

# Shoalhaven 2027 Community Strategic Plan



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## Our Shoalhaven

Shoalhaven is unique with its spectacular natural environment, growing population and robust economy. It is a wonderful place to live, work, stay and play. From Berry to Durras, the coastal strip sustains diversity of places, people and environments.

Shoalhaven is located on the south coast of New South Wales, with the regional centre of Nowra-Bomaderry located about 160 kilometres south of Sydney. Most of the population is concentrated along the coastal fringe, which is traversed by the Princes Highway. The major centres include Nowra-Bomaderry, Milton-Ulladulla, Huskisson-Vincentia, St Georges Basin District, Culburra Beach and Sussex Inlet. The area encompasses a total land area of about 4,660 square kilometres, including substantial areas of national park, state forest, bushland, beaches and lakes. The natural amenity of the area is a strong attractor, for both new residents, holiday makers and day trippers.

The original inhabitants of the Shoalhaven area are the Wodi Wodi, Wandandian and Murramarang Aboriginal people. European settlement dates from 1822 when land was taken up near the mouth of the Shoalhaven River.

The Shoalhaven is blessed with perhaps the most scenically beautiful landscapes on the east coast of Australia, ranging from the lush rainforests, woodlands, rocky terrain, coastal plains, farmland and floodplains. The area also has more than 165 kilometres of coastline, the longest of any local government area in NSW. The coast is very diverse in its character, with major estuaries, many coastal lakes, long wild beaches and small pocket beaches, extensive coastal dune systems, towering sandstone headlands and rugged bluffs.

The Shoalhaven population has a strong sense of community, a desire to help one another, friendly, welcoming and caring. Community involvement in Council and community activities is reflective of the large numbers attending key events being held throughout the year.

This Integrated Plan aims to complement the wonderful place that is the Shoalhaven and to build priorities, goals and actions that provide direction for the community and Council into the future.



## Background

Local councils in NSW are required to undertake their planning and reporting activities in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* (Act) and the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* (Regulation). The Act and Regulation provides guidelines for councils to follow to ensure community involvement is central to the formation of strategic plans that drive council's long term planning and day to day operations. The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (Figure 1) is the name given to that section of the Act and Regulation that deals with Council's planning processes and the community's involvement.

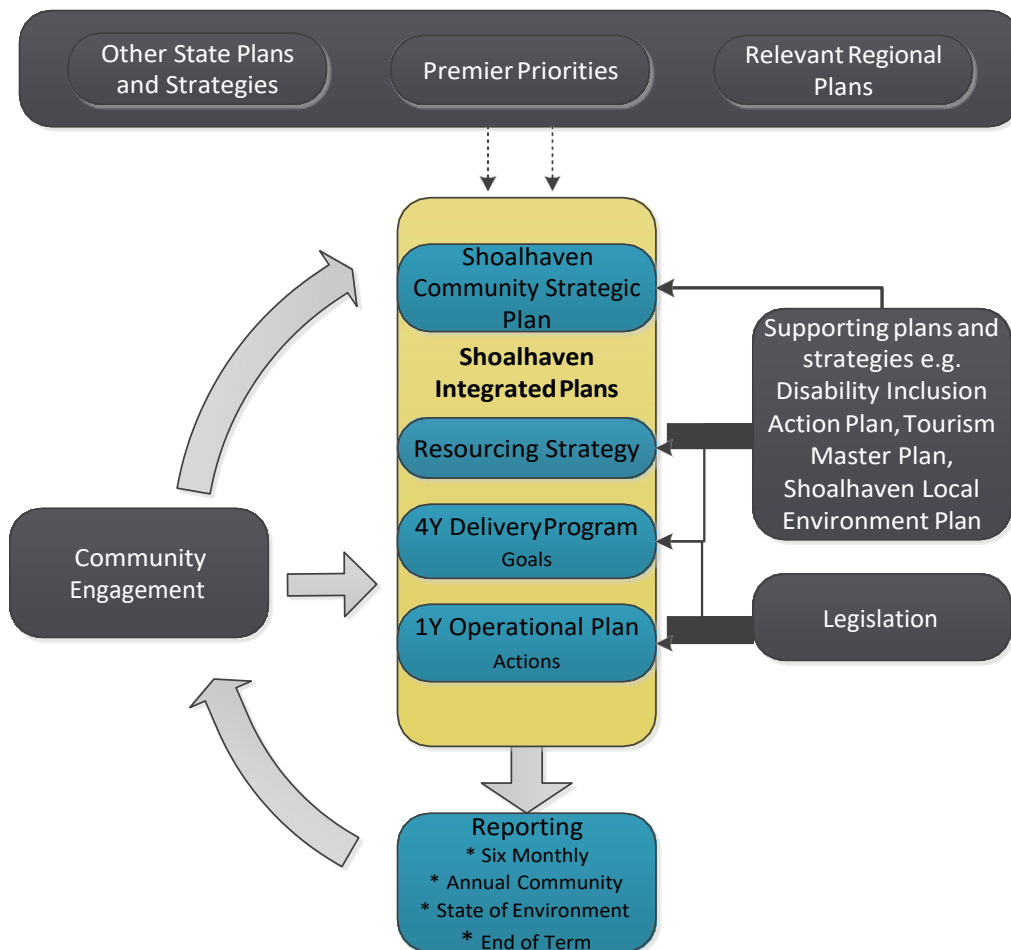


Figure 1: Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

## Shoalhaven's Integrated Plan Structure

**The Shoalhaven Integrated Plan is made up of four key components (Figure 1):**

1. Shoalhaven Community Strategic Plan (CSP)
2. Delivery Program
  - Goals
3. Operational Plan
  - Actions
  - Financials
  - Fees & Charges
  - Budget
4. Council's Resourcing Strategy

The Integrated Plan is developed in conjunction with State and Regional Plans, the Resourcing Strategy, other supporting plans, Councillors, staff and community. Monitoring and adjustment is carried out through six monthly and annual reports.

The community plan for the Shoalhaven over the next ten years is captured in the Community Strategic Plan (CSP). While Council will use the plan to develop its Goals and Actions, not everything in the plan is Council's responsibility. Other government and non-government organisations can and will use the CSP to align their activities to meet Shoalhaven's needs.

The Resourcing Strategy is critical to the successful development and completion of the Plan's Actions. It is used to address the budget needs through the Long Term Financial Plan, assets required through the Asset Plan and Council's workforce through the workforce plan.

The four-year Delivery Program Goals are Council's response to the Community Strategic Plan. The Goals are developed in conjunction with its Resourcing Strategy, supporting plans and legislation.

The one-year Operational Plan Actions details what will be completed over the next 12 months to address the Delivery Program Goals. Budget, staff resources and assets are allocated to ensure the Actions are undertaken.

## Building a CSP

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is the community's plan for Shoalhaven. It has a minimum ten-year timeframe and should reflect the community's aspirations (needs and wants) for Shoalhaven. Council's role in the creation of the CSP is to facilitate its development and produce the document; the CSP is not a Council plan but a community plan. While Council will use the CSP as a guide for creating other plans; it is important to note that other State and Federal Agencies will also use the CSP to develop their own strategies and plans for the Shoalhaven. Figure 2 illustrates the ownership distinctions for Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework documents.

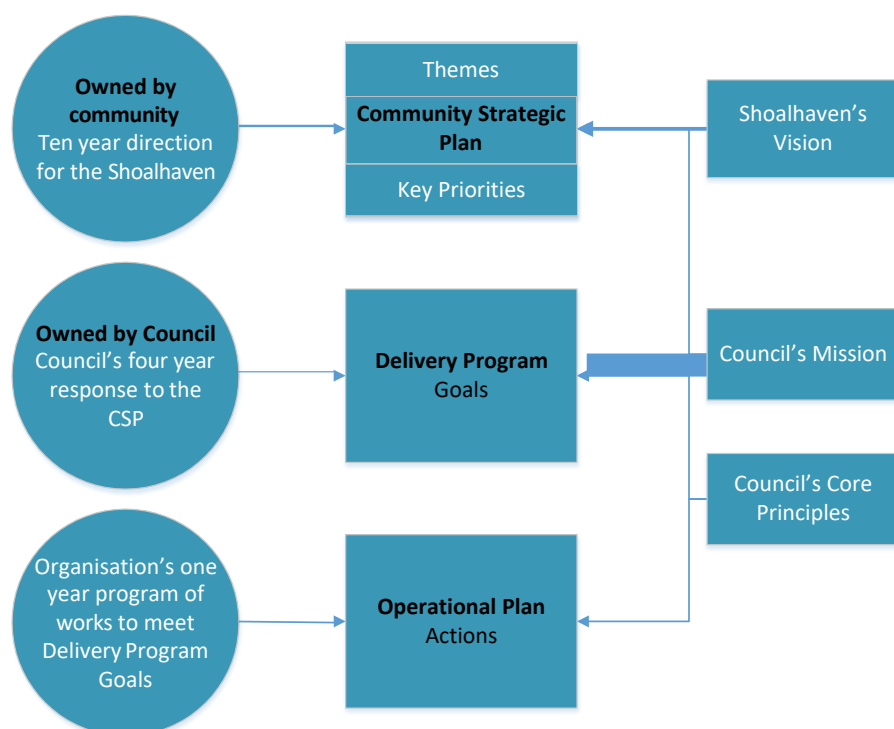


Figure 2: IP&R Framework ownership distinctions

The CSP is one part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (Figure 1). Community engagement is critical to the development of the CSP and a Community Engagement Strategy (Strategy) was adopted by Council. The Strategy is used to direct Council's efforts in obtaining community input for the CSP's creation. Other input that needs to be considered when reviewing the CSP are regional, state and local plans and strategies for Shoalhaven.

The CSP (Shoalhaven 2027-10 Year Plan to take us through to the year 2027) provides direction for Council and is used to determine its four-year Delivery Program. Council must consider other supporting plan requirements as well as any legislative obligations when developing its Delivery Program. To achieve the Delivery Program, a one year Operational Plan with associated resources (budget, workforce and assets) is developed. The Operational Plan details what will be achieved in the Delivery Program throughout the coming twelve months.

To help maintain focus for Council and feedback for the community, regular reporting is undertaken. Six monthly reports on the status of the Delivery Program are prepared along with Annual Reports and an End of Council Term Report that covers the past four years. The reports are provided to Council and Community.

Given the CSP is a community plan, Council's role in delivering the parts of the CSP will be governed by its 'span of control' and resources available to undertake actions. Figure 3 helps to explain Council level of involvement in the CSP.

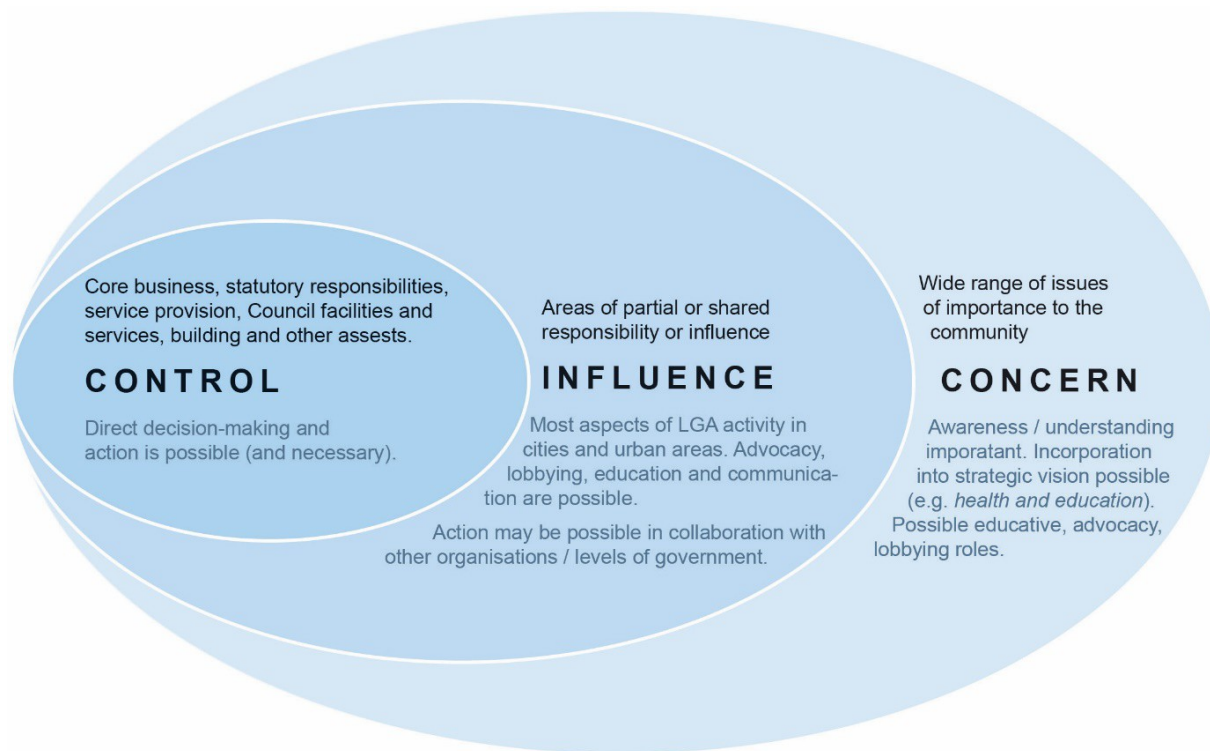


Figure 3: Council's areas of control, influence and concern in achieving the community's outcomes

#### The basic structure of the CSP includes:

- A community vision statement
- Themes (Objectives) for the community that address the quadruple bottom line (community, environments, economy and governance) issues identified by the community
- Key Priorities (Strategies) for achieving the themes
- Assessment methods for determining whether the key priorities are being achieved

To build this structure, Council will engage with the community using the core principles of:

#### Ecologically sustainable development;

Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) can be defined as: using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased.

Effective ESD requires the integration of economic and environmental considerations in decision making processes.

ESD can be achieved through the implementation of the following principles and programs:

- The precautionary principle - where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental damage
- Intergenerational equity – making sure impacts on generations are considered
- Conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity
- Improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms.

### **Social justice principles;**

Priorities identified within the CSP are based on the social justice principles of:

- Equity – All people are treated equally while also recognising that there are situations where application of the same rules to disadvantaged and marginalised groups can generate unequal results
- Access and connectedness – This can be achieved through both improved transport options mobility, connections with each other, connections with the environment, provision of facilities and services that meet community need and through business connection opportunities
- Participation – The creation and implementation of the objectives and strategies within the plan must have the full participation and support of the community
- Rights – The CSP includes strategies which will deliver the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled.

### **Effective governance;**

Council must continue to provide mature and strategic leadership while striving for continued improvement in the sustainable delivery of the community's aspirations.

### **Customer service excellence;**

Council is committed to customer service excellence in all its operations and dealings with Shoalhaven residents, visitors and stakeholders.

The following customer service principles will be embraced:

- The provision of effective communication channels and methods
- Staff who are supported and skilled in high quality customer service
- Building trust with the community through maintaining commitments and accepting responsibility for errors.



**Financial sustainability;**

Council's long-term financial performance and position will be sustainable. Planned long-term service and infrastructure levels should be met without unanticipated increases in rates or disruptive cuts to services.

Council's Core Sustainable Resourcing Principles include:

- Program sustainability – Maintaining priority service and infrastructure renewal programs
- Rate predictability – Stability and predictability in the setting of rate revenue
- Inter-generational equity – Sharing fairly the use of resources, and the associated cost burden between current and future users of services and infrastructure
- Meeting growth needs – New revenue attributed to the City's growth is directed to growth-based services and infrastructure.

## Measuring & Reporting Progress

All Council activities link directly to the Shoalhaven Integrated Plan (SIP). These activities monitor whether our actions are appropriate to achieving the long-term key priorities set out in Shoalhaven 2027. Council undertakes several reporting and reviewing tasks to ensure that we remain on track.

A range of measures have been developed to support the generation of progress reports. These measures include:

- Community indicators – high level measures that help to report on Shoalhaven's CSP Key Priorities;
- Strategic Progress Indicators – provided in the Annual Community Report;
- Operational Performance Measures - used to report on Council's performance in delivering the Goals / Actions contained within the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Council's reporting mechanisms include:

- Six monthly progress reports to highlight how Council is progressing with its Delivery Program Goals;
- An Annual Community Report that details Council's efforts in meeting the Operational Plan Actions and budget commitments;
- State of the Environment Report that provides a snap shot of how the environment is fairing;
- An End of Term Report, produced at the end of each Council term. The report outlines Council's Delivery Program achievements against the directions set in Shoalhaven 2027.

## Community Vision Statement

*We will work together in Shoalhaven to foster a safe and attractive community for people to live, work, stay and play; where sustainable growth, development and environmental protection are managed to provide a unique and relaxed lifestyle.*

## Themes

The CSP Themes for Shoalhaven 2027 are:

I want a city that has.....

1. Resilient, safe and inclusive communities
2. Sustainable, liveable environments
3. Prosperous communities
4. Responsible governance

## Themes and Key Priorities

CSP Key Priorities assigned to the themes:

### **1. Resilient, safe and inclusive communities**

- 1.1 Build inclusive, safe and connected communities
- 1.2 Activate communities through arts, culture and events
- 1.3 Support active, healthy liveable communities

### **2. Sustainable, liveable environments**

- 2.1 Improve and maintain road and transport infrastructure
- 2.2 Plan and manage appropriate and sustainable development
- 2.3 Protect and showcase the natural environment

### **3. Prosperous communities**

- 3.1 Maintain and grow a robust economy with vibrant towns and villages

### **4. Responsible governance**

- 4.1 Deliver reliable services
- 4.2 Provide advocacy and transparent leadership through effective government and administration
- 4.3 Inform and engage with the community about the decisions that affect their lives



## Theme 1. Resilient, safe and inclusive communities

The Shoalhaven community has a higher average age than many other areas in NSW. An ageing population is a typical feature of coastal locations in NSW, given the high retiree population and the fact that younger people often migrate to other locations for educational or work pursuits.

Approximately seven in every 10 Shoalhaven City households are a family, with two in 10 a single person. Nearly all occupied dwellings in the City are single houses, with most of the population living in detached low-density housing.

Shoalhaven City has a rich Aboriginal cultural heritage, with nearly one in 20 residents identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. These strong links with Aboriginal culture are further reflected in Council's recognition of the strong spiritual ties that the traditional owners continue to have with the land.

### Links to State and Regional Plans

**NSW Premier's Priorities for *Resilient, safe and inclusive communities* include:**

- Improving service levels in hospitals
- Protecting our kids
- Reducing domestic violence
- Reducing youth homelessness
- Tackling childhood obesity

### Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation Strategic Priorities

- Ensure regional focus on education and skills development, and link to job growth

### What's important to the community:

A broad range of issues were identified for this Theme including:

- Community safety, such as additional policing especially in the Bay and Basin area
- Support for those struggling with substance abuse
- Activities for youth and young families
- A close and involved community
- An inclusive community
- Improved health care especially for the elderly
- Homelessness and the need for affordable housing
- Increased number of cultural events and improvements to Shoalhaven's arts
- Improvements to our parks and reserves
- Focus on better sporting facilities
- Better facilities for children and youth
- Provide more dog friendly areas

## Priorities for Theme 1

### 1.1 Build inclusive, safe and connected communities

#### Definition

Includes: Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) outcomes; Aboriginal cultural heritage; housing options; homelessness; road safety; food safety; waste collection; street lighting; policing; illegal dumping; health services; youth and community development; rangers; regulation enforcement; emergency services; beach patrols, a safe neighborhood, graffiti abatement, migrant support

#### Measure

- Community's sense of belonging (feeling part of the community) – rating, community survey
- Community perception of feeling safe in their community – rating, community survey
- Australian Unity Personal Wellbeing Index – rating, community survey
- When Council has improved resilience and readiness capability in emergency management

### 1.2 Activate communities through arts, culture and events

#### Definition

Includes: visual and performing arts; building social capital; cultural heritage; library services

#### Measure

- Number of programs implemented – determined using Council records
- Satisfaction with the number and type of events in the Shoalhaven – rating, Community survey
- Number of attendees at facilities and events – Community survey

### 1.3 Support active, healthy liveable communities

#### Definition

Includes: facilities for cultural activities; parks, playgrounds and sporting venues; aquatic centres; public halls; schools, educational services; volunteers, tree management.

**Measure**

- Community satisfaction with parks sporting venues, aquatic centres, and public halls – rating, Community Survey
- Increase in the use of parks, playgrounds and sporting fields – annual survey / council records
- Improving community perception of Shoalhaven as a liveable city – Community Survey
- Utilisation of halls and aquatic centres – Council records

## Theme 2- Sustainable, liveable environments

Shoalhaven's significant environmental qualities stem from its extensive natural areas, vast biodiversity and relatively small area of settlement. The natural and rural landscapes form part of the cultural heritage and 'sense of connection' for the community and are an important tourism and economic assets.

Nowra, regarded as the major regional centre of Shoalhaven, is located on the banks of the Shoalhaven River, providing administrative, commercial and other high order services for the area. Ulladulla and the Vincentia district (Bay and Basin area) are Shoalhaven's major towns. Shoalhaven's major settlement areas are Nowra-Bomaderry, Milton-Ulladulla and the Bay and Basin area.

## Links to State and Regional Plans

**NSW Premier's Priorities for *Sustainable, liveable environments* include:**

- Building infrastructure
- Faster housing approvals
- Keeping our environment clean

### **Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan**

- Economic development and employment growth
- Housing and settlement
- Natural environment and agriculture/resource lands
- Transport and networks

### **Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation Strategic Priorities**

- Support the Illawarra Regional Transport Strategy

## What's important to the community:

A broad range of issues were identified for this Theme including:

- Road improvement, including maintenance, renewal and resealing programs
- Improved public transport options
- More paths and better maintenance of the ones we have
- More cycleways and improved road shoulders for cycling
- Protection and restoration of the natural environmental
- Mitigate and adapt to climate change
- Bypasses for Nowra and Milton/Ulladulla and a third bridge over the Shoalhaven River
- Improved parking options
- Maintain our infrastructure
- Appropriate, sustainable development
- Better use of the Shoalhaven river and foreshore
- Improved planning controls
- Continue to revitalise Shoalhaven's CBDs
- Retain amenity of the area, keep the village feel
- Restrict over-development in the coastal villages
- Sustainable / renewable energy
- Look after and where possible improve our unique environments
- Development that is in keeping with our unique natural environment

## Priorities for Theme 2

### 2.1 Improve and maintain road and transport infrastructure

#### Definition

Includes: roads; paths; cycle ways; parking; transport options (public and private); bridges; drainage; main roads; rail and bus services; boat ramps and jetties

#### Measure

- Community perception of Council road condition and other infrastructure– rating, Community Survey
- The number of defects and complaints regarding road-condition is falling – Council records
- The total length of pathways is increasing – Council records
- Backlog of repair and renewal of community assets is falling – Council records

### 2.2 Plan and manage appropriate and sustainable development

#### Definition

Includes: Providing for population growth; land supply and quality residential development; development applications and contribution processing; town centre and waterway activation; energy efficient design; natural hazards, open space management

#### Measure

- Community satisfaction with strategic planning within Shoalhaven – rating Community Survey
- More community members are involved in strategic planning process – Community survey and Council records
- Development Applications assessment times – Council records

### 2.3 Protect and showcase the natural environment

#### Definition

Includes: Maintenance and renewal; dealing with the effects of climate change, renewable energy; land and waterway quality; endangered species protection; noxious weed control; national parks

#### Measure

- Community perception of the health of the natural environment – rating, Community Survey
- Community perception of environmental protection and enforcement – rating, Community Survey
- Waterway environments are improving – Council records
- Council's energy usage is reducing – Council records



### Theme 3- Prosperous communities

The City's economy consists of a range of industry sectors resulting in a robust and resilient economy. Key industries that have, and will continue to have a significant role in maintaining and growing our economy include Defence and Public Administration; Manufacturing; Professional and Technical Services; Transport, Logistics and Wholesale Trade; Agriculture and Aquaculture; Health Care and Human Services; Education and Training; Tourism, Accommodation and Food Services; and Retail Trade.

### Links to other Plans and Strategies

**NSW Premier's Priorities for *Prosperous communities* include:**

- Creating jobs
- Improving education results

**Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation Strategic Priorities**

- Support an agreed Illawarra Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan
- Design, develop and deliver regional strategies that support local activity

### What's important to the community:

A broad range of issues were identified for this Theme including:

- Employment, more jobs are needed
- Invest in tourism
- Education and training options especially for Shoalhaven's youth
- Build a vibrant community
- Greater shopping variety in the local area
- Continue to improve Nowra CBD
- Help create growth through business opportunities
- Help to build sporting facilities that bring growth and jobs to Shoalhaven

## Priorities for Theme 3

### 3.1 Maintain and grow a robust economy with vibrant towns and villages

#### Definition

Includes: business networks; building business potential; partnering with government and industry

#### Measures

- Total value of construction certificates issued – determined by Council records
- Total number of people employed within the Shoalhaven – Profile ID
- The level of Gross Regional product per worker – Profile ID
- Community's satisfaction with Shoalhaven's CBDs – rating, Community Survey
- Community's perception of Shoalhaven as a vibrant place to live and work – rating, Community Survey

## Theme 4- Responsible governance

Responsible Governance covers the services provided to the community by all government departments, as well as the internal operations needed to support those community services and the effective governance processes needed to run a local government authority.

## Links to other Plans and Strategies

### **NSW Premier's Priorities for *Responsive governance* include:**

- Driving public sector diversity
- Improving government services

### **Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation Strategic Priorities**

- Design, develop and deliver regionally agreed policies procedures and services in areas of local government activity
- Establish the IPJO as a capable and robust organisation

## What's important to the community:

A broad range of issues were identified for this Theme including:

- Green bins and better ways to recycle waste
- Improved medical facilities especially for those coastal villages
- More park bins and improved cleaning in the CBD
- Strong leadership
- A cohesive Council that can be trusted
- Ensure funding equity across the Shoalhaven
- Ability to participate in decision making
- Ability to have "their say" in Councils projects, policies and plans

## Priorities for Theme 4

### 4.1 Deliver reliable services

#### Definition

Includes: Water; waste; property; cemeteries and crematorium; asset maintenance; regulatory and business performance reporting; counter services (customer and cashier services); Government Information Public Access (GIPA) service

#### Measure

- Community perception of council's services – rating, Community Survey
- The number of customer appreciation comments are increasing – Council records
- Community perception of customer service – rating, Community Survey

### 4.2 Provide advocacy and transparent leadership through effective government and administration

#### Definition

Includes: Project support and business improvement; Graphical Information System (GIS) support; records; computer and business systems; survey services; legal; insurance; risk and audit services; human resources and governance; Work Health and Safety; mechanical services; financial; revenue and investment management; supply services; payroll; contract supervision; civil engineering and design services; traffic; transport and road safety investigations; asset management; media; web; local, state and federal government agencies; integrated planning and reporting support; community leadership

#### Measure

- Financial sustainability – Fit for the future ratios – Council records
- Council workforce demographics – Council records
- Percentage of the capital works program completed – Council records

### 4.3 Inform and engage with the community about the decisions that affect their lives

#### Definition

Includes: Community engagement; participation in community building activities; maintaining communication channels; community education, developing partnerships, informing community and involving community in Council business.

#### Measure

- Number of community engagements taking place – council records
- Number of participants in community engagement – council records  
Community perception of Council's ability to communicate effectively – rating, community survey



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