

# Snowy Valleys

## Community Strategic Plan 2042

2025 Revision









# Acknowledgement of country

Snowy Valleys Council proudly acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the land and water and pays respect to their elders past and present.

# Vision

We are proud of our beautiful environment and strong community, enjoying a high quality of life with diverse opportunities, strong connections, and respect for our First Nations people.

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# Welcome

We are delighted to share our community's vision for the next 18 years; the Snowy Valleys Community Strategic Plan 2042. This Plan presents an inspiring roadmap for our region as we move towards 2042 that captures a clear vision and compelling goals for our residents, businesses, community organisations and many partners and collaborators. It is the key strategic plan that will guide us as we work together to achieve great things for Snowy Valleys.

Since the first Community Strategic Plan (Plan) was developed over a decade ago, it has been used by Council to inform decisions and set the agenda for long-term planning of projects, infrastructure and services. Snowy Valleys Council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and maintaining this Plan. Its implementation draws on the continuing partnerships with all levels of government and agencies, non-government organisations, businesses and the community.

With the election of a new council in September 2024, NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting legislation requires that this Plan be reviewed and updated to ensure it reflects the community's priorities. This updated plan builds on the 2022 Community Strategic Plan, and considers the information gathered from engagement activities that took place in 2024. Your contributions have highlighted the strengths of our region and identified the key challenges we face.

This Plan emphasises the importance of fostering economic growth while preserving the natural beauty that defines Snowy Valleys. It underscores the need for sustainability, resilience, and collaboration to shape an inclusive community that offers a high quality of life for residents of all ages. The Plan also highlights the critical role of improving connectivity and accessibility, ensuring that our region provides vibrant spaces and quality services that enhance our sense of community and well-being.

Delivering this vision is not something we can achieve in isolation. Shared decision making and effective working partnerships with government agencies, non-government organisations, business and, of course, our community will be critical to our success.

The unique nature of this Plan is that it is a document for the whole community. If we are to succeed in creating the community we have envisioned with this Plan, we need to work together, and everyone is encouraged to play an active role in whatever way we can. This Plan is designed to encourage commitment to our future and a sense of common purpose and responsibility.

This is the Plan for our Snowy Valleys, and we are committed to working with our community to reach our goals.



# Our Plan

## About our plan

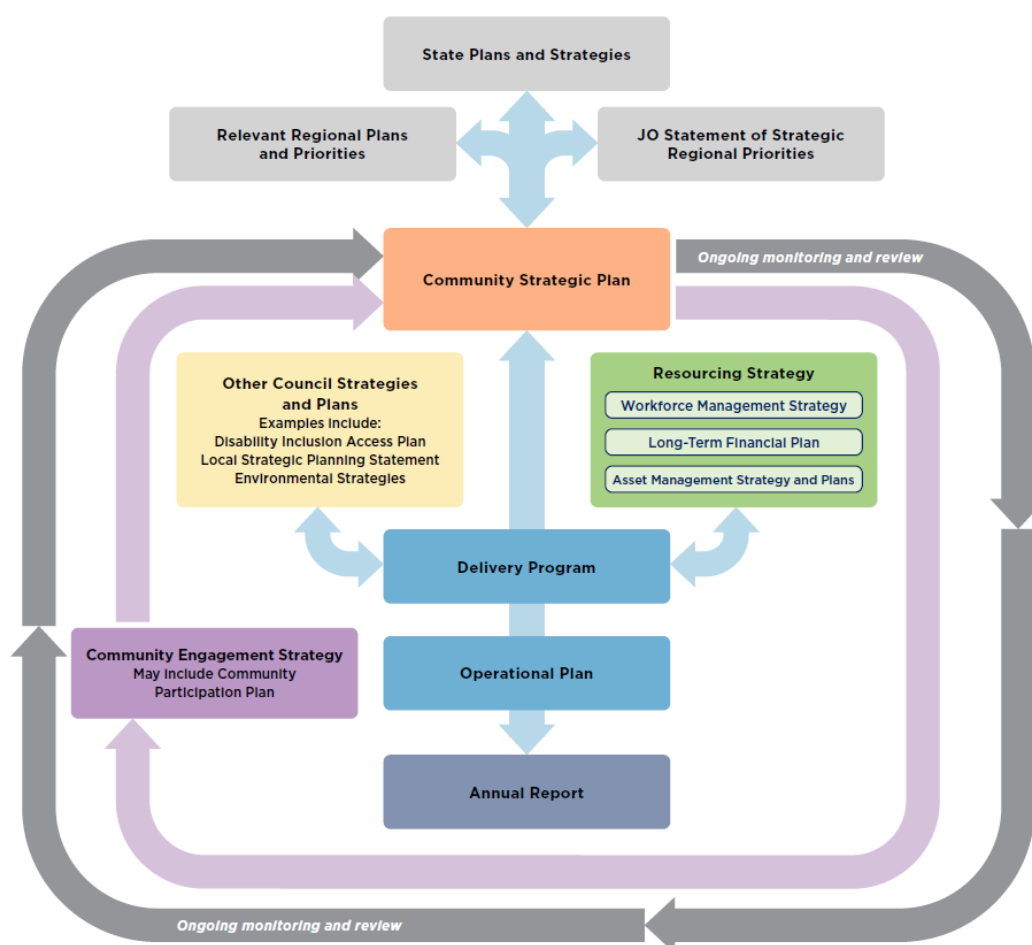
The Snowy Valleys 2042 Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is based on the aspirations and priorities of our community and sets out a long-term vision for the area. The plan identifies the key priorities and strategies for achieving this.

It is the community's plan for the future, not a council plan. Snowy Valleys Council is the custodian of the CSP. However, state agencies, businesses, industry groups, community groups, and individuals also lead and support the achievement of the vision and strategic priorities.

## Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework

An integrated approach to planning and reporting is a requirement for every NSW council under the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework set out in the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government General Regulation 2021*.

This framework requires that the Council develop a series of plans, strategies, and reports linked to the community vision and priorities set out in the CSP. Each of these must be based on the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights.





# Our Snowy Valleys

Snowy Valleys region is made up of friendly, welcoming communities, each with unique heritage and character. It boasts a resilient and robust economy, anchored by agriculture and timber industries. It is host to much of the power generation for Snowy Hydro and has one of the biggest softwood plantations in the Southern Hemisphere. Home to the renowned Batlow Apples, it produces a range of premium stone fruits, cherries, and blueberries. In addition, the region has some of Australia's best grazing fertile lands, producing wool, beef and lamb.

## Total Population

**14,932**

## SEIFA index\*

**953**

## Top Industries

1. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
2. Manufacturing
3. Health Care and Social Assistance
4. Retail Trader
5. Construction

\* Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is score that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage in terms of people's access to material and social resources, and their ability to participate in society



If the Snowy Valleys Council area consisted of 100 people, there would be:

6

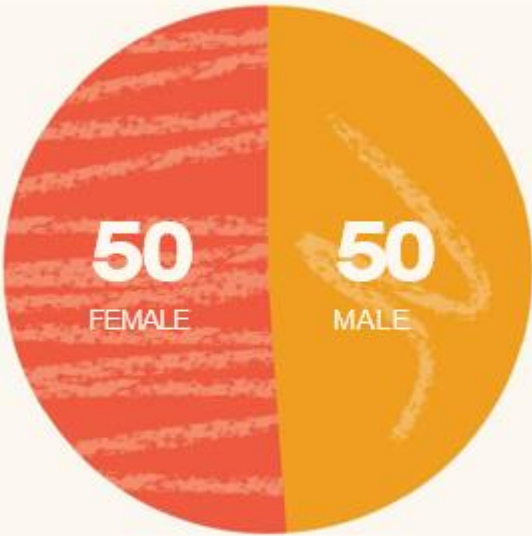
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

6

Born overseas

4

Speaking languages other than English at home



24: 0 – 19 years 45: 20 – 59 years  
31: 60+ years



12

Care for someone with a disability

6

Have a disability



24

With an individual income less than \$400 per week



31

Living by themselves

69

Living in families



72

Who own, or pay a Mortgage in a house

24

Who rent



43

That completed Higher education

55

That did not completed year 12



3

Unemployed and looking for work

20

who volunteer

31

Working Part time

58

working full time



71

Who drive to work

5

Who walked to work



# Community engagement

## What we asked

1. How do you feel about the vision in the endorsed CSP?
2. How are we tracking with the existing CSP?
3. What makes your community a great place to live?
4. What do you think are the main challenges facing your community?
5. What have you seen in another area/shire that you think would work well in your community?
6. What is one thing you would like to see achieved in your community in the next ten years?
7. What services or projects do you think Council should be prioritising or lobbying other levels of government.

## How did you get involved?

- Virtually – surveys
- In conversation – discussion guides, community workshops
- On paper – drawing sheets, written submissions

### Participation

Over 450 people from the Snowy Valleys area participated in the Towards 2042 Stage 1 engagement from 1 February to 15 March 2024.





# Community engagement

## What is important to you

When we asked the Snowy Valleys community what makes their area a great place to live, the beautiful natural environment was a clear standout. Residents value the picturesque landscapes, fresh air, open skies, and easy access to the mountains and high country. They appreciate the affordable lifestyle and quality of life, enjoying a balance between rural living and convenient access to larger towns. The close-knit community fosters a strong sense of belonging and collective care, with people working together for the greater good. The region's peaceful, tranquil atmosphere and calming pace of life are highly cherished, and sport plays an important role in the community, with activities like biking, the rail trail, football, gyms, and tennis being particularly popular.

Since 2021, sport and recreation has grown in importance while sense of community and the experience of peace and quiet has declined notably.

## What is important to you

Participants highlighted several key challenges facing the Snowy Valleys community. Since 2021, there has been a shift in concerns, with less focus on jobs and employment and more on social issues. Access to health and medical care was another major issue, with difficulties in securing appointments with doctors and specialists, the need to travel for healthcare, and limited aged care and residential care options. Housing affordability is worsening due to rising interest rates, and there is a shortage of rental properties. Concerns about the Council were paramount, particularly regarding financial sustainability, issues with rates, difficulties in securing funding, poor

community engagement and communications, and a perceived lack of vision. There is also ongoing concern about the impacts of amalgamation, with an urgent desire to de-amalgamate. Additionally, the condition and quality of the road network are seen as poor, internet and telecommunications services are seen as inadequate, and there is concern about the loss of library services.

## Key priorities

People who took part in the engagement indicated they prioritise:

- Improved health services, prioritising better access to doctors and mental health services.
- Economic growth, focused on expanding business and tourism activities, promoting agriculture, and attracting new residents to the area.
- Enhanced sports and recreation, focused on developing cycling trails, including a regional rail trail and mountain biking destinations, as well as upgrading parks and pool facilities.
- Infrastructure upgrades, including expanded car parking, lighting, public toilets, stormwater upgrades, consistent internet services, and securing water supply.
- Improved council governance and leadership, including a strong desire for a council demerger, enhanced community engagement, and financial sustainability.







# Council's role

Council is committed to understanding the community's priorities, concerns and needs in terms of key services, facilities and programs.

Whilst Snowy Valleys Council is the custodian of the Community Strategic Plan, all levels of government, businesses, industry groups, community groups and individuals will share the responsibility for achieving our long-term community goals.

The plan describes Council's role in the delivery of each priority using the following terms:

## Provide

Services, facilities, infrastructure, programs, planning, and engagement.

## Collaborate

Partner with the community, business and industry, other councils, and other tiers of government.

## Advocate

Amplify the voice of our community to get the best possible outcomes.





# How to read this Plan

## Theme/pillar

Our focus area for achieving the 2042 vision and to provide structure for this Plan.

## Strategic objectives

These are the long-term aspirations for our community under each theme/pillar. These have been developed in consultation with our community and contribute to achieving our 2042 vision.

Snowy Valleys Council

Community Strategic Plan 2042

## A. Our community

Our communities are connected and inclusive, supported by services that nurture health, wellbeing and identity.

Our community protects and celebrates the history while looking forward to a secure and prosperous future.

Services in the Snowy Valleys are accessible and diverse, supporting all stages of life. They bring us together, connect us and build our sense of belonging.

We feel safe and confident in our ability to respond to change.



## Measures

| Strategic objectives   | Council's role                     | Our partners   |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| The <b>history</b> heritage, and unique character of our region is acknowledged, supported and retained.     | Provide<br>Collaborate<br>Advocate | Community members<br>Community groups  |
| The wellbeing of local people is supported through the provision of local services.                          | Provide<br>Collaborate<br>Advocate | NSW State Government<br>Commonwealth government<br>Service providers<br>Health providers                       |
| Our community is prepared and resilient and <b>able to</b> respond to natural disasters and economic shocks. | Provide<br>Collaborate<br>Advocate | NSW State Government<br>Commonwealth government<br>Community groups<br>Community members<br>Emergency services |
| Arts and cultural activities thrive in our region.   | Provide<br>Collaborate             | Artists<br>Community groups<br>Community members<br>Tourism bodies   |

| Measure  | Baseline  | Target  | Source                                      |
|--|---|---|---|
| Community rating of cultural, recreational and entertainment events  | Goal rating for Community cultural, recreational and youth events | Goal rating for Community cultural, recreational and youth events | SVC Community Satisfaction Survey           |
| Community satisfaction with facilities and services, early education and children's services   | 62% community satisfaction rating (2021)                          | > 62% community satisfaction rating                               | SVC Community Satisfaction Survey           |
| Incidents of crime in outdoor/public places which include: Violence (24), Rape (24), Sexual offences, Robbery, Break & Enter, Motor Theft, Stolen Motor Vehicle, Stolen from person and Malicious damage to property | 67 outdoor/public place incidents reported (2020)                 | public place incidents reported                                   | NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research |
| Community accessibility and satisfaction to Library Services   | \$6,251 Library loans across all SVC Library Services             | Increase Library loans by 2%                                      | SVC Council Data                            |
| Community satisfaction with the comfort of accessing community services, programs and facilities in times of natural disasters and economic shocks   | 70% Community Satisfaction rating (2021)                          | > 70% community satisfaction rating                               | SVC Community Satisfaction Survey           |
| SVC Children's Services children enrolment nation  | Overall enrolment numbers reported                                | Overall enrolment numbers reported                                | SVC Council Data                            |

**Council's role** This outlines Council's role in the delivery of each strategic objective.

**Our partners** To achieve long-term aspirations, we must work with other partners. This Plan outlines some of our key partners but is not an exhaustive list.

**Measures** The measures outline the community indicators used to measure and report progress on the **implementation of this Plan**.



# Plan

The Snowy Valleys CSP consists of five themes and strategic objectives:



## 1. Our community

Our communities are connected and inclusive, supported by services that nurture health, wellbeing and identity.



## 2. Our economy

Our diverse economy supports community longevity, vibrancy and a sustainable future.



## 3. Our environment

Our natural environment is cared for and protected to ensure future generations can experience and enjoy its beauty.



## 4. Our infrastructure

Our local infrastructure is sustainable and facilitates our way of life.



## 5. Our civic leadership

Our civic leadership and organisational governance fosters open and transparent partnership with our community.

Each theme outlines the strategic objectives, strategies for achieving them, important partners and collaborators, and the specific role of the Council. A separate section explains the review and reporting process, and measures to track progress. The strategies in this Plan have been developed with careful consideration of the quadruple bottom line (QBL) and are grounded in Social Justice Principles.









# 1. Our community



**Our communities are connected and inclusive, supported by services that nurture health, wellbeing and identity.**

Our community protects and celebrates its history while looking forward to a secure and prosperous future. Services in the Snowy Valleys are accessible and diverse, supporting all stages of life. They bring us together, connect us and build our sense of belonging. We feel safe and confident in our ability to respond to change.

| Strategy  | Council's Role                     | Our Partner  |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>1.1</b> The livability, heritage, and unique characteristics of our region is acknowledged, supported and retained.          | Provide<br>Collaborate<br>Advocate | Community members<br>Community groups  |
| <b>1.2</b> The wellbeing of local people is supported through the provision of local health, recreation and community services. | Provide<br>Collaborate<br>Advocate | NSW State Government<br>Commonwealth Government<br>Service providers<br>Health providers |
| <b>1.3</b> Our community is safe, prepared and resilient to disasters and shocks.   | Provide<br>Collaborate<br>Advocate | NSW State Government<br>Community Groups<br>Community Members<br>Emergency services      |
| <b>1.4</b> Arts and cultural activities thrive in our region.   | Provide<br>Collaborate             | Artists<br>Community groups<br>Community members<br>Tourism bodies                       |









## 2. Our economy

**Our diverse economy supports community longevity, vibrancy and a sustainable future.**

Strong relationships between industry, organisations, government and community underpin our actions to supporting existing businesses and attracting new industry. Together, we are committed to the development of infrastructure that is essential for economic growth. Our economy provides a wide range of opportunities, ensuring positive employment pathways and the ability to attract and retain young people and families. We welcome and encourage visitors to our region and support the development of new and diverse tourism experiences as a way to boost our economy.

| Strategy   | Council's Role                     | Our Partner   |
|--|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>2.1</b> Our economy is made up of a broad range of business and industry with strong opportunities.   | Provide<br>Collaborate<br>Advocate | Local business and industry Community groups<br>NSW Government CRJO<br>RDA Murray     |
| <b>2.2</b> Our economy attracts, retains, and supports young people and families in the region through robust vocational pathways, quality education and employment opportunities. | Provide<br>Collaborate<br>Advocate | Local business and industry<br>Education and training providers<br>CRJO<br>RDA Murray |
| <b>2.3</b> Sustainable tourism initiatives contribute to a thriving economy.   | Provide<br>Collaborate<br>Advocate | Local business and industry Tourism bodies  |









## 3. Our environment

**Our natural environment is cared for and protected to ensure future generations can experience and enjoy its beauty.**

Our community embraces sustainable practices to protect our natural environment and resources and ensure we are resilient to a changing climate. We work collectively to manage our environmental footprint and respect and preserve the beauty of our landscapes. We plan for sustainable growth, that protects and enhances the local character and amenity.

| Strategy   | Council's Role                     | Our Partner  |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>3.1</b> Our community works together to protect and preserve our biodiversity and natural environment.        | Provide<br>Collaborate<br>Advocate | NSW<br>Government<br>Community groups<br>Community members<br>Landholders<br>Australian Government   |
| <b>3.2</b> A robust planning framework supports the needs and identity of our community and natural environment. | Provide<br>Collaborate<br>Advocate | Community members<br>Housing providers   |
| <b>3.3</b> We are resilient to a changing climate through adaptation and mitigation.                             | Provide<br>Collaborate<br>Advocate | NSW<br>Government<br>Community groups<br>Community members<br>Landholders<br>Commonwealth Government |







## 4. Our infrastructure



**Our local infrastructure is sustainable and facilitates our way of life.**

Our tracks, trails and paths provide the community and visitors with sustainable transport and recreational opportunities. We plan for, provide and maintain a safe local transport network. Our community facilities and spaces cater for active and passive recreation and are well maintained, safe and accessible.

| Strategy   | Council's Role                     | Our Partner   |
|--|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>4.1</b> A robust transport network services our communities.  | Provide<br>Collaborate<br>Advocate | NSW Government<br>Australian Government<br>Public and community transport operators               |
| <b>4.2</b> Our amenities, infrastructure green spaces and community facilities meet community needs.                     | Provide<br>Collaborate<br>Advocate | Community Groups<br>NSW Government<br>Australian Government                                       |
| <b>4.3</b> Our ability to live sustainably is supported by access to contemporary waste, water and wastewater services.  | Provide<br>Collaborate             | NSW Government<br>Community groups<br>Community members<br>Landholders<br>Commonwealth Government |
| <b>4.4</b> Quality digital communication infrastructure, includes mobile phone reception and high-speed internet access. | Advocate<br>Collaborate            | Commonwealth government<br>CRJO<br>RDA Murray<br>Telecommunications providers                     |









## 5. Our civic leadership

**Our civic leadership and organisational governance foster open and transparent partnership with our community.**

We are a collaborative and connected community that recognises our mutual responsibility to work towards our goals. We actively participate and engage to improve our region. Our leaders act fairly, listen to and represent our community and are accountable and transparent in their decision-making process. They build strong relationships across the community, with other levels of government, industry and agencies to advocate for our needs. Council's resources are well managed to ensure a high level of customer service, ongoing viability and value for money.

| Strategy   | Council's Role         | Our Partner                           |
|--|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>5.1</b> Council and local communities' partner to create an ongoing culture of engagement and communication to aid Council decision making. | Provide<br>Collaborate | Community Members<br>Community groups |
| <b>5.2</b> Council has well managed and governed practices and resources to ensure a high performing organisation                              | Provide<br>Collaborate | CRJO<br>RDASI                         |
| <b>5.3</b> Council demonstrates fair, innovative and representative leadership.  | Provide                | NSW State<br>Government               |







# Our progress

## Working together

This Community Strategic Plan outlines our collective vision for the future. We must work together to guide and implement strategies that move us towards these goals.

Council is proud to act as the custodian of the Community Strategic Plan, ensuring that the aspirations and priorities of our community are meaningfully documented and elevated among our partners.

Council’s commitment in responding to this plan is reflected in the Delivery Program, which translates strategic objectives into actionable plans over a four-year term, aligning with the Council election cycle.

## Review

To ensure accountability and transparency, the plan is reviewed every four years in line with the Council term. This regular review allows the plan to adapt to changing circumstances and emerging community needs.

## Reporting

Reporting on our progress is a key component of this process.

Council will prepare the State of the Shire Report in the year in which an ordinary election of councillors is held. This Report outlines the implementation and effectiveness of the Community Strategic Plan in achieving its objectives and will be presented and endorsed to the second meeting of a newly elected Council.

## Measures

The following tables outline the measures for determining whether the objectives of this plan are being achieved. They are not measures of Council’s performance, but a gauge for stakeholders to determine whether the community is moving closer to, or further away from, the vision.





# Measures

## Our community

| Measure   | Source                                  | Baseline   | Desired Trend         |
|---|---|------------|-----------------------|
| Personal Wellbeing Index  | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021      | 79.8       | Stabilise             |
| Community Wellbeing Index   | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021      | 5.7        | Stabilise or increase |
| Sense of belonging index  | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021      | 6          | Stabilise             |
| Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage                                 | ABS SEIFA 2021                          | 952        | Increase              |
| Equity and Inclusion Index  | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021      | 4.4        | Stabilise or increase |
| Percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domains        | Australia Early Development Census 2021 | 25.4%      | Decrease              |
| Life expectancy at birth for all persons                                      | Health Stats NSW 2020                   | 82.9 years | Increase              |
| Persons with a long-term health condition as a percentage of total population | ABS Census 2021                         | 57.5%      | Decrease              |
| Persons with a mental health condition as a percentage of total population    | ABS Census 2021                         | 8.3%       | Stabilise or decrease |
| Voluntary Work for an organisation (all persons)                              | ABS Census 2021                         | 19.9%      | Stabilise             |
| General Psychological Distress  | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021      | 8.8        | Decrease              |
| Crime and Safety Index  | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021      | 4.4        | Stabilise             |
| Access to general health services   | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021      | 5.2        | Stabilise             |
| Access to specialist services   | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021      | 3.6        | Stabilise             |
| Access to mental health services  | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021      | 3.3        | Stabilise             |



## Our economy

| Measure  | Source                             | Baseline | Desired Trend          |
|--|------------------------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Percentage of persons ages 15-64 years with a non-school qualification at Certificate III or above | ABS Census 2021                    | 50.5%    | Increase               |
| Quality of local schools   | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021 | 5.4      | Stabilise              |
| Total unemployed looking for work  | ABS Small Area Labour Markets 2024 | 2.4%     | Decrease               |
| Number of businesses   | ABS Census 2023                    | 1,706    | Stabilise or increase  |
| Visitor Local Spend  | Spendmapp (Jan 2025)               | \$7.03m  | Stabilised or Increase |

## Our environment

| Measure  | Source  | Baseline    | Desired Trend         |
|--|---|-------------|-----------------------|
| Landscape and Aesthetics Index                       | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021                      | 6.0         | Stabilise or increase |
| Perceived Environmental Health Index                 | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021                      | 3.4         | Increase              |
| CO2e emissions per capita                            | Snapshot Climate – Australia Emissions Profiles 2021-22 | 38.8 tonnes | Stabilise             |
| Average Development Application lodgment time        | NSW Planning Portal 2023-24                             | 23 days     | Decrease              |
| Average assessment days for Development Applications | OLG Your Council Report 2022-23                         | 56 days     | Decrease              |





## Our Infrastructure

| Measure  | Source                             | Baseline                        | Desired Trend    |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Quality of local roads                           | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021 | <b>3.8</b>                      | <b>Stabilise</b> |
| Access to public transport                       | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021 | <b>2.5</b>                      | <b>Increase</b>  |
| Mains breaks per 100kms – Water and sewer        | NSW Water 2022-23                  | <b>9.59 per 100 kms of main</b> | <b>Decrease</b>  |
| Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Total water and sewer | NSW Water 2022-23                  | <b>4851 CO2eq</b>               | <b>Decrease</b>  |
| Recycling Rate                                   | OLG Your Council Report 2022-23    | <b>34.1</b>                     | <b>Increase</b>  |
| Access to Telecommunication Index                | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021 | <b>3.6</b>                      | <b>Increase</b>  |

## Our Civic leadership

| Measure                                      | Source                             | Baseline    | Desired Trend    |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Operating Performance Ratio                  | OLG Your Council Report 2022-23    | <b>-0.5</b> | <b>Increase</b>  |
| Infrastructure backlog ratio                 | OLG Your Council Report 2022-23    | <b>0.5</b>  | <b>Stabilise</b> |
| Community Leadership and Collaboration Index | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021 | <b>5.0</b>  | <b>Stabilise</b> |
| Elected Female Councillors                   | OLG Your Council Report 2022-23    | <b>22</b>   | <b>Increase</b>  |
| Having your Say and Being Heard Index        | UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021 | <b>4.6</b>  | <b>Stabilise</b> |



# Acknowledgements

The Snowy Valleys Community Strategic Plan 2042 has been developed in partnership with the Snowy Valleys community, Snowy Valleys Council, the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, and Projectura.

Snowy Valleys Council wishes to thank the community members who gave their time and thoughts during the engagement process to inform the strategy.





