

NARRANDERA SHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2017-2020



On behalf of Council, it is pleasing to present the Narrandera Shire Council Economic Development Strategy 2017-2020.

Council's vision for the Narrandera Shire is to build the Shire into a prosperous, diverse and sustainable community with a growing economy which is strong and resilient. The key objective in achieving this is the creation of a positive and supportive environment that will facilitate economic development.

The Economic Development Strategy will guide the direction of Council and the focus of Council's work over the next three years by creating jobs, facilitating business growth and diversifying and growing the economy to improve the wealth and wellbeing of the community. This Strategy is a blueprint for how Council will work with small business, industry, the community and all levels of government to drive diversified and sustainable economic development.

The Strategy will focus on 4 key strategic areas:

1. Our Shire is "open for business"
2. Enhancing our liveability
3. Economic growth and diversification
4. Planning for the economy of the future

This Strategy recognises the commitment of Council to position the Narrandera Shire as a place where people wish to live, work and invest with appropriate infrastructure to support and encourage investment. The Strategy also aspires to work more strongly with the community and be a leader in the Region in business sustainability and growth.

Thank you to all those who contributed to the development of this Strategy. Extensive consultation held across the Shire, with business, industry, government organisations, bordering Shires and industry representatives has been invaluable in the development of this Strategy.

Council look forward to engaging and partnering with the community, business and industry in the implementation of this Strategy to develop a vibrant economy in the Shire.

Mayor Kschenka
Narrandera Shire Council



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Narrandera Shire Council wishes to thank all residents, businesses and organisations that attended our consultative forums, met with our staff and consultants and provided information for our Shire's Economic Development Strategy.

The **Narrandera Shire Economic Development Strategy** was funded by the **Murray Darling Basin Authority Regional Diversification Program – Energise Enterprise Fund**.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT	4
3. MACRO TRENDS	6
4. NARRANDERA SHIRE	8
5. OUR PLAN FOR GROWING & DIVERSIFYING OUR ECONOMY	15
Initiative 1 Our Shire is 'Open for Business'	16
Initiative 2 Enhancing our Liveability	17
Initiative 3 Economic Growth and Diversity	18
Initiative 4 Planning for the Economy of the Future	20
6. MONITORING OUR PROGRESS	24
7. NARRANDERA SHIRE - CONTACTS	25
8. REFERENCES	26

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NARRANDERA SHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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Disclaimer:

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Didgeridoos produced by Wiradjuri Elder, Michael Lyons, Sandhills Artefacts.
Source: www.sandhillsartefacts.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

In 2016, Council received funding under the Murray-Darling Basin Regional Diversification Program – Energise Enterprise Fund to prepare an Economic Development Strategy for Narrandera Shire. The implementation of the Murray – Darling Basin Plan has significantly reduced access to water within the Murray-Darling Basin, resulting in the need for communities within the Basin to restructure, diversify and strengthen their local economy to adjust to a water constrained environment.

Objective & Goals

‘A growing economy that is strong and resilient’, is a key strategic direction of the Narrandera Shire Community Strategic Plan. Building Narrandera into a prosperous, diverse and sustainable community is one of Narrandera Shire’s key strategies¹. In facilitating economic growth Council is seeking to:

- Position Narrandera Shire as a place where people wish to live, work, visit and invest
- Support, retain, strengthen and grow local businesses
- Attract new investment that is sustainable and compatible with community aspirations and the Shire’s environment
- Support the creation of employment opportunities and a skilled workforce
- Grow the population of the Shire
- Upgrade existing infrastructure and secure enabling infrastructure
- Ensure responsible stewardship of resources

KEY STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

A strong and resilient community and sustainable environment

A growing economy

Quality, sustainable infrastructure

Efficient and Responsive Services

Trusted and Effective Government



*Sheep sale,
Narrandera Sale Yards*

¹ Narrandera Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2012-2031.

Purpose of the Economic Development Strategy

The Economic Development Strategy provides the direction and framework to encourage, support and facilitate economic development within Narrandera Shire. The Strategy is designed to assist Council, Government Agencies and the Shire community create a positive and supportive environment that will enable local businesses to grow and prosper, attract new residents and investment into the Shire and create employment and wealth.

The achievement of this Strategy will require investment by Narrandera Shire Council, State and Federal funding, and investment by industry and the community.

Stakeholders

Economic development in Narrandera Shire will require collaboration with and support and investment from a diverse range of stakeholders including:

- Federal and State Government
- Infrastructure and service providers
- Regional Agencies and Authorities
- Narrandera Shire Council, working both individually and in cooperation with other Councils
- Private sector – including local businesses
- Shire community

In preparing this Strategy, input was sought from a diversity of stakeholders drawn from the local and regional communities. The main priorities identified by our stakeholders were:

- Growing and diversifying the Shire’s economy to drive population growth, create employment and retain services within the Shire.
- Addressing skill shortages within the Shire. Positions, particularly in the health care, transport and manufacturing sectors, are difficult to fill. There is a need to create a skilled workforce by providing access to training locally, providing career opportunities and encouraging skilled workers to relocate to Narrandera Shire.
- Capitalising on opportunities to leverage off Narrandera’s highly accessible location, river corridor and other assets to grow key industries including agriculture, agri-business, tourism, transport and logistics and the service sector.
- ‘Putting Narrandera on the map’ – improving the image and awareness of Narrandera and Narrandera Shire by improving presentation, increased advocacy and effective marketing and promotion.
- For Council to be proactive, ‘open for business’ and have a ‘can-do’ attitude.



Leadership

Narrandera Shire Council will endeavour to create a positive investment environment by:

- Ensuring that its plans, policies and procedures reflect its economic development objectives
- Providing dedicated staff resources to work with and support local businesses and industry groups
- Providing demographic, social and economic data and information
- Advocating for the interests of Narrandera Shire and the Shire's industry sectors and businesses – at regional, State and National level
- Facilitating industry, business and workforce training and capacity building initiatives
- Providing links to business information and advisory services
- Strengthening local communities and enhancing the presentation and liveability of the Shire
- Advocating and supporting 'buy local'
- Marketing and promoting the Shire
- Maintaining existing infrastructure and advocating for funding for additional enabling infrastructure

**Council will
create a
positive
investment
environment**



Grants Sawmilling Co



Barellan Beer

Source: www.sydneyscoop.com

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

NSW Planning Context

The Narrandera Shire Economic Development strategy has been prepared within the framework set by the NSW Government through its **NSW Making it Happen Plan**, key sector development strategies, Riverina Region plans and strategies, and the **Murray Darling Basin Plan**. The **NSW Making it Happen Plan** articulates 30 priorities for NSW, 12 of which have been identified as the ‘Premier’s Priorities’. Priorities that will help to drive economic development are:

Premier’s Priorities

- Creating jobs – 150,000 new jobs by 2019
- Building infrastructure
- Improving education results
- Faster housing approvals

State Priorities

- Making it easier to start a business
- Encouraging business investment
- Boosting apprenticeships
- Accelerating major project assessment
- Improving Aboriginal education outcomes
- Increasing cultural participation (event strategy)
- Increasing housing supply
- Reducing road fatalities (improving roads)

Riverina Region

Plans influencing the direction for economic development and investment in the Riverina Region include the Riverina Regional Action Plan², Draft Riverina Murray Regional Plan³, RDA Riverina Regional Plan 2013-2016⁴ and the Riverina Destination Management Plan⁵.

The key strategic directions of these Plans:

- **Collaborative approach** between all tiers of government, business and community.
- **Supporting economic growth** through strengthening communities and existing economic activities, diversification and innovation, and attracting new investment.
- **Improving regional infrastructure** by investing in ‘strategic’ and ‘enabling’ infrastructure to facilitate and support growth, including transport infrastructure to improve freight productivity, ensuring water security and enhancing telecommunications.

² Department of Premier and Cabinet (2012) [Riverina Regional Action Plan](#)

³ Planning NSW (2016) [Draft Riverina Murray Regional Plan](#)

⁴ Regional Development Australia Riverina (2013) [RDA Riverina Regional Plan 2013-2016](#)

⁵ Riverina Tourism (2013) [Riverina Destination Management Plan](#)

- **Workforce development** focusing on meeting industry needs, developing business and industry skills, enhanced educational outcomes, transition from school to work, attracting and retaining employees, community capacity building and social inclusion.
- **Enhancing lifestyle** and developing liveable regional cities, towns and villages, through community development and participation, access to quality education and health services and fostering the arts, recreation and events.
- **Ensuring a sustainable environment** through environmental protection, sustainable use of natural resources, water management, and development and implementation of environmentally sustainable infrastructure and practices (renewable energy, water efficiency, recycling etc).

Nominated priority growth sectors within the Riverina Region are:

- **Technology** – capitalising on new technologies and the installation and servicing of these technologies.
- **Agriculture and agri business** – technology advances in water efficiencies, product diversification and value adding, with emerging activities including:
 - Poultry industry
 - Intensive livestock production – feedlots, piggeries
 - Intensive horticulture – including greenhouse and hydroponic activities
 - Aquaculture – specialising in Murray Cod
 - Nut production and processing – hazelnuts, walnuts, almonds
- **Renewables** - waste management, recycling, clean energy and low carbon initiatives.
- **Transport and logistics** – expanding road, rail and airport infrastructure to increase the capacity and efficiency of the freight system and enhancing connectivity within the region and externally, both nationally and globally.
- **Defence industries** – positioning the Riverina – Murray Region as a defence education and service hub.
- **Tourism** – including nature-based, culinary and agri-tourism.
- **Health, education and research** – ensuring access to adequate services region-wide.



Canoeing on the Murrumbidgee River at Narrandera
Source: www.traveller.com

3. MACRO TRENDS

Narrandera Shire is operating in a national and global environment and there are a range of key macro-trends that have the potential to influence economic growth within the Shire.

Key Trends	Implications and Opportunities for Narrandera Shire
<p>Changes in global markets – globally, economic growth is being driven by the rise of the Asian and Indian markets. Increasing urbanisation, significant growth in household incomes and the use of agricultural land and produce for non-agricultural activities (eg bio-fuel), is creating strong demand for goods and services, particularly for food products.</p> <p>Food Security – with the world’s population growing by 1.1% per annum, and forecast to reach 8.4 billion by 2035, food security is becoming a major issue, with this driving research and investment in the agricultural sector and the expansion of agriculture in second and third world countries including Brazil, Chile and South Africa.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing demand for agricultural staples – meat, fish, cereals, legumes and rice. • Potential for new niche crops and value-adding. • Increased awareness of and willingness to pay for ‘clean, green’ produce. • Much of the growth is occurring in the northern hemisphere, creating opportunities for counter seasonal production in the southern hemisphere. • The opening up of new export markets. • Growing competition from emerging agricultural producers (eg Brazil), with low cost structures – with Australian farmers needing to be more strategic, efficient and productive. • Changes in farming practices, including a shift to more intensive production methods (eg feedlots, glasshouses, aquaculture), improved land and water management, and introduction of higher yielding plant and livestock varieties. • Different freight requirements – increasing use of containers. • New sources of capital investment
<p>Climate Change – increasing variability in climate and weather patterns is creating uncertainty regarding long term temperature and rainfall patterns as well as an increase in extreme weather events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk for agricultural producers and agricultural dependent industries and services. • Narrandera Shire needs to diversify its economy to reduce its dependence on agriculture.
<p>Eco Efficiency and Sustainability – the transition to a more sustainable and resource efficient economy moving towards a ‘closed-loop’ structure whereby all outputs become either inputs for other activities or are returned to natural systems as benign emissions rather than pollutants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for new industries and businesses in energy and water efficient technologies; waste management, reduction and reuse; and alternative energy. • Shift to investment in renewable energy and demand for land and/or materials for alternative energy production (eg solar and wind farms, bio-fuel production etc). • Increased demand for ‘green skills’ within the workforce. • Changing purchasing criteria and behaviour, with businesses increasingly needing to meet / comply with environmental / sustainability targets and accreditation criteria. • Heightened community awareness and interest in ‘clean – green’ and locally produced products, creating opportunities for value-adding, niche marketing and premium pricing.

Key Trends

Digital Economy – the internet and mobile technologies are transforming production techniques, business models and operations, communication modes and consumer behaviour.

Changing population dynamics in Australia including:

- Aging population and workforce.
- Generational change with 'baby boomers' moving into retirement and Gen X and Y becoming dominant in the work place. Gen X and Y have different aspirations and attitudes to work than the baby boomers.
- Increasing focus on work-life balance and quality of life.
- Diversified and growing cultural mix.
- Consumers are becoming more aware, sophisticated and demanding.

Implications and Opportunities for Narrandera Shire

- Enhanced opportunities for local businesses to improve their decision making and productivity and access new markets.
- Opportunities for some businesses and workers to relocate away from the cities and continue to operate nationally / internationally.
- Potential for greater access to health, education, financial and other services through on-line delivery.
- Opportunities for Narrandera Shire and businesses to significantly increase their exposure and also to engage and communicate directly with potential customers.
- Increased competition for local businesses from external businesses (eg internet shopping).
- Increased applications (eg remote monitoring, robotics) in agriculture and manufacturing – resulting in a reduction in demand for unskilled workers and increased demand for workers with IT / digital skills.
- Aging population – increased demand for health, aged care and allied facilities and services.
- The need to re-skill older workers, particularly in the use of IT and technology.
- The need to be cognisant of the implications of generational change and social trends in developing investment and marketing strategies and marketing and promoting the Shire.
- Lifestyle and work-life balance is playing an increasingly significant role in decision-making and needs to be incorporated in the development, positioning and marketing of Narrandera Shire.
- Narrandera Shire needs to be a socially inclusive community that welcomes and embraces people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.



Narrandera Shire is a significant grain producer



4. NARRANDERA SHIRE

Narrandera Shire is centrally located in the Riverina Region of NSW, 554kms south west of Sydney, 339km west of Canberra, 437kms north of Melbourne and 824kms east of Adelaide. The Shire covers an area of 4,116 square kilometres. It sits mid-way between the main regional centres of Wagga Wagga (99km to the east) and Griffith (98km to the west), and marks the transition between the extensive broadacre agricultural areas of the western slopes and plains to the east and the highly productive Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) to the west. The Shire lies within the catchment area of the Murrumbidgee River and is the start of the MIA.

The Shire has an estimated population of 5959⁶. Population appears to be increasing slowly, growing 0.4% between 2001 and 2011 and 0.97% between 2011 and 2016.

The township of Narrandera (population 3,871⁷) is the commercial and administrative centre of the Shire. The town is a district centre servicing Narrandera Shire and the northern part of Federation Shire to the south. Located at the junction of the Sturt and Newell Highways and on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River, Narrandera is also a significant Highway service centre as well as a popular location for travellers to stop. Narrandera is an attractive town, known for its tree-lined streets, heritage buildings, river corridor, koala habitat, Lake Talbot and the Lake Talbot Aquatic Park.

Narrandera Shire has two villages, Barellan (population 328) and Grong Grong (population 391) and 16 rural localities – Ardlethan (part), Binya, Brobenah, Colinroobie, Corbie Hill, Kamarah, Landervale, Moomboolbool and Murrami to the north of Narrandera and Boree Creek, Corobimilla, Euroley, Galore, Gillenbah, Morundah (part) and Sandigo to the south.



⁶ Regional Development Australia - RDA Riverina Local Government Areas 2016

⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics – Population Census 2011 – Narrandera

Top Right: Narrandera Arts Centre (source www.irrigator.com.au), **Bottom from Left to Right: Grong Grong Earth Garden** (Earthgarden facebook), **Barellan Heavy Horses Festival** (visitnsw.com), **Texas Rose performing at the John O'Brien Festival** (outbacknow.com.au), **On Common Ground CAD Factory Production** (realtimearts.com)

Access

Narrandera Shire is highly accessible. The town of Narrandera sits on the cross-roads of the Newell and Sturt Highways, with the Newell Highway being one of the main interstate routes, linking Melbourne, through Central NSW to Queensland, while the Sturt Highway is a major east – west route, linking the Hume Highway in NSW, through the Riverina and Murray Regions west into South Australia. Other major roads in the Shire are Burley Griffin Way linking Canberra to Griffith though Barellan in the northern part of Narrandera Shire, Irrigation Way linking Narrandera to Leeton and onto Griffith, and Canola Way extending from the Newell Highway at Grong Grong east to Junee to link with Goldfields Way, the Olympic Highway, and Gundagai Road through to the Hume Highway.

Narrandera has a weekly train service to Sydney plus daily TrainLink coach services to Wagga Wagga and Griffith. Daily rail services to Sydney and Melbourne are available from Wagga Wagga. For rail freight, the Shire is connected to the Main Southern Railway line (Sydney to Melbourne) via the Temora – Roto branch line which traverses the northern part of the Shire through Barellan and Moomboolool, and the Hay Branch line, from Junee through Grong Grong and Narrandera onto Griffith. The Narrandera – Tocumwal branch line (which closed in 1988, connected with the still operating Victorian Goulburn Valley Railway line at Tocumwal and provided access to Melbourne) still remains as a corridor.

Narrandera has a commercial airport with Regional Express (REX) Airlines operating daily services between Narrandera – Griffith and Sydney. Flights to Melbourne are available from Wagga Wagga.



Located on the intersection of the Newell and Sturt Highways, the Service Centre at Gillenbah is a very popular rest stop for trucks.

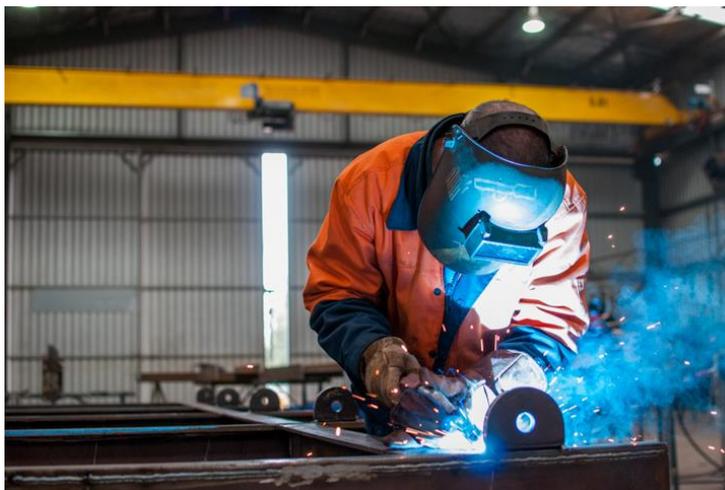
Economic Base

Narrandera Shire has a diverse economic base. In 2014/15 the Shire had 540 businesses and 2,709 local jobs and a gross regional product (GRP) of \$235 million. The Shire accounted for 2.9% of the Riverina Region GRP and 0.05% of the NSW GRP. From 2011/12 to 2014/15, Narrandera Shire had one of the highest increases in GRP (18.7%) within the Riverina Region, well above the regional increase of 13.4%.⁸

Agriculture is the main economic activity and employer with 19% of the Shire's workforce employed in this sector⁹. Around 88.9% of the Shire's area is in agricultural production, with the value of agricultural production in 2011 being \$168.4 million¹⁰. Agriculture is dominated by dryland, broadacre farming with the main activities being cropping (grains, legumes and oilseeds) and cattle and sheep (for wool and meat) production. Only 2.5% of the agricultural land in the Shire is irrigated with the main irrigated activities being grapes, fruit, nuts, vegetables, cotton and rice production.

Other activities include piggeries (2 large producers) and aquaculture (2 commercial producers and DPI Research Station and hatchery). Recent changes in agriculture include the investment by ProTen in a large poultry farm (\$63 million investment – 4 million chickens) and by Agri Australia in a large hazelnut plantation (\$70 million project). There are proposals to expand the PIC Piggery and the two commercial aquaculture farms and establish a hazelnut drying and cracking plant.

Other significant economic sectors within the Shire are health and aged care, manufacturing, retail and tourism.



540
businesses

2,709 jobs

GRP
\$235m

Value of
Agricultural
\$168.4m

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Narrandera Shire Council
Grants Sawmilling
Narrandera Fisheries Centre
Manildra Flour Mill
Hutchins Bros Engineering
Bio Ag
Agri Australis - Hazelnut Farm
PIC (Piggery)
Proten – Poultry Farm
Teloca House – RSL Lifecare
Opal – Aged Care
Murrumbidgee Local Health
District – Narrandera Health
Services
Department of Education

Left: Hutchin Bros Engineering (source: www.hutchinbros.com.au)
Right: Manildra Flour (source: www.manildra.com.au)

⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics – Census of Population and Dwellings – 2011. Basic Community Profile – Narrandera Shire.

¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics – Agricultural Census 2011.

Strengths & Strategic Assets

The strengths and strategic assets that Narrandera Shire has to work with to encourage and facilitate economic development include:

Asset	Benefits and Opportunities
Murrumbidgee River	The Murrumbidgee River is a significant natural resource that enhances the attractiveness and lifestyle of the Shire and supports a range of agricultural, tourism and recreational activities.
Central location within the Riverina Region and southern NSW.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centrally located within the Riverina Region, on the intersection of two major interstate highways (Newell and Sturt) and traversed by three significant east-west regional roads – Irrigation Way, Canola Way and Burley Griffin Way. In terms of travel time (5-6 hours by road from Sydney and Melbourne and 8-9 hours from Adelaide), Narrandera is strategically located for both truck drivers and long-haul travellers to break their journey. Allied to this, the Newell Highway at Narrandera marks the eastern boundary of road train and high mass vehicle access, with trucking companies using Narrandera Shire as a base for changing drivers and coupling and uncoupling loads. Within an hour's drive of two regional cities, Wagga Wagga and Griffith, with Narrandera able to offer a rural lifestyle with access to city services as well as a central location for regional meetings and activities. Proximity to Leeton – providing opportunities for the two Shires to work together.
Highly fertile, productive agricultural land and a favourable growing climate.	Narrandera Shire is part of one of the most productive agricultural regions in Australia. Producers in the Shire have ready access to an extensive range of agri-businesses and services, value-adding activities and freight services. Larger rural holdings provide the opportunity for large scale intensive livestock, aquaculture and horticultural activities as well as the development of processing and value-added facilities.
Good rail infrastructure with access to multiple ports.	Narrandera Shire has two branch line connections to the Main South Line and rail access to ports in Sydney, Port Kembla and Melbourne as well as access to the proposed Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail line. There is also a rail corridor between Narrandera and Tocumwal with the potential, in the future, to link to the Victorian rail freight network and provide direct access from Narrandera and the Western Riverina to the Port of Melbourne.
Air Access – regular passenger services.	Daily air services operate from Narrandera Airport to Sydney with flights to Melbourne available from Wagga Wagga Airport.
Utility infrastructure in place and secure.	Narrandera Shire has secure water, power and natural gas. Access to the National Broadband Network is being implemented with fixed wireless and satellite access in place and fibre to the node programed to be available in July 2017.
A diverse range of businesses and service providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good range of businesses and services to support residents and visitors. A number of large, sustainable businesses including the Manilda Flour Mill, Grants Sawmilling, Bio Ag and Hutchins Bros Engineering, as well as significant investment by international and national firms in agriculture and aquaculture activities.
A skilled workforce.	56.5% of Shire residents have post school (tertiary) qualifications. Narrandera Shire has a very high proportion of people with vocational certificates (59.7% of people with tertiary qualifications, compared to NSW - 30.9%).
The township of Narrandera – offering a quality, affordable lifestyle.	Narrandera is a very attractive town, set on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River with wide, tree-lined streets, heritage buildings, quality sporting and recreation facilities, a vibrant and growing arts sector, a high level of service provision and a safe, supportive and friendly community.
Affordable land and premises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of a range of competitively priced residential, rural-residential (lifestyle), commercial and industrial land and premises in Narrandera. Red Hill Industrial Estate – suitable for heavy industry with road train and HMV access. Large tracts of both serviced and unserved land are available.

Issues & Challenges

Addressing challenges and removing barriers is fundamental to attracting investment and delivering sustained growth.

Issue	Challenges for Narrandera Shire
<p>Competition from the larger centres of Wagga Wagga, Griffith and Leeton. Government investment and services are being increasingly focussed on Wagga Wagga and Griffith, with services being progressively down-graded or withdrawn from smaller towns such as Narrandera.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retaining services within the Shire and facilitating access to services available in the nearby regional cities. • Raising the Shire’s profile and differentiating it from other centres within the Region. • Ensuring that Government Agencies and decision-makers are aware of both the attributes and needs of Narrandera Shire and that these are taken into consideration in the development of regional strategies and programs. • Securing opportunities to accommodate Government agencies and/or services and to participate in economic and community development programs and activities.
<p>Limited awareness of Narrandera and Narrandera Shire. Within the Riverina Region Narrandera is ‘overshadowed’ by the larger centres which tend to be the first ‘port of call’ for people and businesses looking to invest in and/or relocate to, the Region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising the Shire’s profile and differentiating it from other centres within the Region. • Ensuring that the Shire is ‘open for business’ and that this is effectively communicated, marketed and promoted. • Ensuring that comprehensive, up-to-date information and data is available and readily accessible for potential investors and residents.
<p>Negative perceptions of Narrandera Shire (primarily from within the Region) including a declining population, static economy, social issues and an unsupportive planning environment. These perceptions may not reflect reality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the presentation of Narrandera - Gillenbah and the villages to create positive impressions. • Providing accurate information – facts to counteract incorrect perceptions. • Developing and implementing effective communications, public relations and marketing strategies. • Encouraging Councillors, the media and other ambassadors for the Shire to focus on the positives.
<p>Dependence on agriculture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To further diversify the Shire’s economic base to reduce the reliance on agriculture.
<p>Remaining competitive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further developing the capacity and flexibility of local producers, businesses and the workforce to respond to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The changing global marketplace and business environment. ○ Technology – including the digital environment. ○ Climate change. • Facilitating access to research and development to keep businesses abreast of trends and changes, and to drive innovation and best practice.
<p>Growing labour / skills shortages – within the Shire and the Riverina Region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding current and likely future labour and skills requirements and incorporating this into education and training programs. • Ensuring access to quality tertiary education and skills-based training to provide ‘work-ready’ employees and enhance and diversify workplace skills. • Providing strong pathways between education and employment to encourage young people to remain in, or return to, Narrandera Shire. • Attracting workers, particularly skilled workers, to the Shire / Region.
<p>Very limited availability of land and premises in Borellan and Grong Grong for residential and business growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging property owners to bring land and/or premises onto the market.
<p>Funding and resource constraints within Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing the funds needed to maintain and augment infrastructure (eg roads) to facilitate and support economic development. • Providing the range and level of services needed to compete effectively with more affluent LGAs to attract and retain residents and businesses. • Providing the funds and resources to effectively market and promote the Shire to attract investment, workers, new residents and visitors.

Opportunities

The sectors that provide the strongest opportunity for growth and diversification in Narrandera Shire are:

- Agriculture and agri-business
- Tourism
- Transport and logistics
- Health and aged care
- Manufacturing – processing and fabrication
- Trades and service industries



Top Left: Sandhills Artefacts – Teaching the Next Generation. (source: www.sandhillsartefacts.com)

Top Right: Bio Ag Production Plant – Red Hill Estate (source: www.bioag.com.au)

Bottom Left: Lake Talbot Tourist Park

BUSINESSES IN NARRANDERA SHIRE ARE EXPANDING & INVESTING

- **Agri Australia** - \$70m investment in establishing a hazelnut plantation (1 million trees) with plans to establish a hazelnut drying and cracking plant by 2022
- **ProTen** – \$63m investment in a large poultry farm – 4 million bird capacity
- **GrainCorp** - \$2.2m investment in the Barellan Grain Receival site to expand capacity and increase throughput
- **Manildra Mill** - \$6m investment to install a packing plant, increase the capacity of the warehouse and grain storage facilities, and install a new weighbridge
- **Hutchins Bros Engineering** – significant expansion of their fabrication and coating plants
- **PIC Piggery** –expanding capacity by 16%
- **Paterson’s Transport** – increasing their truck fleet to 20 vehicles
- **Uarah Fisheries** – expanding facilities for the production of Murray Cod fingerlings for export and table fish for the domestic market
- **Silverwater Native Fish** – expanding production of Murray Cod fingerlings to supply Riverina growers



Top: Hutchin Bros Engineering (source: www.hutchinbros.com.au)

Bottom: Agri Australis Hazelnut Plantation to supply Ferrero Rocher (source: weeklytimes.com)

5. OUR PLAN FOR GROWING AND DIVERSIFYING OUR ECONOMY

Narrandera Shire Council envisages an economic future where our:

- Shire's population is increasing
- Economy is diversified, sustainable and resilient
- Businesses are innovative, entrepreneurial and profitable
- Workforce is skilled, capable and productive
- Shire is locally, regionally, nationally and globally connected

This will be achieved through four strategic initiatives:

1. Our Shire is 'open for business'
2. Enhancing our liveability
3. Economic growth and diversification
4. Planning for the economy of the future

Strategies and key actions for each initiative are summarised in the following Tables. While many of the actions will be on-going, a number will involve additional resources in Year 1 to build the foundation for on-going actions.

Each of our initiatives will deliver on the 'NSW Making it Happen' priorities of creating jobs, encouraging business investment, making it easier to start a business and boosting apprenticeships.



From Left to Right: King Bee Honey (www.weeklytimes.com), Riverina Agricultural Tours (www.insideriverina.com), Glendale Orchard Tours (www.narrandera.com.au)

Initiative 1: Our Shire is ‘Open for Business’

A ‘can do’ attitude is fundamental to stimulating economic growth. To attract new business and investment and to ensure that our existing businesses continue to grow and prosper, Council will provide a positive, supportive and responsive investment environment.

Strategies		Key Actions		Timing - Year		
				1	2	3
1.1	Be a proactive, supportive and coordinated Council.	1.1.1	Continue to employ an Economic Development Manager and provide funds and resources for economic development.	✓	✓	✓
		1.1.2	Establish an Economic Development Taskforce to drive economic development and implement this Strategy with Council, key industry and key community membership	✓		
		1.1.3	Review Council’s policies, plans and regulations to ensure that they facilitate and support development.	✓		
		1.1.4	Ensure that Council’s systems and procedures for handling and processing development and investment enquiries are welcoming, stream-lined and customer service focussed.	✓		
		1.1.5	Purchase access to online, interactive statistical data and modelling tools (eg id profile, REMPLAN) to provide comprehensive demographic, social and economic data for the Shire.	✓		
		1.1.6	Produce information and data that will assist businesses, investors and potential residents in their decision-making, and enable Council to monitor performance.	✓		
		1.1.7	Include comprehensive information on economic development and business assistance on Council’s website.	✓	✓	✓
1.2	Continue to build partnerships and strategic alliances.	1.2.1	Strengthen relationships with Government Agencies, regional organisations and service providers through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation in regional programs, forums and workshops. • Briefing and updating these organisations on the Shire’s needs and priorities. • Advocating strongly for improved facilities, infrastructure and services. • Ensuring that the Shire’s priorities and projects are recognised in regional plans and strategies. 	✓	✓	✓
		1.2.2	Build and strengthen strategic alliances with Councils within the Riverina Region and along strategic road and rail corridors.	✓	✓	✓
1.3	Engage pro-actively with local businesses and business / industry organisations.	1.3.1	Build knowledge and understanding of local economic sectors and businesses, including organising a program of industry briefings and tours for Councillors and Council staff.	✓	✓	✓
		1.3.2	Encourage and facilitate opportunities for professional development, networking and innovation.	✓	✓	✓
		1.3.3	Establish effective networks and communication channels.	✓		
		1.3.4	Support business groups and networks.	✓	✓	✓
		1.3.5	Harness skills and experience available in the Shire and surrounding region (eg through forming task forces and working groups) to address specific challenges and realise opportunities.	✓	✓	✓

Strategies		Key Actions		Timing - Year		
				1	2	3
1.4	Build a strong, positive profile for Narrandera Shire.	1.4.1	Implement the branding strategy and signage strategy.	✓	✓	✓
		1.4.2	Develop and implement a communications strategy, including articulating key messages.	✓	✓	✓
		1.4.3	Build the Shire's digital presence, including launching a new Council website, embracing social media and capitalising on opportunities provided by third party data bases, websites and apps.	✓	✓	✓
		1.4.4	Effectively market and promote the Shire, to raise its profile and increase awareness of its strengths, assets and opportunities.	✓	✓	✓
		1.4.5	Encourage the community to be advocates for the Shire, including speaking about the positives.	✓	✓	✓
		1.4.6	Re-develop the Narrandera Visitor Information Centre as focal point for both tourism and economic development.	Funding dependent		

✓ Additional resources required in Year 1 to build the framework to support implementation in Years 2 and 3.

Initiative 2: Enhancing our Liveability

Lifestyle and work-life balances play a major role in relocation and investment decisions. Working with our community, Narrandera Shire Council will continue to develop, position and promote Narrandera Shire as:

- A welcoming, caring and safe community.
- Having quality, comprehensive facilities and services.
- Offering a contemporary, vibrant, affordable lifestyle in a physically attractive setting.
- Providing a positive business environment with strong locational advantages and diverse investment opportunities.

Strategies		Key Actions		Timing - Year		
				1	2	3
2.1	Continue to improve presentation – creating positive first impressions.	2.1.1	Implement the Narrandera CBD Masterplan – subject to funding and staging -further developing the town centre as an attractive place to shop and socialise, including provision of free public WIFI in main street.	Funding dependent		
		2.1.2	Develop attractive gateway arrival points and entry corridor to the Shire, Narrandera and villages.			
		2.1.3	Improve the presentation of the Shire's industrial areas.			
2.2	Enhance lifestyle.	2.2.1	Continue to improve and expand recreation, sporting and leisure facilities within the Shire.	✓	✓	✓
		2.2.2	Develop and diversify arts and cultural activities.	✓	✓	✓

Strategies		Key Actions		Timing - Year		
				1	2	3
2.3	Advocate for the retention and expansion of facilities and services.	2.2.3	Continue to develop and promote a dynamic and vibrant program of events and activities.	✓	✓	✓
		2.3.1	Advocate for improved child care, health care, aged care and social assistance facilities and services within the Shire.	✓	✓	✓
		2.3.2	Ensure that facilities and services have the capacity to support 'aging in place'.	✓	✓	✓
		2.3.3	Explore options / advocate for improved education outcomes within the Shire, including the re-opening of the Grong Grong Public School (if warranted), and the redevelopment of the TAFE campus as a ONE TAFE Flexible Learning Centre.	✓	✓	✓
2.4	Encourage and support opportunities for community development.	2.4.1	Explore opportunities for providing information, activities and programs that will help new residents and people on temporary work visas assimilate into the community.	✓	✓	✓
		2.4.2	Continue to support activities (eg events, sport, creative arts etc) that encourage engagement and social inclusion and build pride in, and commitment to, the local community.	✓	✓	✓
		2.4.3	Support community initiatives to develop, grow and enhance the liveability of the Shire	✓	✓	✓
2.5	Attract new residents.	2.5.1	Develop and implement a Resident Attraction and Retention Strategy.		✓	✓

Initiative 3: Economic Growth and Diversification

Economic growth will come through growing and strengthening existing economic activities and businesses, and attracting new businesses and investment.

Strategies		Key Actions		Timing - Year		
				1	2	3
3.1	Encourage and nurture business start-ups.	3.1.1	Provide access to information and business advisory services.	✓	✓	✓
		3.1.2	Assess feasibility of hosting business start-up events to link people with business ideas to business advisory and support services (eg Many Rivers, BEC etc).	✓	✓	✓
3.2	Support and nurture existing businesses.	3.2.1	Provide access to information, advice and leverage opportunities for information sharing.	✓	✓	✓
		3.2.2	Encourage and support 'buy local' initiatives.	✓	✓	✓
		3.2.3	Raise awareness of business advisory and support services and encourage businesses to participate in business and skills development programs.	✓	✓	✓
		3.2.4	Facilitate opportunities for professional development, networking and innovation.	✓	✓	✓
		3.2.5	Identify training programs and resources available on-line from Government Agencies and training providers	✓	✓	✓

Strategies		Key Actions		Timing - Year		
				1	2	3
			and provide links to these from the Economic Development page of Council's website.			
		3.2.6	Raise the profile of local businesses by providing opportunities to showcase, market and promote businesses products and services.	✓	✓	✓
		3.2.7	Encourage businesses to list on relevant industry data bases and websites and participate in programs such as trade missions.	✓	✓	✓
		3.2.8	Encourage and assist local businesses to register on Federal, State and Council procurement data bases.	✓	✓	✓
		3.2.9	Work with major project proponents to identify the goods and services required and provide introductions to local businesses.		✓	✓
		3.2.10	Encourage and assist businesses to prepare for the NBN and embrace digital / on-line business and marketing opportunities.	✓	✓	✓
		3.2.11	Facilitate access by business and community groups to funding programs.	✓	✓	✓
3.3	Strengthen and grow key sectors.	3.3.1	<u>Agriculture and Agri Business</u>			
			• Develop a producer data base and establish networks and communication channels.	✓		
			• Continue to advocate for water security.	✓	✓	✓
			• Encourage and support adoption of new activities and technologies, sustainable land management practices, and innovative business models.		✓	✓
			• Advocate for and assist producers to develop strategies to address labour and skills shortages and develop the local workforce.	✓	✓	✓
			• Explore opportunities for and encourage development of new processing and value-adding opportunities and utilisation of waste products.		✓	✓
		3.3.2	<u>Aquaculture</u>			
			• Support the expansion of the aquaculture industry within the Shire.	✓	✓	✓
			• Build skills and knowledge about the industry within Council and the local community.	✓	✓	✓
			• Explore the possibility of positioning the Narrandera Fisheries Research Centre as a Centre of Excellence for the Murray Cod industry.	✓		
		3.3.3	<u>Retail & Wholesale</u>			
			• Position and promote Narrandera as a lifestyle centre.	✓	✓	✓
			• Encourage and facilitate training (customer service, merchandise display, e.commerce etc)	✓	✓	✓
			• Encourage development of and participation in cooperative marketing and promotional campaigns.		✓	✓
		3.3.4	<u>Tourism / Visitor Economy</u>			

Strategies		Key Actions	Timing - Year		
			1	2	3
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop products, experiences and activities, including events. 	✓	✓	✓
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to improve infrastructure, facilities and services for visitors 	✓	✓	✓
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and improve information and promotional collateral. 	✓		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively market and promote the Shire, including implementing the branding strategy and expanding the Shire's on-line presence and capitalising on digital and social media opportunities. 	✓	✓	✓
		3.3.5 Transport and Logistics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage off Narrandera's strategic location to position and develop the Shire as a road transport hub. 		✓	✓
		3.3.6 Health Care & Social Assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for continued improvements in health, aged care and social assistance services, programs and facilities. 	✓	✓	✓
3.4	Target and attract new businesses and activities.	3.4.1 Investigate possible investment attraction incentives and formulate an Economic Development Assistance Policy that articulates the support that Council can offer new businesses and investors.	✓		
		3.4.2 Produce information and promotional collateral – in both digital and print formats.	✓	✓	✓
		3.4.3 Participate in forums, expos, trade missions etc that have the potential to bring new businesses / investment into the Shire.	✓	✓	✓
		3.4.4 Explore opportunities to leverage off Council's Sister City programs.		✓	✓
		3.4.5 Investigate the potential of emerging / new activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government and service sector Intensive agriculture Niche / boutique agriculture and agri-businesses Manufacturing – value-adding and processing Renewable energy and use of waste products 	✓	✓	✓
		3.4.6 Market the Shire's strengths, assets and opportunities.	✓	✓	✓

Initiative 4: Planning for the Economy of the Future

Economic development is dependent upon having suitable land and premises and utility and transport infrastructure to accommodate and facilitate growth as well as access to a work force. The focus will be on ensuring that these ‘foundation blocks’ are in place.

Strategies		Key Actions		Timing - Year		
				1	2	3
Land & Premises						
4.1	Ensure sufficient supply of land and premises to facilitate and support growth.	4.1.1	Annually review land use plans and strategies to ensure sufficient land is zoned to accommodate growth for industrial and residential activities.	✓	✓	✓
		4.1.2	Investigate the need for a light industrial / business park land and/or premises in Narrandera, and if needed, encourage owners of vacant and/or underutilised land in the Narrandera West (Leeton Road) and Pine Hill Industrial Estates to bring this land into production (subdivision, sale, lease or development).	✓	✓	✓
4.2	Facilitate further development of the Red Hill Industrial Estate.	4.2.1	Retain general / heavy industry zoning and preserve buffer areas around the Estate.	✓	✓	✓
		4.2.2	Develop a sales policy for Council-owned land in the Estate that provides incentives for developers, fosters a quick development timeline, and discourages land banking.	✓		
		4.2.3	Formulate and implement a marketing plan for the Estate that includes quality promotional material and supporting information, as well as conceptual subdivision layouts and servicing plans.	✓	✓	✓
		4.2.4	Organise famils of the Estate (and Narrandera) for regional development agency (eg RDA, Industry NSW, BEC) staff and regularly update these agencies regarding the availability of commercial and industrial land and premises within Narrandera.	✓	✓	✓
		4.2.5	Advocate for Government Funding to assist in providing enabling infrastructure to facilitate subdivision and development.	✓	✓	✓
Utilities & Services						
4.3	Ensure that the power supply can accommodate growth.	4.3.1	Advocate for on-going improvements in the power supply in Narrandera Shire.	✓	✓	✓
		4.3.2	Advocate for and assist local businesses access grant funds for ‘last mile’ infrastructure.	✓	✓	✓
		4.3.3	Support the development of renewable / green energy producers within the Shire.	✓	✓	✓
4.4	Improve telecommunications.	4.4.1	Develop and implement a Digital Strategy in consultation with industry and community groups.	✓	✓	✓
Transport & Logistics						
4.5	Increase the capacity of the road network in the Shire to accommodate	4.5.1	Develop a Road Improvement Strategy, identifying strategically important production and freight routes within and through the Shire and the works required to remove ‘pinch points’ and expand capacity to accommodate HPVs.	✓		
		4.5.2	Advocate for the Shire’s road needs to be included in regional and State freight and transport strategies.	✓	✓	✓
		4.5.3	Advocate for and seek funding to upgrade and maintain strategically important roads.	✓	✓	✓

Strategies		Key Actions		Timing - Year		
				1	2	3
	increased truck movements and higher productivity vehicles.					
4.6	Provide infrastructure and facilities to support the road transport sector.	4.6.1	Plan for improved infrastructure and/or facilities for trucks in Narrandera – Gillenbah and Barellan.	✓	✓	✓
4.7	Continue to improve rail infrastructure.	4.7.1	Advocate for ongoing improvements to the Hay Branch line (Junee through to Griffith via Narrandera), taking the line from Class C to Class A to facilitate longer and heavier trains.	✓	✓	✓
		4.7.2	As required, support rail and freight service providers secure 'paths' for rail freight from the Western Riverina.	✓	✓	✓
4.8	Plan for freight infrastructure to meet growing demand	4.8.1	Liaise with local producers (eg Agri Australis, Proten, Grants Sawmilling, Hutchins Bros Engineering) to determine likely future freight transport requirements.	✓	✓	✓
		4.8.2	Advocate to have the Narrandera-Tocumwal rail corridor recognised as strategic infrastructure and protected and preserved for future use.	✓	✓	✓
		4.8.3	Plan for a small intermodal terminal / freight receival site in Narrandera.		✓	✓
4.9	Retain commercial air services to Narrandera.	4.9.1	Continue to upgrade the Narrandera – Leeton Airport to ensure on-going compliance.	✓	✓	✓
		4.9.2	Implement the Airport Strategic Plan.		✓	✓
		4.9.3	Build patronage on the route by diversifying the market base – eg through growing the conference, meetings and events markets.	✓	✓	✓
Accommodation						
4.10	Diversify and improve accommodation available in the Shire.	4.10.1	Monitor demand for motel and hotel accommodation and, when needed, advocate for the development of new accommodation within the Shire.	✓	✓	✓
		4.10.2	Advocate to improve the supply of rental housing and other accommodation for temporary and seasonal workers and position Narrandera as the accommodation hub to service the Narrandera – Leeton area.	✓	✓	✓
		4.10.3	Undertake a review of camping areas and facilities in the Shire to maximise economic benefits.			✓
Workforce						
4.11	Grow the local workforce, ensuring that it is aligned with local and regional industry needs.	4.11.1	Profile and articulate existing and future local and regional workforce requirements and jobs and skills gaps.	✓		
		4.11.2	Work with regional organisations and education and training providers to address job and skill gaps and formulate and deliver 'job readiness' and skills development opportunities.	✓	✓	✓
		4.11.3	Participate in relevant employment and skills development programs and initiatives (eg the 'Grow our Own' program being implemented in the Western Riverina).	✓	✓	✓

Strategies		Key Actions	Timing - Year		
			1	2	3
		4.11.4 Encourage proponents of major developments to 'grow their own' workforce by employing local residents and investing in training and skills development.	✓	✓	✓
		4.11.5 Work with the Shire's Aboriginal community and residents who are socially disadvantaged, to improve training and employment outcomes.	✓	✓	✓
		4.11.6 Work with industry and businesses to attract skilled workers to the Shire to fill vacant positions and address skills gaps.	✓	✓	✓
		4.11.7 Investigate opportunities to harness skills of visitors to the Shire (eg retirees, back packers) to address labour shortages, particularly for seasonal work (eg harvesting, picking, truck drivers).		✓	✓
		4.11.8 Advocate for improved access to education and training services and flexible approaches to workplace training, apprenticeships and traineeships.	✓	✓	✓
		4.11.9 Retain young people within the community, through programs such as school based vocational training, transition to work / work ready, offering apprentice and traineeships and providing access to tertiary training.	✓	✓	✓
		4.11.10 Develop and implement programs to welcome and orientate new employees and integrate them into the community.	✓	✓	✓



Left: Barellan's main attraction – the big tennis racquet
Above: Royal Hotel Grong Grong

6. MONITORING OUR PROGRESS

The progress and success of the Economic Development Strategy will be evaluated by:

- Completion of the implementation actions listed in the Strategy.
- Monitoring key statistics that measure changes in population, visitation, business activity and employment.

Outcome	Measure	Target	Benchmark/s	Data Source
Population Growth	Resident Population	Increase by 10% by 2021	5091 (2011)	ABS Population Census - 2016
	Estimated Population		5959 (2016)	RDA Riverina LGA population estimates
Increase visitation to the Shire	Visitation to the Narrandera Visitor Information Centre.	Increase to 40,000 within 3 years	36,821 (2015/16)	Destination NSW – LGA Visitor Profiles Tourism Research Australia – LGA Visitor Profiles
	Domestic Overnight Visitors	5% increase within 3 years	64,000 (YE Sept 2014)	
	Visitor Nights		105,000 nights	
	Length of Stay (nights)	Increase to 2.5 nights	1.6 nights	
	Visitor Expenditure	\$20 million	\$15 million	Council data base
	Event attendance	5% increase within 3 years	Create bench mark	
	Passengers through Narrandera Airport	15,000+ within 3 years	13,326 (2015/16)	
Growth in productivity	Value of Gross Regional Product	5% per annum	\$235million (2014/15)	National Economic Indicators for Local Government Areas – ID Profile.
	Worker Productivity (GRP / Worker)	Equal or exceed the average for the Riverina Region	\$86,733 (2014/15)	National Economic Indicators for Local Government Areas – ID Profile.
Improved business and investor confidence	Number of Businesses	10 additional businesses within 3 years.	540 (2014/15)	National Economic Indicators for Local Government Areas – ID Profile.
	Number of existing businesses that have expanded	10 businesses expanding within 3 years.	New measure.	Council data base
	New Business Start-ups	3 / year	New measure	Council Data Base
	Business Exits		New measure	Council Data Base
Job Creation	Number of people employed	3000 within 3 years	2,895 (June 2016)	Department of Employment – Small Area Labour Market Statistics.
	Unemployment Rate	Remain below 5%	4.5% (June 2016)	Department of Employment – Small Area Labour Market Statistics.

7. NARRANDERA SHIRE



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENQUIRIES

Economic Development Manager

Narrandera Shire Council

www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au

141 East Street, NARRANDERA NSW 2700

Tel: (02) 6959 5510

Email: council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au

INTERESTED IN VISITING OUR SHIRE

Narrandera Visitors Centre

www.narrandera.com

26 Cadell Street, NARRANDERA NSW 2700

Tel: (02) 69595545

Email: tourist.centre@narrandera.nsw.gov.au

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Waterslide at the Lake Talbot Aquatic Centre.
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Koalas are one of Narrandera Shire's popular attractions.

Source: Koala Photos (Top: www.laketalbot.com.au, Right: www.narrandera.com),
 Koala Spotting (Left: www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au, Above: www.visitnsw.com)