



THE VISION FOR THE LONG-TERM FUTURE OF THE TOOWOOMBA REGION  
THE BEST OF CITY AND COUNTRY



**TOOWOOMBA  
REGIONAL  
COUNCIL**

**TOOWOOMBA REGIONAL COMMUNITY PLAN**

# *Our Community Vision*

JULY 2010

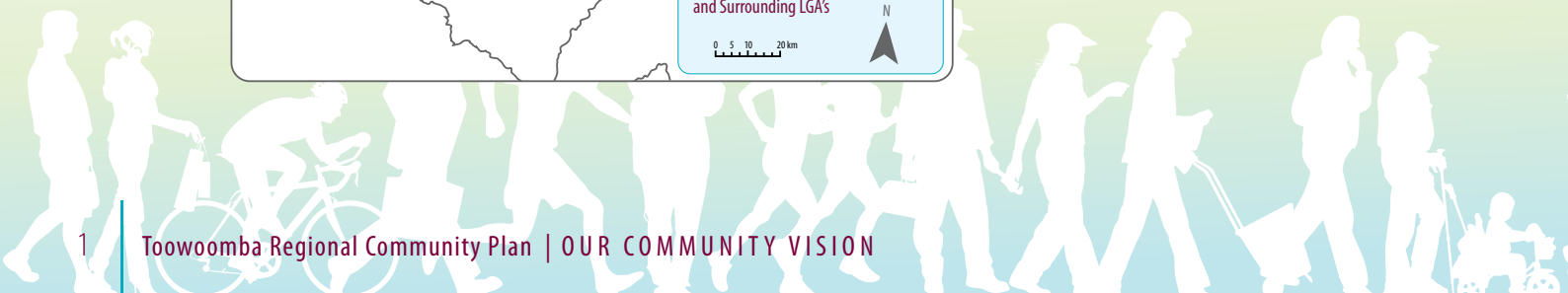
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## Our Toowoomba Region

The Toowoomba Regional Council area covers 12,973 sq km extending from Toowoomba in the east to Cecil Plains in the west and from Clifton in the south to Yarraman in the north. The location of communities within the Toowoomba Regional Council area are shown on page 5.





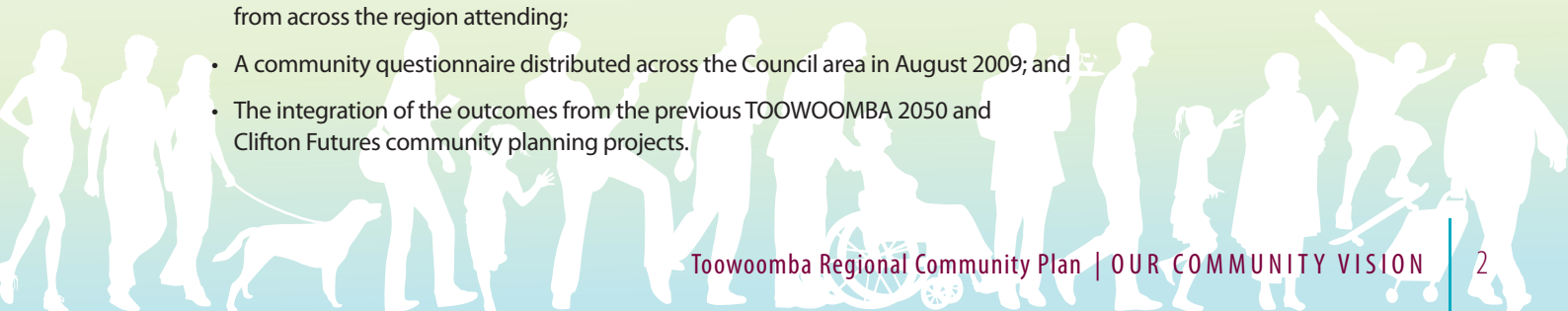
## Background

The Toowoomba Regional Community Plan describes the community's overall vision for the region's preferred long-term future. It covers local and regional issues across the following nine themes – settlement pattern, transport and mobility, integrated infrastructure and utilities, natural environment, natural resources and landscape, community identity, strong communities, economy and governance. The plan is consistent with the Queensland Local Government Act 2009, which requires councils to develop a long-term community plan covering at least 10 years.

The Community Plan has evolved from Council's Strategic Directions project which brought together community and strategic planning efforts, South East Queensland Regional Plan requirements, regional planning studies, place-based investigations and legislative requirements to develop a foundational Strategic Directions document

Community engagement was central to the development and finalisation of aspirational and strategic content contained in this document. Community engagement activities were consistent with the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum and with Council's draft community engagement policy. Key engagement activities included:

- Seven Strategic Directions community engagement workshops, six briefings to various stakeholder groups as well as submissions from the community during March 2010;
- A regional community summit held in September 2009 with more than 100 people from across the region attending;
- A community questionnaire distributed across the Council area in August 2009; and
- The integration of the outcomes from the previous TOOWOOMBA 2050 and Clifton Futures community planning projects.



“What has the community said about the future of the region?”

# Community Voices

## Settlement Pattern

- balanced development of mining, agriculture and housing
- enough space to be happy

## Transport and Mobility

- better public transport to outlying areas
- more cycle-friendly bike paths

## Integrated Infrastructure and Utilities

- adequate water infrastructure for domestic, industrial and recreational use
- solar and wind generated power

## Natural Environment

- water sustainability
- respect for the natural environment

## Natural Resources and Landscape

- sustainable farming
- landscape not ruined by mining

## Community Identity

- affordability of housing
- great place to bring up a family

## Strong Communities

- better health service in rural areas
- acceptance of many cultures within the community

## Economy

- Toowoomba provides a good service centre for outlying towns
- diversity of industry

## Governance

- a council with proactive decision-making and foresight
- strong leadership and good planning





# Community Vision

The following is a vision for the preferred long-term future of the Toowoomba Region. This vision statement has resulted from the community engagement process and reflects the words of the community.

## In the year 2050 . . .

The Toowoomba Region has the best of city and country - it is a place in which we love to live!

Toowoomba City is a prosperous place with a cosmopolitan heart that retains its "rural heritage" and services the Darling Downs and beyond. A network of vibrant towns, each with their own character and identity, embraces a relaxed country lifestyle and rural qualities.

Our family-friendly and safe communities are defined by their resilience, a spirit of collaboration and a rich cultural life. Good quality services and infrastructure equitably meet the diverse needs of our healthy communities. We care for our people!

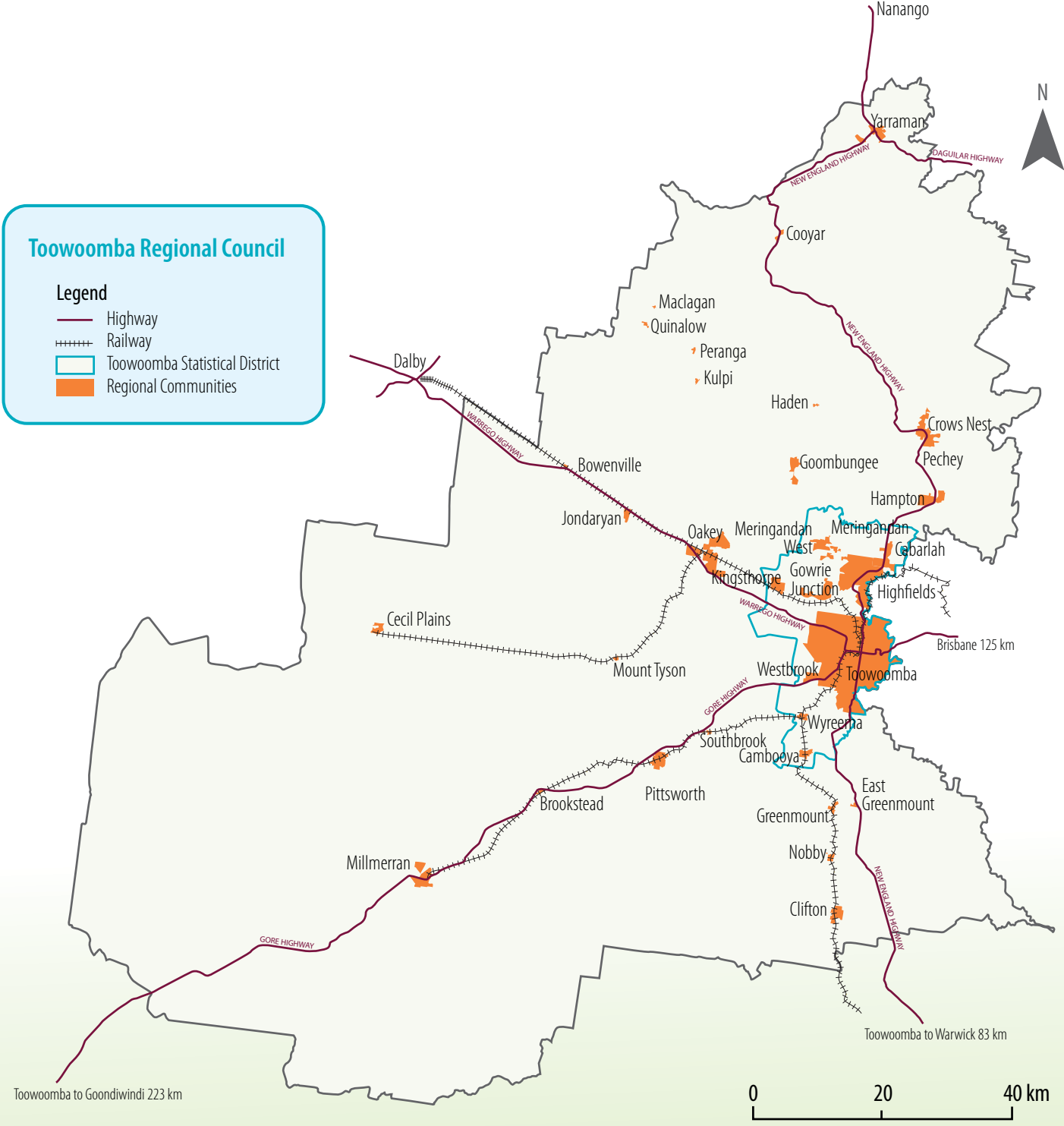
Our region's various natural and built environmental assets and scenic landscapes are valued by our community and managed sustainably.

Toowoomba is a thriving region with a robust and adaptive economy that provides opportunities for all. We take advantage of opportunities presented by our unique position as a gateway to the east and west.

Our governance structure supports local community leadership and decision-making, and our communities actively participate in Council decision-making processes.

Our region's future is guided by the understanding of the interconnection of all aspects of our communities.

The following pages detail the vision, themes, their respective elements and the outcomes to be achieved through the Toowoomba Regional Community Plan.



**Toowoomba Regional Council area**





## Settlement Pattern

### Where will we live?

Our region has developed in a sustainable manner with compact well-planned communities established within valued rural settings. The planned expansion of urban areas is underpinned by community need while maintaining and enhancing access to services and recreational and social infrastructure. The unique architectural, cultural, historic, scientific, natural, social or spiritual qualities of places are conserved, enhanced and maintained.

Our settlement areas provide for a high level of self containment, a strong sense of identity, reinforce local character and urban landscape values, and incorporate innovative and sustainable urban design. Settlement areas across the region have a diverse mix of economic and community-based activities, and provide convenient access to housing choice, community services and facilities, and employment. Settlement areas are connected by an integrated transport system that promotes sustainable modes of transport.

Toowoomba City is a principal regional activity centre with thriving and diverse neighbourhoods that have a strong sense of community and local identity. Our diverse rural towns and townships retain their attractive and vibrant character which underpins the uniqueness of our region.

Development within our region is undertaken in a coordinated and wise manner to avoid compromising landscape values and productivity of good agricultural land and avoid causing environmental degradation. Development is restricted in areas with development constraints, areas exposed to natural hazards and when incompatible with surrounding activities.

“ balanced development of mining, agriculture and housing  
 enough space to be happy ”



### What outcomes are we seeking?

#### Network of Towns

Toowoomba City is a principal regional activity centre that is connected to a network of attractive and vibrant rural towns by an integrated transport system.

#### Sustainable Urban Development

Development is designed and sited to respond to climate, is resource-wise, reinforces local character and achieves innovation and design excellence.

#### Compact Urban Form

A compact urban form promotes communities where people can live, work and play, and urban land is developed in a coordinated way to maximise infrastructure efficiencies and provide access to housing choice, community services and facilities, employment and transport options.

#### Rural Landscape

Development within the rural landscape does not compromise primary production, and considers cultural, heritage, environmental biodiversity and water network values.

#### Development Constraints

Development avoids areas of environmental significance, areas with development constraints and areas exposed to natural hazards.

#### Incompatible Land Uses

Avoid impacts arising from the development or intensification of incompatible activities.

### How will we measure progress?

Indicator name	Target
Compact Urban Form	Increase in the proportion of new residential development achieved through infill and redevelopment of existing urban areas.
Urban Consolidation	The proportion of new residential development and the percentage of regional population within the urban footprint (as defined by the South-East Queensland Regional Plan).





**THEME 2:**

**Transport and Mobility**

- better public transport to outlying areas
- more cycle friendly bike paths



**How will we get around?**

Our region’s sustainable integrated transport system provides effective road, rail and air connections for the safe and efficient movement of people, the provision of services and distribution of goods within and beyond the region. Our transport system comprises quality rural and urban roads, safe and connected highways, suitable freight routes, managed parking systems, effective public transport services and street environments that enhance cycling and walking networks.

The region offers sustainable transport choices, including viable alternatives to car-based travel, through well established public and active transport infrastructure and services.

Modes of transportation keep pace with population growth, community expectations and economic growth demands. Investment in our transport system is based on minimising the impacts on the environment and community health while addressing the accessibility needs of all community members.

The region is well connected to surrounding regions and beyond, through enhanced air services and key road and rail network investments, inclusive of the Toowoomba by-pass (a Surat Basin connection road) and national, state and regional rail link connections.

**What outcomes are we seeking?**

**Integrated Transport System**

A safe and equitable integrated transport system supports more compact urban growth, sustainable modes of transport, managed parking provisions and accessibility to employment and local services, whilst providing effective connections to regional, state and national transport networks.

**Road Networks**

A safe and functional road network connects to and enhances state and national transport networks, while providing a safe and accessible local street network that balances the needs of all road users without compromising community amenity and safety.

**Active Transport**

Well connected active transport networks and end of trip facilities provide safe, convenient and accessible links between residential areas and key destinations for pedestrians, cyclists and other users of mobility devices to reduce private car dependency.

**Bus Services**

Safe, accessible and reliable community, school and public bus services provide connections from residential areas to key destinations, activity centres and townships across the region and beyond.

**Passenger Rail Services**

Safe, accessible and reliable passenger rail networks and services are explored and utilised, to provide connections between regional centres, to Brisbane and other regions.

**Freight Transport**

An efficient and integrated freight transport system, including road and rail, enhances the region’s position as a major freight distribution centre, while minimising the associated impacts of freight movement on the community and its environment.

**Airport Services**

Passenger, medical and freight air services meet community expectations, aviation requirements and promote economic growth.

**How will we measure progress?**

Indicator name	Target
Transport Mode Sharing	Increase the percentage of trips made by modes other than the car.
Resident satisfaction with regional roads	Establish baseline and increase number of residents satisfied with Toowoomba Regional Council roads.





## Integrated Infrastructure and Utilities

### How will we be serviced?

Integrated and timely infrastructure provision guides and services growth within the region. Delivery is prioritised to best utilise public resources and to ensure the community's needs are equitably met.

Water and waste management infrastructure, communications technologies and energy networks support the desired quality of life for current and future generations whilst responding to environmental needs and economic demands.

The region's water is managed on a holistic total water cycle basis to secure a sustainable supply to our water-wise community and to protect public and environmental health. Waste is utilised as a resource and its generation is reduced and safely managed to minimise impacts on the environment.

High quality communications technology and energy-wise infrastructure sustains the needs of the region.

“adequate water infrastructure for domestic, industrial and recreational use”

- solar and wind generated power



### What outcomes are we seeking?

#### Coordinated Infrastructure Planning and Delivery

Progressive and sustainable infrastructure is provided, managed and maintained in an integrated manner. It is coordinated, prioritised, sequenced and delivered to promote efficient development and to balance community, economic and environmental needs.

#### Integrated Water Management

Water infrastructure is provided and managed on a total water cycle basis. Sustainable supplies of quality water are made available, and water use efficiency and innovations are in place. Public and environmental health is protected through effective wastewater and stormwater management.

#### Waste Management

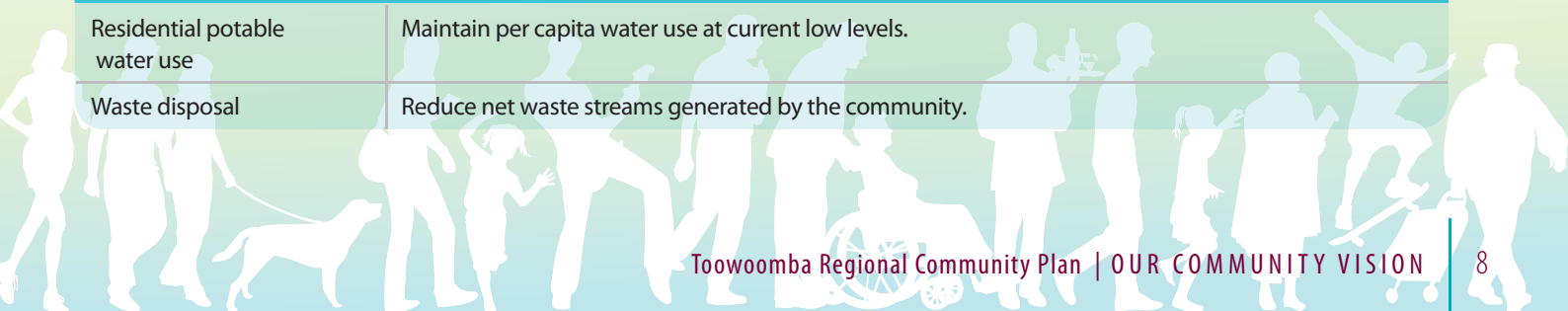
The impacts of waste generation are minimised through improved consumption behaviour, effective recycling infrastructure and practices, and the reduction of emissions from landfills.

#### Energy and Communications

Up-to-date information and communications technology is accessible to all parts of the community. Energy infrastructure keeps pace with future growth and supports the use and development of viable low emissions and renewable energy sources.

### How will we measure progress?

Indicator name	Target
Residential potable water use	Maintain per capita water use at current low levels.
Waste disposal	Reduce net waste streams generated by the community.



THEME 4:

## Natural Environment

- water sustainability
- respect for the natural environment



### What will our environment be like?

Our community values its diverse natural environment and ensures its wellbeing. Protection of ecosystems and biodiversity networks ensures retention of important flora and fauna. The condition of the surrounding atmosphere and health of aquatic networks is maintained to protect the health and amenity of our community and surrounds. The natural environment is adapting to climate change impacts. Environmental offsets are utilised to minimise development impacts.

### What outcomes are we seeking?

#### Ecosystem Services

Ecosystem functions and processes are protected and enhanced to ensure ecosystem services contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community and natural environment.

#### Biodiversity

Flora, fauna and biodiversity networks are protected, managed and enhanced to ensure retention of important species and viable populations.

#### Waterways, Wetlands and Aquifers

Environmental values and the ecological health and function of water networks are protected, managed and enhanced.

#### Atmosphere

Air and acoustic environment is maintained to protect the amenity, health and wellbeing of the community and the natural environment.

#### Climate-Resilient Environment

The natural environment is healthy and resilient supporting community needs and is actively managed for ongoing adaptation to climate change.

#### Environmental Offsets

Environmental offsets ensure development does not lead to a net loss of environmental values and offsets are directed to areas of environmental significance.



### How will we measure progress?

Indicator name	Target
Air quality	Establish baseline and profile of air quality parameters and meet air quality objectives in the Environmental Protection (Air) Policy 2008.
Change in extent of remnant vegetation	Maintain viability of ecosystems by retaining all remaining remnant vegetation.

## Natural Resources and Landscape



“  
 • sustainable farming  
 • landscape not ruined by mining  
 ”



### How will we best use what we have?

Our valued scenic landscapes and regional greenspaces are protected and our natural areas and resources are well managed by landholders and community. Our diversified primary production (including agriculture, forestry and fisheries) is eco-efficient and adaptive to changing climatic conditions. Land with best capacity for food production is protected and buffered.

The economic benefits of extraction of finite land and water resources (including quarry and mineral resources) or generation of energy are balanced with community and environmental needs. The use and re-use of a range of land, water and atmospheric resources in primary and secondary production is well understood and only occurs if impacts are managed and resources are returned or rehabilitated to a similar or better condition.

### What outcomes are we seeking?

#### Scenic Amenity and Greenspaces

Scenic landscapes, regional greenspaces and landscapes of rural and heritage value are identified, protected and managed.

#### Natural Resource Management

Natural resources are managed in a sustainable manner.

#### Land Resources

Land resources are recognised for their contribution to the regional landscape, primary production capability and catchment functions and are managed to maximise productivity whilst minimising land degradation.

#### Water Resources

Surface and ground water resources are utilised in a sustainable manner to balance user needs without compromising the ecological health and function of water networks.

#### Sustainable Production

Diversified primary and secondary production is undertaken in an efficient and sustainable manner that is adaptive to technological advances and increased climate variability.

#### Natural Economic Resources

A range of natural economic resources are identified, protected, managed and used only where socio-economic benefits exist and where negative impacts on communities, good quality agricultural land and other natural environmental values can be minimised.

### How will we measure progress?

Indicator name	Target
Maintenance of Waterways	Achieve scheduled water quality objectives for all regional waterways.
Productive Agricultural Land	Current agricultural land is available for sustainable agriculture.





THEME 6:

Community Identity

- affordability of housing
- great place to bring up a family



What will we value about our communities?

Toowoomba is a growing regional city with an increasingly cosmopolitan heart that has retained the “country feel” that is much valued by our region’s people. The rural qualities of our regional towns, townships and landscapes are an intrinsic part of our region’s character and identity.

Our proud sporting tradition is an important component of our communities’ identity and heritage, as is the quality of parks and public spaces. Our community facilities and housing options respond to and provide for the diversity of our communities.

What outcomes are we seeking?

Rural Community Identity

Our diverse rural communities have a strong sense of place linked to individual local heritage, character and identity.

Toowoomba City Identity

Toowoomba is a thriving compact city which is characterised by its rural context and heritage. It has a vibrant cosmopolitan heart as well as diverse neighbourhoods with their own distinct character and identity.

Urban Design

Health and community safety considerations are integrated into the design and delivery of development in new and established urban areas.

Community Facilities and Services

Social, community and cultural infrastructure and services are planned, coordinated and delivered in a timely manner to support the regional settlement pattern and desired community outcomes.

Sport and Recreation

Sporting facilities and programs as well as outdoor recreation opportunities are planned, developed and maintained in an integrated manner to ensure that the community’s needs are addressed.

Urban Parks and Public Spaces

Public spaces and urban parks are integrated, accessible and high-quality environments that create memorable places and promote interaction between people.

Housing Diversity and Affordability

The community has equitable access to affordable, suitable and good quality housing.

How will we measure progress?

Indicator name	Target
Community Facilities Suitability	Establish baseline and increase level of resident satisfaction with community facilities in the Toowoomba Regional Council area.
Built Heritage	Minimise demolition and removal of heritage and character buildings as well as increase community awareness and appreciation of built heritage.





## Strong Communities

### How will we live and interact?

The social and cultural needs of our diverse communities are addressed to ensure the ongoing vibrancy of our region. Good quality facilities and services foster the wellbeing of our people. Our resilient communities are characterised by strong social networks. Social justice, access, equity and fairness are key foundations of our strong communities.

### What outcomes are we seeking?

#### Education Excellence

Toowoomba is a progressive city known for education excellence and we have good quality education facilities throughout the region.

#### Learning Communities

Our communities embrace lifelong learning and forward thinking for the betterment of individuals and the community as a whole.

#### Creative Expression

Our communities have a range of opportunities for creative expression and cultural exchange.

#### Health Services

The region's good quality and well-integrated health services, including associated social support services and environmental health services, meet the community's needs.

#### Healthy Lifestyles

Good urban design and health promotion programs support our communities to actively focus on healthy living.

#### Public Safety

Collaborative approaches to the prevention of injury, crime and property damage ensure the safety and security of our communities.

### How will we measure progress?

Indicator name	Target
Public Safety	Establish baseline and increase the percentage of residents who are satisfied with safety in their neighbourhood and feel safe within local centres.
Addressing disadvantage	Establish baseline and maintain or increase Socio-Economic Index For Areas (SEIFA) scores for Toowoomba Regional Council area.



“ better health service in rural areas  
 • acceptance of many cultures within the community ”



#### Social Capital

Our communities are vibrant and resilient and actively foster social interaction and inclusiveness through strong people networks.

#### Cultural Diversity and Heritage

Our communities value our cultural heritage and diverse backgrounds. We actively share our cultural heritage and intergenerational knowledge and skills.

#### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are actively involved in community planning and decision-making processes, with Aboriginal traditional owners engaged in business about their country.

#### Social Justice and Equity

Our diverse and family-friendly communities are defined by fairness, where every individual has equal opportunity and lives free of discrimination.



THEME 8:

Economy

“Toowoomba provides a good service centre for outlying towns

- diversity of industry

”



How prosperous will we be?

Our region has a strong, prosperous and progressive economy that contributes to the health and wellbeing of our communities and contributes to the character and liveability of the region. Our region promotes a diverse range of business, industry and tourism activity that is innovative, environmentally sustainable and generates a diverse range of employment opportunities.

Toowoomba City is the principal regional activity centre for the region and beyond, providing a mix of businesses, industries and services which are readily accessible to our local and regional communities. Our rural communities have strong and viable economies which support and are underpinned by a sustainable rural sector. Readily accessible activity centres are located across our region providing a broad range of business uses and supporting infrastructure.

The region takes full advantage of its geographical location in eastern Australia and the economic opportunities associated with South East Queensland and the resource development within South West Queensland. Economic growth opportunities are supported by key infrastructure investment, including the Toowoomba by-pass (Surat Basin connection road) and national, state and regional rail link connections.

What outcomes are we seeking?

**Economic Growth and Development**

The Toowoomba region has a strong and sustainable economy fostering innovation, diverse business opportunities and a thriving export sector. Toowoomba City is the principal regional activity centre for business, industry and service provision for the Toowoomba Regional Council area and surrounding regions. Economic growth and development opportunities are supported by timely provision of infrastructure.

**Employment Opportunities and Skills Base**

The community has access to a diverse range of employment opportunities, and the region’s workforce has the capacity to meet the needs of businesses and industries.

**Activity Centres and Employment**

Activity centres include a mix of land uses and supporting infrastructure, providing for future growth of a broad range of business uses to support employment growth.

**Business and Industry**

The region is a healthy and vibrant place for business and supports innovative and environmentally-sustainable businesses and industries.

**Creative and Knowledge-based Industries**

The region has a thriving creative industry sector, supports innovation and clusters of science and technology, health, education and training.

**Rural Industries and Primary Production**

Sustainable rural industries and primary production contribute to the regional economy, capitalise on existing competitive advantages, are responsive to technological advances and adapt to climate variability.

**Rural Futures**

Our rural communities are strong and viable with sustainable and unique economies that contribute to and benefit from regional growth, ensuring the health, wealth and liveability of the region.

**Tourism**

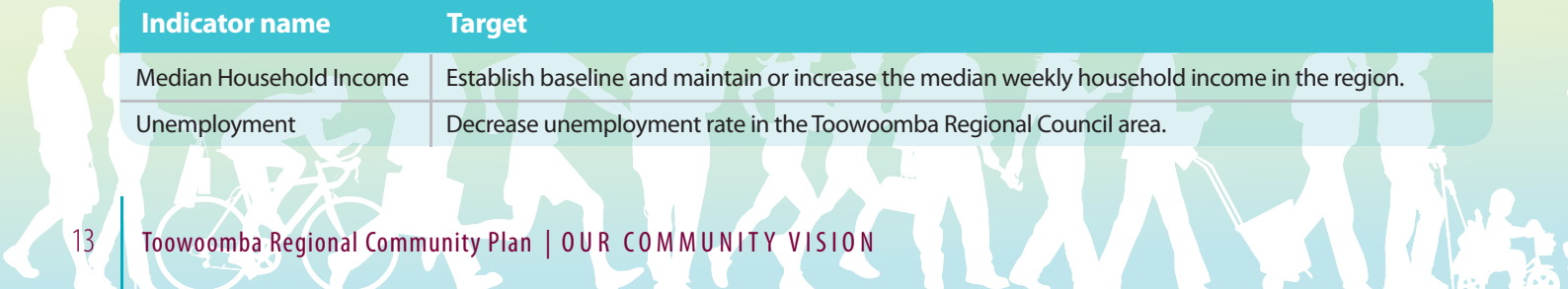
The region has a thriving tourism sector that capitalises on the natural and heritage assets, and arts and cultural exchange opportunities.

**Events**

The region has the capacity to attract and host a range of iconic state, national and international events, while strengthening the capacity and popularity of local and community events.

How will we measure progress?

Indicator name	Target
Median Household Income	Establish baseline and maintain or increase the median weekly household income in the region.
Unemployment	Decrease unemployment rate in the Toowoomba Regional Council area.





Governance

**How will we be governed?**

Community leadership and decisions reflect the interests and needs of all communities across the Toowoomba region. All our communities actively participate in shaping our region and community-wide partnership approaches are implemented to action community priorities.

Planning and operational processes are centred on good governance principles, integrated strategic approaches and "best practice" community participation, engagement and partnership processes. These ensure our region grows and changes in a sustainable manner with strong communities and economic prosperity, in a way that maintains ecological processes.

“a council with proactive decision making and foresight  
 • strong leadership and good planning”

**What outcomes are we seeking?**

**Democracy, Transparency and Leadership**

Community leadership and decisions are transparent, represent current and future interests of the region's communities and acknowledge the interdependence of urban and rural communities.

**Accountability, Compliance and Risk Management**

Decision making, planning and operational processes are in the public interest resulting in lawful, ethical and responsible decisions that respect the moral values of the community.

**Effective Processes and Service Delivery**

Planning and operational processes are effective, ensuring efficient use of resources. Service delivery is responsive and meets community expectations and minimises "red-tape".

**Integrated Strategic Planning**

Integrated strategic planning approaches are pursued to meet the needs of the community, whilst ensuring community wellbeing and inclusiveness, promoting economic growth and maintaining ecological processes.

**Community Participation and Engagement**

Community participation and engagement are at the centre of decision making processes and facilitate the involvement of all community members.

**Community Partnerships**

Community-wide partnerships are pursued to effectively respond to priorities identified by the community.

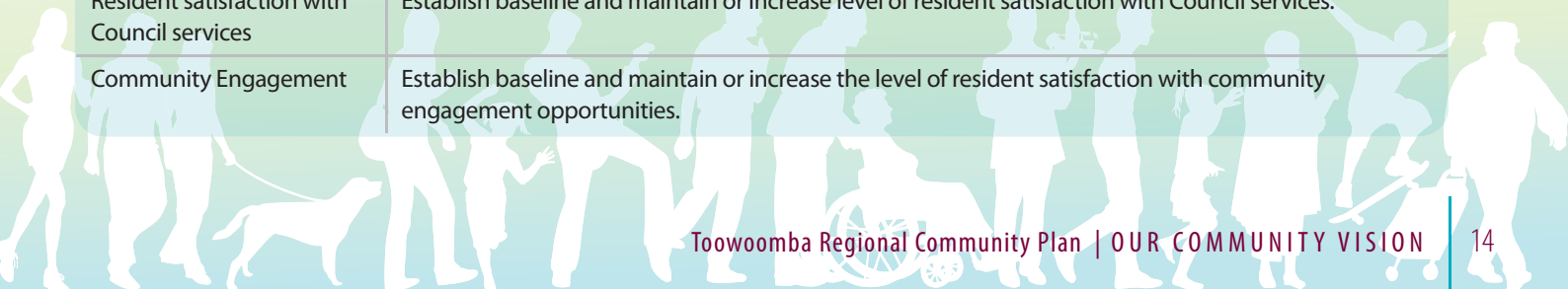
**Sustainability**

The whole community proactively responds to the region's sustainability issues to meet the needs of present and future generations while valuing and learning from the past.



**How will we measure progress?**

Indicator name	Target
Resident satisfaction with Council services	Establish baseline and maintain or increase level of resident satisfaction with Council services.
Community Engagement	Establish baseline and maintain or increase the level of resident satisfaction with community engagement opportunities.





## Contact Us

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