**Maitland’s Future**

**Community Strategic Plan 2025-2034**

Our shared vision

Endorsed March 2025

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**Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Wonnarua People as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land within the Maitland Local Government Area. Council pays respect to all Aboriginal Elders, past, present and future with a spiritual connection to these lands.

**A message from our Mayor**

Philip Penfold, Mayor of Maitland

Maitland is a city evolving, family-friendly, welcoming, and proud of its heritage. Centrally located in the heart of the Hunter region, we offer the perfect blend of city convenience with a warm country charm.

But while there’s plenty to love about Maitland today, we always need to focus on tomorrow, and on how we can continue to enjoy this place we love well into the future. That’s why we’ve created Maitland's Future: our shared vision for achieving a connected city with thriving communities.

We've developed Maitland's Future in consultation with you, our community. It represents the collaboration of thousands of interactions, including face-to-face conversations, workshops, surveys, online feedback and stakeholder engagement. Through this community consultation, we have developed four key focus areas that reflect the aspirations and values of the Maitland community:

• Liveable Maitland

• Sustainable Maitland

• Vibrant Maitland

• Achieving Together

These focus areas are integral to the future of Maitland and the next decade is set to be an exciting and rewarding time for all of us as Maitland embraces new opportunities and growth, becoming a dynamic place where people can live, work, enjoy and succeed.

**A message from our General Manager**

Jeff Smith, General Manager

This document's importance for our city's future can’t be overstated. Representing the highest level of planning we undertake at local government level, our shared vision will guide our projects and programs for the next decade and beyond.

Creating a shared vision for our city is one thing, but what’s just as important is having a plan to make sure we get things done.

As caretakers of Maitland's Future, we have embraced a collaborative approach to planning and reporting. This approach fosters unity among the community and our partners, allows us to work together towards our shared vision and priorities, and celebrates our collective achievements across the key focus areas.

As we move towards achieving our shared vision for Maitland's future, we will work closely with our community and partners on the actions, projects and services we need to deliver to bring this plan to life.

Our commitment to this process ensures that Maitland not only remains a great place to live but evolves into a thriving, connected city where everyone can contribute to and benefit from our collective success.

Working together, we can create a connected city with thriving communities.

**Our shared vision**

A connected city with thriving communities

**Liveable Maitland**

Working together to foster strong connections, great places to live, and efficient mobility enhancing how we connect with people and place.

1.1 Great neighbourhoods

**•** Quality open space network

**•** Connected living

**•** Housing diversity

1.2 Integrated movement

**•** Efficient and sustainable movement

**•** Connected active transport

**•** Housing diversity

**•** Safe and efficient road networks

1.3 Welcoming community

**•** Community connections

**•** Inclusive public places and spaces

**•** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander connections

**•** Diverse communities

**Sustainable Maitland**

Working together to commit to environmental stewardship and community resilience, centred around strong connections to nature and ensuring our communities thrive. Working together to foster a culture built on trust, empowering an engaged workforce that embraces change.

2.1 Valuing our natural environment

**•** Functional biodiversity corridors

**•** Natural spaces

**•** Environment engagement

**•** Waterway management

2.2 Sustainable and resilient communities

**•** Sustainable leadership

**•** Living sustainably

**•** Prepared communities

**•** Circular economy

**Vibrant Maitland**

Working together to create opportunities for growth, work, and participation.

3.1 Diverse local economy

**•** Investment attraction

**•** Strengthened and diversified precincts

**•** Future skill

3.2 Vibrant community life

**•** Diverse heritage and cultures

**•** Precinct activation

**•** City presentation

3.3 City shaping partnerships

**•** Growth opportunities

**•** Advocacy and partnerships

**Achieving Together**

Working together to foster a culture built on trust, empowering an engaged workforce that embraces change.

4.1 Trusted services

**•** Meaningful consultation and engagement

**•** Trusted customer experience

**•** Transparent decision making

4.2 Engaged workforce

**•** Excellence in leadership

**•** Collaborative organisation

**•** Development and growth of our people

4.3 Resilient future

**•** Informed planning

**•** Culture of improvement and innovation

**•** Leverage technology and data

**How we plan**

“The future depends on what you do today.” – Mahatma Gandhi

**Our shared vision**

We've built our shared vision for Maitland upon four key focus areas: Liveable Maitland, Sustainable Maitland, Vibrant Maitland, and Achieving Together. These focus areas form the foundation of our Maitland's Future vision and represent our Strategic Framework, guiding us toward a thriving, connected city.

Each focus area represents a key element to building a community where everyone can live, work, enjoy, and succeed. They are supported by informing strategies that provide clear direction, ensuring every decision aligns with our shared goals. This framework is our roadmap for the future, connecting vision to action and delivering outcomes that matter to our community. Maitland’s Future

Maitland's Future is the highest-level plan that we prepare. Its purpose is to identify the community’s main priorities and aspirations for the future and plan strategies for achieving these goals. Maitland's Future guides all other strategies and plans and must be developed with and on behalf of the community.

**What is Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR)?**

The NSW Government requires local councils to work with their communities to plan for the future. This involves creating long, medium, and short- term plans that reflect the community’s vision and priorities. These plans are shaped by community input and supported by informed planning around finances, assets, and resources. The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) Framework approach, under the Local Government Act 1993, helps councils across NSW make thoughtful, sustainable decisions for a brighter future.

**The Heart of the Hunter**

**Who we are**

Maitland is a city evolving, family friendly, welcoming, and proud of its heritage. Centrally located in the heart of the Hunter region, we offer the perfect blend of city convenience with a warm country charm.

We embrace new opportunities and growth, making Maitland a dynamic place to live, work, enjoy and succeed. Scenic beauty, unique heritage, rural landscape, welcoming people and convenient location are some of the factors that have led to our city being one of the fastest-growing cities in Australia.

The local government area covers 396km² from Woodberry in the east to Harpers Hill in the west, Tocal to the north, and Gillieston Heights to the south. Over 95,000 residents are settled in new and growing suburbs and quiet rural areas. Our residents come from a broad cross-section of society, and this range will continue to expand as our city grows, enriching our spirit and identity.

By 2041, we expect about 145,000 people to call our city home.

The Wonnarua and Guringai Peoples are the Traditional Keepers and Custodians of the lands within the Maitland Local Government Area.

It is one of the oldest regional centres in Australia, built on the banks of the Hunter River. The Hunter River winds through the countryside and the city, offering a beautiful backdrop to our daily lives.

While the river is usually calm, it can occasionally become more powerful, making some areas prone to flooding. Flooding has uniquely shaped our city with urban areas having clear boundaries that overlook peaceful, picturesque farmlands.

We are a busy and productive community, with a thriving local economy diversified across health, construction, service and knowledge industries. Maitland supports 35,227 jobs and has an annual economic output of $14.294 billion.

The city’s continued population growth is a significant strength for the local economy, providing industries and businesses with access to a broad workforce from within Maitland and neighbouring areas, thanks to our central location in the region. This growth, and the city's lifestyle benefits help attract people to support the key industries that drive our economy. To fully leverage this strength, we must also focus on attracting more jobs to meet the needs of our growing community and ensure sustained economic development.

**Our place in the region**

The Hunter Region of New South Wales, encompassing Maitland, is renowned for its economic diversity, natural resources, and strategic location. Understanding its significance and aligning with regional opportunities can sustainably benefit Maitland.

The Hunter is the leading regional economy in Australia, where people enjoy an enviable quality of life within an exceptional natural environment. It is home to more than 860,000 people and 427,000 jobs. New residents are attracted to diverse and affordable housing, healthy, green and flexible lifestyle options, and a wide range of employment opportunities.

**Economic significance**

Maitland plays a strategic role in the economic landscape of the Hunter Region, serving as a dynamic hub for commerce, industry, and innovation.

Its strategic location, and transport infrastructure, fosters seamless connectivity to major cities and markets, making it an attractive destination for businesses and investors. The city’s vibrant local economy is underpinned by diverse sectors, including manufacturing, mining, retail, and health industry, which collectively drive job creation and sustainable growth.

Maitland’s commitment to honouring its rich heritage while embracing contemporary developments enhances its appeal; this harmonious blend of historical charm and modern progress makes Maitland a unique and thriving economic centre.

**Employment and education**

The Hunter Region offers substantial employment and education benefits to Maitland residents.

The Hunter Region supports over 427,000 jobs, making it a significant employment hub in New South Wales. This diverse job market spans key industries such as mining, manufacturing, healthcare, education, and tourism, providing a wide range of career opportunities.

In terms of education, the Hunter Region is home to several renowned institutions, including the University of Newcastle, which offers world-class education and research facilities. TAFE NSW campuses in the region provide vocational training and skill development programs tailored to the needs of local industries. Additionally, a network of high-quality public and private schools ensures that students of all ages have access to excellent educational opportunities.

Strategic location and connectivity Maitland has access to significant infrastructure and amenities that bolster its appeal and functionality. Key facilities include the renowned John Hunter Hospital, offering comprehensive medical services to the region. Newcastle Airport provides convenient domestic and international flight connections, facilitating travel and commerce. The Hunter Valley’s celebrated vineyards and wineries enhance the area’s tourism industry and contribute to its economic vitality.

Maitland benefits from proximity to Newcastle’s port facilities, the stunning beaches of Port Stephens and a variety of recreational and cultural attractions, all of which collectively support a high quality of life and robust economic growth.

**Our shared future**

**Overview**

We all have an important role to play in Maitland’s Future. Together, we have developed an ambitious long-term vision that sets out our priorities for the future. Our community is passionate about Maitland, and they love where they live. This willingness to engage has helped shape our city’s future.

**Our engagement**

**Collaboration and listening**

We've developed Maitland’s Future through an extensive engagement process undertaken throughout 2024. The focus of this process was to listen to the needs and aspirations of our community to determine our future priorities based on our strengths, challenges and opportunities.

Our engagement began at local community events, followed by workshops, stakeholder meetings, surveys, online discussions and local neighbourhood conversations. We wanted to make sure we heard from all of Maitland – young and old, from Woodberry to Luskintyre and everywhere in between.

However, our conversations continue as we remain committed to reaching out and the right direction.

**Community involvement**

Over 3,745 contributions

500 responses to our Community Satisfaction Survey

2000 plus people engaged/contributors

45 plus events and activities

13 posts online, including Facebook and LinkedIn

**Building on what we have heard**

Before we go out and ask more questions, it’s important to reflect on what the community has already shared with us. This ensures we acknowledge past insights, identify recurring themes, and build on existing feedback to guide meaningful conversations moving forward.

• Community Satisfaction Survey 2022 (May 2022) – 600 surveys completed

• Environmental Sustainability Strategy (November – December 2022) – 500 phone surveys completed and 2338 responses to an online survey

• Environmental Attitudes Research (July – August 2022) – 501 surveys completed

 • Australian Liveability Census (March – June 2023) – 927 surveys completed

• Economic Development Strategy engagement (May - July 2023) – 1061 people engaged

• Maitland Aquatics Strategy engagement (August 2023) – 1796 participants via online surveys, focus groups, meetings and pop ups

• Community Satisfaction Survey 2024 (May 2024) – 500 surveys completed

• Disability Inclusion Action Plan (May 2022) - 300 surveys completed and 27 interviews with people with lived experience.

**Promotion and opportunities to participate**

66% of our engagement was face-to-face

59,000 plus social media reach

152 responses to our online polls to prioritise what you want

6280 Maitland's Future engagement site visits

9 focus groups

3 engagement videos

12,000 plus video views

1 promotional video

73,500 plus video views

13 e-newsletters

Subscriber reach: 49,500

1 public exhibition

35 formal submissions

**What is most important to the community**

Traffic management

Recreation spaces and parks/sports, aquatic centres

Greener, more open spaces

Local history, historic building and features

Range of housing prices/affordable housing

Access to neighbourhood services and facilities

Road maintenance

Arts and cultural programs

Walking, jogging, bike paths that connect housing to communities

Local employment options

Protecting the natural environment

Local education options

**Meaningful engagement**

Meaningful engagement is more than just consultation; it’s about building genuine connections by meeting people where they are and truly listening to their stories, needs, and aspirations.

For us, this meant stepping into the spaces where our community feels most comfortable, taking the time to understand their perspectives, and fostering trust through authentic dialogue. 66% of our engagement was face-to-face.

**How we connected**

Street Eats Taste Festival

East Maitland Library

Access and Inclusion Reference Group forum

Gather and grow event

Sustainnovation

Internal engagement

Youth event

Library Baby Storytime Metford Literacy

St Bede’s College Focus groups

Subject Matter expert workshops

Maitland Regional Art Gallery

**Our role**

As Maitland continues to grow, Council, our stakeholders and our community need to work together to invest in our individual and collective wellbeing.

While Council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and delivering Maitland’s Future on behalf of the community, it is not solely responsible for its implementation.

Many of the issues and concerns facing Maitland are complex and beyond the direct control and influence of us, such as public transport, health, education, housing, planning and employment.

To deliver our shared vision, Council works with various stakeholders and partners, including other levels of government and their affiliated agencies, local businesses and industry, educational institutions, community groups, and other service providers.

Depending on the activity, Council’s role is to deliver, partner and/or advocate. By building partnerships, taking a strong leadership role and delivering on its commitments, Council plays an important role in shaping our city and making Maitland a place for everyone.

**Deliver**

We deliver a wide range of programs and services, including waste collection, libraries, childcare, maintenance of local roads and public spaces, recreation facilities and programs, community support, special events and regulatory functions.

**Partner**

There are areas in which we have partial or shared responsibility or influence. We build strategic partnerships with federal and state government agencies, the private sector, and various other stakeholders whose work will contribute to delivering our long-term priorities.

**Advocate**

Many issues important to the community are outside Council’s control. Council gives a voice to the needs and aspirations of the community by advocating for changes in policy and action at relevant levels of government and industry.

**Opportunities and challenges**

We acknowledge that Maitland faces challenges in our journey to becoming a connected city with thriving communities.

Global trends like technological advancements, automation, and artificial intelligence are transforming how we work, travel and communicate, affecting jobs across all sectors. Other trends, including an aging population, changing consumer habits, and the rise of the sharing economy, shape how we live and work. On top of this, climate change is leading to more frequent and severe local weather events. These factors combined will play a key role in how we plan our cities for the future.

Understanding the opportunities and challenges presented by global trends is crucial for shaping a resilient and thriving future. The seven updated CSIRO global trends, adapting to climate change, becoming leaner, cleaner, and greener, addressing the escalating health imperative, navigating geopolitical shifts, diving into digital advancements, increasing autonomy, and unlocking the human dimension, offer both prospects for growth and potential hurdles.

By comprehensively analysing these trends, we can better anticipate their impacts and strategically plan to harness opportunities while mitigating risks. This proactive approach ensures that we are well prepared to navigate the complexities of the future, fostering sustainable development and enhancing the wellbeing of our communities.

Acknowledging these challenges and identifying how to mitigate them or turn them into opportunities will be key to delivering Maitland's vision.

**Population challenges**

When compared to Australian trends, Maitland has a number of unique population challenges.

These include:

• High population growth: Maitland welcomes more than 2,000 new residents into our community each year, equating to approximately 2.7 per cent annual growth. Such high growth presents Council with distinct challenges, including an increased demand for essential services and infrastructure to accommodate the expanding community. Between 2022 and 2023 alone, the population grew by 2,3439 people – over six new residents each day. At this pace, we are likely to surpass the projected population target of 144,50010 by 2041, representing a 6111 per cent increase over 20 years.

• Lack of diversity: Compared to the rest of Australia’s population, residents of Maitland are more likely to have been born in Australia (86.9 per cent versus 66.9 per cent) and to only speak English at home rather than other languages (90.6 per cent versus 72 per cent). This may signify less exposure to diverse cultures and innovative practices, and fewer international connections.

**Low education**

At the 2021 Census, less than a quarter (24.8 per cent) of Maitland’s population above 15 years had attained a post-

school qualification of Diploma or above. With nine out of 10 future jobs estimated to require post school qualifications, there is likely to be a significant decline in demand for an unqualified labour force.

This will substantially impact the Maitland economy, polarising employment opportunities and increasing economic inequality into the future.

**Climate change**

Climate change is one of the biggest social and economic challenges of the 21st century. We are already starting to see its effects on our daily lives. As the climate shifts, we can expect more frequent and intense events like bushfires, floods, and extreme heat, which may also increase health risks. These changes could have far-reaching consequences for both our communities and our economy.

**Industry transition**

The mining sector continues to play a significant role in our local economy, particularly coal, extracted in the Upper Hunter region and exported through the Port of Newcastle. There is an opportunity for economic alignment towards ecological and social sustainability by creating new green jobs and providing support for people and communities who might be disadvantaged during the change process.

Maitland can leverage the shift as the Hunter Region undergoes an industry transition towards greener and more sustainable practices and position itself as a key player in the emerging green energy sector.

**Affordable housing**

Forecasts show that Maitland’s population will grow to 144,550 by 2041 – an increase of 54,80016 residents, stimulating demand for more than 1,000 new dwellings annually. A mix of affordable and sustainable future housing is imperative to meet the diverse needs of our growing community.

Housing demand in Maitland continues to outpace supply, particularly for middle to low-income brackets. Driven by regional growth and migration from major cities, it has resulted in soaring house prices and rental costs, causing significant mortgage and rental stress. Addressing these challenges involve increasing the housing supply, promoting affordable housing projects, and implementing policies to mitigate homelessness and housing insecurity.

**Changing demographics**

Maitland experiences a high level of people aged 25-39 moving to the area, largely due to migration from nearby areas such as Lake Macquarie, Newcastle and Cessnock and projections suggest that this trend will continue.

Projections indicate an additional 14,800 individuals aged 65 and over will reside in the area by 2041. This demographic change necessitates enhanced healthcare services, age-friendly infrastructure, and accessible housing options for older adults. It also presents opportunities for economic growth in sectors such as healthcare, aged care, and related services. Policies must focus on creating inclusive communities that support the wellbeing and active participation of older residents.

Maitland's high demographic of young families presents challenges in ensuring adequate and accessible services such as childcare, education, healthcare, and family-friendly infrastructure. There is a growing need for affordable housing, safe neighbourhoods, and diverse community programs that cater to various age groups. Additionally, economic pressures faced by young families, like managing mortgages and saving for education, require coordinated support across all levels of government. Long-term planning is crucial to address the evolving needs of these families as their children grow, ensuring that Maitland remains a thriving and supportive community.

**Sustainable development**

Given Maitland’s rapid growth, there is a significant opportunity to manage development by embracing smart and sustainable practices. By focusing on vertical growth through building up rather than out, Maitland can preserve green spaces, reduce urban sprawl, and make more efficient use of existing infrastructure.

This approach minimises environmental impact and supports a higher quality of urban living, with better access to amenities and services.

Prioritising sustainable development ensures that Maitland can continue to grow while maintaining its commitment to environmental conservation and community wellbeing.

**Flood plains**

By strategically using flood plains, we can create multifunctional green spaces that mitigate the impacts of flooding and provide recreational areas, wildlife habitats, and agricultural land. These areas can support biodiversity, improve water quality, and offer educational opportunities focused on environmental conservation.

Embracing flood plains as valuable assets enables Maitland to balance development with natural processes, fostering a more sustainable and adaptive urban environment.

**From local to global**

How Maitland’s Future fits in with other strategies and plans.

**Delivered at the local level**

Includes: local roads, parks, waterways, waste, libraries, events, community wellbeing and facilities, development

**•** Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (featuring Maitland’s Future Community Strategic Plan)

**•** Maitland’s Informing Strategies

**•** Maitland’s policies, strategies and plans.

**Delivered at the regional level**

Includes: regional planning, health and wellbeing, and water catchment management.

• Hunter Regional Plan 2041

• Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036

• The Hunter New England Health District Strategic Plan 2021-2026

• Hunter Joint Organisations Strategic Plan 2032

• Greater Hunter Regional Water Strategy 2018

• Hunter Regional Economic Development Strategy update 2023

• Destination Sydney Surrounds North Destination Management Plan 2030

• Greater Newcastle Future Transport Plan 2056.

• NSW Flood Prone Land Policy within the NSW Flood Risk Management Manual

**Delivered at the state level**

Includes: health, care (aged, child, disability), transport, education, employment, police, development

• State Plan NSW Housing

• NSW State Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2042

• NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021–2025

• NSW Net Zero Plan 2020-2030

• Transport for NSW: Smart NSW Roadmap 2022-2027

• Future Transport Strategy 2056

• NSW State Health Plan: Future Health 2022-2032

• NSW Government Visitor Economy Strategy 2030

• NSW State Emergency Service Strategic Plan 2021-2041

• NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041

• NSW Circular Economy Policy Statement 2019

• Biodiversity Conservation Investment Strategy 2018.

**Delivered at the national level**

Includes: defence, immigration, taxation, communications, and trade.

• Australian Modern Manufacturing Strategy 2020

• National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2020

• Thrive 2030 Strategy - The re-imagined Visitor Economy

• Australia’s Biodiversity and Conservation Strategy 2010- 2030

• National Digital Economy Strategy 2030

• Infrastructure Australia Strategy 2021

• National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy 2021-2025

• National Urban Policy 2024

• National Waste Policy and Action Plan 2019.

**Delivered at the global level**

Includes: environmental and social issues; political, health or economic crises.

• United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

• Paris Climate Agreement

• Global Biodiversity Framework

**Measuring wellbeing: a framework for Maitland’s Future**

Measuring wellbeing is vital for understanding and enhancing the quality of life in Maitland. A strong sense of wellbeing reflects a thriving community where people feel connected, safe,and supported. We have developed a Wellbeing Framework integrating directly into the focus areas and priorities of Maitland’s Future, ensuring the wellbeing of our residents remains central to our decision-making. This framework provides a clear structure for monitoring progress and aligning our goals with the needs of the community, helping us create a city where everyone can flourish.

**What is wellbeing?**

Definitions of wellbeing are typically broad and diverse, encompassing a wide range of areas that impact on an individual’s quality of life. Having the opportunity and ability to lead lives of personal and community value with qualities such as good health and time to enjoy the things in life that matter in an environment that promotes personal growth are at the heart of wellbeing.

**Maitland's Wellbeing Domains**

Maitland’s Wellbeing Domains has ten domains of wellbeing reflecting key factors that impact the quality of life of Maitland’s community. Indicators are how we measure our progress and are grouped under each domain to help us know where wellbeing improves in Maitland over time. While an indicator sits under one domain, many are also relevant to other domains.

The Wellbeing Framework recognises accessibility as a foundational principle rather than a standalone domain. This ensures that accessibility is interwoven into all elements of wellbeing, spanning all domains of the framework. Ensuring every resident can participate fully in community life and access the resources they need to connect and thrive.

• Health – Includes physical and mental health, access to healthcare, and programs promoting overall wellbeing.

• Belonging – Focuses on fostering relationships, belonging, and active participation in community life.

• Education – Covers access to education, skill development, and opportunities for continuous learning throughout life.

• Housing – Focuses on housing affordability, quality, and overall living conditions.

• Economic – Encompasses job opportunities, economic development, and financial security for residents.

• Sustainability – Addresses environmental quality, climate resilience, and access to natural spaces.

• Connection - Ensures access to services, public transport, digital connectivity, and infrastructure linking communities and services.

• Safety – Measures community safety and emergency preparedness.

• Governance – Focuses on trust in institutions, transparency, and opportunities for residents to engage in decision-making.

• Time – Assesses work-life balance, leisure time, and opportunities for personal and family pursuits.

Inspired by the ACT Government’s Wellbeing Framework, we’ve used their work as a foundation, adapting it to reflect what truly matters for Maitland.

**Community indicators**

Community indicators measure wellbeing to ensure we’re making meaningful progress toward our shared vision. They highlight areas needing improvement and show how changes positively impact daily life to help us stay focused on improving quality of life and meeting the unique needs of our community. Appendix two provides further information.

**Social Justice Principles**

We are committed to applying the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights, aiming to decrease or eliminate inequity, promote inclusiveness of diversity, and establish environments that support all people. The four principles of social justice are:

• Equity – resources are allocated according to need with the aim of achieving more equal outcomes, particularly for those with greater needs or barriers to access

• Access – people have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life

• Participation – people can fully participate in community life and genuinely influence decisions that affect their lives

• Rights – human rights are universal, and everyone has the right to respectful, equal and dignified treatment. Human rights are the basic freedoms and protections that people are entitled to, including economic, social, cultural and political rights.

**Our priorities for Maitland**

A connected city with thriving communities

Our shared vision for a connected city with thriving communities focuses on creating vibrant neighbourhoods, centres, and towns. These areas will blend timeless charm with modern design and practical features, resulting in beautiful and functional spaces. We aim to foster a strong sense of community while maintaining close connections to nature. Our shared vision strikes the perfect balance between country outlook and the convenience of city living.

Improved transport connectivity will make it easier for residents to interact and for businesses to thrive, ensuring that people have access to a wider choice of housing in both existing and new communities, located close to jobs, shopping, and services, and supported by public transport, walking, and cycling options.

The natural environment will enrich the living experience by valuing open space, local bushland, wetlands, flood plains, and biodiversity. By building resilient and sustainable communities, promoting sustainable leadership, and supporting circular economy initiatives, we ensure a thriving and adaptable future for all communities.

By fostering a diverse local economy and promoting vibrant community life, we aim to shape a thriving city. Our shared vision creates opportunities for work, personal growth, and engaging activities, enriching daily experiences and overall wellbeing. Through city-shaping partnerships, building trust, and cultivating an engaged workforce, we will ensure Maitland remains resilient and prosperous for future generations.

**Liveable Maitland**

Working together to foster strong connections, great places to live, and efficient mobility, enhancing how we connect with people and place.

A Liveable Maitland is defined by a high quality of life that centres around community wellbeing and daily experiences. It's about creating walkable and bike friendly neighbourhoods, where public spaces are inviting and safe for all ages. Access to essential services like healthcare, education, and community facilities is crucial, ensuring every person can live comfortably.

It’s about creating a welcoming, inclusive environment where people feel they belong, supported by integrated transport that connects residents to services, jobs, and each other.

Affordable housing options and diverse cultural amenities foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity. To achieve true liveability,

Maitland must harmonise environmental sustainability and economic vitality, creating a balanced where all aspects of life complement each other seamlessly.

**1.1 Great neighbourhoods**

We are committed to creating great neighbourhoods that thrive on connectivity by offering a mix of housing, accessible open spaces, and essential services. Together, we aim to ensure a high quality of life for everyone.

1.1.1 Quality open space network

Develop a network of quality open spaces that seamlessly connects residents to accessible, walkable parks, recreational areas, streetscapes and natural landscapes, ensuring ease of access, enhanced community wellbeing, and increased usage of outdoor spaces.

Councils’ role is to deliver.

1.1.2 Connected living

Create and maintain neighbourhoods where residents can connect to essential facilities and community infrastructure, fostering a sense of community, enhancing convenience, and improving overall quality of life.

Councils’ role is to deliver, partner and advocate.

1.1.3 Housing diversity

Facilitate affordable and diverse housing options to ensure everyone has a place to call home in all stages of life.

Councils’ role is to partner and advocate.

**Community indicators**

1.1.1 Wellbeing domains are connection.

• Percentage of residents that live within 400 metre walking distance to a local park or other public open space

• Percentage of deemed quality open space

• Survey respondents agreed there are plenty of accessible open spaces in the neighbourhood

1.1.2 Wellbeing domains are connection and Health

• Overall quality of life in Maitland

• Community infrastructure index score: percentage of residents that live within defined walking distance of community facilities, public transport (train stations and bus stops), recreation facilities, local centres, and parks

• Survey respondents agreed that medical, mental health and social services are accessible and adequate

• Survey respondents agreed that sporting facilities and active lifestyle opportunities in the area meet their needs

• Medical practitioners per 1,000 population

• Percentage of the population that live within one kilometer of a General Practitioner

1.1.3 Wellbeing domains are housing

• Percentage of diverse housing options (detached houses, apartments, townhouses)

• Survey respondents agreed that there are diverse housing options available for everyone across Maitland LGA

• Percentage of the population under rental stress

• Percentage of the population under mortgage stress

**1.2 Integrated movement**

We create an efficient and sustainable transport network, connecting people through well-maintained roads, planned traffic management, reliable public transport, and safe infrastructure for active movement.

1.2.1 Efficient and sustainable movement

Create long-term, sustainable transport and movement networks that connect different travel options, making it easier for our growing community to navigate efficiently and conveniently.

Council’s role is to deliver and partner.

1.2.2 Connected active transport

Establish a safe network of connected pathways and cycleways to maximise access to key destinations and facilities.

Council’s role is to deliver, partner and advocate.

1.2.3 Safe and efficient road networks

Ensure safe, efficient, functional and connected roads that facilitate seamless travel and connectivity throughout our community.

Council’s role is to deliver, partner and advocate.

**Community indicators**

1.2.1 Wellbeing domains are connection.

• How easy is it for you to get to the places you need to go within Maitland?

• Percentage of housing within 800 metres of a train station or 400 metres of a bus stop

• What would encourage you to use public or active transport (walking, cycling) more frequently?

1.2.2 Wellbeing domains are connection.

• Number of suburbs with a walk score above 50 (somewhat walkable – some errands can be accomplished on foot)

• Percentage of total trips where residents are using a car as mode of transport

• Percentage of residents using active and public transport options

• Percentage of accessible pathways that connect you to a destination or facility

1.2.3 Wellbeing domains are safety.

• Smoothness score for Maitland’s roads

• Road safety – number of crashes

**1.3 Welcoming community**

We create inclusive, welcoming communities where connections thrive, ensuring equitable access to public spaces for all.

1.3.1 Community connections

Support initiatives and services promoting social inclusion, provide lifelong learning opportunities and connect our community to information, knowledge and ideas.

Council’s role is to deliver, partner and advocate.

1.3.2 Inclusive public places and spaces

Ensure that people of all abilities can connect safely and fully enjoy our public places and spaces by promoting accessibility, inclusivity, and a sense of belonging for everyone in our community.

Council’s role is to deliver and partner.

1.3.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander connections

We respect the deep connection of Aboriginal people to the land and honour the rich cultures of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by actively supporting reconciliation, acknowledging their diverse histories, and building strong relationships. Through engagement and collaboration, we aim to foster mutual respect and understanding.

Council’s role is to deliver and partner.

1.3.4 Diverse communities

We respect and celebrate all communities by acknowledging their rich heritage, embracing diversity in all its forms, and fostering meaningful connections that promote inclusion and understanding.

Council’s role is to deliver and partner.

**Community indicators**

1.3.1 Wellbeing domains are belonging, connection, time and health.

• Survey respondents agreed the Maitland residents feel connected to the local community

• Australian Digital Inclusion Index for Maitland

• Percentage of population in volunteering work

• Survey respondents agreed that they are satisfied with their mental and physical health

1.3.2 Wellbeing domains are belonging, safety.

• Survey respondents agreed that community spaces, neighbourhoods, and facilities are welcoming to all

• Survey respondents agreed that Maitland community is welcoming and supportive of people with disability

• Survey respondents agreed that it is easy for individuals with disability to access our public spaces, facilities, and programs

• Survey respondents agreed they feel safe in their local neighbourhoods

• Seven out of ten major instances of major offences remain stable or improve

1.3.3 and 1.3.4 Wellbeing domains are belonging, safety.

• Engage with Aboriginal communities through our community satisfaction survey

• Survey respondents agreed the Maitland community is welcoming to people from different cultures

• Percentage of the community that are from multi-cultural backgrounds

**Sustainable Maitland**

Working together to commit to environmental stewardship and community resilience, centred around strong connections to nature and ensuring our communities thrive.

A Sustainable Maitland is about caring for our natural environment while proactively planning for future challenges.

It means maintaining access to high-quality bushland, wetlands, and waterways for passive recreation, staying cool during hot summers, and preparing for natural hazards like floods, storms, bushfires, and drought.

Our Council leads by example in environmental practices, supporting the community in reducing environmental impacts and avoiding waste.

**2.1 Valuing our natural environment**

We value and enhance our natural environment to ensure a thriving community and resilient ecosystems. By nurturing our bushlands, wetlands, and waterways we support biodiversity, improve public health, create economic opportunities and maintain the natural beauty of our surroundings.

2.1.1 Functional biodiversity corridors

Establish and maintain functional biodiversity corridors to support wildlife movement, enhance ecosystem health, and promote a balanced natural environment.

Council’s role is to deliver and partner.

2.1.2 Natural spaces

Protect important natural spaces to ensure a thriving ecosystem and community wellbeing.

Council’s role is to deliver and partner.

2.1.3 Environment engagement

Enhance community participation in environmental events and volunteering to foster ownership, pride and connection to our natural surroundings.

Council’s role is to deliver and partner.

2.1.4 Waterway management

Manage and maintain comprehensive waterways that include stormwater drainage, floodplains, wetlands, and our river, aiming to protect the environment, enhance community safety, and support the overall wellbeing of our community.

Council’s role is to deliver and partner.

**Community indicators**

2.1.1 Wellbeing domains are sustainability.

• Hectares of bushland revegetated each year and in total

• Hectares of native vegetation in the LGA

• Number of recorded flora and fauna species

2.1.2 Wellbeing domains are sustainability.

• Total protected land area

• Survey respondents agreed that the natural environments and green spaces are well preserved

• Percentage of tree canopy cover in residential areas preserved

2.1.3 Wellbeing domains are sustainability.

• Participation in community conservation events

• Number of members of landcare groups

2.1.4 Wellbeing domains are sustainability.

• Water Quality Report Card

• Waterway health

**2.2 Sustainable and resilient communities**

We build sustainable, resilient communities by reducing reliance on non-renewable energy, improving resource efficiency, embracing a circular economy, and empowering residents to create vibrant, green neighbourhoods that enhance wellbeing.

2.2.1 Sustainable leadership

Champion sustainable practices and set a precedent for environmental responsibility and climate change mitigation. We inspire and guide others through actions and plans to foster a culture of sustainability and achieving enhanced resilience.

Council’s role is to deliver.

2.2.2 Living sustainably

Foster practices that reduce environmental impact and promote resource efficiency across all aspects of daily life, including the development of a sustainable built environment. Our outcome is a community that embraces sustainable habits, designs, and opportunities, leading to improved ecological health and a higher quality of life for all communities.

Council’s role is to partner and advocate.

2.2.3 Prepared communities

Increase community preparedness for climate change and natural hazards such as floods, heat, bushfires, and drought.

Council’s role is to deliver and partner.

2.2.4 Circular economy

Contribute to a shift towards a circular economy, conserving resources, maximising the value of materials, and creating markets for reused, recycled and recovered resources and products.

Council’s role is to deliver and partner.

**Community Indicators**

2.2.1 Wellbeing domains are sustainability.

• Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50 per cent by 2030

• Percentage of goods and services procured that meet sustainability criteria, including environmentally friendly and ethically sourced products.

• Percentage of projects that use sustainable practise

2.2.2 Wellbeing domains are sustainability.

• Number of solar electricity customers (residential and commercial)

• Average water consumption

2.2.3 Wellbeing domains are sustainability.

• Survey respondents agreed that their household is prepared for natural disasters in the Maitland area

2.2.4 Wellbeing domains are sustainability.

• Waste diversion rate

**Vibrant Maitland**

Working together to create opportunities for growth, work, and involvement.

A Vibrant Maitland is defined by a dynamic environment fostering opportunities for work, personal growth, and engaging activities, enriching daily experiences and the overall wellbeing of its residents. It's dedicated to fostering a diverse and resilient economy supporting a wide variety of job opportunities and business growth.

By cultivating partnerships and creating an inviting atmosphere for business attractions, we ensure our community remains a vibrant hub for innovation.

Our commitment to providing a rich array of activities and amenities enhances the quality of life, making Maitland a place where people can live, work and thrive.

**3.1 Diverse local economy**

We leverage our city's connections, to attract investment, foster innovation, and create thriving precincts that generate future jobs.

3.1.1 Investment attraction

To attract investment by positioning Maitland as an innovative, well- connected city that is easy to do business. Driving economic growth, enhance infrastructure, and create opportunities that benefit both investors and the broader community.

Council’s role is to partner and advocate.

3.1.2 Strengthened and diversified precincts

Strengthen and expand our existing business precincts by empowering local providers and developing new strategic areas, ensuring that our community has access to diverse and meaningful job opportunities to support its growth.

Council’s role is to deliver, partner and advocate.

3.1.3 Future skill

Partner with and support educational institutions, training providers and industries to ensure our community has the necessary knowledge, skills, qualifications, and innovative capabilities to enhance future employment opportunities.

Council’s role is to partner and advocate.

**Community indicators**

3.1.1 Wellbeing domains are economic.

• Survey respondents agreed that there are meaningful employment opportunities across Maitland

• Maitland LGA unemployment rate

• Number of employment opportunities offered within the LGA

• Local jobs ratio

3.1.2 Wellbeing domains are Economic.

• Number of jobs created in strategic and business hubs

• Number of strategic and business hubs

3.1.3 Wellbeing domains are education.

• Skilled labour pool with an education of diploma and above

• Education levels of over 15-year-olds

• Percentage of youth not involved in education or work

**3.2 Vibrant community life**

We honour our history while embracing the future by blending past and present, ensuring the city reflects our pride and enhances community life through vibrant arts, cultural events, and sports that celebrate diversity, foster personal growth, and strengthen community identity.

3.2.1 Diverse heritage and cultures

Acknowledge and respect the diverse histories while embracing our future by celebrating arts and cultural heritage, supporting diverse cultural experiences, and enhancing the community’s sense of identity and pride.

Council’s role is to deliver and partner.

3.2.2 Precinct activation

We are a vibrant hub of events and activities, creating a lively day/nightlife where our communities can come together, celebrate, and enjoy a rich variety of experiences.

Council’s role is to deliver and partner.

3.2.3 City presentation

To create a visually appealing and well-maintained urban environment that reflects our community’s pride and identity, fostering a sense of belonging and enhancing the quality of life for all communities.

Council’s role is to deliver.

**Community indicators**

3.2.1 Wellbeing domains are belonging.

• Survey respondents agreed they were satisfied with heritage conservation efforts

• Survey respondents agreed that they are satisfied with community and cultural programs

• Value of grants received for culture and heritage

3.2.2 Wellbeing domains are belonging.

• Survey respondents were satisfied with place activation

• Survey respondents were satisfied with the promotion of the city

• Survey respondents were satisfied with festival and major events

3.2.3 Wellbeing domains are belonging.

• Survey respondents were satisfied with the maintenance of local parks and gardens

**3.3 City shaping partnerships**

We advance advocacy and build strategic partnerships by actively engaging with stakeholders, aligning shared goals, leveraging grant funding, and driving collaborative initiatives to enhance connectivity within our city and across the region.

3.3.1 Growth opportunities

To optimise growth opportunities by leveraging grant funding, fostering regional collaboration, and aligning with our shared vision of a connected city, ensuring sustainable development that enhances community connectivity and regional integration.

Council’s role is to deliver, partner and advocate

3.3.2 Advocacy and partnerships

To advance advocacy and build strategic partnerships by actively engaging with stakeholders, aligning shared goals, and driving collaborative initiatives. To ensure we amplify community voices, influence positive change, and harness collective resources.

Council’s role is to deliver, partner and advocate

**Community indicators**

3.3.1 Wellbeing domains are economic.

• Value of residential building approvals including Development Applications/Complying Development Certificates and State Significant Developments

• Value of non-residential building approvals including Development Applications/Complying Development Certificates and State Significant Developments

• Value of grant investment in the city

3.3.2 Wellbeing domains are economic.

• Number of meetings held by our Community Committees

• Number of meetings held to discuss our advocacy position

• Number of Hunter Joint Organisation meetings attended

**Achieving Together**

Working together to foster a culture built on trust, empowering an engaged workforce that embraces change.

Achieving Together in Maitland is defined by building trust and fostering collaboration to create a resilient and prosperous future.

It’s about having an engaged workforce committed to our shared goals and ensuring financial sustainability through prudent management and innovative practices. Using data and informed planning, we can navigate challenges and seize opportunities effectively.

Our shared vision can only be realised if we work together, harnessing the collective strength of our community.

In turn enhancing liveability, sustainability, wellbeing, and economic vitality, creating a balanced environment where all aspects of life support each other seamlessly.

**4.1 Trusted services**

We build trusted services through transparent decision making informed by meaningful consultation and engagement.

4.1.1 Meaningful consultation and engagement

Foster meaningful consultation and engagement by actively involving stakeholders in decision making processes, ensuring their voices are heard. This will strengthen trust and collaboration, leading to more informed and effective outcomes for all.

Council’s role is to deliver.

4.1.2 Trusted customer experience

Deliver a trusted customer experience by providing reliable, transparent, and responsive services that meet the needs and expectations of our community. This approach builds confidence and fosters lasting relationships with our customers.

Council’s role is to deliver.

4.1.3 Transparent decision making

Ensure transparent decision making to build trust, accountability and integrity within the community, fostering a culture of openness and responsible leadership.

Council’s role is to deliver.

**Community indicators**

4.1.1 Wellbeing domains are governance.

• Survey respondents agreed that Council effectively understands and responds to the needs of the community

• Survey respondents agreed that Council provides them with opportunities to participate in the planning and decision-making processes

• Number of people engaged on projects

• Number of visits to engagement portal

4.1.2 Wellbeing domains are governance.

• Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)

• Survey respondents were satisfied with the way their contact was handled

• Survey respondents were satisfied with the range of online services available

4.1.3 Wellbeing domains are governance.

• Survey respondents agreed that they are satisfied with the level of communication

• Survey respondents agreed that Council is honest and transparent

**4.2 Engaged workforce**

We foster an engaged workforce committed to development and growth, ensuring the wellbeing of our people.

4.2.1 Excellence in leadership

Equip our leaders with the skills and vision needed to drive meaningful change and foster innovation. Leading with integrity and effectively navigate complex challenges to contribute to the success and growth of Maitland.

Council’s role is to deliver.

4.2.2 Collaborative organisation

Build a culture that listens and encourages empathy, understanding and willingness to help our customers and colleagues.

Council’s role is to deliver and partner.

4.2.3 Development and growth of our people

Plan for our future workforce to ensure we have developed and engaged people to deliver on our community’s priorities. Put our people first and strive to create a positive employee experience.

Council’s role is to deliver.

**Community indicators**

4.2.1 Wellbeing domains are governance.

• Retention rate of high-performing employees

• 360-degree leadership profiles completed

• Employee wellbeing score from employee survey

• Percentage of employees agree that leadership supports development and performance (Executive Leadership Team level)

4.2.2 Wellbeing domains are governance.

• Employee satisfaction with cross-knowledge and collaboration

• Number of information sharing sessions and collaboration opportunities within internal panels and committees

• Participation rate with employee survey

4.2.3 Wellbeing domains are governance.

• Participation rates in study assistance

• Internal Promotion rate

• Retention rate of all staff

• Percentage of employees that completed two structured development discussions annually

**4.3 Resilient future**

We create a resilient future through informed planning, leveraging innovation, technology and data to foster change.

4.3.1 Informed planning

Undertake a holistic approach to planning that reflects community needs and aspirations, delivering current and future services sustainably while making sound financial decisions aligned with Maitland’s risk management framework and long-term planning.

Council’s role is to deliver.

4.3.2 Culture of improvement and innovation

Encourage innovation and a culture of improvement to enhance overall performance, efficiency and effectiveness of products and services provided to the community.

Council’s role is to deliver.

4.3.3 Leverage technology and data

Utilise the digital transformation of the organisation to drive innovative approaches and insights using quality data to make strategic decisions that align with our shared vision, provide consistency and transparency, and promote a culture of improvement.

Council’s role is to deliver.

**Community indicators**

Governance

4.3.1 Wellbeing domains are governance.

• Number of financial ratios met

• Survey respondents were satisfied with long term planning for the city

4.3.2 Wellbeing domains are governance.

• Number of new initiatives, projects, or ideas aimed at process or service improvement within a specific period

• Employee satisfaction with the innovation culture

4.3.3 Wellbeing domains are governance.

• Employee satisfaction with technology

**Appendix**

**1. Glossary**

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ADVOCACY The act of speaking or arguing in favour of something, such as a cause, idea, or policy. In the context of the strategic priorities, it refers to another sphere of government or organisation delivering a service or outcome for the city.

BASELINE A starting point or initial set of data used for comparison to measure changes or progress over time.

BIODIVERSITY The variety of all living things including plants, animals and microorganisms, their genes and the ecosystems which they are a part

CIRCULAR ECONOMY A model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible.

MCC Maitland City Council.

COMMUNITY A community is a diverse and dynamic network encompassing residents, businesses, sporting groups, cultural organisations, and other stakeholders who live, work, and engage in shared activities within Maitland.

COMPLYING DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATE (CDC) A combined planning and construction approval process. It is designed to enable straightforward development applications to be fast tracked. It can be conducted by either MCC or a private certifier.

CSIRO Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

DELIVER To successfully provide or complete a task, service, or outcome according to set expectations, timelines, and standards.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION (DA) A merit-based assessment conducted directly through MCC.

FOCUS AREAS Core focus areas that support and guide the achievement of our vision.

IPR Integrated Planning and Reporting.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA (LGA) Maitland

LGA covers an area of 392sqkm.

MAITLAND’S FUTURE This is our integrated Community Strategic Plan which provides clear strategic direction for the long term, and identifies the main priorities, aspirations and shared vision of the community.

MINDARIBBA The traditional name of the Maitland area, acknowledging the cultural and historical significance of the land to the Wonnarua people, the Traditional Custodians.

OBJECTIVE A specific and measurable outcome that supports the achievement of a priority, providing clear direction for actions and initiatives.

PARTNERING A structured approach to working together with other parties to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome.

PRIORITY A key area of focus within a focus area that defines what needs to be addressed to drive progress and deliver meaningful outcome.

RISK MANAGEMENT A discipline for developing appropriate procedures to reduce the possibility of adverse effects from future events.

STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT (SSD) Some types of development are deemed to have state significance due to the size, economic value or potential impacts.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their needs.

TARGET A goal to be reached by a specific date which may be higher than the forecasted performance. It aims to continually improve performance.

WE/OUR/US In this document this refers collectively to the community of Maitland and Maitland City Council.

**2. References and research**

Maitland’s strategies and plans

• Local Strategic Planning Statement

• Local Housing Strategy 2041

• Rural Land Strategy 2041

• Customer Experience Plan 2019 (Internal document)

• Economic Development Strategy (draft)

• Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030

• Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2024-2028

• Maitland Social Profile 2025

External resources

• Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021, Maitland: Region Data Summary

• NSW DPIE 2020, NSW 2023 Population Projections, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, accessed April 2024

• NSW Office of Local Government (OLG), Integrated Planning & Reporting Handbook for Local Councils in NSW (September 2021)

• Remplan 2021, ‘Maitland City Council: Economy, Jobs and Business Insights’, accessed June 2024

• CSIRO global trends

• Walk score Maitland, NSW

• Open data network - Environment

• NSW Government Public table, Sales Report accessed June 2024

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