

# Yass Valley

## Community Strategic Plan 2042

2025 Revision



## Acknowledgement of country

Yass Valley Council recognises the traditional custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal and Wiradjuri people, and acknowledges the Elders of the community and their descendants.

## Contact Us

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# Welcome

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

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

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

This Plan emphasises the importance of nurturing a close-knit, supportive community while balancing growth with the preservation of our stunning natural environment.

It highlights the need for sustainable development, ensuring that our rural lifestyle and the tranquillity of our surroundings are protected as we continue to evolve. The Plan also addresses critical infrastructure improvements, supports economic development, and prioritises equitable access to essential services, all while maintaining the character and charm that make Yass Valley unique. By fostering collaboration, resilience, and forward-thinking leadership, this Plan aims to create a prosperous, connected, and vibrant future for all residents.

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

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

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

# Vision

**To build and maintain sustainable communities while recognising and respecting the environment and First nations people of the country.**

## Vision definitions

### Sustainable communities

Refers to social, environmental and economic sustainability, social connections, civic leadership, environmental health and economic prosperity which can be maintained to meet current and future needs.

### Environment

Considers both the local natural and atmospheric environment and the broader global environment considering issues such as resource use and climate change.

### First Nations people

Traditional Owners of the country within the Yass Valley Council local government area, including the Ngunnawal and Wiradjuri First Nations people

### Recognising and respecting

Respect refers to the way an individual or group treats another individual or group. Recognising and respecting the First nations people aligns with Reconciliation Australia's 5 dimensions: historical acceptance, race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity and unity. When applied to the environment, recognition and respect refers to the employment of sustainable practices, with the goal to minimise negative environmental impact and preserve the natural environment where possible and practical.

# Our plan

## About our plan

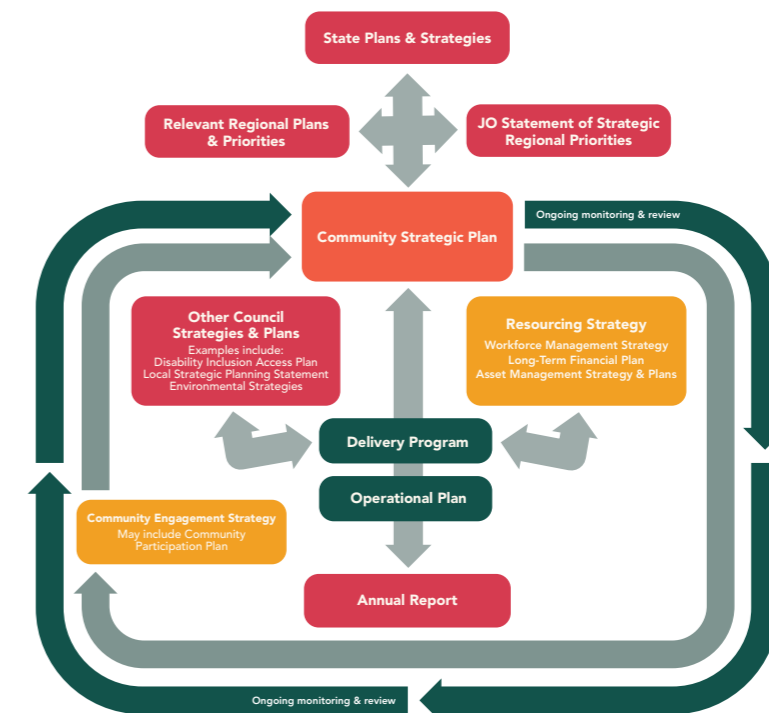
The Yass Valley Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is based on the aspirations and priorities of our community. Informed by community input, it sets out a long-term vision for the region to 2042 and identifies the key priorities and strategies for achieving this.

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

## Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework

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

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



# Our Yass Valley

Yass Valley is a thriving rural region, much-loved for its strong sense of community, spectacular natural scenery, innovative local producers, and simple country lifestyle. Popular with tourists for its rich history, heritage, thriving arts and fantastic food and wine.

Nature lovers enjoy the range of outdoor experiences on offer in- from exploring caves and bushwalking, to strolling through the parks and gardens, camping and water sports on the lake.

Total population  
**17,477**

SEIFA index\*  
**1065**

## Top industries of employment

- 1 Public Administration and Safety
- 2 Construction
- 3 Health Care and Social Assistance
- 4 Education and Training
- 5 Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

Source: Profile ID 2023, ABS Census 2021

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

If the Yass Valley Council region consisted of 100 people, there would be:

**3**  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

**11**  
born overseas

**4**  
speaking languages other than English at home

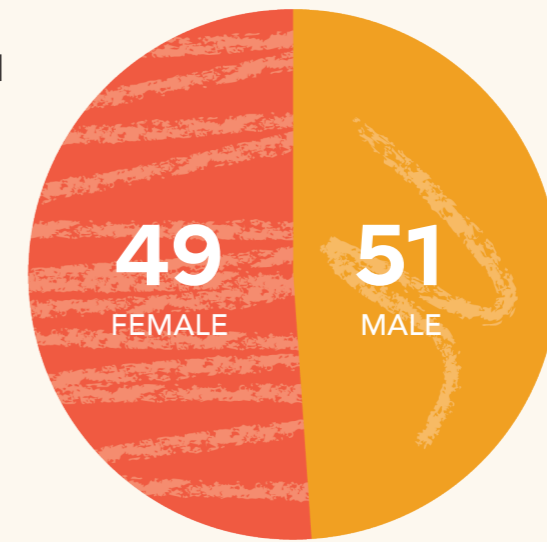


**20**  
with an individual income less than \$400 per week



**59**  
that completed higher education

**37**  
that did not complete year 12



**26:** 0 – 19 years **51:** 20 – 59 years  
**25:** 60+ years



**22**  
living by themselves

**78**  
living in families



**1**  
unemployed and looking for work

**22**  
who volunteer

**30**  
working part time

**61**  
working full time



**14**  
care for someone with a disability

**5**  
have a disability



**81**  
who own, or pay a mortgage on a house

**16**  
live in medium and high density housing



**67**  
who drove to work

**3**  
who walked to work

Source: ABS Census. profile.id. economy.id. BOSCAR, NSW Health stats. NSW Population Health Survey

# Community engagement

## What we asked

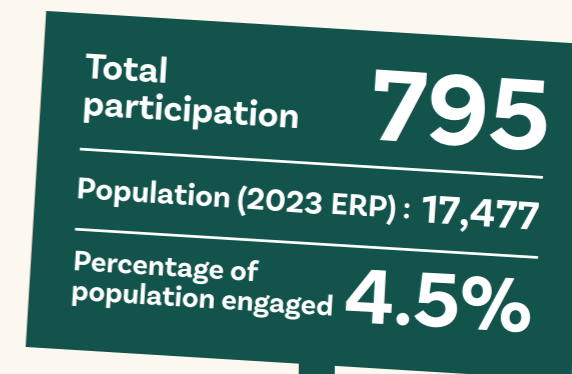
1. How do you feel about the vision in the endorsed CSP?
2. How are we tracking with the existing CSP?
3. What makes your community a great place to live?
4. What do you think are the main challenges facing your community?
5. What have you seen in another area/shire that you think would work well in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

## How did you get involved

- Virtually – surveys
- In conversation – discussion guides, pop-ups
- On paper – drawing sheets, written submissions

## Participation

Nearly 800 people from the Yass Valley participated in the Towards 2042 Stage 1 engagement from 1 February to 15 March 2024.



\* The Regional Wellbeing Survey, conducted annually by the University of Canberra, measures the wellbeing and quality of life of people living in rural and regional Australia.

# Community engagement

## What is important to you

When we asked the Yass Valley community what makes their area a great place to live, they emphasised the strong sense of community, where people know and support each other, and take pride in their surroundings. Residents appreciate the peace, calm, and tranquillity that comes from living in a beautiful natural environment, with stunning landscapes, wide-open spaces, and a clear night sky filled with stars. Yass Valley offers a rural lifestyle that combines the best aspects of city life without the hustle and bustle. Towns are filled with friendly people who rally together in times of need. Since 2021, there has been a notable increase in the community spirit, a greater appreciation for the lifestyle, and a slight decrease in the value placed on the natural environment.

## Main challenges

Participants in the Yass Valley identified several key challenges facing the community. Public administration emerged as the primary concern, with issues highlighted around perceived poor value for rates, limited community engagement, and unequal distribution of resources and services across the council area. Infrastructure concerns were significant, particularly regarding the poor condition of roads, town presentation, and the security and quality of the water supply. Additionally, there was apprehension about overdevelopment, highlighting the need to balance growth while preserving the natural environment and the character of the towns. Access to health and medical care was another critical issue, with residents facing difficulties in accessing doctors and specialists, the absence of a local hospital, and inadequate in-home

aged care services. Since 2021, there has been a sharp increase in concerns about the council, infrastructure, water quality, development, and health services.

## Key priorities

Participants in the engagement process highlighted several key priorities:

- Ensuring a reliable and high-quality water supply, improving accessibility, and maintaining roads and footpaths more effectively.
- Enhancing sports and recreation facilities, with a focus on a heated indoor swimming area, upgraded sports amenities, additional playgrounds, a mountain bike park, dog park, and more diverse paths and trails for better recreational opportunities.
- Supporting economic growth by attracting and supporting businesses, making towns more appealing for commercial activities, expanding retail options, and promoting tourism to foster vibrant local development.
- Promoting a positive environmental impact by building resilience to climate change, encouraging sustainability, improving waste management and recycling, and advocating for sustainable living practices.
- Strengthening council leadership and efficiency by focusing on financial sustainability, improving service delivery, enhancing community engagement, ensuring effective use of community funds, and managing rates without excessive increases.



# Council's role

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

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

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

## Provide

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

## Collaborate

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

## Advocate

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

# Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, United Nations Member States, including Australia, adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals serve as a global blueprint for peace, prosperity, and sustainability for people and the planet, now and into the future.

As responsible global citizens, we have integrated the principles of the SDGs into the development of this Community Strategic Plan. By aligning our local strategies with these global goals, we ensure that our community not only addresses local priorities but also contributes to the broader vision of sustainable development worldwide.

These are the seventeen SDGs we have considered in the formulation of our strategies:

## The goals include:

1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and well-being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduce inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnerships for the goals



# Plan

The Yass Valley CSP consists of five themes and strategic objectives:

## CO. Our community

We are a network of vibrant, inclusive and diverse communities that value our rural lifestyle.

## EC. Our economy

We have a strong regional economy experiencing sustainable growth, which provides for a diverse range of employment opportunities.

## EN. Our environment

We appreciate our range of rural landscapes and habitats and are stewards of the natural environment for future generations.

## IN. Our infrastructure

Our community is well serviced and connected to built, social and communications infrastructure.

## CL. Our civic leadership

Our leaders operate ethically and implement good governance.

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





# CO. Our community

We are a network of vibrant, inclusive and diverse communities that value our rural lifestyle.

Related Sustainable Development Goals



Strategic objectives	Strategies	Council's role	Our partners
Our health and wellbeing are supported by equitable access to services.	CO.1 Our community can access health and community services that support physical health and mental wellbeing.	Collaborate Advocate	Health services Community services Community members Community groups CRJO
We have a vibrant, inclusive, and creative community life.	CO.2 Events celebrate the identity of our towns and villages, heritage and culture.	Provide Collaborate	Traditional Owners and First Nations people Community members Community groups
	CO.3 Creative expression through arts and culture is encouraged.	Provide Collaborate	
	CO.4 Traditional Owners and First Nations to Country is recognised and supported.	Collaborate Advocate	
	CO.5 Community development is supported to enhance resilience and connection.	Provide Collaborate	
Our community is connected, safe and proud.	CO.6 Community connectivity and informal support networks support participation in a broad range of activities.	Collaborate	Community members Community groups NSW government Emergency services Community services
	CO.7 We support and promote services, community groups and local initiatives as a way of including new residents and supporting existing residents.	Provide Collaborate Advocate	
	CO.8 We support our community partners to foster respect and safety.	Provide Collaborate Advocate	



## Supporting documents, plans or strategies

Disability Inclusion Action Plan - 2024-2026

Yass Valley Reconciliation Action Plan

# EC. Our economy

We have a strong regional economy experiencing sustainable growth, which provides for a diverse range of employment opportunities.

## Related Sustainable Development Goals



Strategic objectives	Strategies	Council's role	Our partners
Our location attracts business and industry to our region, boosting our local economy and jobs.	EC.1 Enable business and industry growth and development.	Provide Collaborate Advocate	Business and industry NSW Government ACT Government CRJO RDA Southern NSW & ACT
	EC.2 Promote the region as an ideal location for businesses and industry.	Provide Collaborate Advocate	
Our local established and emerging businesses are supported to thrive.	EC.3 Foster a diverse, adaptive and innovative agricultural industry.	Provide Collaborate Advocate	Business and industry NSW government Australian Government
	EC.4 Support businesses to develop by streamlined process and business support.	Collaborate	
	EC.4 Businesses are supported and resilient to adapt and respond to shocks and natural disasters.	Collaborate	
	EC.5 The local and regional tourism offering is expanded, increasing visitation to the region.	Collaborate	
Our community can access education, training and employment options.	EC.6 Deliver diverse educational programs within the community, from early childhood through to higher education.	Advocate	Education and training providers Business and industry Community members
	EC.7. Create clear and accessible pathways that connect education and training with employment opportunities, ensuring a smooth transition from learning to work.	Advocate	
	EC.8. Foster job creation and equip employers to develop a skilled and capable workforce.	Collaborate Advocate	



## Supporting documents, plans or strategies

- Tablelands Destination Development Plan
- Southern Tablelands Regional Economic Development Strategy

# EN. Our environment

We appreciate our range of rural landscapes and habitats and are stewards of the natural environment for future generations.

## Related Sustainable Development Goals



Strategic objectives	Strategies	Council's role	Our partners
Our natural environment is maintained, protected and enhanced in line with community expectations.	EN.1 Protect and enhance the existing natural environment, including flora and fauna native to the region.	Collaborate	Water authorities Landholders Community groups Community members
	EN.2 Implement effective integrated weed management.	Provide Collaborate	
	EN.3 Protect and rehabilitate waterways, catchments, and groundwater.	Collaborate	
Our community is resilient to climate impacts.	EN.4 Investigate and implement approaches to reduce our carbon footprint.	Provide Collaborate	Service providers Business and industry Community groups
	EN.5 Mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change and adopt environmentally sustainable practices.	Collaborate	
We have a robust planning framework that protects and maintains our rural character and natural landscapes.	EN.6 Growth is strategically planned to ensure liveability.	Provide Collaborate	Housing providers Community groups Community members NSW Government Australian Government
	EN.7 Plan for sufficient residential and economic land availability and employment generation.	Provide Collaborate	
	EN.8 Plan for the provision of a variety of affordable and quality housing types.	Collaborate Advocate	
	EN.9 Our local character is maintained through the protection and preservation of our built, cultural and natural heritage.	Collaborate Advocate	



## Supporting documents, plans or strategies

- Yass Valley Council Settlement Strategy 2036
- Local Strategic Planning Statement
- Onsite Sewage Management System Strategy - 2019

# IN. Our infrastructure

Our community is well serviced and connected to built, social and communications infrastructure.

## Related Sustainable Development Goals



Strategic objectives	Strategies	Council's role	Our partners
We have transport links that connect towns within the region and increase access to significant centres.	IN.1 Deliver improved and increased public and community transport services within the region.	Advocate Provide Collaborate	NSW Government Australian Government Transport providers Community services
	IN.2 Plan for, maintain and improve road networks.	Advocate	
	IN.3 Seek funding to improve road conditions and connectivity.	Provide	
	IN.4 Expand and connect footpaths, trails, and cycleways to encourage walking, cycling, and other forms of sustainable transportation		
We are proud of our liveable and accessible local places and spaces.	IN.5 Ensure community facilities are comfortable, accessible, and meet diverse resident needs.	Provide Collaborate	Community members Community groups
	IN.6 Preserve and enhance green open spaces, ensuring accessibility, maintenance, and natural beauty.	Provide Collaborate	
	IN.7 Encourage community pride through the beautification and upkeep of our villages and towns.	Provide Collaborate	
	IN.8 Invest in quality sports and recreation facilities that promote active lifestyles across all ages.	Provide Provide	
	IN.9 Develop and maintain parks, gardens, and playgrounds that offer safe, inclusive spaces for relaxation and play.		
	IN.10 Design functional streetscapes that enhance local character, promote walking, and create a sense of place.		



Strategic objectives	Strategies	Council's role	Our partners
Our essential infrastructure is sound and reliable.	IN.11 Ensure high quality water supply options for the towns in the region.	Provide Collaborate	Australian Government Community groups CRJO NSW Government RDASI Service providers Telecommunications providers Water authorities
	IN.12 Provide safe and efficient sewerage services across the region.	Provide	
	IN.13 Our waste management practices are accessible and efficient.	Provide Collaborate	
	IN.14 Mobile telephone blackspot areas are removed.	Advocate	
	IN.15 Deliver a reliable telephone and high speed internet communication network.	Advocate	

## Supporting documents, plans or strategies

- Bike Plan and Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP) - 2017-2027
- Digital Yass Valley - Smart Region Strategy - 2017
- Yass Valley Open Space Strategy
- Binalong Recreation Ground Masterplan
- Yass & Villiage Masterplans
- Victoria Park Masterplan

# CL. Our civic leadership

Our leaders operate ethically and implement good governance.

Related Sustainable Development Goals



Strategic objectives	Strategies	Council's role	Our partners
Council is an effective, responsible and innovative organisation.	CL.1 Council resources, practices and processes are undertaken in a safe and efficient manner that meets legislative requirements.	Provide Collaborate	Community members Community groups CRJO RDA Southern NSW & ACT NSW Government Australian Government
	CL.2 Governance provides a sound basis for decision making.	Provide Collaborate	
	CL.3 Council actively participates in regional bodies such as CRJO to identify innovations and opportunities for our region.	Provide Collaborate	
Our community is informed and engaged in decision making.	CL.4 Our community is empowered to access engagement opportunities and provide input into the future direction of the region.	Provide Collaborate	Community members Community groups
	CL.5 Residents have access to timely, relevant and accurate information about issues that affect them.	Provide Collaborate	



## Supporting documents, plans or strategies

Community Engagement Strategy

# Our progress

## Working together

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

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

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

## Review

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

## Reporting

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

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

## Measures

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



Measure	Source	Baseline	Desired trend
<b>Community</b>			
Personal Wellbeing Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	75.9	Stabilise
Community Wellbeing Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	5.5	Increase
Sense of Belonging Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	5.6	Stabilise or increase
Median Household Income (weekly)	ABS Census 2021	\$2310	Stabilise
Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSED)	ABS SEIFA2021	1062	Stabilise
Equity and Inclusion Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	3.9	Increase
Percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domains	Australian Early Development Census 2021	22.1%	Decrease
Life expectancy at birth for all persons	Health Stats NSW 2020	83.8 years	Increase
Persons with a long-term health condition as a percentage of total population	ABS Census 2021	57.0%	Decrease
Persons with a mental health condition as a percentage of total population	ABS Census 2021	10.0%	Decrease
Voluntary Work for an organisation (all persons)	ABS Census 2021	22.2%	Decrease
General Psychological Distress	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	10.2	Decrease
Crime and Safety Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	4.0	Decrease
Mortgage costs >30% of income	Profile ID	10.8%	Stabilise
Rent costs >30% of income	Profile ID	26.2%	Stabilise
Access to general health services	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	5.0	Increase
Access to specialist health services	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	3.4	Increase
Access to mental health services	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	3.8	Increase

Measure	Source	Baseline	Desired trend
<b>Our Economy</b>			
Gross regional product as a % of total State Gross Regional Product 2024	Profile ID 2024	0.11%	Increase
Total GST registered businesses 2023	Profile ID 2024	2244	-
Total tourism sales as a percentage of NSW's total tourism sales 2022-23	Profile ID 2024	0.1%	Increase
Percentage of persons ages 15-64 years with a non-school qualification at Certificate III or above	ABS Census 2021	67.9%	Stabilise
Persons with no non-school qualifications	ABS Census 2021	34.2%	Decrease
Quality of local schools	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	5.2	Increase
Total unemployed looking for work	ABS Small Area Labour Markets 2024	1.2%	Stabilise
<b>Environmental</b>			
Landscape and Aesthetics Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	5.7	Increase
Perceived Environmental Health Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	3.6	Increase
CO2e emissions per capita	Snapshot Climate - Australian Emissions Profiles 2021-22	24.5 tonnes	Decrease
Average Development Application lodgement time	NSW Planning Portal 2023-24	10 days	Stabilise
Average assessment days for Development Applications	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	111 days	Decrease

Measure	Source	Baseline	Desired trend
<b>Infrastructure</b>			
Road length per capita	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	72.5 kms	-
Quality of local roads	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	2.7	Decrease
Access to public transport	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	2.5	Decrease
Mains breaks per 100 kms – Water and sewer	NSW Water 2022-23	7.97 per 100 kms of main	Stabilise or decrease
Greenhouse Gas Emissions - Total water and sewer	NSW Water 2022-23	1127 CO2eq	Stabilise
Recycling Rate	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	52.6	Stabilise
Access to Telecommunications Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	3.5	Increase
Number of public halls	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	4	-
Number of public libraries	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	1	-
Open public space	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	256.0 ha	-
Number of public swimming pools (including tidal and rock pools)	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	2	-
<b>Civic leadership</b>			
Operating Performance Ratio	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	-2.7	Increase
Average residential rate	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	\$1157.41	-
Typical residential bill for usage of water and sewerage	NSW Water	\$1014.45	-
Infrastructure backlog ratio	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	1.9	Stabilise
Community Leadership and Collaboration Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	4.7	Increase
Elected Female Councillors	OLG Your Council Report 2022-23	33	-
Having a Say and Being Heard Index	UoC Regional Wellbeing Survey 2021	4.1	Increase



# Acknowledgements

The Yass Valley Community Strategic Plan 2022-2042 has been developed in partnership with Yass Valley Council, the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, and Projectura.

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