

# SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



2020/2024



## From the MAYOR

We have long stated the benefits of our country lifestyle as reason enough to live in Singleton, even before we talk about economic opportunities and state-of-the-art community and recreation facilities. There is so much happening in Singleton right now, and so much more I want for our community, like getting our fair share of Resources for Regions funding, the construction of the Singleton Bypass, diversification of our industries and confidence back in retail and the economy in general. Singleton's Socio-Economic Development Strategy will help deliver our vision for an even more vibrant, progressive, connected, sustainable and resilient community.

Through strategic planning, we can create a liveable regional community that fosters the success and wellbeing of residents, workers, visitors and students. These strategic actions are aligned with our current economic strengths such as natural resources, agriculture, tourism, public administration, heavy manufacturing, viticulture and our world-renowned National Parks.

The Hunter and Singleton local government area is entering a new and exciting era with a growing population, greater economic diversification and expanding global gateways that link the region to the rest of the world. The Hunter is covered with thriving communities, excellent infrastructure, a world-class university, exceptional hospitals, high value manufacturing and a diverse natural environment that underpins the future prosperity of the region.

There are opportunities to be grasped and challenges that need to be addressed before the Singleton local government area can realise its potential as a leading regional economy with exceptional liveability. I am confident that Singleton Council and the region is well placed to realise these opportunities as they arise.

With a long-term vision, robust strategy and carefully planned actions, the Singleton community can solve any encountered issues. I am pleased to be releasing the Singleton Local Government Area Socio-Economic Development Strategy and look forward to working with you in realising our vision.

Cr Sue Moore | Mayor



## From the GENERAL MANAGER

I've spent almost 30 years in local government, and I have seen a lot of things change in that time. But I have never been more excited to be part of the transformation that is happening in Singleton right now — we are moving in a direction that acknowledges our foundations but is embracing new and modern way for both our economy and community to not just function, but thrive.

The Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 paints the big picture for how Singleton will look in seven years' time, but

it's the Socio-Economic Development Strategy that will inform Operational Plan actions to ensure we get there as efficiently as possible.

Council delivers a significant capital works program every year on essential infrastructure across our local government area to a level comparable to any region in Australia. We continue to undertake sweeping actions against the visions in our Community Strategic Plan. For example, when we say we're going to make Singleton a creative, vibrant, inclusive, safe and healthy community, we mean we're going to develop a future plan for Singleton in the areas of arts, culture and recreation and economic growth; and we're going to deliver a program of high-quality events.

When we say we're going to protect and enhance a sustainable environment, we mean we're going to support community organisations to secure funding for environmental projects, advocate for water infrastructure funding that will assist our plans to make our region resilient to drought conditions and we're going to set long term operational and community targets according to Sustainable Development Goals.

The Singleton community and economy is in for an exciting period and this strategy will assist in making every opportunity count. With the direction set and the journey in motion, I can't wait to see what we achieve together. It is a journey we're all on together, and the purpose of it all is for everyone to feel good about living, working, visiting and doing business in Singleton.

Jason Linnane | General Manager

## WANARUAH | WONNARUA

Singleton Council acknowledges the Wanaruah, Wonnarua people and their custodianship of the Land in the Singleton Local Government Area. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders who live within the Singleton Local Government Area and pay our respect to Elders past present and future.

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WE ARE

VIBRANT  
PROGRESSIVE  
RESILIENT  
CONNECTED  
SUSTAINABLE

# PURPOSE

The purpose of this strategy is to articulate how Singleton Council will undertake Socio-Economic Development to ensure the future of the Singleton local government area (LGA) and its residents. This Socio-Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) has been created to provide strategic direction to Council staff to ensure efficient and effective use of internal and external resources in our pursuit to improve the liveability of the Singleton LGA.

This document is not intended to cover every aspect of social and economic development, as Council does not have the resources available for such a strategy. The strategies identified within this document are those that are the most important to the community, and are achievable within current Council funding and resources. The strategies within this document will be used as a source of information when developing Council's Community Strategic Plan and when identifying actions for the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Council's role is to deliver on strategic projects and programs funded by the Operational Plan and informed by the SEDS, collaborate with regional and national stakeholders to deliver projects that span across LGA boundaries and advocate for funding and outcomes that Council have limited influence but are important to our community.



## SINGLETON AT A GLANCE

Singleton Council would like to acknowledge the Wanaruah, Wonnarua People as the traditional owners and custodians of the land within the Singleton local government area. Council pays respect to all Aboriginal Elders, past, present and future and acknowledges the long, rich cultural and spiritual connections to the Singleton area. This connection is evident in the stories and ceremonies, natural landmarks and sacred objects embedded in the landscapes and waterways throughout the region today.

Currently there are over 1200 people living in the Singleton LGA who identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. Singleton Council is committed to the improvement of the wellbeing outcomes of all Aboriginal people living in the LGA of Singleton. Set against the unspoiled World Heritage-listed Wollemi, Yengo and Mount Royal national parks, Singleton is a gateway to scenic vineyards, roads less travelled and bushland beauty. An incredible 40 per cent of the Singleton area is national park, where accessible bush tracks take walkers to gorgeous vistas and picnickers stop to breathe in crisp country air.

Scenic drives are a given in this part of NSW, as are sweeping views of lush farmland. Just north of Singleton is the beautiful Lake St Clair, a popular waterway for fishing, kayaking, sailing and waterskiing.

Stroll Singleton's main streets for its historic buildings that speak to the region's rich heritage, alongside boutique stores and cafes brewing great coffee. The Singleton Historical Society and Museum is housed in the old council chambers (the building itself was an old jail, too) and the Singleton Army Infantry Museum provides a detailed look at Australia's Infantry Corps history, customs and traditions.

Nearby, Sacred Spaces at the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy is part 19th-century architectural jewel, part appreciation of the vital role the 'motherhouse' played in the life of the region's nuns. From town, it's a quick drive along Putty Road to Broke Fordwich, a pretty valley framed by the Brokenback and Hunter mountain ranges.

Singleton has a powerful industry base, significant agricultural lands, skilled labour force, is located on major transport routes and is home to the 1,500ha Lone Pine Army Barracks and the Singleton Army Training Area. Singleton is an attractive business and commercial destination, with major industries including mining, heavy manufacturing, construction, Defence, public administration, agricultural production and viticulture.

As the gateway between the Upper and Lower Hunter, the newly opened Hunter Expressway has made Singleton even more accessible to the Port and coastal attractions of Newcastle, as well as an easy 2.5 hours' drive to Sydney. Rail and air transport links allow convenient access to major cities on the eastern seaboard and beyond.



POPULATION  
23,496



50.9% MALE  
49.1% FEMALE



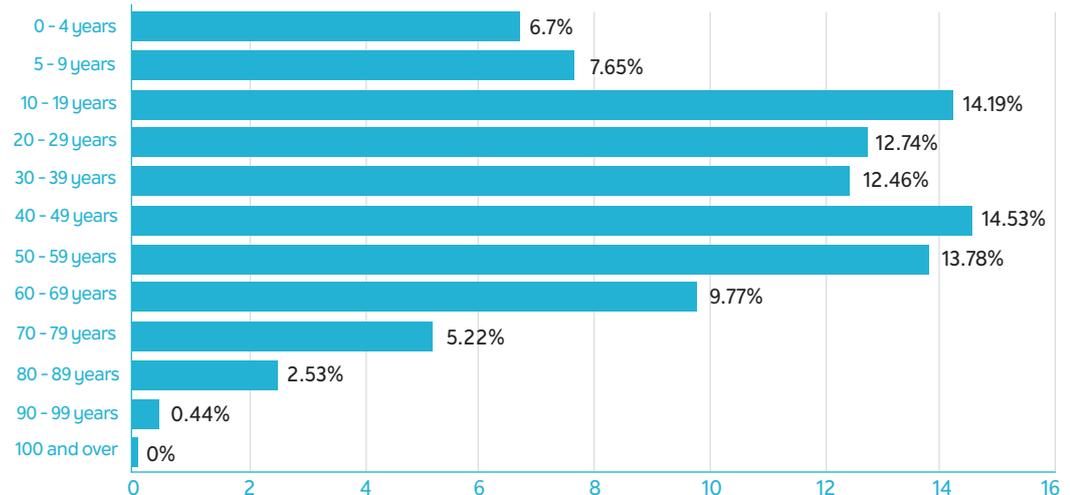
LGA COVERS  
4893km<sup>2</sup>

# DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

## POPULATION

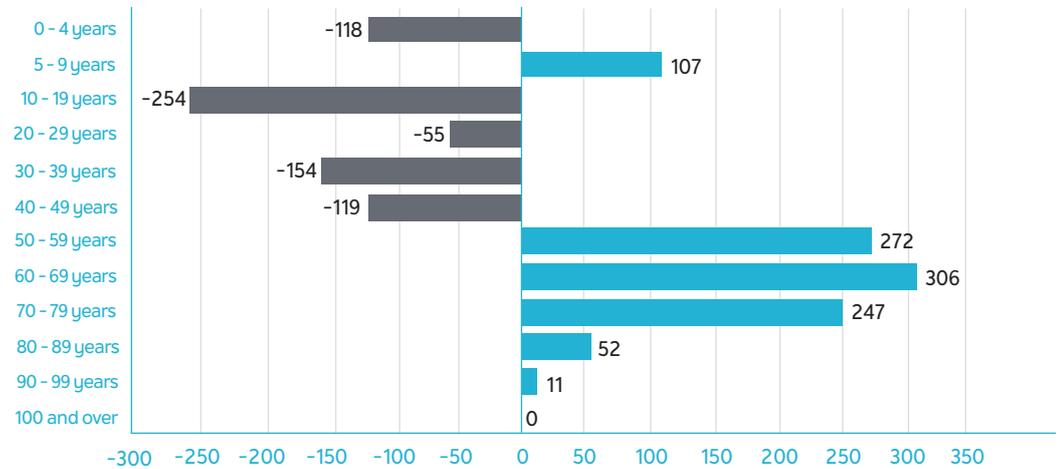
Singleton has a current estimated residential population of 23,496 and has grown at a rate of 0.5% over the past ten years. By 2036, it can be expected that Singleton will have grown by around 2,375 residents with a further 880 dwellings required, supporting a relatively stable construction industry.

Singleton population by age is shown in the graph.



## POPULATION CHANGE

There is a general trend towards an ageing population. There has been a population decline in under 50's and an increase in over 50's, with the exception of 5-9 year olds where there has been a net increase of 107 children since 2011. The greatest downturn in population is in the 10-19 year age group.



## AGEING POPULATION

There were 4027 people from the Singleton LGA aged 60 and over as at Census 2016, which represents 17.5% of the population and an increase from 13.4% since 2006. Over the next 20 years, numbers of people aged 65 and over are expected to double within the Singleton LGA. 75% of older people own their own home and 70% of those indicate that their home will still be suitable in 10 years.



## EDUCATION

The typical Singleton resident has completed year 12 and holds a certificate in an engineering or management related field.



## DIVERSITY

The majority of Singleton's immigrants arrived in Australia between 2004 to 2014. Five years ago, 33% of residents did not live within the Singleton LGA and 1% did not live in Australia. 6% of Singleton residents are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, 3% speak a second language and 4% are not Australian Citizens.



## FAMILY STATUS

88% of residents are married or de facto and 12% single. 4% of residents are lone parents and 80% of lone parents are female.



## HOUSING

The typical resident lives in a standalone dwelling (87%) that contains 4 bedrooms (41%) is owned with a mortgage (42%) and is occupied by 4 people (25%).



## WORK

The typical resident works full time (46%), is an employee (83%), works in the private sector (82%), works over 49 hours per week (22%), drives to work (66%) and works in a technical trade (18%) in the mining industry (24%).



## TRANSPORT

74% of Singleton LGA residents drive to work in a single journey by car while 80.5% use only one method for the journey. Conversely, 0.35% of working population used public transport (bus or rail) to travel to work, 3.7% of commuters used carbon neutral means such as walking or bicycle and 4.3% worked from home.



## LIFE EXPECTANCY

The life expectancy of a child born in Singleton in 2015 is 84.1 for females and 79.8 for males, slightly less than the NSW average of 85.0 and 80.9 respectively.



## INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

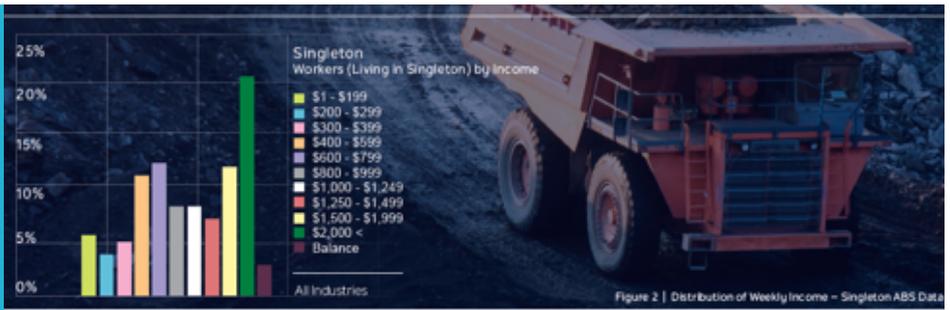
The population of people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander is 1,285 which represents 5.6% of the population. This compares to 4.5% of the Hunter Region population. There has been an increase of 295 people (1.3%) identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander since 2011.



# ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

In terms of employment, Singleton boasts a current unemployment rate of 4.2%. There are 10,144 employed residents in Singleton with 7,362 of those both living and working in the LGA. Around 24% of Singleton residents are employed in the mining sector. Overall, Singleton provides 16,325 jobs to the regional economy with 6,626 of those jobs being in the mining sector. As such, Singleton, through the mining industry, is a significant contributor of jobs to the wider region.

More than half of Singleton workers earn more than \$1,000 per week as compared to 41% for the Hunter as a whole and 43% for NSW.



## ENDOWMENTS

Endowments are strengths that a regional economy possesses and can capitalise on. Economic principles suggest that endowments play a key role in the economic development of regions.

Economic development should therefore concentrate on factors that enable the growth of endowment-based industries, as well as building local leadership and institutional capacity and capabilities to facilitate businesses and public agencies and services to capitalise on the opportunities that a region's endowments present.

### The endowments of the Singleton LGA are:

- The Singleton LGA has a large land area, covering 489,335 hectares

### An abundance of natural resources:

- The region has abundant, accessible, high-quality coal resources (including thermal and metallurgical coal)
- The region has a diverse range of soil types suitable for a broad range of agricultural industries which totals approximately 212,000 hectares
- 211,000 hectares of National Parks (Yengo, Wollemi, Mt Royal), State Forests and Biodiversity Offsets
- Glennies Creek Dam and Lake St Clair
- The Hunter River
- The Singleton LGA is home to part of the Hunter Valley's internationally recognised wine region
- One of three world-renowned Equine Centres, with significant breeding and training facilities, is located within or adjacent to the Singleton LGA
- Close proximity to the large populations of Sydney and Newcastle

### Quality Infrastructure:

- The Singleton LGA is positioned on the nationally significant transport infrastructure of the Hunter Express Way, New England Highway and the Golden Highway
- The Singleton LGA is positioned on the Hunter Valley Coal Rail Network
- The Singleton LGA is positioned on the Interregional Rail Network

- Established power stations, high voltage transmission lines and associated grid infrastructure and gas infrastructure are located within and adjacent to the Singleton LGA
- The Port of Newcastle is within 60 minutes of the Singleton LGA
- Newcastle Airport, which is NSW's second busiest airport, is within 60 minutes of the Singleton LGA
- The University of Newcastle is within 45 minutes of the Singleton LGA
- Singleton has access to land for residential expansion
- Lone Pine Army Barracks is located within the Singleton LGA
- The Singleton Regional Livestock Market and Saleyards
- Significant Indigenous Heritage such as the Biaime Cave

### Significant social strengths such as:

- Hunter New England (HNE) Health Singleton Base Hospital services the Singleton LGA. The Hospital features an Emergency Department, 17 visiting Medical Officers, visiting specialists including Gynaecologist, Nephrologist, Cardiologist, Respiratory, Sleep dynamics
- Community health services are delivered by HNE Health from the newly developed Singleton Base Hospital wing and include; Education programs: For example Risky Business, Pit stops in local secondary schools, Regular Clinics, Counselling, Community Adolescent Mental Health service
- Non-acute Mental Health services in Singleton include; 0.6FTE Mental Health Nurse who is located at Maitland and has a caseload of 15-20 Singleton clients, access to a team of senior allied health staff including Psychiatric, Rehabilitation Technician, Social Worker, Psychologist Registrar fortnightly clinic into Singleton.
- Singleton TAFE Connected Learning Centre increases the range of courses that are available
- Singleton has 1.40 GP's per 1,000 residents, which is the average for rural communities. There are 33 GP's in private practice of which 17 are visiting Medical Officers at Singleton Base Hospital
- Community managed organisations are well represented in Singleton or are outreached from other areas including NDIS providers, Counselling Services, Youth Services and Aged Care
- Health Services provided by Ungooroo Aboriginal Health
- Strong Arts and Culture scene with a council owned building utilised for local groups, annual Singleton Art prize, a range of arts and cultural groups and funding allocated for an arts and culture centre
- A range of annual community events delivered by Council which engage the community and include; Seniors Festival, NAIDOC celebrations, Blast, Christmas on John Street, Australia Day Twilight and Firelight events



# THE ROLE OF COUNCIL IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Private sector businesses, the federal government, state government and local government remain the most significant contributors to the Singleton economy via the expansion of business operations, through investment in infrastructure, training, skills and education.

Council's overarching role is to provide the appropriate environment to enable sustainable economic development by providing the following functions as:

- A **leader** in social and community development
- An **investor** in local infrastructure
- A **collaborator** with local businesses, stakeholders, networks and community groups
- A **provider** of services to the local community
- An **advocate** on behalf of the community to achieve improvements and benefits within the community
- A **communicator**, by raising awareness around issues and opportunities
- A **regulator**, by implementing legislative provisions such as waste management, development controls, environmental management, and energy and water reduction measures
- An **employer** of choice

## OUR VISION

Vibrant | Progressive | Connected | Sustainable | Resilient

Singleton's Community Strategic Plan, adopted in 2017, sets the foundation for this strategy by clearly articulating our community's vision for its future. Built on the pillars of Our People, Our Places, Our Environment, Our Economy and Our Leadership it sets the benchmark for success for Singleton's future.

**The Singleton Council socio-economic vision is to improve the living standards, wellbeing and happiness of residents through applying socio economic principles to planning and actions.**

The Singleton Council Socio-Economic Development Strategy will assist Singleton Council achieve the vision outlined within the Community Strategic Plan.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC VALUES

The core socio-economic values shown below are supportive of and complementary to the Singleton Community Strategic Plan pillars, of "Our People, Our Places, Our Environment, Our Economy and Our Leadership".

The following eleven core socio-economic values are used by Singleton Council to ensure that a balanced planning approach will be taken in guiding the Singleton Council LGA into a prosperous, rewarding and harmonious future.

- **Entrepreneurial and Business Support** - Create an environment that fosters and supports business, promotes job creation, supports entrepreneurship and diversifies our industry base.
- **Investment Attraction and Industry Diversification** - Provide tools, systems and information to enable capital and business investment attraction from government and non-government sources.
- **Visitor Economy** - Provide supportive legislation, investment in infrastructure, programming, marketing support and grant funding information that assists industry expansion in areas such as tourism and arts and culture.
- **Infrastructure** - Provide residents and businesses with access to infrastructure at the standard equal to or better than what is available in our cities.
- **Health and Wellbeing** - Support and promote activities that provide personal fulfilment for residents such as arts, personal development and beautiful outdoor spaces. Support and promote sporting activities and events that provide physical development and pathways to excellence. Minimise the impacts of social issues such as homelessness and mental health issues.
- **Social Support** - Seek a collaborative approach, which ensures planning for the region is integrated, sustainable and equitable and delivers the best possible quality of life for our community.
- **Education and Training** - Provide residents with unimpeded access to education (preschool, primary school, secondary school, vocational and university), training and equipment to create the foundations of a prosperous economy.
- **Environmental Management** - Undertake short and long-term environmental planning that preserves regional biodiversity, minimises waste, supports long-term community sustainability and minimises environmental impacts for future generations.
- **Equity** - Promote and foster a community where benefits and rewards are the same for all demographics such as gender, age, race or religions. Demographics should not be a determining factor in an individual or group of people's income, life expectancy, health or education.
- **Community Engagement** - Place the communities needs at the heart of socio-economic development by engaging consistently, thoroughly and regularly.
- **Measuring Success** - Capture and measure community and economic health metrics to inform decision making in delivering a creative, vibrant, inclusive, safe and healthy community.

# FUNDING + SUPPORT

Singleton Council supports and funds socio-economic development in a variety of ways within the Singleton LGA. Council directly supports local jobs through the direct employment of council staff and the indirect employment of workers through the issue of contracts for services. Singleton Council assists not-for-profit organisations with obtaining state and federal grant funds, provides business start-up and business resilience support, provides advice and guidance to industry and advocates for projects and initiatives that are important to our community.

Council advocates for improved access to grant funding as a mining affected region, advocates for a reduction in 1:1 grant funding co-contributions that prevent the approval of local projects, advocates for real government funding to assist our region transition into a sustainable economy for future generations and advocates for water infrastructure funding that will ensure the Singleton LGA has an agriculture industry that is resilient to drought.

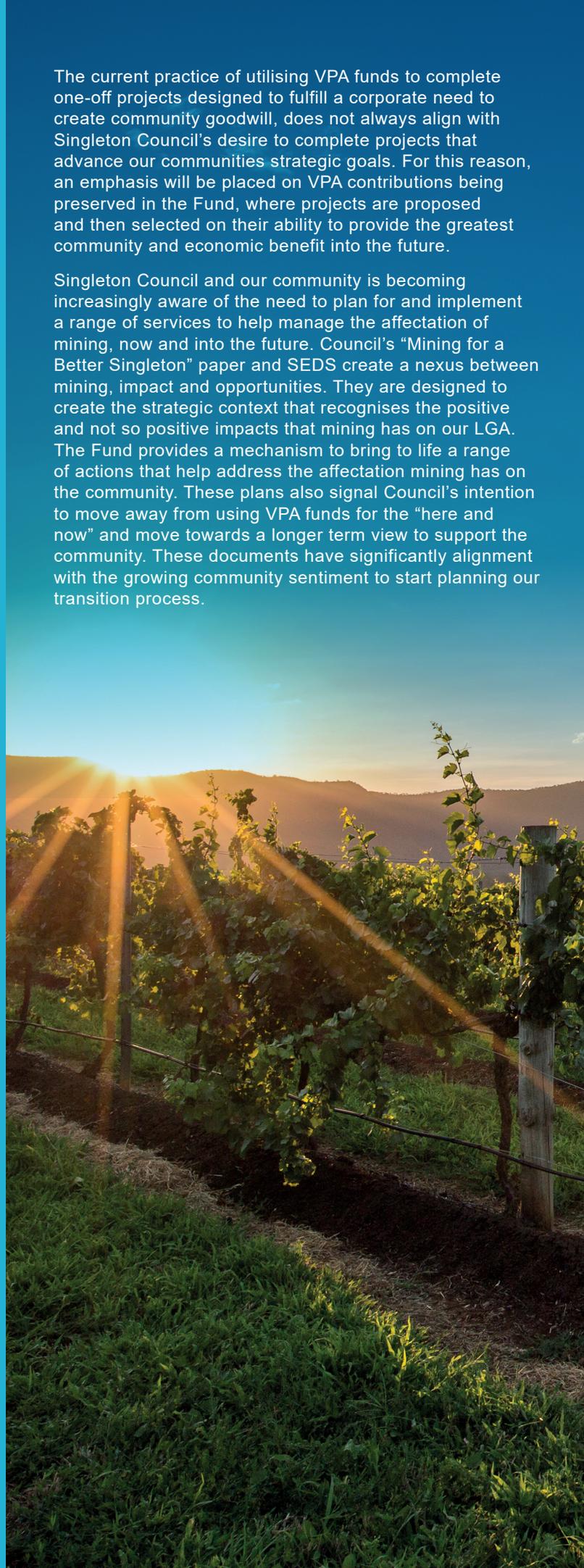
## Singleton Council provides socio-economic support to the Singleton LGA through:

- Infrastructure maintenance on roads, buildings, parks and other council owned infrastructure
- Infrastructure improvements and capital works on roads, buildings, water, sewer, parks and other council owned infrastructure
- Children services (long day care, mobile pre-school, OOSH)
- Library services
- Delivery of targeted community socio-economic programs
- Youth services and the Youth Venue
- Recreational facilities (pool, parks, Civic Centre, sporting fields, Lake St Clair, etc)
- Public events
- Grant management and grant applications
- Collaboration and interaction with government agencies and industry regarding programs and initiatives that provide community benefit
- Communications and engagement
- Strategic land use planning and development approvals
- Pro-active investment attraction initiatives
- Social and economic future planning

Singleton Council has developed a Community & Economic Development Fund (CEDF), where mining related Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) funds can be set aside for the long term benefit of the community. The CEDF and the Singleton Socio-Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) will work together to achieve improved outcomes for Singleton LGA residents, workers and visitors.

The current practice of utilising VPA funds to complete one-off projects designed to fulfill a corporate need to create community goodwill, does not always align with Singleton Council's desire to complete projects that advance our communities strategic goals. For this reason, an emphasis will be placed on VPA contributions being preserved in the Fund, where projects are proposed and then selected on their ability to provide the greatest community and economic benefit into the future.

Singleton Council and our community is becoming increasingly aware of the need to plan for and implement a range of services to help manage the affectation of mining, now and into the future. Council's "Mining for a Better Singleton" paper and SEDS create a nexus between mining, impact and opportunities. They are designed to create the strategic context that recognises the positive and not so positive impacts that mining has on our LGA. The Fund provides a mechanism to bring to life a range of actions that help address the affectation mining has on the community. These plans also signal Council's intention to move away from using VPA funds for the "here and now" and move towards a longer term view to support the community. These documents have significantly alignment with the growing community sentiment to start planning our transition process.



# THE ROLE OF ADVOCACY IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Putting our community first is paramount for Singleton Council. It is the cornerstone of everything we do, which is why the Singleton Advocacy Agenda plays an important role in laying the foundation for Council and the community to commence action today that will create long-lasting change into the future. If acted upon, this agenda will form the blueprint for our local government area's transformation.

Community-based advocacy is a powerful way for people to mobilise action around matters that are important to them. When the community, businesses and all levels of government work together collaboratively, great outcomes are possible. Looking ahead to the next 20 - 30 years, Singleton will continue to grow and transform. Council will seek out opportunities to ensure the best services and amenities for our residents, businesses and visitors. Public transport, state-of-the-art medical services, education facilities and sustainable post-mining land use are just a few examples of the changing projects that Council will advocate for. One of the ways to strengthen an area is to ensure it has a strong, united voice on matters that are important to our residents, our communities and our businesses. This agenda paves the way for greater collaboration between Singleton Council and State and Federal Governments to transform our town into an innovative, dynamic and sustainable hub of the future.

To deliver on its full potential, Singleton requires significant investment — both public and private. Singleton Council calls on the NSW and Federal Governments, to partner with us to help drive the major initiatives that will shape the future of our area for decades to come. That's why Council has identified the following advocacy priorities for our region.

The priorities listed in the Advocacy Agenda have been developed with the help of our community through input into the Community Strategic Plan (CSP). But Council alone cannot deliver all the outcomes and objectives of our CSP. Shared decision making and effective working partnerships with government agencies, non-government organisations, business and, of course, our local community is critical to our collective success as a region. Every one of us has a role to play in realising our shared future. Our role as a Council is to influence decision makers to support policy change and investment in our communities. To enable this, we need to be clear about what our advocacy priorities are and have a planned, coordinated and targeted approach to advocacy that brings about change. The Singleton Advocacy Agenda will act as a stand alone document that is reviewed six monthly to ensure currency and relevance.



# NATIONAL, STATE + REGIONAL ECONOMIC CONTEXT

There is a significant regional planning framework that informs the future direction for the Singleton LGA. Much of this landscape has been produced in response to particular drivers for change. A summary of regionally significant documents is shown in the table below.

## SUMMARY OF KEY REGIONAL PLANS + STRATEGIES



### 2015 | Premier's Priorities 2015 - 2019

The Premier of NSW has committed to delivering 12 Premier's Priorities. The priorities aim to keep the economy strong, create jobs, deliver world-class services, protect the vulnerable and ensure that all NSW citizens and communities share in the state's success.



### 2016 | Hunter Regional Plan 2036 (NSW Government, Department of Planning & Environment)

Recognises the Upper Hunter and Singleton LGA will undergo transition in context of ongoing changes in the structure and location of the mining industry. Priorities in the Hunter Regional Plan relate to reshaping the Upper Hunter economy to transition to post mining. Four goals identified for the Hunter to become:

- The Leading Regional Economy in NSW
- A Biodiversity Rich Natural Environment
- Thriving Communities
- Greater Housing Choice and Jobs



### 2017 | Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Action Plan (NSW Government, Singleton Council, Muswellbrook Shire Council, Upper Hunter Shire Council, Dungog Shire Council and Newcastle University)

Examines future industry options for the Upper Hunter to support transition. The post-mining economy to be centred on intensive agribusiness, tourism, energy transitions, new technologies, mining support, sector renewables and research. Identifies five strategic themes:

- Driving Land Use Certainty
- Encouraging New Industry Investment
- Developing New Market Opportunities
- Planning For Water Security
- Government/Industry Engagement



### 2018 | A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW (NSW Government)

The Hunter Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018–2022 (the Strategy) sets out a long term economic vision and associated strategy for the Hunter Functional Economic Region (Hunter, the Region). Economic research suggests that regions are becoming increasingly specialised in the key engine industries that drive regional economies and a region's relative strengths (endowments) play a key role in determining these specialisations.

This Strategy is based on industry specialisations and opportunities that leverage the region's key endowments — including its natural resources; infrastructure; established clusters and institutions; location; and labour force and lifestyle — to guide investment and other actions over the period 2018 to 2022.

Three core strategies have been identified to capture the opportunities, manage risks and deliver on the vision. These are:

- Improve inter and intra-connectivity of the Region to boost business opportunities in the 'engine' industries of Agriculture, Mining and Manufacturing
- Manage transitions and risks to the Coal Mining and Electricity Generation sectors and diversify the Region's economy to build resilience
- Improve infrastructure, services and amenities to fully realise and sustain the Region's growth potential



### 2018 | Social Report - Insights on inequality (Committee for the Economic Development of Australia CEDA)

Committee for the Economic Development of Australia CEDA report examines key ideas and concepts of inequality, including inequality of opportunity and the future of inequality. Insights on inequality aims to better understand inequality as an economic concept, equality of opportunities, and the potential inequality challenges Australia faces in the future.



### 2017 | **The fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan (COAG Health Council)**

Commits all governments to work together to achieve integration in planning and service delivery at a regional level. This plan is a significant reform for the way mental health services are delivered and to improve collaboration between Health and CMOs who now have responsibility for non-acute care of MH clients on an NDIS plan.



### 2018 | **Destination Sydney Surrounds North Destination Management Plan 2018 - 2020 (NSW Government and Destination NSW)**

Looks at actions required to drive the visitor economy. It identified seven priorities including:

- Advocate for the Visitor Economy and foster greater collaboration between regions
- Facilitate destination infrastructure development
- Facilitate product and experience development
- Facilitate major events growth
- Maximise the benefits of funding programs
- Facilitate industry skills development and knowledge
- Improve destination marketing effectiveness



### 2018 | **Hunter Regional Economic Development Strategy (NSW Government, Singleton Council, Cessnock City Council, Maitland City Council Muswellbrook Shire Council, Upper Hunter Shire Council, Dungog Shire Council and Port Stephens Council)**

Developed under the Hunter Regional Plan to deliver NSW State Government's Economic Development Strategy for NSW for the Hunter Functional Economic Region. Its objectives are to:

- Build on and enhance existing regional strengths
- Identify new opportunities to enhance the development, performance and competitiveness of the region
- Attain long term sustainability



### 2017 | **AGL NSW Generation Plan**

Plan produced by AGL and under review by Federal Government for Liddell Power Station beyond its announced retirement in 2022. It proposes a mix of high efficiency gas peakers, renewables, battery storage and demand response, and conversion of generators at Liddell into synchronous condensers. The feasibility of a pumped hydro project in the Hunter region is being explored with the NSW Government. The plan may have significant workforce and industry structure implications for Singleton with AGL announcing it will spend more than \$200 million and create 90 jobs during work to upgrade and maintain the coal fired Bayswater Power Station.



### 2016 | **NSW Government Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+ (NSW Government)**

The vision for the New South Wales Cultural Infrastructure Plan is that it will:

- Support strong communities and economies
- Provide access to space for community participation in culture
- Provide infrastructure for a collaborative and thriving cultural sector
- Create impact through partnerships and capacity building
- Be a leading cultural destination of the Asia Pacific
- Leverage diversity and unique cultural identities across NSW



### 2017 | **Singleton Community Strategic Plan 2017 – 2027 (Singleton Council)**

Singleton's Community Strategic Plan adopted in 2017 sets the foundation for the Future Plan by clearly articulating our community's vision for its future. Built on the pillars of Our People, Places, Environment, Economy and Leadership it sets the benchmark for success for Singleton's future as:

- a creative, vibrant, inclusive, safe and healthy community
- a well-planned, sustainable, accessible and safe community with vibrant places and spaces
- we value, protect and enhance a sustainable environment
- we have an innovative, sustainable and diverse economy
- resilient, informed, connected and engaged
- an effective and efficient operational Council
- a highly functioning and progressive elected Council



### 2013 | **Singleton Local Environmental Plan (Singleton Council)**

This Plan aims to make local environmental planning provisions for land in Singleton in accordance with the relevant standard environmental planning instrument under Section 33A of the Act

# STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The following strategic focus areas have been selected by Singleton Council as a means of achieving our vision to improve the living standards, wellbeing and happiness of residents through applying socio economic principles to planning and actions.

## ENTREPRENEURIAL + BUSINESS SUPPORT

The purpose of this focus area is to create an environment that fosters and supports business, promotes job creation, supports entrepreneurship and diversifies our industry base.

Economic theory widely recognises that technological advancements and innovation lead to productivity increases within the local, regional and national economics. Business creation and growth will also lead to increased employment, reduced unemployment rates, increased income and social advantage. For these reasons, Singleton Council aims to foster and encourage ideas to a point where they can be realised in a meaningful and productive way.

Action	Timing
1 Assist start-up businesses within the Singleton LGA by maintaining and expanding the Business Start-up Assistance Program	Ongoing
2 Assist businesses within the Singleton LGA by maintaining and expanding the Business Resilience Training Program	Ongoing
3 Assist business to business sales within the Singleton LGA by launching and promoting the Localised Business Network Website	Ongoing
4 Assist art related businesses within the Singleton LGA by providing a dedicated space to promote art culture and heritage	> 3 year
5 Create an indigenous Business Support Program focused on brand creation and business promotion	> 3 year
6 Work with the Singleton Business Chamber to establish a program that promotes buying local	> 3 year

## INVESTMENT ATTRACTION + INDUSTRY DIVERSIFICATION

Today, 25% of Singleton LGA residents and 41% of all jobs within the Singleton LGA are employed in the mining sector. The mining industry accounts for 64% of Singleton's Gross Regional Product (GRP). For this reason, Singleton can be said to have a 'single engine' economy' or one in which there is one key industry that brings money into the region and drives the local economy with nearly all other industries being either enabling industries (those that support the engine industry) or population serving industries (those that support the local population). Whilst there are minor exceptions to this trend (eg, public administration, agriculture and viticulture) they do not significantly drive economic outcomes.

Singleton Council and our regional stakeholders are seeking to utilise our skilled workforce, major industries, research and development experts, infrastructure and networks to build new opportunities for sustainable regional development. Capital investment in regional economic infrastructure is vitally important in maintaining an advantage over our regional and international competitors. Efficient road, rail, air, sea and communications networks allow our regional exporters to move goods and services to their customers more efficiently and therefore reduce costs.

Capital investment in regional social infrastructure is just as important to our community as economic infrastructure. Infrastructure that supports community services, arts, heritage, culture, health and wellbeing is essential for our region's most vulnerable people and will ensure that all residents have the opportunity to live a full and happy life.

## Grants

Federal, state and local grant funds provide an opportunity to build infrastructure and to create community, in addition to what is possible using Council's annual budget. The benefits in receiving grant funding is via direct employment during the construction phase and in the flow on effects from creating jobs and opportunities.

Action	Timing
7 Assist community groups and organisation to apply for relevant grant funding	Ongoing
8 Apply for grant funding to reduce Council expenditure and to fund projects without a funding allocation	Ongoing
9 Advocate to change the Resources for Regions Fund to an allocation based on mining affectation, royalties contribution, reduced benefit cost ratio and reduced co-contribution	Ongoing
10 Advocate to the NSW Government to continue the Stronger Country Community Fund Program	Ongoing
11 Advocate to all levels of government to provide a funding allocation for economic projects. This will allow councils to improve capital works planning and to have the ability to retain experienced project management staff	Ongoing

## Investment attraction

Financial investment is a highly competitive market with investors seeking low risk, above average returns from their equity. For our region to attract investment, investors must first know the advantages and opportunities available.

The Singleton LGA has a variety of endowments that are attractive to investors. These include being located on a regional road and rail corridor, located in close proximity to the Sydney and Newcastle populations, having a skilled labour force, being in close proximity to Newcastle Airport and the Port of Newcastle, having direct access to significant electricity infrastructure and being rich in mineral resources.

Action	Timing
12 Create an investment prospectus for the Singleton LGA	> 1 year
13 Take part in the NSW Government 'Relocate to Regional NSW' project	Ongoing
14 Create case studies that show business relocation and business start-up success stories within the Singleton LGA	> 3 year
15 Add the business case studies to the Council website	> 3 year
16 Update the council website with the latest investment information for our region	Ongoing

## Encourage new industry investment

For industry diversification to occur, new industries need to be established and existing industries need to grow. For the Singleton LGA to attract new industries, there needs to be a competitive advantage or incentive for businesses to be established or relocated from other areas.

Action	Timing
17 Develop a policy and strategy to guide the approach for attracting appropriate economic generating development, managing relationships and best practice approvals process	Ongoing
18 Work closely with governments, universities and industry to identify opportunities within Singleton and the Upper Hunter	Ongoing
19 Engage with AGL regarding the future use of the Liddell and Bayswater power station sites	Ongoing
20 Investigate the opportunities available in ethanol and Bio-valley innovation	Ongoing
21 Advocate for flexible post mining land use that meets the communities current and future needs	Ongoing
22 Advocate for DA approval flexibility that allows for improved access to mining buffer lands within the approval framework	Ongoing
23 Work with NSW Regional Investment in assisting companies to relocate to regional areas	Ongoing
24 Establish a process to identify and encourage new industry investment	> 1 year

## Planning for water security

Singleton is located on the banks of the Hunter River and the Singleton LGA is located in the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment area and has two main water supply schemes. The Singleton water supply scheme receives raw water from Glennies Creek Dam, which is treated at the Obanvale Water Treatment Plant, and the Jerrys Plains water supply scheme which is supplied by AGL Macquarie via a bulk supply agreement with Council. In addition to these two water supply schemes, Hunter Water supplies the town of Branxton.

To ensure our rural and urban communities can thrive, Council and the community must maximise the use of our limited water resources and build capacity within the system to allow for future demand.

Action	Timing
25 Advocate to Water NSW for the construction of a two-way pipeline between Lostock and Glennies Creek Dam, to allow water transfer when excess water is available in one catchment	Ongoing
26 Seek funding for a potable pipeline from Hunter Water Corporation infrastructure to the Singleton Water Utility	> 5 year
27 Seek funding for water standpipe construction throughout the LGA, which will improve access to water in times of drought	Ongoing
28 Obtain funding for the Milbrodale/Bulga water supply project	> 3 year

## Introduce Smart Regions Technology

Using a Long Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN) can offer wide area data acquisition as a low-cost managed service to boost regional productivity and innovation. Data is collected and transmitted by battery powered transmitters with a life of more than ten years. These devices can be used for remote water, gas and electricity meter reading, flow monitoring, sewer overflow monitoring, water level monitoring, weather stations, soil monitors, vehicle tracking and many other purposes.

A LoRaWAN network covering the Singleton LGA would enable businesses and individuals to make efficiency gains and identify innovative projects that will boost productivity and increase profits.

Action	Timing
29 Investigate the viability and cost of setting up a LoRaWAN, which enables Smart Regions Technology to be deployed within the LGA	> 1 year
30 Establish a trial Smart Region Network to determine benefits and costs	> 3 years
31 Investigate installation of electric charging stations	> 3 years
32 Develop Smart Regions Infrastructure within the LGA	> 5 years

## Increase agricultural business output

The Singleton LGA is a region built on agriculture with the majority of the region zoned for this purpose. The region features broad valley floor areas and alluvial soils with a long history of cropping and grazing. The Singleton LGA is home to approximately 550 farms, which have an average size of 284ha and a total land area of 139,561ha. The annual output value of agriculture within the LGA is approximately \$141 million, which is the eighth largest industry.

The Singleton LGA is part of the Hunter Valley Wine Region, which is internationally renowned for viticulture. Jerrys Plain forms part of the internationally acclaimed thoroughbred breeding area and a leading area for Australian Stock horses, thoroughbred bloodstock and breeding.

Action	Timing
33 Seek opportunities to support farm automation and farm robotics	Ongoing
34 Provide information that supports businesses to establish high intensity agriculture businesses within the LGA	Ongoing
35 Promote wine and food tourism via the council website and Visitor Information Centre	Ongoing

## Industry transition

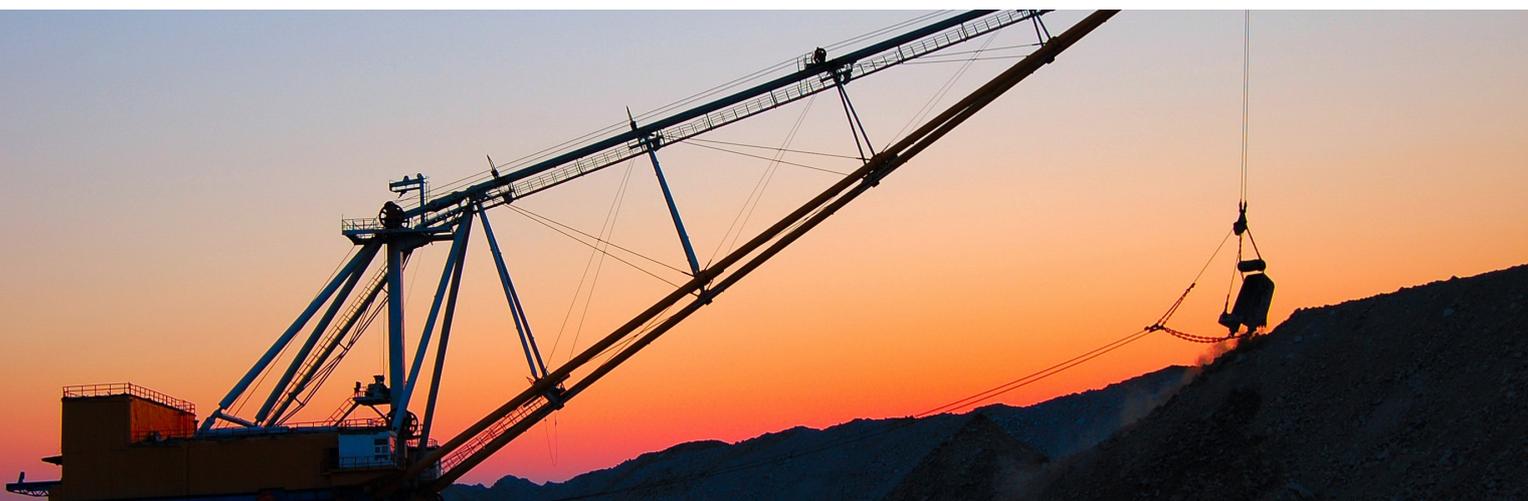
Mining is acknowledged as a transitory industry that makes temporary use of land. Given the magnitude of its operations in the Singleton LGA, the way in which a transition away from mining is managed has significant implications for the long term future of the local community and economy.

The Singleton economy is heavily dependent on mining. The mining sector not only accounts for 25% of local jobs and nearly 41% of all jobs available in the LGA, it also accounts for nearly 64% of the local GRP. The longevity and prosperity of mining in the LGA is hard to predict. As current exploration licences are enacted and mining operations cease site by site, a trend for mining operations to move up the Hunter Valley is likely to emerge. The longevity of each site and the presence of mining in the Singleton LGA will be dependent on a complex interaction of many factors.

The best transition that the Singleton LGA can hope for is one that is gradual and occurs over a period of 10 years or more. However, history has shown us that external market forces often result in scenarios that are sudden and that occur over a much shorter time period.

The following actions have been designed to provide a plan for a moderate to severe mining industry transition if it should occur.

Action	Timing	
36	Monitor mining industry data and trends for industry transition	Ongoing
37	Advocate for a fully funded Transition Authority that includes community members/groups, industry representatives, Local Government, NSW Government, Australian Government and transition experts to manage and oversee transition actions	When required
38	Establish a local employment advisory service to assist with job searching and applications, financial assistance and regional job opportunities	When required
39	Establish a training and education assistance fund to assist displaced workers gain new skills	When required
40	Establish a free counselling service to address stress and mental health within the community	When required
41	Establish a program to fund school expenses for families affected by financial stress	When required
42	Establish a program to fund essential living expenses for families affected by financial stress	When required
43	Seek funding for ongoing mine rehabilitation projects to ensure the final land use meets community expectation	When required
44	Seek funding for ongoing pest and weed management on post mining land	When required
45	Develop an investment prospectus for all under employed post mining land and infrastructure that will assist with attracting investment	When required



## VISITOR ECONOMY

Promoting the diversity and attractions of our region and encouraging visitors to stay and play for extended periods will have a positive impact on the community and economy.

### Increase tourism offerings + develop tourism product

As a visitor destination, the Hunter Valley is Australia's oldest and most visited surviving commercial wine region. Located in the heart of the Hunter region, it is made up of two local Government areas - Cessnock and Singleton, surrounded by World Heritage National Parks but also with a rich heritage of colonial, indigenous and industrial history.

The Singleton LGA has the advantage of being geographically close to the two largest urban populations of NSW - Sydney and Newcastle, yet seen as a clean and green visitor escape. That advantage, with its wine and food experiences, has translated into a well-developed visitor economy, driven by a large day trip market and a growing reputation for leisure events.

The Singleton LGA boasts 211,000 hectares of National Parks and State Forests. Camping and caravanning enthusiasts enjoy easy access to Lake St Clair Camp Ground, Glennies Creek Dam, Yengo National Park, Wollemi National Park, Mount Royal National Park, Putty State Forest and McNamara Park Free Camp Ground.

Action	Timing	
46	Create a business plan for the Lake St Clair camp ground	> 3 year
47	Operate a high quality Visitor Information Centre	Ongoing
48	Enhance our identity and promote the LGA as a destination through development and delivery of a Tourism Strategy	Ongoing
49	Attract visitors by running four (4) free community events per year	Annual
50	Attract visitors by running the Singleton Festival	Bi-annual
51	Support the Hunter Valley Wine Tourism Association (HVWTA) to deliver agreed actions	Ongoing
52	Support Broke Fordwich Wine Tourism Association in promoting their region and offerings	Ongoing
53	Support Around Hermitage in promoting their region and offerings	Ongoing
54	Create a new Singleton LGA tourism guide and map	> 1 year
55	Grow nature based tourism by promoting local offerings	> 3 year
56	Advocate for better access to Yengo, Wollemi and Mount Royal National Parks	> 1 year
57	Advocate for better facilities in Yengo, Wollemi and Mount Royal National Parks	> 1 year
58	Build the region's capacity and reputation as an event destination by providing quality events and infrastructure	Ongoing
59	Support businesses to develop tourism assets within the LGA	Ongoing
60	Work with HVWTA to building on our reputation and attraction as one of Australia's premier visitor destinations, offering a high value experience based around providing quality food and wine experiences	Ongoing
61	Establish a Singleton LGA tourism network	> 3 year
62	Implement the Wine Tourism Sign Strategy in Broke Fordwich	> 5 year
63	Investigate the possibility of a Putty Road Tourism Drive	> 3 year
64	Investigate a lookout with stopping bay on Carrowbrook Road overlooking Glennies Creek Dam	> 5 year
65	Work with stakeholders to increase access to the Baiame Cave	Ongoing
66	Work with stakeholders to improve facilities at the Baiame Cave	Ongoing

## Create an arts + culture identity

Council's aim for arts and culture is to provide social, recreational and cultural services that inspire and entertain, support and promote activities that provide personal fulfilment through arts and culture, encourage personal development by creating beautiful outdoor spaces, support and promote sporting activities and events that provide physical development and pathways to excellence.

Action	Timing
67 Promote our local history and pride in our Heritage	Ongoing
68 Provide public access to the Singleton Civic Art Collection	> 5 year
69 Increase community participation of audiences at concerts, festivals, performances, events and exhibitions	Ongoing
70 Improve the local arts and cultural facilities	> 5 year
71 Support community groups in delivering youth music, art and digital media arts, community artistic collaborations, visual arts exhibition opportunity, music and drama training, multicultural and Aboriginal arts opportunity	Ongoing
72 Develop a Arts and Cultural Strategy for the Singleton LGA	> 3 year
73 Establish an arts and culture network	> 3 year
74 Promote arts and culture via the Council website and other avenues	Ongoing
75 Develop and implement operating model for the Arts and Culture Centre post construction	> 5 year
76 Apply for funding to upgrade the Civic Centre, Rural Halls and Cultural Facilities	Ongoing

## INFRASTRUCTURE

The core strategies around infrastructure are to improve inter and intra-regional connectivity, improve infrastructure, services and amenities to sustain the region's growth potential, realise efficiencies and cater for our communities social and educational needs.

Action	Timing
77 Advocate for funds to connect Singleton Water to Hunter Water to improve water security	Ongoing
78 Construct the Arts and Culture Centre at Townhead Park	> 5 year
79 Advocate for funds to connect Glennies Creek Dam to Lostock Dam to improve water security	Ongoing
80 Continue the Town Centre Revitalisation as described in the Town Centre Master Plan	Ongoing
81 Collaborate with the NSW Government to establish regionally significant infrastructure upgrades within the region	Ongoing
82 Work with AGL to identify and establish the infrastructure required for the Liddell Power Station transition to enable new opportunities	> 3 year
83 Advocate for funding to fast track the Singleton Bypass to improve safety, travel times and congestion	Ongoing
84 Advocate for funding to complete the Golden Highway/New England Highway intersection flyover to improve safety, travel times and congestion	Ongoing
85 Maintain and enhance the Singleton Regional Livestock Markets to enable local livestock sales	> 3 year
86 Advocate for 100% mobile telecommunication coverage and improved fixed line telecommunications infrastructure	Ongoing
87 Advocate for an upgrade to the Singleton Police Station	Ongoing
88 Advocate for funding to reduce the 40 mobile black spots within the LGA	Ongoing

## HEALTH + WELLBEING

Australia's population and our regional population are not only projected to grow and age, but to have an increased life expectancy. Ageing is expected to be more pronounced in regional NSW. By 2038, the health and residential care industry will employ almost 80,000 extra people across regional NSW and account for nearly 20% of regional jobs. Advances in digital and telehealth may accelerate support for older Australians to 'age in place', enabling people to stay in their own home longer if they choose.

### Promote an active + healthy lifestyle

Parks, community spaces and free recreational facilities are vital to a community's sense of belonging and physical wellbeing. Singleton Council is a proud provider of community facilities and services, and will continue to improve existing community infrastructure to meet the community's needs.

Action	Timing
89 Investigate options to improve access to the Hunter River	> 3 year
90 Improve and extend the footpath network	Ongoing
91 Improve open space and public domains	Ongoing
92 Maintain high maintenance standard for parks, community spaces and free recreational facilities within the LGA	Ongoing
93 Assist health services to promote 'tele health' within our region	Ongoing
94 Guide the health and residential care industry through the planning process for new developments	Ongoing
95 Review and improve the open space and recreation plan	> 3 year
96 Assist sporting groups with grant funding applications	Ongoing
97 Provide free community events that encourage physical activity	Ongoing
98 Promote Cultural Engagement with Aboriginal services through the Aboriginal Advisory Committee	Ongoing

### Address mental health in Singleton + the Upper Hunter

Mental Health services will continue to be in high demand and under-served. Mental health services are mostly delivered on an outreach basis from Maitland and require patients to be transferred to other facilities in acute cases or prolonged illness. An increased demand and uptake of e-health and tele-health opportunities is forecast, which will alleviate the constraints of travel to existing general, and specialist medical services. The rate of uptake of e-health is subject to continuing evidence-based research.

Action	Timing
99 Promote the current mental health services available via a services map, streamlined referral protocols, information about tele-health facilities	> 3 year
100 Advocate for improved mental health services in the community (eg increased clinics, mental health nurse capacity, tele-health and a mental health unit)	Ongoing
101 Investigate options for a virtual and/or physical community hub which can direct people to mental health services and a range of community services	> 3 year

## SOCIAL SUPPORT

Singleton is a unique community, experiencing low official unemployment levels but high hidden unemployment and the impacts of a two-speed economy. Whilst most basic services exist, the Council and the community services sector work together collaboratively to ensure that planning for the region is integrated, sustainable, equitable and delivers the best possible quality of life for our community.

*Empower and enable Singleton families to better connect with services, develop capacity, and reverse the social impacts of disadvantage*

A number of social and structural factors lead to a loss of connectedness in Singleton including the limited availability of public transport, limited social networks, a two-tiered economy, and a drive in, drive out, shift worker employment model.



Action		Timing
102	Maintain an accurate set of baseline data	Ongoing
103	Council to engage in service planning, advocacy, coordination and capacity building for a collaborative approach	Ongoing
104	Advocate for no cost public facilities that provide social support	Ongoing
105	Advocate for Singleton LGA based drug and alcohol support services	Ongoing
106	Develop and maintain social services through a community directory	> 1 year
107	Investigate and identify local transport issues preventing travel to work, social services, TAFE and University	> 3 year
108	Facilitate collaboration through Interagency	Ongoing
109	Support the Driving Employment Pathways Partnership	Ongoing

## Empower + enable Singleton to address youth employment, Alcohol + Other Drugs (AOD) issues

For young people who are at-risk and have not completed formal education, the opportunities locally are very limited. Whilst Singleton LGA unemployment rate remains low, the unemployment rate amongst 15-24 year olds remains above the regional average and will need to be addressed to ensure we can retain our talented youth.

Action		Timing
110	Facilitate collaboration and support local agencies in delivering preventative approaches to reducing AOD risks	Ongoing
111	Support programs which support drivers licences for all ages via programs delivered by Road Safety Officer, Digital literacy classes, Singleton Library	Ongoing
112	Promote traineeships and industry work placements through Council as lead agency to develop work experience protocols for students across Admin, Communications, Community Participation, Planning, Asset Maintenance	Ongoing
113	Maintain and improve the Driving Employment Pathways Partnership to assist youth in gaining a drivers licence	Ongoing
114	Advocate for targeted vocational training and school to work pathways	> 1 year

## Empower + enable Singleton to address housing + homelessness

Singleton's population forecast will mean we have approximately 2,375 more residents requiring an estimated 880 new dwellings over the next 18 years. Regionally, NSW Housing considers Singleton as a low housing priority with a 2-3 year waiting period. Issues for Singleton include having a suitable mix of housing for increasing trend towards lone person households, rental and mortgage stress during boom and bust cycles of the coal industry, and critical shortages of low cost housing particularly in peak demand periods.

No	Action	Timing
115	Facilitate collaboration and support local agencies in addressing homelessness	Ongoing
116	Promote and support existing local programs and projects including OpenDoor@SNC and Upper Hunter Homeless Support (UHHS)	> 3 year
117	Investigate Singleton LGA based housing stock that can be used for homelessness support and advocate for change of use to create temporary and transitional housing stock which can be head leased by UHHS.	> 3 year
118	Membership and support Big Ideas on Homelessness Network in promoting Spare Room.com, Digital Vault and Common Ground.	> 3 year
119	Collaboration and advocacy with local Community Housing provider (Compass) for improved services to homeless and at risk	Ongoing

## Empower + enable Singleton to address youth transport options

74% of Singleton LGA residents drive to work in a single journey by car while 80.5% use only one method for the journey. Conversely 0.35% of working population used public transport (Bus or rail) to travel to work, 3.7% of commuters used carbon neutral means such as walking or bicycle and 4.3% worked from home. The rail line is primarily used to deliver coal and runs minimal commuter services with buses providing regular services to Maitland. The distance from Newcastle and other regional centres and lack of transport options restrict many young people from securing local employment. Many young people leave the area to study and find employment.

Recent New South Wales Council of Social Services (NCOSS) consultation and community forums on Youth, Employment and Alcohol and Other Drugs have identified transport as a major barrier for young people to connect to services, employment and community. ABS data indicates a lowering of expectations about future employment prospects and a declining motivation to complete the HSC and further education due to rural isolation, transport barriers and entrenched disadvantage. In addition, many young people are relocating to larger population centres which provide regular transport services, tertiary education opportunities and greater employment prospects. To prevent the drain of young people and skills from the area, a strategic approach to youth transport options is vital.

Action		Timing
120	Maintain and improve the Mayoral Workforce initiative to fund a minimum of 20 places in the Safer Driver Education program	Ongoing
121	Support the Road Safety Officer in delivering driver knowledge test literacy sessions at the Youth Venue by providing marketing funding and expertise	Ongoing
122	Assist in identifying and training Volunteer Driving Mentors from Singleton community and corporate	> 1 year

## Empower + enable Singleton to address connectedness

The main factors leading to a loss of connectedness in Singleton include: lack of suitable transport options, limited social services, inability to access suitable training and education courses and lack of suitable job opportunities. Some issues contributing to a lack of connectedness are:

- No access to internet or Facebook
- Workforce isolation due to drive in and drive out workers and shift work requirements
- Singleton workforce is mostly mining related and creates a two-tiered economy of high income and low to middle-income brackets creating a toxic energy in the community.
- Shift Work
- Financial hardship
- Mental illness
- Lack of information or the inability to find the information

Action		Timing
123	Connect the community by running four (4) free community events per year	Annual
124	Connect the community by running the Singleton Festival	Bi-annual
125	Enable the community to hold functions and events by providing access to facilities and a system of booking that is efficient and effective	Ongoing
126	Communicate information to the community through social platforms such as Facebook, Councils websites and media releases	Ongoing
127	Maintain and advertise a community services database to provide ease of identification and available services	Ongoing
128	Advocate for increased commuter trains and Country Link services to and from the Upper and Lower Hunter	Ongoing

## EDUCATION + TRAINING

Singleton Council, along with the (Department of Education and Communities), have a role to play in ensuring young people and mature students get the best start in life and maximize their potential by having access to a high quality education system.

No	Action	Timing
129	Maintain and improve the Mayoral Workforce Initiative to deliver education and training to youth	Ongoing
130	Investigate and identify local transport issues preventing travel to TAFE and University	> 3 years
131	Promote traineeships and industry work placements through Mayoral Workforce Initiative	Ongoing
132	Advocate for increased courses to be run from Singleton TAFE Connected Learning Centre	Ongoing
133	Investigate the possibility of locating a Country Universities Centre within the Singleton LGA	> 3 years
134	Maintain and improve the Driving Employment Pathways Partnership to assist youth in gaining a drivers licence	Ongoing
135	Advocate for additional train services to Newcastle to improve access to university courses	Ongoing
136	Advocate for funding to address overcrowding at Singleton High School	Ongoing

## ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Singleton Council's commitment to protecting and preserving the environment within our local government area and our approach to minimise impacts associated with our activities are documented in the Environmental Management Policy POL/5013. This policy provides direction for Council's overall approach to managing its environmental performance and operating in an environmentally responsible manner.

## EQUITY

To achieve our goal to be the best Council in Australia, we need diversity in thought and experience. Singleton Council has a contemporary workforce that reflects the demographics of the community we serve, and we believe our inclusive and collaborative culture contributes to our success.

Singleton Council's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan 2018-2021 sets out Council's commitment to providing a workplace that is free from discrimination and harassment and provides equal employment opportunities to current and prospective employees. The implementation of this plan will continue to support initiatives that ensure Singleton Council has a diverse and engaged workforce in order to provide the best possible service to our community.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Communications and engagement is an important function in the management of Council's image and public perception through a range of channels, including the media and social media. Communication also plays a lead role in the response to crisis situations, where Council's image or reputation may be damaged or impacted within the community.

### Community Communication + Engagement

Council has a responsibility to the community to ensure every effort is taken to inform the public of any opportunities available to them or of any developing issues within the region. By keeping the public informed, Council will receive comprehensive and thorough feedback when making decisions that affect our community.

Action	Timing	
137	Communicate with the community via Council's social media channels	Ongoing
138	Communicate with the community via Council's Website and Community Portal	Ongoing
139	Engage with the community via Customer Service staff	> 1 year
140	Use Council's news room to promote Council activities and programs via all media channels	Ongoing
141	Utilise community events as a means of engaging with the community	Ongoing
142	Use paid advertising to communicate important issues and events	As required
143	Conduct community surveys and analyse customer service data to identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council customer satisfaction</li> <li>• Community needs</li> <li>• Community concerns</li> <li>• Perception of safety</li> <li>• Perception of area liveability</li> </ul>	Ongoing

## Marketing + promotion

Efficient and effective use of marketing resources is not only financially responsible but has the potential to increase profitability and visitation for council and community assets. In the first instance, Singleton Council will utilise free advertising and our existing assets to promote our region. These assets include the Visitor Information Centre (VIC), Library, Youth Venue, Council customer service areas, Civic Centre and other council infrastructure.

Following the use of free or low cost advertising, Council will seek paid advertising that is on brand, is regular and targets the outcome council is seeking.

Action	Timing
144 Inspire the community through creative design	Ongoing
145 Promote the region's natural beauty and visual strengths	Ongoing
146 Maintain modern VIC tourism signage	Ongoing
147 Develop an annual tourism and investment marketing program	> 1 year
148 Install new Civic Centre imagery to inspire visitors	> 1 year
149 Design and install new town entry signs	> 3 year
150 Design and install new LGA entry signs	> 3 year
151 Maintain Council's Brand and Style Guide	Ongoing
152 Use paid and unpaid advertising to attract visitor and investment	Ongoing

## MEASUREMENT + EVALUATION

The ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the work of the Council will be through a set of lead and lag metrics. Lag metrics will largely be community wide measures that measure the success of initiatives and ongoing business activities to shape and influence the course of the Singleton community and economy. Some initiatives included in this strategy will be predominantly aimed at influencing lag metrics which can be influenced greatly by external economic factors.

### The lag metrics include:

- Gross Regional Product
- Population growth
- Unemployment and partial employment
- Household Income in terms of both growth and distribution
- Industry market share
- Mining output
- House prices/vacancy rates/rental rates
- Tourism overnight stays and spend
- SEIFA (noting that this measure will be broken down into individual components of social advantage/disadvantage in line with the findings of the baseline study)
- Crime rates
- Safety perception
- Liveability

Lead metrics, or those measures that indicate progress toward overall goals and outcomes will be largely based on achievement of the ongoing business activities as outlined in this strategy.

Action	Timing
153 Create a system to collect community wellbeing information that can be used to track trends and assist decision making	> 1 year
154 Analyse community wellbeing information to determine actions that will benefit the local community	ongoing
155 Review and update strategic actions every 2 years with completed actions removed and replaced with new actions	Bi-annual



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