

# Submission 1

## **Comment: DRAFT Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2018 - 2023**

To attract new residents and businesses it is important that the community is perceived as vibrant and progressive. The shire council has a very important role in kick-starting this perception of towns and communities as great places to live. This draft strategy if implemented by council will play an important part in this. I support the Strategic Initiatives but would like to make comments on some of these.

**Strategic Initiative 2: Ensure that the foundation blocks needed to stimulate and support economic development are in place**

### **Strategy 4: Enhance lifestyle and liveability**

People will move or stay here because of the lifestyle and liveability. Council has done much in maintaining clean towns with great sporting facilities and well cared for parks. I would like to see council do more to encourage arts and cultural activities. An opportunity is available with the heritage Savoy Theatre. This could serve as a cultural centre and business hub.

**Strategy 5: Ensure that there is suitable residential, industrial and commercial land and premises available in the Shire to facilitate growth**

New residents, existing residents and visitors need somewhere to live. You cannot get population growth without new housing. Council should revisit its zoning and planning provisions as the current ones encourage reduced population growth. There should be new residential developments in towns and provision for lifestyle blocks and eco farms. The eco farm concept should be encouraged.

Council should 'look outside the box' and promote and support alternative building methods such as mud-brick, underground, straw-bale and shipping container housing as well as supporting the tiny house movement. They should encourage new housing to be sustainable and solar efficient.

Council should also encourage and support owner builders. Owner builders are more likely to employ local trades people and circulate money within the community.

These initiatives would encourage lifestyle or tree change movers. One way council could be seen to do this would be to run an alternative building and sustainable lifestyle expo. This would complement the 'regions reputation for nature and lifestyle.

Council should also relax its policies on multiple occupancy or multiple dwellings. Family and visitors (Airbnb) need somewhere pleasant and different to stay.

**9.11.5 Explore options to develop cycling routes and experiences including:** o Rail trails o Coonabarabran – Warrumbungle National Park cycleway o Riverside cycleways / shared pathways in Coonabarabran, Coolah, Dunedoo and Binnaway o Mountain bike trails and touring routes

I support this as so far it is a missed tourism opportunity.

There is no mention in the draft document of the potential for gemstone fossicking tourism.

## Submission 2

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 15 February 2019 9:39 AM  
**To:** Records Officer  
**Subject:** Warrumbungle Shire Economic Development & Tourism Strategy 2018-2023

Good morning,

I would like to comment on the above strategy.

I do not believe that Warrumbungle Shire should be incorporating, supporting or looking to develop any links with coal mining on prime agricultural land or the Santos development of Coal Seam Gas in the Pilliga.

The Shire needs to focus on its scenic amenity and clean, green image to attract tourists. It is difficult to see these developments as furthering this aim. Also agriculture is a major income producer for the Shire and these types of developments are diametrically opposed to this activity. CSG threatens water security as the Pilliga is a major recharge area for the Great Artesian Basin and our towns and our farms rely heavily on this resource. There may be some short term economic gain in supporting CSG but if the integrity of the Great Artesian Basin is compromised, this will be disastrous for the Shire. Coonabarabran is dependent on this artesian water in the drought to supply residents and, for some farmers, it is their only source of water, all dams having dried up. It also impacts on one of our major activities, Astronomy, through flaring and light pollution.

The Shire Council needs to support things like renewables, and other economic activities more in line with the image that should be promoted for the Shire.

Regards

# Submission 3

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 15 February 2019 7:21 PM  
**To:** Records Officer  
**Subject:** draft Warrumbungle Shire Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2018-2023.

To the General Manager, and Councillors,

Re draft Warrumbungle Shire Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2018-2023.

I draw the Shire's attention to the gathering storm of human-caused threats to climate, nature and economy pose a danger of systemic collapse comparable to the 2008 financial crisis, according to a new report\* that calls for urgent and radical reform to protect political and social systems.

The study says the combination of global warming, soil infertility, pollinator loss, chemical leaching and ocean acidification is creating a 'new domain of risk', which is being underestimated by policymakers even though it may pose the greatest threat in human history.

'A new, highly complex and destabilised 'domain of risk' is emerging – which includes the risk of the collapse of key social and economic systems, at local and potentially even global levels,' warns the paper from the Institute for Public Policy Research. 'This new risk domain affects virtually all areas of policy and politics, and it is doubtful that societies around the world are adequately prepared to manage this risk.'

Until recently, most studies of environmental risk tended to examine threats in isolation: climate scientists examined disruption to weather systems, biologists focused on ecosystem loss and economists calculated potential damages from intensifying storms and droughts. But a growing body of research is assessing how the interplay of these factors can create a cascade of tipping points in human society as well as the natural world.

Evidence on the deterioration of natural systems is presented with a series of grim global statistics: since 1950, the number of floods has increased by a factor of 15, extreme temperature events by a factor of 20, and wildfires sevenfold; topsoil is now being lost 10 to 40 times faster than it is being replenished by natural processes; the 20 warmest years since records began in 1850 have been in the past 22 years; vertebrate populations have fallen by an average of 60% since the 1970s, and insect numbers – vital for pollination – have declined even faster in some countries.

I have recently written to all Shire Councillors asking for the Shire to join other Local Governments in declaring a Climate Emergency. Such a declaration will not only place Warrumbungle Shire in a position of leadership but also provide a useful reference point when it comes to making decisions about what kinds of activities the Shire should undertake.

\* <https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/age-of-environmental-breakdown>

Sincerely

-----

# Submission 4

**Aileen Bell**

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 15 February 2019 1:49 PM  
**To:** Records Officer  
**Subject:** Submission on DRAFT Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2018 - 2023

To the General Manager, and other appropriate sectors,

Looks well presented, just some small concerns about what looks like poor research in the area of mining, and what they may bring.

Page 4 states "There are currently no proposals to mine coal or extract coal seam gas within the Shire." This is an untrue statement, as there are current gas licences such as PEL 450, 433, 462 and possibly 434 still considered active by the NSW Govt. This should be amended.

Mining and railway is listed in several areas such as page 23, discussing accommodation, but just this year our Mayor has met with companies and the discussion is around temporary mining camps capable of holding 500 people. This shows there is no benefit for businesses with the Warrumbungle shire. Page 30, 54 and 60 discusses the same and covers gas extraction too, but any history of gas mining in Australia, such as QLD, show little benefit at all, and more likely a detriment to neighbouring communities. The same example of accommodation is made, but even here, Narrabri has already constructed man camps just for gas miners. So the likelihood of accommodation needs is nil. Employment opportunities are a rarity because of the nature of the work, requiring only small specialised teams that fly in and out, meaning no money into local services, no money for schools, no families moving in etc etc The exploration of Narrabri for gas has proved this does happen, and the practice will continue if they get approval.

It is good that it highlights how short term mining industries create a drain on other sectors such as agriculture and transport. Agriculture is the biggest industry currently for Coonabarabran.

I would suggest removing these references because they do not look well researched into the real impacts these bring.

Thanks,

**Aileen Bell**

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 15 February 2019 2:19 PM  
**To:** Records Officer  
**Subject:** Comment on: DRAFT Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2018-2023

My comments on Warrumbungle Council's DRAFT Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2018-2023 are:

Cycleway from Coonabarabran to and beyond Warrumbungle NP:

1. It is good to see the concept of a 'cycleway from Coonabarabran to Warrumbungle National Park' listed several times as a desirable element in the Shire's infrastructure, an opportunity and as a good strategy for building our economy.
2. Council should revisit its decision on 15th November 2018 not to action the concept at this point in time. Council should establish an advisory committee to develop the project and involve Gilgandra Shire Council in this.

Coal and Coal Seam Gas:

1. Coal and coal seam gas are listed as 'strengths and assets' and mentioned in strategies as something to get involved in. This is a mistake.
2. International agreements to limit global warming, combined with the precautionary principle which is embedded in Ecologically Sustainable Development, require undeveloped coal and coal seam gas to be left in the ground. This is the only sure way to prevent dangerous climate change that will devastate the environment and economy of Warrumbungle Shire.

Renewable Energy:

1. It is very disappointing not to find renewable energy given prominence as a major element in the future well-being of our Shire.
2. Renewable energy gets mentioned low down in the hierarchy of strategies, and then a bit inappropriately and seemingly reluctantly:
  - o page 54, item 10.2 as part of facilitating growth; and
  - o page 59, item 6.3.4 as a way to reduce energy use and cost.
3. Council has already seen the benefits of solar power with its own roof-top installations, so why the half-heartedness?
4. Renewable energy should be embraced as an essential and major positive strategy for a thriving future.

Climate Change:

1. The draft Strategy obliquely acknowledges climate change as a driver of change on page 28. However, the language used ("...increasing variability...uncertainty...") is tending towards quiet denialism.
2. Climate damage is already evident in our land and water and biodiversity. These natural assets are the basis of the Shire's agriculture, forestry and tourism economies.

3. Action to prevent dangerous climate change should be central to Council's Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.
4. A good starting point might be for Council to become a committed and active member of the Climate Council's 'Cities Power Partnership'. (Despite the name, many shire councils are joining.)

Sustainability:

1. On several pages the draft Strategy mentions 'sustainable', 'sustainable development or 'sustainability' as a high-level goal or priority, but the draft Strategy is very light on how that might be achieved.
2. On page 57 in item 9.3, "encourage and support adoption of ... sustainable land management practices ..." is mentioned. This is good but it is too vague for success to be measured.
3. On page 53 in item 4.3, "sustainability" is misused to mean something like 'survival' - very important of course but not possible in the long term without genuine sustainability.
4. The many cumulative pressures on every aspect of local, regional, continental and global life support systems (land, water, air, biological, social) mean that the principles of ecologically sustainable development should be integral to development strategies. The draft fails in this regard.

Regards,

RECEIVED

13 FEB 2019

SUBMISSION RE: DRAFT WARRUMBUNGLE SHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM STRATEGY 2018-2023.

As a resident of 30 years and a volunteer at the Coonabarabran VIC, I feel qualified to comment on aspects of this document pertaining to tourism.

Despite the statistics provided by Tourism Research Australia (p.12), visitor numbers at the Coonabarabran VIC have actually declined markedly in the last two years ie from 33,972 in 2017 to 29,174 in 2018, a REDUCTION of nearly 5,000 people in one year! This is clearly unsustainable.

One vague statement says council should "provide funds and resources to market and promote the Shire" (p.59). MUCH MORE needs to be spent than is currently the case. Some may argue that the cost is too high, however, it will cost the Shire more in the long run if the money isn't spent, as evidenced by the declining visitor numbers quoted above.

There are MANY MORE OPPORTUNITIES for promotion. These include:

1. Regular attendance at ALL the Caravan and Camping Shows, not just Sydney. Newcastle, Maitland and Penrith were attended at various times in the past.
2. Tamworth Country Music Festival has visitors from all over Australia, many of whom arrive a week or two early. Set up a stand in an air conditioned shopping centre for a few days.
3. Likewise the Elvis Festival in Parkes. Promote Coonabarabran as a stopping point for the many travellers moving from Parkes to Tamworth a week later. Heat is obviously not an issue or they wouldn't be going to Tamworth in January!
4. Displays in regional shopping centres to capture the day and short break market eg Tamworth, Dubbo, Orange.
5. Ag Quip in Gunnedah has thousands of visitors. Set up a stand there.
6. Advertise in "The Senior" free newspaper eg Goulburn had a full page ad in the latest issue; it also named a Groups Liaison Officer to simplify the process for those wishing to organize group tours.
7. Contact coach companies. Encourage and help them bring group tours to Warrumbungle Shire eg Langley's, Cowan's, Burke's.
8. Organize famil tours for travel journalists from major newspapers and magazines.
9. Make Festival of the Stars a week-long event, as it once was. In 2018, it was basically SSO's Starfest, one night and one day, reducing the amount of time visitors needed to stay in the town. Support and grow this event (p.42).
10. Link in with the Warrumbungle Environmental Education Centre to encourage school groups to stay longer eg have students visit the Coonabarabran VIC's Megafauna Exhibit and Keeping Place, walk down the street (shopping as they go) and over to Crystal Kingdom, perhaps also looking at some historical buildings on the way.

11. Market in Queensland eg at the EKKA. A huge proportion of our visitors are from that state.
12. Advertise in magazines designed for our target market eg astronomy, bushwalking.

The main points I wish to make with regard to astro-tourism are as follows:

1. Coonabarabran needs to link in with the new Inland Astro-Trail being proposed. Unfortunately, no one from SSO attended the first meeting held at SSO in October, 2017. Donna Burton and I were the only attendees from the Warrumbungle Shire.
2. Throughout the Draft Strategy, there is frequent reference to the Dark Sky Park. My understanding is that this is actually located in Gilgandra Shire and there would be little financial benefit for our town, especially if stargazers camp out.
3. Whilst the free night time viewing area sounds like a good idea, I fear the impact it will have on the financial viability of the two private observatories. As it is, they are competing for the same market and on many occasions tours are cancelled due to cloud cover or storms.
4. SSO could do many more behind-the-scenes tours. Even most locals aren't aware of daytime tours during the April and October school holidays. If marketed well, there is huge untapped potential for these tours.

Although the Draft Strategy contains many wonderful ideas for tourism, it is unclear who is responsible for implementing them. Obviously there are too many for one person to be responsible. Will it be council staff or private citizens?

Thank you for your time.

6<sup>th</sup> February, 2019.



**Aileen Bell**

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, 11 February 2019 1:16 PM  
**To:** Records Officer  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** on the draft Warrumbungle Shire Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2018-2023  
**Attachments:** EDT SStrategy\_ Submission Letter 11Feb19.pdf  
**Importance:** High

Good Afternoon Roger,

Please find attached letter of submission on the draft Warrumbungle Shire Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2018-2023 from tl.

Kind Regards,



The General Manager  
Warrumbungle Shire Council  
PO Box 191  
Coonabarabran NSW 2357

11<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Dear Roger,

On behalf of the ( ) I would like to submit the following points as feedback for the Warrumbungle Shire Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2018-2023.

- supports the purpose of the EDT Strategy and Action Plan. Is this a specific 5 year plan 2018-2023, or a visionary strategy document?? It seems that we can't achieve ALL of what is currently encompassed in the document in the next 5 years. It needs to be prioritised and simplified.
- Change Title period to (2019-2023)...
- Simplify into a concise, Council and Community specific document. Refer to Mid-Western Shire ED Strategy as an example.
- Document needs to be able to be willingly received and actioned by Council Staff and Community. Simple. Easy. Achievable. Inspiring.
- Specific and actionable – not a document full of motherhood statements
  - Itemise priorities for Council to achieve and Community to achieve
  - Broken down into actions achievable over each of the 5 years
    - 2019
    - 2020
    - 2021
    - 2022
    - 2023
  - Simple, measured, prioritised and achievable
  - Focus on the actions to implement, not focus on what the Shire is lacking, ie. Focus on the actionable solutions rather than the problems.
- Document in its current form is too long and not-specific
  - Some of the content could be moved to appendices at the back instead of cluttering the main content.
- Introduction needs re-writing.
- Page 1: Goal is 'Our economy is strong and sustainable, providing our communities with localised employment opportunities and ease of access to markets, goods and services'. This is in present tense. Should a goal be in present tense or in future tense?  
That is, should it read: 'To have a strong and sustainable economy, to provide our communities with localised employment opportunities and ease of access to markets, goods and services'  
By using future tense, it delivers a sense of what "needs to be done", not what is "already done".

- Links to specifics eg. Strategic Initiative 1 – Shire is Open for Business. 1.2.2 Needs specific links for potential new business owners/residents on persons to contact and where to access additional information for people looking to buy or move into the area
- Real Estate needs to focus on the positives not on the negatives as it currently is. Eg. Median house prices are a positive for potential residents. Not highlight the lack of capital gain for investors entering the market. (Page 19) Green Highlighted text box focuses on a negative constraint, not a positive solution!
- Needs to clearly show who is accountable or responsible for action items. So far it only lists “What”, needs to clearly state “How”, by “Whom” and “When” by. Eg. Strategic Imperative 5
- Summary of Outcomes from the Community Consultation needs to be INCLUDED within the Strategy document or at least referred and linked to within the Strategy – Appendix etc.
- Summary of Outcomes from the Community Consultation No.2. Things that need to happen to provide a positive environment for Economic Development - For Council to provide a positive and supportive environment
  - o THIS IS THE FIRST PRIORITY!
- The final document should be edited for spelling and grammar and other inaccuracies

We would be pleased to receive feedback on the consideration of the points raised, if you require any further assistance or clarification please give me a call on

Yours Sincerely,

## Submission 8

...

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 15 February 2019 1:31 PM  
**To:** Records Officer  
**Subject:** Draft Warrumbungle Shire Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2018-2023

Comments on the Draft Strategy as published:

General notes going through the document:

Telecommunications, page 15:

While Coonabarabran has FTTN, Dunedoo and Coolah have NBN Fixed Wireless only and NOT FTTN.

Other towns will retain the legacy ADSL for the foreseeable future, though this is a dead end technology-wise, slow and unlikely to be maintained forever by Telstra.

The lack of new NBN service in the industrial area of Coonabarabran is a serious problem. While NBN and government will say "but you have satellite", this is terrible for a town business area. Prospective business owners will not start there or relocate there when they can go to other areas that will have better NBN. This is an enormous issue for the growth of any future business in the town and this document really doesn't do anything to address that. It's all very well to note it as a problem, but what plans does council have to fix this in the future?

As with many things, there is no strategy to address this and no future plans.

What future planning is there to encourage new business in the town? What planning is there for Arts & Culture - a field that makes an area more liveable and inviting? Is there any plans for an Arts/Culture officer?

What are you going to do to make sure that the goals set out in this document are actually followed through? What will the implementation of this document entail? Many have looked at the previous version of this document and wondered what actually happened?

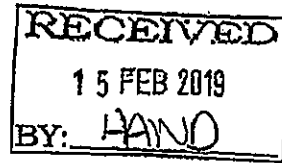
I am particularly interested in the plans on page 45-46 -- but how will they be implemented? What strategies will be put in place to actually make these happen and what encouragement will there be for local businesses to be involved in this?

What are your plans to keep as much local work required by Council in the local area? Council is one of the largest drivers of work in this shire and yet so many areas you work in see all the work directed out of shire. Yes I am talking about IT and telecommunications. Will there ever be even a chance for local suppliers to compete again in this area? Many of the suggestions in this document involve apps, multimedia, computer displays and more -- it is hoped that local suppliers will have a chance to be involved in this.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

# Submission 9



Response to Strategic Plan

- The plan is full of nice to haves and will sit happily in a filing cabinet or a PDF download - the biggest and first thing to look at is making sure you have positive leadership who understand the future (and stop clinging to the past) and are very visible reiterating over and over what the plan is and how you are achieving it. The shire feels like a nest of ants all running in different directions, happy to run over the other ants to get where they want to go. Time to get everyone marching in roughly the same direction.
- So saying that - we MUST have fresh new leadership in the Tourism and Business Development role. I have not met a single person who believes that the current role is being properly performed (or performed at all) and it is to the detriment of the whole shire that this has been allowed to continue for many years. Much of what is "wrong" can be directly attributed to the choice of keeping the one person in that position for so long.

Hire someone who is going to "sell" the shire, and who has the wherewithal to be able to lobby and deal make at a state and federal level.

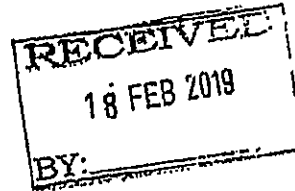
- I believe the Coonabarabran bypass is an opportunity to improve business and tourism – but again, to save the town will need leadership and someone who can keep people working towards the goal of being successful, instead of laying down and dying – like it currently feels it is. Hire someone on a 3 year contract – the returns will be greater than the wages and it will reset the town's enthusiasm which is lacking.
- While you are hiring these people – hire an Arts and Culture officer to grow those areas across the shire. It is an area that benefits the town for both business and tourism. It is an area that will survive long after climate change has ended local agriculture as we know it.
- I don't know the ins and outs, but if the council can invest in providing scholarships to young people that are willing to come back and work a few years after graduation in marketing/tourism/business for the council that would be a positive move to boosting the council's capacity for new ideas, being able to use and promote new tools, and having fresh connections outside of the shire.

Yours Sincerely

14/02/2019

# Submission 10

12-02-2019



The General Manager  
Warrumbungle Shire Council  
P.O.Box 191  
Coonabarabran 2357

Dear Sir,

Re: Draft Economic and Tourism Strategy 2018 – 2023.

I would like to make the following submission to the above strategy:

1. Top priority is a reliable Water supply; the present system negatively affects the increase in population, attraction of industry, tourism and town beatification.
2. The same applies to the supply of electricity. This can be overcome by using the coal seam gas in the area to generate electricity.
3. Any upgrading of the CBD must include extra parking.
4. Sewage system needs upgrading.
5. Relocate Showground to Racecourse (combine) this will release plenty of building blocks in a good location.
6. Publicity. Lack of publicity has had an adverse effect on the development of the shire and tourism. I suggest that Council employ a fully qualified Publicity Officer to be in charge of Development and Tourism.
7. Tourism: Coonabarabran needs its own Tourism Web Site with links to the other towns in the Shire. Apps for mobile devices are needed for all the different attractions. A lot of the information on other web sites needs updating.

Kind regards.