



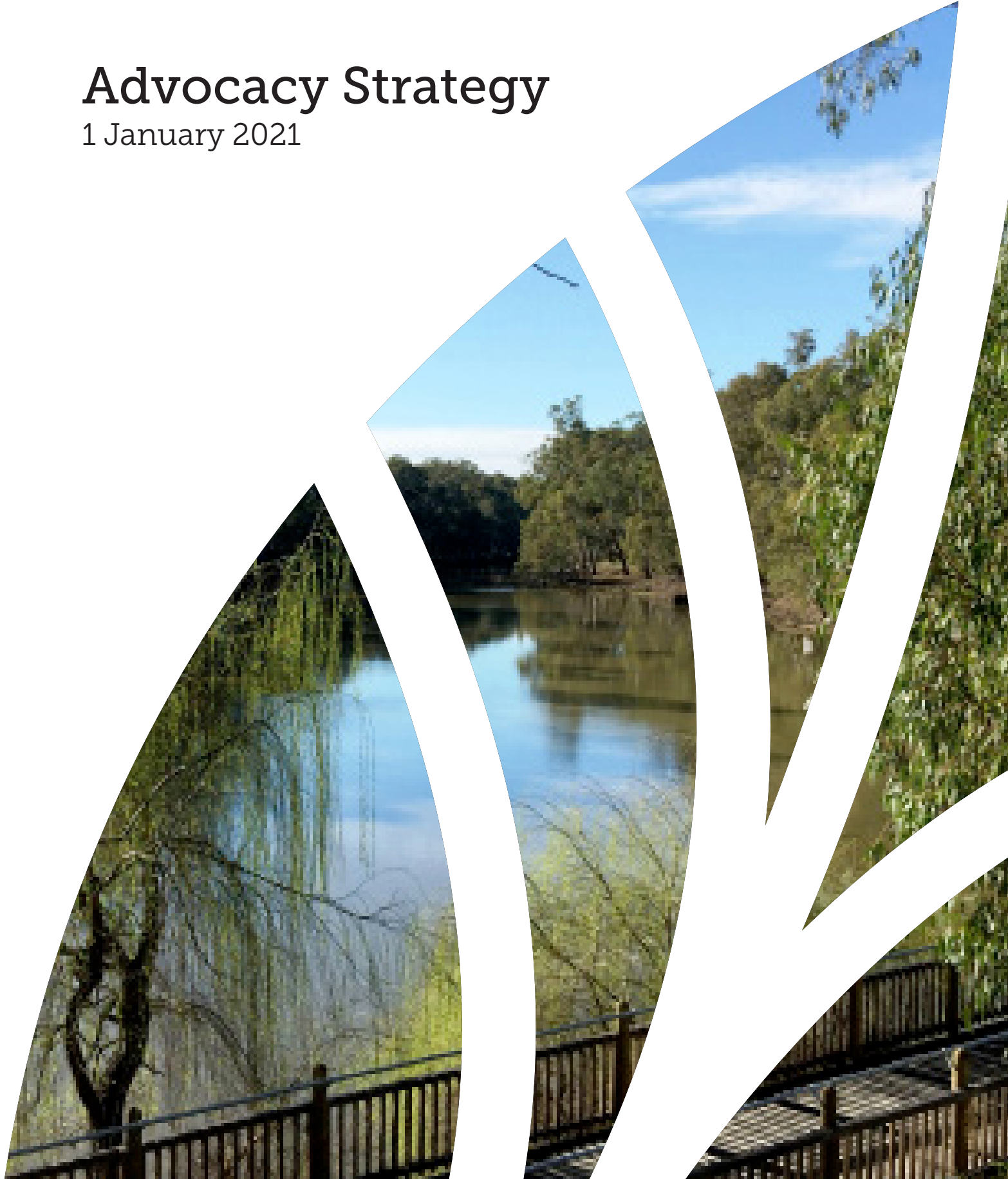
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**Edward
River**
COUNCIL

Advocacy Strategy

1 January 2021



Seven Priority Projects

1. *Retirement Living*
2. *Investment in Deniliquin Hospital*
3. *Airport Redevelopment*
4. *Agribusiness Masterplan*
5. *Education – Deniliquin High School*
6. *Water – Murray Darling Basin Plan*
7. *Telecommunications*



1. Retirement Living

Project Objective

The Edward River community has identified the need to develop a Retirement Living Village in Deniliquin to provide housing options for senior residents.

Funding Request

\$15 million for design, construction and development

Status

Land secured. Ready for development.

Rationale

Despite its ageing population, Deniliquin does not currently have accessible retirement living options for seniors living locally. The development of Retirement Living will release housing stock within the township and villages for future growth.

Council worked with the State Government for a number of years and secured two parcels of adjoining land to enable this development. Initial works have been completed to services and access to the site.

Council is currently developing a business case for several options to deliver the project; council as the developer, partnering with a service provider to manage the facility; or seeking an established service provider to develop, market and operate the facility.

Supporting Strategies

Edward River 2030 Community Strategic Plan

Retirement Consultancy – Phase One Report – Market Analysis



2. Deniliquin Hospital



Project Objective

Limited clinical services mean that many patients are forced to travel outside of the region to seek health care. Investment and immediate support for Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) to develop a clinical services plan for Deniliquin Health cluster to rapidly provide access to additional health services - paediatric, oncology, immunology, geriatric and stroke services.

Funding Request

\$300,000 for Murrumbidgee Local Health District to develop a clinical services plan for Deniliquin Health Services with investment following to implement the plan.

Status

Council acknowledges and appreciates the \$3.2 Million in funding committed by NSW State Government for improvements to hospital entrance area and relocation of emergency entrance. These works are yet to be commenced.

Rationale

The Deniliquin Hospital services Deniliquin and the Edward River local government area, as well as a broader catchment area of around 25,000 people. However, over 1500 local patients requiring paediatric, oncology, immunology and other services overwhelmingly travel to Victoria, Albury or Wagga Wagga. Limited services are available in Deniliquin for children under 16, with many children needing to be transported by ambulance or by parents to

larger regional centres such as Albury, Echuca, Shepparton or Bendigo. The recent cross border closures and lack of access to Victorian medical services highlighted how critical this situation has become for local residents.

With State Government having committed funding to significantly improving hospitals in other Riverina Murray areas including Griffith and Wagga Wagga, upgrades to services at the Deniliquin Hospital must be prioritised, given its location at the centre of the Southern Riverina and the size of its catchment area.

With a critical shortage of General Practitioners in Deniliquin the MLHD should be supported as a priority to introduce more GPs and training for GPs to provide extended medical services through an expanded hospital, relieving the current pressure families to travel elsewhere for critical health services.

Supporting Strategies

Edward River 2030 Community Strategic Plan



3. Deniliquin Airport

Project Objective

Renew aging infrastructure to support economic development, emergency service provision and incremental improvements at the Deniliquin Airport.

Funding Request

\$6.5 Million

- Runway extension \$2.5 million (\$2.5 million Federal Government funding secured)
- Taxiway, aprons and facilities \$3 million
- Wright Bros Drive sealing \$1 million

Status

Shovel & Investment Ready

Rationale

The aging Deniliquin airport has been in operation since the 1940s.

A market analysis commissioned by Council has identified several key opportunities to support the long-term growth of the airport and attract new businesses, including flight training, aircraft maintenance, residential airpark facilities, aviation tourism; and non-aeronautical development. Several studies have also identified the Deniliquin Airport as the major regional facility for firefighting, a support centre during major floods, support for air ambulance services for the region, and as the hub for regional agricultural aviation needs.

The existing 1200m runway is the original runway and has had limited renewal investment over its lifecycle. Reconstruction and upgrading of the existing facility is essential for ongoing use, expansion of safety services and economic development.



Supporting Strategies

Edward River 2030 Community Strategic Plan

Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS)

Murray Regional Destination Management Plan

Deniliquin Airport Market Analysis

Deniliquin Airport Masterplan 2011

4. Agribusiness Masterplan

Project Objective

A regional plan to harness the region's competitive advantages in scalable agriculture and drive investment into the region.

Funding Request

\$500,000 required to support the formation of a board and employ an executive officer to implement the plan.

Status

Ready for implementation

Rationale

Edward River Council, with its location in the centre of the Riverina Murray region, has developed a strategy to support and guide future growth in the agribusiness sector. The Edward River region has a valuable agribusiness asset base and areas of great competitive advantage that can be harnessed to take advantage of the growing global demand for quality, safe, trusted food and fibre produced in sustainable and ethical production systems. Council has been working with several other local and regional stakeholders and Councils to identify the opportunities available.

While Council can influence the various stakeholders, many of the recommended projects are beyond the jurisdiction and core business of the Edward River Council alone. Therefore, it is imperative to attract funding to underpin and resource the formation of a high calibre steering committee or board to implement the strategy.

Supporting Strategies

Edward River 2030 Community Strategic Plan

Edward River Economic Development Strategy 2017-2020

McKinna et al Consulting – Agrifood Situation Analysis 2019

McKinna et al Consulting – Agribusiness Masterplan 2019

Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS)



5. Education - Deniliquin High School

Project Objective

Immediate investment required to modernise science labs, industrial arts/technology centre and develop a hospitality centre to increase

enrollments and stem the movement of families who choose schools outside the region.

Funding Request

\$3 million

Science Lab - \$1 million

Industrial Arts/Technology Centre - \$1 million

Hospitality Centre - \$1 million

Status

Ready for implementation

Rationale

With over 500 students enrolled and its history of achieving strong academic results, Deniliquin High school is an excellent asset for Deniliquin and the broader Edward River Region. Unfortunately, over the past 20 years, the school has received poor capital investment and as a result, the school's infrastructure isn't competitive against more modern schools located in Moama, Echuca, Ballarat and Melbourne. The number of students enrolled has decreased from over 700 to 510 in recent years. The decline in enrolments has directly and adversely impacted the Deniliquin economy and community.

To enable the school to comply with current regulations in delivering science and industrial arts subjects, it is imperative that the science labs, industrial arts and technology centre and hospitality centres are upgraded urgently. These subjects are critical as most of the employment opportunities within the Deniliquin and Edward River region are related to agriculture, science, manufacturing trades



(such as welding and fabrication) and tourism and hospitality.

The inability for students to pursue studies restricts their ability to secure a job in the local workforce. The flow on effects of young people

having to leave the region to secure employment are significant for the student, the local community and the local economy.

Supporting Strategies

Edward River 2030 Community Strategic Plan

Deniliquin High Scholl – School Plan

Department of Education Strategic Plan 2018-2022

6. Water - Murray Darling Basin Plan

Project Objective

Edward River Council supports the RAMJO Water Position Paper and advocates for the adoption of the recommendations contained within it.

Advocacy Request

The Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) produced a Water Position Paper to highlight the region's leaders current and future concerns about water security within its eleven LGAs due to the negative impacts the Murray Darling Basin Plan has had on the economic structure of its communities and industries. The RAMJO Water Position Paper and its Recommendations have been endorsed by Council. This paper seeks a sustainable, apolitical, ethical, evidence-based suite of solutions to ensure the optimal use of water across the Murray Darling Basin. The paper has generated considerable interest from Federal and State Ministers.

Status

Ready for implementation

Rationale

The recommendations include a review, evaluation of and solutions to:

- A comprehensive review of the water market
- Impact of water prices on agricultural diversity and security
- Environmental flows – greater detail on the benefits, uses and regulation
- Infrastructure – now and for the future
- Conveyance water and losses
- Drought
- Climate change
- Agricultural adaption- investment and research

Supporting Strategies

RAMJO Water Position Paper

Edward River 2030 Community Strategic Plan

MDBA Community Profiles – Deniliquin Township Community Profile

Basin Plan Socio-economic impacts – RMCG for the Murray Group



7. Connectivity - Blackspots

Project Objective

Council is seeking immediate investment from State and Federal Governments to address mobile blackspots across the region and improve digital connectivity to support the safety of our residents, improve efficiency and growth in agricultural enterprises and improve business competitiveness.

Funding Request

Immediate investment in mobile phone towers (4-5G) on major routes between Deniliquin and Hay (Route B75); Moulamein (Pretty Pine Rd), Swan Hill (Wakool & Tulla Rd), Jerilderie (Conargo Rd), Finley (Route B58) and Moama (Route B75) to ensure consistent mobile reception between Deniliquin and its connecting destinations. This should be followed by a telecommunications strategy for the region to fill the gaps.

Status

Needed urgently

Rationale

Outside the Deniliquin township, virtually the whole rural area of the Edward River Council experiences poor mobile and internet connectivity. The lack of connectivity disadvantages our residents who rely on mobile connections for safety, social inclusion, education and access to health, welfare and emergency services. Reliable telecommunications is critical in the 21st Century, particularly during emergency situations, extreme weather, bushfires, flooding or serious trauma incidents and road accidents.

The Edward River region's agriculture sector produces in excess of \$250 million worth of regional exports annually. This is a significant contributor to the local, regional, state and national economies.

To support the continued growth of agricultural and economic participation among isolated communities, it is critical that mobile coverage across the Edward River local government area and the broader Riverina and Murray region is improved to enable access to new markets or technologies.

The market are reluctant to implement commercial mobile phone towers in this remote region as the coverage is broad and population sparse; and the returns are not commercially viable. Government intervention is needed to ensure this vital infrastructure is in place as soon as possible.

Supporting Strategies

Edward River 2030 Community Strategic Plan

Edward River Economic Development Strategy

Murray Region Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS)

