

# Advocacy Plan 2024 - 2025

*Fast track for growth*



*Cover image: Deniliquin bridge over river at dusk.*

# MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Edward River Council is committed to facilitating the long term, sustainable growth of our population and economy.

We have a proven track record of working with other tiers of government to deliver projects that address regional challenges and capitalise on opportunities that support our growth agenda.

This Advocacy Plan outlines how Council will work with our government and industry partners on priority and strategic initiatives







to deliver economic and social benefit for the Edward River and broader region.

It is a blueprint for partnership, and I look forward to working with our region's partners and decision makers to deliver these exciting projects.

**Mayor  
Cr Peta Betts**



## The Edward River Advocacy Plan

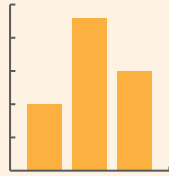
Priority	Request	Timeframe
 NSW Water Buy Backs – Collaboration for Optimal Socio-Economic Outcomes	–	<12 months
 Deniliquin Airport Runway Extension and Upgrade for Emergency Response and Economic Growth	\$4.0m	<12 months
 Edward River Village – Supporting Senior Independent Living	\$1.5m	12-24 months
 Country University Centres – Equitable Access to Education	–	12-24 months
 New Deniliquin Hospital Delivering Clinical Services Plan	\$150.0m	>24 months
 Deniliquin Intermodal Freight Hub – Connecting Regional Business to Melbourne Port	\$4.0m	12-24 months

## › Edward River Council Community



Population

8456



Median Age

46 yrs



Av. household income

\$900 per wk



Age brackets

0 to 17 years = 21%

60+ years = 33%

ABS 2021



Females

50.7%

Males

49.3%

Country of birth



83.9%

Australia

Aboriginal/Torres Strait  
Islander People

4.8% | 404  
People



Tertiary qualified 12.4%

Trade qualified 22.5%

ABS 2021

### Ancestry

4.6%  
Australian  
Aboriginal

11.2%  
Scottish

10.7%  
Irish

40.2%  
English

43.8%  
Australian

ABS 2021

### Housing

20.7%  
Household with  
children

28.2%  
Household  
without children

7.9%  
One parent  
household  
with children



Average  
people per  
household  
2.21  
People

88% Detached  
dwellings

1.6 Underutilised  
bedrooms

ABS 2021

## Edward River Council Economy (GRP, jobs, employment, businesses)



Gross Regional  
Product (GRP)  
**\$519m**

NIEIR 2022



GRP/Capita  
**\$67,172**



No. Registered  
Businesses  
**909**

ABS 2021



Total Economic  
Output  
**\$919.2m**

NIEIR 2022



Jobs  
**3,917**



Unemployment  
**3.7%**

ABS 2021



**216k**  
Tourism –  
Visitors



**\$46m**  
Visitor  
Expenditure

TRA 2019 NIEIR 2022 ABS 2021



### Employment Industries - Top 5

**16.5%**  
Health Care +  
Social Assistance  
**16.3%**  
Agriculture, Forestry  
+ Fishing

NIEIR 2022

**9.1%**  
Retail Trade  
**8%**  
Construction  
**7.7%**  
Education + Training

## NSW Water Buy Backs – Request for Collaborative and Inclusive Consultation



### Objectives

*Maximise irrigated agricultural productivity and value, and capacity to adapt to Basin Plan changes / Maximise environmental benefits without reducing agricultural jobs, value, productivity and service / Stabilise population decline and then increase population / Explore new economic opportunities to sustain and attract population, services, social capital and small businesses*

### Project

Engage in a genuinely collaborative, inclusive and transparent approach to design the non-purchase water recovery programs, socioeconomic impact assessment, community assistance, and environmental feasibility.

### Rationale

Our community is still suffering the legacy impacts of more than 20% of its water entitlements being purchased under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan Buy Backs program from 2008-2012.

The Water Amendment (Restoring Our Rivers) Bill 2023 to recover yet another 450 GL from the pool to grow food and fibre will further hollow out our community.

We request collaborative participation and consultation to develop programs that avoid any further negative impacts on our industries and communities. An inclusive consultation will deliver the following outcomes:

### Community Benefits

- A stabilised and then growing population, particularly new families.
- Improved community infrastructure where needed – ie. roads, swimming pools, sporting and other recreational facilities.
- Improved health, education, digital connectivity, and other services.
- Improved engagement and participation for our indigenous community.



### Economic Stimulus Benefits

- Increase economic return from irrigated agriculture through investments that are reflective of community direction, need and support.
- A diversified economic base with new businesses and industry development.
- Increased job opportunities in primary and secondary industries.

### Current Status

#### *Ready for Engagement*

Our community and industry representatives are ready to engage and work collaboratively for best outcomes for our communities.

### Alignment

#### **NSW Government - Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS)**

- Sustain and enhance utilities such as water, energy and telecommunications to strengthen the agriculture and food product manufacturing sectors.
- Invest in infrastructure which enhances liveability and improve capacity to support population growth.

#### **Regional Development Australia (RDA) Murray Strategic Regional Plan 2022 – 2025**

- Leadership & Collaboration - Collaborate for stronger and more attuned collective impact.
- Sustainable Natural Resources - Build world standard housing, health, education, leisure and recreational opportunities, for all Champion behaviours that preserve, conserve and regenerate our natural resources (focussing on water, vegetation, soil and carbon) to address climate change.

## Deniliquin Airport Runway Extension and Upgrade for Emergency Response and Economic Growth



### Objectives

*Regional Population Growth / Regional Economic Growth / Regional Emergency Response Centre*

### Project

#### Deniliquin Airport Enhancements

- Strengthen and lengthen the existing runway from 1,220m to 1,600m.
- Meet current CASA standards for landing heavier aircraft.
- Upgrade of the Aeronautical Ground Lighting (AGL).

### Project Costs and Funding

- Two stage project – stage one completed and funded.
- Seeking Funding of \$4m to complete Stage 2.

Project Budget		\$9.9m
Funding Committed (Stage One):		
Federal – Regional Airports Program	\$2.5m	
Federal – Local Roads and Community Infrastructure	\$1.5m	
Edward River Council	\$1.9m	
<b>Funding Requested (Stage Two):</b>		<b>\$4.0m</b>

### Rationale

Strategically located, the Deniliquin Airport is a prime asset for further investment to service the regional population along the Murray River corridor, to deliver the following key objectives for our region:

#### Emergency Response Benefits

- Enhance the access to emergency rescue and relief, health care services and patient transfers, particularly with aging population and change in aircraft specifications that provide services (eg King Air360 series Air Ambulance, firefighting aircraft).
- Establish a permanent regional Critical Emergency Response Centre in readiness for predicted increases in extreme unpredictable weather events causing fire and flood emergencies.
- Reduce risk associated with patient transport time considering proximity to major emergency health care centres.

## Deniliquin Airport Runway Extension and Upgrade for Emergency Response and Economic Growth



### Economic Stimulus Benefits

- Increase connectivity through the introduction of passenger and freight services, reduction in isolation, attraction of new businesses and residents.
- Increase population growth through the attraction of new residents and businesses.
- Increase employment opportunities during construction phase, ongoing operations and expansion and attraction of air service providers.
- Increase tourism output with increased visitation and development of new visitor product (eg events, scenic flights).
- Provide opportunities for agriculture sector such as new supply chain and product development and expansion of existing aerial services.
- Increase Economic output by \$20 million through private investment.
- Increase Regional economy by \$8.67 million.

### Alignment

#### NSW Government – Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS)

- Invest in infrastructure which enhances liveability and improve capacity to support population growth.
- Continue to develop and grow the visitor economy to diversify the region's economy.

#### Regional Development Australia (RDA) Murray Strategic Regional Plan 2022 – 2025

- Amenity & Liveability – Advocate for equitable access to housing, healthcare, education, recreation and opportunities to socialise, Active transport/public transport.

- Connectivity and Infrastructure – Develop multi-modal links and hubs to drive freight transport, visitation and tourism, logistics and warehousing.

#### Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041

- Integrate transport and land use planning.

#### NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan 2022 – 2032

- Enable better access to safe, high quality and timely health services – Improve local transport solutions and assistance schemes.

### Current Status

#### *Ready for implementation*

Shovel ready – will commence once additional funding of \$4m is secured.

## Edward River Village – Supporting Senior Independent Living



### Objectives

*Regional Population Growth / Appropriate Housing for Ageing Population / Health and Wellbeing for Seniors / Regional Economic Growth*

### Project

#### Edward River Village

#### Stage 2 – construction of 9 dwellings

- Complete 9 additional age appropriate dwellings for retirement living.
- Complete civil works and landscaping.

### Project Costs and Funding

- Seeking Funding of \$1.5m to complete Stage 2.

Project Budget		\$4.5m
Funding Committed: Edward River Council (Dwelling Sales)		\$3.0m
<b>Funding Requested:</b>		<b>\$1.5m</b>

### Rationale

Improve the quality and range of housing on offer for older people across the region, facilitating an increase in residential relocation, population expansion and creation of new employment opportunities in the aged care health, wellbeing and service sectors. Stage 1 of this project is complete consisting of 6 dwellings and associated works as part of the overall project that will deliver 32 dwellings and a community centre. Completion of the Edward River Village will meet the following key objectives:

### Social Benefits

- Increase in housing availability and affordability for the region to meet the needs of an ageing population, providing options for retirees to downsize and remain in their community independently.
- Improve liveability for ageing population to act and an attractor for new residents.



- Increase physical, mental health and wellbeing for seniors through connecting and engaging in a safe and welcoming neighbourhood.

### Economic Benefits

- Increase household expenditure through attracting new residents contributing to economic growth.
- Increase in housing stock supporting increasing population.
- Increase employment opportunities during construction phase and ongoing employment for onsite management and maintenance.
- Increase private investment and employment opportunities in industries supporting ageing community members such as health, recreation, and service.
- Increase Economic output by \$15.76 million over the life of the project (Stage 1 – Stage 5).

### Alignment

#### Regional Development Australia (RDA) Murray Strategic Regional Plan 2022 – 2025

- Amenity & Liveability – Address housing affordability and range of stock. Encourage innovative accommodation programs; Advocate for equitable access to housing, healthcare, education, recreation and opportunities to socialise.

#### Ageing Well in NSW: Seniors Strategy 2021 – 2031

- Living in age-friendly environments – work towards increased housing options for older people that are age appropriate, affordable, accessible and close to transport, recreation and community services.

#### Advisory Panel on Economic Potential of Senior Australian's Recommendations

- Reducing the prevalence of age discrimination in communities so older people can continue to participate in the workforce if they choose.
- Encouraging lifelong learning and active ageing so people can be active and resilient, stay connected and increase their general wellbeing.
- Good health and housing to allow Australians to age in place.

#### Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041

- Communities and places – Ensure housing supply, diversity, affordability and resilience.

### Current Status

*Ready for implementation  
2024 – 2025*

## Country University Centres – Equitable Access to Education



### Objectives

*Regional Economic Growth / Regional Population Growth / Increase Employment Opportunities*

### Project

**Establish three Country University Centres located in Finley, Deniliquin and Moama**

### Project Costs and Funding

Joint funding application through 2023 (Cohort 4) Regional University Study Hubs Program in partnership with Berrigan Shire Council and Murray River Shire Council.

### Rationale

Quality higher education is currently accessed through relocation to large centres which is a barrier for many in our community in terms of cost and distance. Relocation for study negatively affects regional population especially when it becomes long term or indefinite and contracts the regional skilled worker base. Country University Centres in our region will address the inequality in further education access and deliver the following outcomes:

### Social Benefits

- Improve community wellbeing through access to further education and employment opportunities.
- Improve liveability driven through increase in population and supporting services.
- Equitable access to education – cost and proximity.

### Economic Benefits

- Increase economic stimulus through maintaining and attracting residents.
- Expand pool of regional workers with relevant qualifications for local business.
- Increase industry and business expansion opportunities with strategically delivered further education.

*Image Disclaimer: The working group intends to affiliate with the CUC Network if they are successful in obtaining funds.*



### Alignment

#### **NSW Government – Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) 2023 Update**

- Boost and sustain the supply of skilled workers for the core industries of agriculture, manufacturing and tourism with regional skills development and attraction programs.
- Invest in infrastructure which enhances liveability and improves capacity to support population growth.

#### **Regional Development Australia (RDA) Murray Strategic Regional Plan 2022 – 2025**

- Human Capital & Skills – Creating networked and knowledgeable learning communities capable of attracting, connecting and retaining workforce.
- Amenity & Liveability – Build world standard housing, health, education, leisure and recreational opportunities for all.

#### **Australian Universities Accord**

- Create additional Regional University Centres (renamed Regional University Study Hubs) and expand the model to suburban/outer metropolitan locations by establishing Tertiary Study Hubs (Suburban University Study Hubs). The Panel believes this will reduce barriers to participation for students living in regional, remote and outer metropolitan and peri urban areas where accessing a physical campus can be difficult.

#### **Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041**

- Strategically plan for health and education precincts.

#### **NSW Department of Education Rural and Remote Education Strategy (2021 – 2024)**

- Quality teaching and learning – Better equip and develop rural and remote teachers to deliver a broader curriculum, contextualised to the needs of the community, to offer engaging learning opportunities for students.
- Enabling learners and learning – Ensure staff and students in rural and remote schools are more empowered to address wellbeing needs through stronger connections with their communities.
- Building productive partnerships – Leverage more productive partnerships with higher education providers, vocational education providers and local industry to increase rural and remote student achievement, ambition and access to post-school opportunities.

### **Current Status**

#### ***Business Case Completed.***

Application submitted - 2023  
(Cohort 4) Regional University Study Hubs Program.

## Relocation of the Deniliquin Hospital Supporting Regional Growth & Delivering Outcomes of the Clinical Services Plan



### Objectives

*Regional Economic Growth / Regional Population Growth / Increase Delivery of Regional Health Services / Rationalise Land Use and Centralise Health Services*

### Project

#### Delivery of outcomes from Clinical Services Plan

- Support families in first 2,000 days of life from pre-conception to preschool.
- Reduce the inequality in access to care for vulnerable community members.
- Provide safe and sustainable quality care in new ways including additional non-inpatient services to prevent and manage chronic disease.
- Support people to live well with chronic conditions as they age.
- Strengthen youth services and community mental health care.
- Strengthen surgery, diagnostic services, educational facilities, and digital capabilities.

#### New Deniliquin hospital – relocation to ambulance centre

### Project Costs and Funding

Project Budget	\$150m
Funding Requested:	\$150m

### Rationale

Relocation and upgrade of Deniliquin Hospital to meet identified outcomes from the Deniliquin Clinical Services Plan and provide access for communities to a regional centre for emergency and ongoing health care. Stimulation of population and economic growth will be achievable through the relocation of the hospital allowing access to prime positioned land for residential and business development. This project increases the liveability of our region delivering the following benefits:



### Social Benefits

- Increase health and wellbeing for regional communities, through local access to assistance and treatment.
- Increase liveability of our region with locally delivered hospital and health care decreasing stress and reluctance to access assistance when required.
- Increase medical and social support to an aging population.
- Improve access to emergency air support during medical evacuation or activation of the Deniliquin Airport Critical Emergency Response Centre (relocation site within close proximity).
- Increase access to land for residential or business development through releasing of the current hospital site.

### Economic Benefits

- Increase in medical services will drive economic spend through population growth and employment opportunities.
- Decrease in health care spend with communities accessing health care in a timely manner – accessing locally.
- Increase employment and economic stimulus through construction phase of the new hospital, and during development of the existing hospital site.

### Alignment

#### NSW Government – Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) 2023 Update

- Invest in infrastructure which enhances liveability and improves capacity to support population growth.

#### Regional Development Australia (RDA) Murray Strategic Regional Plan 2022 – 2025

- Amenity & Liveability – Support seamless access to quality health and education services, Advocate for equitable access to housing, healthcare, education, recreation, and opportunities to socialise.

#### The NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan 2022 – 2023 strategic priorities

- Strengthen the regional workforce.
- Enable better access to safe, high quality and timely health services.
- Keep people healthy and well through prevention and education.
- Expand integration of primary, community and hospital care.

#### Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041

- Strategically plan for health and education precincts.

#### NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan 2022 – 2032

- Enable better access to safe, high quality and timely health services – Improve local transport solutions and assistance schemes; Deliver appropriate services in the community.

### Current Status

*Seeking support as an enabler for our Edward River Growth Strategy 2050*

## Deniliquin Intermodal Freight Hub – Connecting Regional Business to Melbourne Port



### Objectives

*Regional Economic Growth / Regional Population Growth / Create Competitive Advantage for Regional Industry*

### Project

#### Rail Freight Hub Construction

- Rail terminal infrastructure and loading facility.
- Sealed road access.
- Storage shed and silos.
- Weighbridge, office and amenities.
- Partnership between Edward River Council and Deni Industrial Park Pty Ltd.

### Project Costs and Funding

<b>Project Budget</b>	<b>\$5.175m</b>
Funding Committed: Deni Industrial Park Pty Ltd	\$1.175m
<b>Funding Requested:</b>	<b>\$4m</b>

### Rationale

Increase competitive advantage for regional industries and accelerated regional economic

growth through efficient and effective rail transportation of bulk commodities and goods delivering the following benefits:

#### Social Benefits

- Decrease congestion on NSW and VIC road networks increasing road safety.
- Reduce emissions and carbon footprint through efficiencies gained with rail use.
- Increase in liveability due to further investment in the region's available services in response to economic and population growth.

#### Economic Benefits

- Improve regional connectivity that is cost effective and efficient for industry development.
- Increase population through the attraction of new business, industry and employment opportunities.

## Deniliquin Intermodal Freight Hub – Connecting Regional Business to Melbourne Port



- Sustain growth through supportive strategic infrastructure.
- Increase access to export and local markets and supply chains.

### Alignment

#### **NSW Government – Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) 2023 Update**

- Enhance market access and competitiveness for the agriculture and food product manufacturing sectors through strong transport infrastructure.
- Boost and sustain the supply of skilled workers for the core industries of agriculture, manufacturing and tourism with regional skills development and attraction programs.
- Invest in infrastructure which enhances liveability and improves capacity to support population growth.

#### **Regional Development Australia (RDA) Murray Strategic Regional Plan 2022 – 2025**

- Connectivity & Infrastructure – Develop multi-modal links and hubs to drive freight transport, visitation and tourism, logistics and warehousing.
- Regional Employment & Business – Accelerate capacity building and economic diversification.
- Sustainable Natural Resources – Champion behaviours that preserve, conserve and regenerate our natural resources (focussing on water, vegetation, soil and carbon) to address climate change.

#### **NSW Freight and Ports Plan 2018 – 2023**

- Economic growth – Providing confidence and certainty that encourages continued investment in the freight industry to support economic growth.
- Efficiency, connectivity and access – Improving the efficiency of existing infrastructure and ensuring greater connectivity and access along key freight routes.
- Capacity – Maximising infrastructure investment and increasing infrastructure and land use capacity to accommodate growth.

#### **Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2041**

- Integrate transport and land use planning.

#### **RAMJO Regional Freight Transport Plan – October 2023**

- Support the development and implementation of integrated freight transport solutions – Promote the use of multiple transport modes for freight movements; Support the use of branch lines for freight movement; Work with industry, State and Federal agencies to develop and implement integrated transport solutions.

### **Current Status**

*Ready for implementation - 2024 - 2025*



**Edward River**  
COUNCIL

## **Advocacy Plan 2024 - 2025**

Fast track for growth

180 Cressy Street (PO Box 270)  
Deniliquin NSW 2710  
T 03 5898 3000 F 03 5898 3029  
council@edwardriver.nsw.gov.au  
www.edwardriver.nsw.gov.au

POLICY VERSION CONTROL			
Policy Title		Advocacy Plan	
Date originally endorsed/adopted		20/02/2024	
Council Minute Number		2024/2002/14.5	
Responsible Officer		Chief Executive Officer	
Version Number	Modified By	Modifications Made	Date modified version endorsed/adopted and resolution number where applicable
1			20/02/2024, 2024/2002/14.5
Next revision			