

Hay and Carrathool Regional Drought Resilience Plan

Summary Consultation Paper

September 2024



This paper summarises the Hay and Carrathool Regional Drought Resilience Plan (The Plan), developed in 2024 and due for official release later this year.

The Hay and Carrathool Regional Drought Resilience Plan has been developed as part of the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program. The Regional Drought Resilience Planning program is jointly funded by the Australian Government and NSW Government under the Future Drought Fund.

Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, the Hay and Carrathool Shire Councils acknowledge the Wiradjuri, Nari Nari, Yitha Yitha and Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people, Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, meet and work. We recognise our communities are made up of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples descended from additional mobs and clans who call the Hay Plains and Riverina region their home. We wish to pay our respects to Elders past and present, and recognise the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our region and across Australia.

Disclaimer

Whilst every care has been taken to prepare this document, Hay Shire Council and Carrathool Shire Council accept no responsibility for decisions or actions taken as a result of any data, information, statement or advice, expressed or implied, contained within.

The information contained in this document is subject to change without notice and should not be construed as a commitment by any of the project partners or other stakeholders involved in its development. Implementation of any and all actions or strategies outlined are subject to further consideration and external funding.



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Introduction

Communities across the Hay and Carrathool region have a long, proud history in agriculture – and the economic and lifestyle opportunities that primary production and the natural environment affords them. However, shifting dynamics are creating long term implications for the future of our communities.

We are facing a range of growing challenges to local industries, economies and community wellbeing, from rising living costs to the compounding impacts of worsening extreme weather events including floods to prolonged droughts. We are questioning what the decarbonisation of global supply chains means for our local economy and primary production industries.

To keep the region, and local economy strong, Hay Shire Council and Carrathool Shire Council have joined forces to develop the **Hay and Carrathool Regional Drought Resilience Plan** ('The Plan'). Due for release in late 2024, The Plan will be a high-level strategic framework guiding our efforts over the next decade towards the future we want for our region.

We are proud of the inclusive and meaningful process we've undertaken since this journey started in March 2024. What's been resoundingly clear is that we have strong foundations to build on as we move forward. Every day, our councils, industries, businesses and communities are working on initiatives and actions that seek to shape the future of our region and create a positive legacy for generations to come.

From community-led initiatives that connect our more isolated communities with the health and wellbeing support services they need, to our grassroots enterprises that support young people with skills and experiences they require to thrive in the modern workforce, to the tireless efforts of our councils and local industries in creating new opportunities for jobs, training and essential services through the energy transition - we have the capacity to adapt and lead innovative approaches that help our community and economy thrive in our unique regional context.

We know the best solutions will continue to come from within our region.

The Plan paints a collective vision for the future that we hope everyone can orient themselves and their efforts towards over the next 10 years. It is an invitation for all to contribute to the delivery of actions and different approaches that will move us towards our region's collective vision for the future.

Contribute your feedback

This summary paper is to be used to guide consultation on the draft Hay and Carrathool Regional Drought Resilience Plan (a 90-page document under development).

It communicates key elements of the draft Plan that are important to get community feedback on – the 2035 vision, resilience strategies and priority actions. These key elements form the scaffolding for the rich detail, insights and ideas shared by our community. That detail is captured in the draft Plan and getting your feedback on the scaffolding is a vital part of the Plan development process.

We invite community and regional stakeholders to provide their feedback on the draft 2035 vision, resilience strategies and priority actions outlined in this summary paper.

Written feedback can be lodged via our online survey at tinyurl.com/HayCarrathoolsurvey

Stakeholders who have participated in the development of the Plan to date are invited to participate and provide feedback in one of our online workshops held in September 2024.

Feedback must be received by Friday 20th September 2024.



Behind the Plan

The Hay and Carrathool Regional Drought Resilience Plan (The Plan) is a high-level strategic framework guiding our efforts over the next decade towards the future we want for our region.

The Plan outlines our region's 2035 vision alongside our key aspirations, goals, strategies, and priority actions for councils, businesses, industries, and communities to build economic, social, cultural, and environmental resilience at regional and local levels.

The Plan's Priority Actions create space for different people to take different approaches towards this collective vision, strengthening the region's social, environmental, and economic systems as we go. Operational documents and implementation plans will come out of the Plan as it is activated by our community and the appropriate partners.

Who developed the Plan?

The Plan was developed as part of the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program. It is a collaboration between Hay and Carrathool Shire Councils, The Next Economy, The Australian Resilience Centre, regional stakeholders and communities across the region. The Regional Drought Resilience Planning program is jointly funded by the Australian Government and NSW Government under the Future Drought Fund.

How was the Plan developed?

While development was convened by Councils, the Plan is and will continue to be an adaptive and community-driven plan implemented and stewarded through partnerships between councils, communities, industry and other relevant stakeholders over the next decade.

The Plan was developed in collaboration with more than **280 community, industry and government members** through an iterative and participatory place-based process centred on the lived experience and wisdom of people who live and work here. The development process has three distinct phases:

1. **Resilience of what, to what?** Shining a light on our people and place, March to June 2024
2. **So what? Exploring ideas, opportunities and pathways,** June to September 2024
3. **Now what? Orientating the region towards action,** September 2024 onwards

In-person workshops 15 workshops 173 participants	Online survey 145 participants	Community Conversations 40 participants	Regional stakeholder meetings 28 participants
Hay and Carrathool Shire residents			State/regional bodies and organisations
More than 280 participants More than 600 hours of work by the community More than \$26,000 in-kind contribution in community time			

The approach sitting behind the Plan

1 **Made by everyone, for everyone**

Governments, businesses, communities, and individuals all play key roles in identifying needs and supporting solutions.

2 **Locally led, regionally focused**

The best ideas and actions come from within. The Plan gives our communities a voice to highlight what matters, what's working, and what opportunities we can build on.

3 **Diverse solutions for diverse contexts**

Priority actions range from regional to hyperlocal, reflecting the unique circumstances of each village and township while considering larger-scale needs.

4 **Individual actions, shared future**

The Plan not only honours each community's uniqueness, it allows everyone to contribute according to their own values and capacities, while working towards a shared future

5 **Collaboration and learning for adaptation**

The Plan marks the start of ongoing collaboration between all stakeholders to enhance the region's resilience and improve quality of life. As such, the Plan is a living document that will evolve over time as we learn our way forward.



The Plan

Our 2035 vision

In 2035, our communities, including our local governments, institutions, businesses, industries and households, will have greater capacity to adapt to climate, environmental, social, and economic challenges and opportunities while remaining healthy and vibrant, with safe places to live, work, and raise future generations.

Our shared aspirations

We will be a climate-resilient region that supports:

Healthy and connected communities:

From the health and wellbeing of our people, to well-functioning and collaborative groups, to more free time for people to do what they love, we will foster community spirit and strengthen family and community connections that bind people and place.

Prosperous regional economy:

From a robust, adaptive and future ready workforce, to on farm technology utilised to support more sustainable farming practices and more free time for farmers, to thriving local businesses, we will drive a diverse and circular regional economy that is in service to our local communities and environment.

Sustainable development:

From our communities being aware and prepared for disruptions, to young people wanting to stay in the region, to affordable and secure places to live for everyone, we will plan and provide reliable 'lifelines' that support our community to live sustainably and with dignity.

Thriving ecosystems:

From landholders and managers working in strong collaboration and partnership with First Nations groups to communities celebrating and leveraging our abundance of sunshine, clean air, biodiversity and open space, we will conserve, regenerate and revitalise our natural ecosystems and landscapes.

Our Regional Resilience Strategies & Priority Actions

Our system is driven by interconnected components—agency, relationships, structures, power, and processes—that need to work together for positive change. Systemic change happens when actions align, synergies connect, and efforts are sequenced, coordinated, and mutually reinforcing.

The Plan identifies 24 Priority Actions for change to support climate adaptation and regional resilience for our complex regional system. The Actions, sit under five Regional Resilience Strategies and are designed for implementation at one or more of the following levels; local village/township/bio-region (Places), Local Government Area (LGA), and across both Hay and Carrathool Shire Council (Region).

Each Resilience Strategy targets an impact area that requires effort over the next 10 years for our region to reach its full potential and to meet our collective vision for 2035.

The Resilience Strategies, Goals and Priority Actions are summarised on the following pages.



Strategy 1: Coordinated Action for Climate Resilient Economic Development

The Hay and Carrathool region boasts vast space, strong networks, and rich natural assets. With the right conditions in place, the region is well-positioned to move towards a sustainable economy that benefits people, the planet, and place. With a diverse, innovative agricultural sector open to economic diversification, the region is ready to reimagine its economy and supply chains. There is capacity and will to address complex trade-offs and options around climate mitigation and adaptation as well as explore opportunities for circularity and new industries.

Our Goal: Our region is an innovative economic hub looking at the whole picture: building resilience to the impacts of climate change whilst driving a rapid transition to net zero emissions for a sustainable regional economic system that works for the benefit of people, the planet and our local places.

Strategy Facilitator: Local Government with State and Federal Government support

Action	Details	Scale	Potential Action Leads
Primary Production Innovation Network	A network for regional producers and industry innovation to support on-farm and regional adaptation/transition efforts in agriculture and primary production.	LGA / Place	Farmers, agronomists and local primary production sector
Climate Resilient Councils	A program to increase institutional capacity to plan for and respond to the challenges/opportunities of climate change including ongoing delivery of services.	LGA	Local government
Our Community Changemakers	An annual program to invest in local leadership capacity (young people and adults) to support, lead and manage positive change.	LGA/ Region	Local government and community groups
Regional Economic Transition Roadmap	A roadmap to build the capacity for a coordination, collaborative approach to economic development for a net zero, climate resilient future.	LGA	Local government and local industry
Climate Resilient Roads	Planning to reduce the direct impact of disasters on the region's road network to ensure connectivity, productivity and safe mobility into the future.	LGA	Local government and state government
Regional Environmental-Economic Account	Program to collect, track and integrate environmental and economic data for effective analysis, decision-making, investment, and facilitate access to emerging environment markets.	LGA/ Region	Local primary production sector, NRM/environmental organisations
Every Drop Counts - Redefining On-Farm Water Efficiency	Research and a place-based pilot to drive the adoption of more innovative and sustainable approaches to efficiently manage and safeguard water on farms. Includes research and place-based pilots.	Place	Local primary production sector and research institutions

Strategy 2: Future Ready Businesses

Our local businesses and workers are an important part of our economy. From large agricultural enterprises to small and medium local businesses, all provide essential services, contribute to our identity and underpin our regions resilience capacity. They need coordinated and long-term support to be better prepared for change, make the most of new opportunities and drive a resilient and thriving region. Drought, floods, a changing climate, technology development and other socio-economic factors such as cost of living and housing shortages already affect how we do business. Increasingly our businesses will need to manage other risks, from market and supply chain disruptions to higher insurance and maintenance costs.

Our Goal: Our region's workforce development ecosystem, local businesses and workers are thriving before, during and after drought and other disruptions.

Strategy Facilitator: Local employers and the business community

Action	Details	Scale	Potential Action Leads
Doing Business - Our Way	A B2B shared workforce group that supports local businesses and major employers to take a collective approach to closing the workforce gap through 'sharing employees'.	Place	Local employers and businesses
Future Ready Businesses	Capacity development initiatives to support the capacity of the local business and not-for-profit ecosystem to be innovative and prepared for disruptions and change.	LGA	Local employers and businesses, local government
Workforce Development Ecosystem	A network of partnerships and initiatives working together to promote a thriving workforce development ecosystem that generates economic opportunities for businesses and provides supported pathways into employment for job seekers and young people in our communities.	LGA	Local government and Regional Development Australia
Training and Employment Pathways Hub	Program, partnerships and service offering to leverage and create opportunities for education, training and employment.	LGA	Coalition of local and regional training and education providers, local businesses and industry groups
Building Social Innovation Capacity	An incubator to support local community members, young people and businesses develop mindsets and capacities to design and activate innovative responses and alternative solutions to the provision of goods and services across the region.	LGA/ Region	Local business network or community progress association

Strategy 3: Reimagined Care Economy

A wealth of people and organisations provide healthcare, education and social services to community members across our region. This work all constitutes the region’s care economy, integral yet often overlooked, it can deliver a range of co-benefits like greater workforce participation for parents/carers, local economy stimulus and promoting the liveability of our region.

Our community identified a strong and accessible regional care economy as necessary for the physical, psychological and social well-being of children, the elderly, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. Despite incremental efforts to improve services across the region, pockets of our care system are under stress making our community vulnerable to shocks and stresses.

Our goal: Our region has a sustainable care economy that improves people’s lives, strengthens community capacity to adapt to stresses and drives the region’s economic growth.

Strategy Facilitator: TBC

Note: This Regional Resilience strategy focuses on Priority Actions that specifically address the provision of childcare across the region. The need for improved health and care services was also identified as important and is considered more broadly across a range of Priority Actions.

Action	Details	Scale	Potential Action Leads
The Childcare Economy - Strategy and Coordination	A regional taskforce and strategy to foster new collaborations to collectively develop and establish alternative models of care across the region, drawing on evidence-based approaches.	LGA	TBC
Growing Together - New Regional Childcare System	New ‘childcare’ initiatives to support more families return to work and increase early childhood outcomes through the delivery of innovative models for decentralised childcare services.	Place	Coalition of community organisations, local businesses, health services, care providers, social businesses
Net Zero Community Transport	A community transport service and EV charging network to provide access and ability with the region/service hubs outside the region.	LGA/ Region	Local government, community groups, local businesses

Strategy 4: Inclusive and Empowered Communities

Our region is fairly isolated from major cities and vulnerable to further isolation when major roads and telecommunications are impacted by natural hazards or climatic events. Connectedness, inclusion, and agency were identified as important and valued in our community conversations. Here, family and community ties help during hard times, with local networks stepping up during disasters.

Safeguarding and strengthening such connections were identified as a priority in our workshops. Already, connections are recognised and celebrated - like the cultural diversity in Hillston and Hay attracting new people to town and enriching local events and celebrations. First Nations custodians across our region offer valuable knowledge for strengthening communities, ecosystems, and economies.

Our goal: Our communities look out for each other. We celebrate our unique strengths and contributions, support each other through hard times, and welcome diverse perspectives and experiences.

Strategy Facilitator: TBC

Action	Details	Scale	Potential Action Leads
Community Impact Fund	Community giving and finance model to directly resource and fund strategic initiatives and activities to address regional needs and priorities; and, support the capacity of communities to govern, lead and manage place-based change aligned with their aspirations.	LGA	Local government, local community groups
Community Welcome Committee	A community and economic development initiative to connect new residents to other members of the community as well as the information or resources they may need to thrive and feel supported.	Place	Community groups and volunteers
Inclusive Communities	Research and program of initiatives coordinated by a program officer to enhance cultural inclusion, connection, social cohesion and wellbeing across the region and within town/village- based communities.	LGA/ Place	Local government or community organisation
The Community Taskforce	A strategic working group of a diverse range of experienced local community representatives that are working with community organisations, local councils and other agencies to steward and support activation and implementation of the Plan.	LGA/ Place	A coalition of community groups and businesses, local government
Community Hubs	A neighbourhood / community centre offering affordable and accessible programs to reduce loneliness, increase social connection and improve health and wellbeing in communities. This includes supporting networking between community organisations to strengthen communication and information sharing about community events, processes, services and activities	Place	Local government and/or community organisation or co-op

Strategy 5: Placemaking with Purpose

We value and take pride in our regional lifestyle, the wide-open spaces our region affords, and the connection to a unique landscape of waterways, vegetation and abundant wildlife. It is this relationship with the landscape, our remote context and the geographical spread of our townships and villages, however, that also means our places and people are vulnerable to drought, heat, flood and economic disruptions.

Placemaking is an overarching and broad approach to recreating and activating local public and cultural spaces into inviting and vibrant areas to re-establish and foster connections between people, the natural environment and their built environment.

Community members across the Hay and Carrathool region identified a range of opportunities to enhance our local places and strengthen community life. From outdoor play spaces to community energy options, these ideas respond to the unique context, challenges and opportunities of each township or village, with inspiration sometimes drawn from them for activities and initiatives in other parts of the region.

Our goal: Our communities have liveable, resilient, and lively public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness and wellbeing.

Strategy Facilitator: Local community groups with support from Local Government, philanthropic organisations and/or corporate partners

Action	Details	Scale	Potential Action Leads
Enabling Community Placemaking	A participatory grant-making program for communities to develop and activate strategic placemaking initiatives that reimagine and revitalise our shared spaces in towns and villages for improved social, environmental and economic outcomes.	LGA/ Region	Local government and funding partners
Shaping Our Places	Community-led placemaking initiatives to create opportunities for local people to connect and enjoy local places whilst providing opportunities for visitors to enjoy what the region has to offer.	Place/ LGA	Community organisations, recreational groups, local businesses
Housing Our Future	A business case and investment prospectus to drive an innovative, flexible and adaptable local housing system for liveable, healthy and resilient communities.	Place/ LGA	Local government
Reimagining our Visitor Economy	An Action Plan to enhance and invest in the natural, lifestyle and historical assets of the region to expand the local tourism economy.	LGA/ Place	Coalition of local government, local businesses and local and regional tourism operators

Our Theory of Change

Our 2035 vision

In 2035, our communities, including our local governments, institutions, businesses, industries and households, will have greater capacity to adapt to climate, environmental, social, and economic challenges and opportunities while remaining healthy and vibrant, with safe places to live, work, and raise future generations.

Our shared aspirations

Healthy and connected communities Prosperous regional economy Sustainable development Thriving ecosystems

Our Regional Resilience Strategies and Priority Actions

Climate Resilient Economic Development	Future Ready Businesses	Reimagined Care Economy	Inclusive and Empowered Communities	Placemaking with Purpose
<p>Our region is an innovative economic hub looking at the whole picture: building resilience to the impacts of climate change whilst driving a rapid transition to net zero emissions for a sustainable regional economic system that works for the benefit of people, the planet and our local places.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Production Innovation Network • Climate Resilient Councils • Our Community Changemakers • Regional Economic Transition Roadmap • Climate Resilient Roads • Regional Environmental-Economic Account • Every Drop Counts 	<p>Our region's workforce development ecosystem, local businesses and workers are thriving before, during and after drought and other disruptions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing Business - Our Way • Future Ready Businesses • Workforce Development Ecosystem • Training and Employment Pathways Hub • Building Social Innovation Capacity 	<p>Our region has a sustainable care economy that improves people's lives, strengthens community capacity to adapt to stresses and drives the region's economic growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Childcare Economy - Strategy and Coordination • Growing Together - New Regional Childcare System • Net Zero Community Transport 	<p>Our communities look out for each other. We celebrate our unique strengths and contributions, support each other through hard times, and welcome diverse perspectives and experiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Impact Fund • Community Welcome Committee • Inclusive Communities • The Community Taskforce • Community Hubs 	<p>Our communities have liveable, resilient, and lively public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness and wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling Community Placemaking • Shaping Our Places • Housing Our Future • Reimagining our Visitor Economy

