Community Development Strategy 2024 – 2028

Building Australia's best regional community



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Mayor's message

The new Community Development Strategy is a road map that sets the course for the Bundaberg Region's future over the next four years.

This plan is the result of extensive community consultation, research, and collaboration, and it embodies our shared vision for a sustainable and inclusive region.

The Bundaberg Region has a rich history and a promising future.

It is known for its natural beauty, thriving agriculture, and strong community spirit, however, like many growing communities we face challenges that require thoughtful planning and innovative solutions.

This strategic plan is designed to address those challenges while capitalising on our strengths, ensuring that the Bundaberg Region remains a great place to live, work, and play for generations to come.

Our community has grown by more than 6,000 residents since the previous 2020-2023 strategy and with this growth we recognise the importance of building connections while balancing the important issues.

One of the key pillars of our Community Development Strategy is capacity building and resilience. We are working towards connecting people with their community and community organisations, enabling the organisation by resourcing, education, and empowerment of people so they can both independently and collectively take action on interests, needs and/or issues important to them.

Accessibility is increasingly important to our community and Council, including not only considerations around infrastructure, but also accessible events, activities, and communications.

We are investing in community infrastructure, such as parks, recreational facilities and cultural spaces, to ensure that all residents have access to the amenities they need to lead healthy, fulfilling lives.

Accessibility enables inclusion and participation, and we want every resident to feel connected, supported, and proud of their community.

Finally, this Community Development Strategy emphasises the importance of collaboration.

We know that the best outcomes are achieved when government, businesses, community groups, and residents work together.

Mayor Helen Blackburn Bundaberg Regional Council



Bundaberg Region community profile

Population grown by over 6,000 since the last strategy.

Current total of **104,166**

20% aged 0-17 years and 33.5% aged 60+ years (2021 ABS census).

Seniors increased by

4.5% since 2016.

25-34 age group decreased by **2%**

13% of residents born overseas compared to 18.4% in regional Queensland generally.

68 nationalities represented by those residents born overseas (2021 ABS census).

Top non-English speaking birthplaces in order:

- 1 Philippines
- 2 South Africa
- 3 Germany
- 4 India
- 5 Netherlands
- 6 Thailand
- 7 Malaysia
- 8 Italy

16% of which, arrived since 2016.

5% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 93.2% aged 15+ years are employed. 6.8% unemployment rate compared to regional Queensland rate of 5.2%.

9.6% have a disability and need help with day-to-day living, compared to 6.3% of people in Queensland.

Largest growing industries:

Health Care and Social Assistance 41.9% Retail Trade 33%

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing 9.6%

Importantly, although these industries grew, Bundaberg compared negatively to regional Queensland with a higher proportion of the population earning lower incomes (less than \$500/week) (39.9%:32.4%).

5,990 JobSeeker and Youth Allowance recipients

> This being 10.5% of the population 16-64 years of age, comparatively higher in relation to average of 7.1% of regional Queensland, and 6.2% across Queensland.

14% did voluntary work in the last 12 months (2021 ABS census).

Households:

Couples with children 20.6%

Single Parents 11%

Lone person 25.5%

Couples without children 30.9%

Households with children decreased, with largest growth in lone parents and childless couple households.

What the community told us

Community Development Strategy Survey 2023

570 responses received with strong variation in age demographics.

22.1% have lived in Bundaberg less than 5 years and approximately

64% for over 10 years.

Over 50% of respondents come from outside central Bundaberg suburbs.

11.4% were First Nations. 5.8% noted English as secondary language.

Interesting findings

23% had insufficient perceived social connections.

Approximately 21% received government payments.

13% perceived their wellbeing as poor or very poor.

Of this 13%, **48%** have insufficient social connections, community participation is lower, they feel less safe walking the streets, less valued in community and don't feel confident to advocate for themselves.

Greatest perceived barriers and challenges in order:

1 Youth boredom/behaviour

- 2 Transport
- 3 Mental health issues
- 4 Crime
- 5 Homelessness

Generally, the community feel the region is inclusive of people with disability, culturally linguistically diverse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. However, there is a shared feeling **inclusion is lacking** for those within the vulnerable/at-risk cohort (domestic and family violence, homeless, LGBTIQAP+ or elderly).

Awareness of community and Council services:

51% not aware of emergency relief options.

38% not aware of emergency/ low-cost grocery offerings.

37.8% did not feel informed about what services for personal wellbeing were available.

Many residents are not aware of Council's community-facing digital assets (Bundaberg Now, What's On, Community Directory, Disaster Dashboard) and funding opportunities for clubs, community groups, not-for-profit organisations or artists.

Education and building awareness

of community services and resources is needed across the region.

What can be done to positively impact the community's concerns?

Youth-based activities

(sport, cultural and social), emphasis on school holidays and those reducing offending/re-offending.

Activities for young children

Mental health focus

Housing and homelessness advocacy/support

Community Development in a local government context

Community Development is a practice-based profession and process concerned with the organisation, education and empowerment of people within communities to take collective action on issues important to them. – International Association for Community Development and Australian Institute of Family Studies.

In local government, Community Development aims to empower community to create stronger and more connected communities, taking a holistic approach on positively impacting human rights, inclusion, social justice, self-determination and collective action. Subsequently, empowered communities will actively participate to build community's capacity, improve quality of life and develop greater resilience within the Bundaberg Region.

At our core we aim to "see through the eyes of another".

- Rabindranath Tagore

Our Community Development team use evidence-based, best practice frameworks and principles to do this work. These include predominantly a participatory action and asset-based approach, with social capital theory forming part of the practice.

To action this strategy, community development applies these practices to work with, support and facilitate community. Our work begins when community identify a shared problem or issue. This process can take time; face-to-face discussions, consultations with community groups, building relationships, forming partnerships and ultimately, establishing an action group that works to research and implement strategies to address the identified shared issue or concern.

Many of the actions in this strategy form part of the day-to-day responsibilities of our Community Development Officers. It is however fundamental to note, although one-off events, community advisory groups, committees and consultations form an important part of Council's role, they are not inherently Community Development; they are part of the strategy and method.

2021 Youth Month Knock Ya Socks Off winners Sienna Edwards, Jesse Sutton and Hope Burgess



Bundaberg Regional Council's collaborative approach

Council has numerous departments that work throughout community encompassing similar priorities and actions as Community Development. In Community Development, we focus on collaborative approaches and the development of this strategy acknowledges the connection of all our work. The following highlights strategies, plans and policies employed by Council:

Corporate Plan 2021 - 2026

Operational Plan 2023 – 2024 and subsequent financial years

Sport and Recreation Strategy 2018 – 2028

Parks and Open Space Strategy 2019 – 2026

Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Plan

Arts + Culture Strategy 2019 - 2023

Community Engagement Policy

Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021 – 2023

Sustainable Bundaberg 2030 Strategy

First Nations Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2026

Intelligent Communities Strategy

Who do we work with in the community?

The Community Development team engage across a large diversity of primary sectors that are designated by community consultations, state and federal strategies or policies. Hence, the linkages to the SDG's are noted below next to the relevant sector. It is important to understand this is not an exhaustive list. Some sectors are encompassed within these and others emerge as community needs shift.

Seniors

Youth

Education

Families and children

Housing and homelessness

Health and wellbeing (encompassing mental, social and physical)

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DFV, LGBTIQAP+, disability, migrants, First Nations and those with English as a second language/parents born overseas)

> Diana Fatiaki, Jill Godbold and Evelyn Redden at the Connect Fest! 2023 Yarning Circle

Bundaberg Regional Council

Our key priorities

- 1 Capacity building and resilience
- 2 Focus on diversity and inclusion
- 3 Building connection and belonging
- 4 Encouraging participation and leadership
- 5 Accessible communities

Capacity building and resilience

Our community has the information and resources needed to access services and supports, work collaboratively and operate sustainably. We want all community members to be educated and empowered to lead a life of opportunity with the right skills and knowledge to overcome challenges and maintain their resilience.

Actions

- Educating community to build skills and resources to independently continue designing and delivering opportunities for the region
- Promote innovative thinking, nurture social consciousness and champion community development methods
- Value the skills of our volunteers and empower them to improve their capacity
- Be a leading member of housing and homelessness alliances or networks and advocate on behalf of community
- Foster awareness and knowledge of mental health services and supports to community
- Work with community to focus on crime prevention projects and address concerns around crime reduction
- Encourage innovative social enterprises
- Commit to self-development

- Promote and support Compassionate Communities
- Build community capacity in primary prevention and early intervention towards domestic and family violence
- Manage Council's grants programs and promote funding or grant opportunities to the wider community
- Ensure Council's neighbourhood centres and community services continue to be supported and connected to share knowledge and information while delivering impactful social programs

Focus on diversity and inclusion

Through Community Development, Council aims to build a region where all community members are included and considered in conversations, planning and delivery of projects and decisions. We are committed to creating a harmonious and cohesive community through social justice principles by focusing on equity, human rights and participation of all. This focus will identify and address inequalities by including all residents, acknowledging their value through recognition of the diversity (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrants, refugees, people with disability (PWD), LGBTIQAP+, women, men, families, children and seniors) within our region.

Actions

- Engage local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, seek advice from Traditional Owner Elders and collaborate on initiatives/events
- Facilitate opportunities for migrant and First Nations collaboration and education
- Partner, support and promote activities with culturally diverse communities that enhance intercultural social connections, while strengthening inclusion for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds
- Participate in and provide support to multicultural advisory groups and other stakeholders from migrant communities to develop community projects of social and economic significance
- Support community to establish a community led LGBTIQAP+ Alliance or advisory group
- Facilitate opportunities for increased social inclusion, particularly those experiencing or at risk of experiencing social isolation (seniors, men, women, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), people with disability (PWD) and LGBTIQAP+)
- Assist residents to increase understanding and awareness of local community (cultures, religions, ethnicities, languages, PWD, LGBTIQAP+, barriers and challenges)

- Provide education on intersectionality
- Work towards establishing Bundaberg as a 'Welcoming City'
- Provide educational opportunities to build positive community attitudes in supporting equality, equity, inclusion and diversity
- Continue advocating for improved inclusion to support people with a disability or life-limiting illness to participate in community
- Create awareness of all disabilities, with a focus on hidden disabilities
- Partner with all abilities services to provide more opportunities for participation and inclusion of the voices of people with disability
- Work towards gender equity and awareness of domestic and family violence, and the disproportionately higher rates for First Nations, other women of colour, LGBTIQAP+ and women with disability

Building connection and belonging

I would like to acknowledge the gender

Our goal is to build a community that supports connections with family, friends and community, while valuing the diversity of our region. Our actions will bring people together to help build social capital and community capacity, while forging support networks within community and creating a genuine sense of belonging.

Actions

- Support and build partnerships with networks, committees, not for profits, community groups and external agencies
- Connect community to sport and recreation clubs, community groups and Council
- Encourage intercultural connections

 migrants, refugees, First Nations,
 Australian South Sea Islanders and
 seasonal workers
- Build social capital to support social and economic development, emphasising the marginalised and vulnerable community
- Support intergenerational connection of children, youth, families and seniors
- Work with the service sector to facilitate connections to encourage proactive solutions driven by community
- Encourage place-based connections between residents and their immediate community
- Connect community to services and supports, inclusive of Council's website, What's On, Our Bundaberg Region, Bundy Region Connect Newsletter, social media, Council's grants programs, Bundaberg Now, libraries and future platforms
- Encourage councillors connection to community
- Partner with and support neighbourhood centre's connection to community

Especially to acknowledge the work of trans women of colour whose leading input is so often forgatten in our history

Encouraging participation and leadership

We aim to provide greater opportunities for all residents to participate and have a say. The community will be encouraged and supported to have active roles in leading positive solutions or impacts across the region.

Actions

- Encourage, participate and lead in participatory action groups
- Facilitate and support low cost or free activities, workshops, events and forums across our focus areas; identifying gaps, barriers and trends as they arise
- Participate in community sector networks and consultations – develop participatory action, leadership and collaboration in community
- Build volunteerism
- Promote and facilitate leadership from community
- Support community voices in networks and alliances
- Encourage community attitudes that support equality, equity, inclusion and participation in society
- Model inclusive leadership, as outlined in Council's work in the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity Action Group
- Grow participation in culturally diverse activities
- Support services and community groups to promote activities to engage greater participation
- Upskill community groups and clubs in promotion and engagement (digital literacy and skills – websites, social media and digital marketing)
- Support families to increase parental engagement in community initiatives and programs
- Encourage and support diversity in leadership roles





Accessible communities

Accessible communities are those that support capacity, education and response of community. This leads to improved health and wellbeing (mental, physical and social), through creating safer more accessible environments that promote active lifestyles for all.

Flourish Family Fun Day 2023

Actions

- Identify opportunities for advice and support on best practice access and inclusion to achieve liveability and promotion of equitable access and responsiveness for all (e.g. Queensland Local Government Community of Practice for Access and Inclusion)
- Support alliances and networks as a leading member in a coordinated approach to developing our region's accessibility for all ages, backgrounds and abilities
- Advocate within Council for accessible built and natural environments
- Engage community with lived experience and facilitate opportunities for feedback to advise Council on responding to gaps and barriers to build accessible spaces
- Work with Council to maintain and promote information and communication systems that are accessible, reliable and responsive (e.g. translation or interpreter options for residents and services)
- Promoting services and supports, inclusive of Council's grants
- Collaborate with community and stakeholders to create projects, events, workshops, and other activities that meet the needs of community and support social inclusion to address isolation and loneliness
- Work with community to identify shared actions for supporting people of all ages and backgrounds
- Participate in community consultations on new projects to ensure community voices of those with lived experience are included
- Work with networks to provide greater opportunities to access activities for social connection in safe and supportive environments



Our Outcome Measurement Framework

Our Outcome Measurement Framework has been developed through research of best practice models used in the sector (including State and Federal Government Departments) and inclusive of 'Measuring What Matters (2023)', Australia's First Wellbeing Framework by the Australian Federal Government. The Department of Social Services 'Financial Wellbeing and Capability Activity Outcomes Framework (2023)' and 'Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 Outcomes Framework', and the Queensland Governments Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy's 'Communities 2032 (2022)' strategy have provided foundation material. Regarding the Outcome Measurement Framework, it is important to understand priorities, actions and subsequent outcomes are multidimensional. Therefore, an acknowledged crossover among these components must be considered when measuring outcomes. In addition, outcomes, indicators of success and measures can be altered throughout the life cycle of this strategy as community challenges arise outside the scope. Thus, highlighting the importance of ongoing connection and consultation with community. Successful Community Development is determined by involvement in networks, activities, and other projects, to identify current trends, gaps and growing community concerns.

Wide Bay Indonesian Group at Cultural Connections 2021



Capacity building and resilience

Our community has the information and resources needed to access services and supports, work collaboratively, and operate sustainably. We want all community members to be educated and empowered to lead a life of opportunity with the right skills and knowledge to overcome challenges and maintain their resiliency.

Intended community outcomes	Indicators of success	Measures
 Community is educated, has skills and resources to independently continue designing and delivering opportunities for community Innovative thinking and social consciousness, championing community development methods Greater volunteerism across the region Being a leading member of the housing and homelessness alliances or networks and advocating on behalf of community Awareness and knowledge of 	 Increased community civic participation in local projects Residents aware of the housing and homeless forum and accessing services Increased mental health (wellbeing) and knowledge of mental health-based services Increased number of people confident in being active bystanders to prevent violence 	 Number of community members in action groups Comparison to ABS National Health Survey on proportion of people who experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress (13% in 2018:15% in 2021 COVID-19 pandemic). Consultation with Regional Housing Ltd, the Department of Housing, and Housing and homelessness forums
mental health services and supports to community	prevent violence against women	 Compare volunteer numbers and hours
 Work with community to focus on crime prevention projects and address concerns around crime reduction 	 Uptake in volunteers and number of volunteer hours (linked to social connections) 	to ABS General Social Survey/census (14%) and consult community groups/

services

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Be Active Be Alive 2024 Gin Gin Tai Chi



Intended community outcomes

- Community has resources and skills to withstand unexpected life events
- Innovative social enterprises
- Commitment to self-development
- Promotion of and support for compassionate communities
- Community capacity in primary prevention and early intervention towards domestic and family violence
- Delivery of council's grants programs and promotion of funding or grant opportunities to the wider community
- Council's Neighbourhood Centres and community services are supported and connected, sharing knowledge and information, while delivering impactful social programs
- Awareness and understanding of the different levels of government and their responsibilities

Indicators of success

- Number of Council grants approved
- Improved community awareness of government responsibilities and Council receiving less State/Federal based communications
- Greater engagement with community resilience activities/ resources
- Lower need for emergency relief
- Bystander programs are conducted
- Council continues participation in the LGAQ Domestic and Family Violence Community of Practice/ similar
- Community Development Officer's attend conferences, workshops and training to sustain best practice

Measures

- Community Resilience Officer report on participation numbers in activities and uptake of resources
- Consult Neighbourhood Centres/other Emergency Relief providers on numbers of engagement
- Review and update in-line with Economic Development profile. ID statistics
- Number of community members completing bystander training
- Providing SmartySearch as a free community resource to research funding around Australia



Gin Gin Story Play 2021

Focus on diversity and inclusion

To build a region where all community members are included and considered in conversations, planning and delivery of projects and decisions. We are committed to creating a harmonious and cohesive community through social justice principles by focusing on equity, human rights and participation of all. This focus will identify and address inequalities by including all residents, acknowledging their value and recognising the asset diversity (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrants, refugees, people with disability (PWD), LGBTIQAP+, women, men, families, children and seniors) within our region.

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Intended community outcomes	Indicators of success	Measures
 Engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and communities Facilitate collaboration and education of migrants with First Nations community Collaborative projects supporting social inclusion and addressing loneliness 	 More collaboration with First Nations community Community perceived increase in awareness, knowledge and ability to be involved in community projects 	 Annual Diversity and Inclusion Forum Feedback/Survey providing a yearly update on concerns, gaps and progress to compare to previous years
 Multicultural Advisory Groups support migrant communities to develop projects of social and economic significance 	 Embracing celebration and expression of culture and language 	 Number of activities where culture and language are expressed
 Residents increased understanding and awareness of local community (cultures, religions, ethnicities, languages, PWD, LGBTIQAP+, barriers and challenges) 	 Increase in community participating and/ or attending cultural activities Actively working 	 Compare cultural activity attendance and participation with previous activities and national averages (ABS) 63.8% and
 Community informed on intersectionality 	within Council's First Nations Strategy	32.2% respectively as of 2022

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Bundaberg Multicultural World Cup

reconciliation Healthy attendance at a community led LGBTIQAP+ Alliance or advisory group

Reported increase in participation at a LGBTIQAP+ Alliance or advisory group

Childers Yarnbombing 2024

advisory group

reconciliation

Partnership with Cultural

Services to work towards

Bundaberg Regional Council 15

Building connection and belonging

To build a community that supports connections with family, friends and community, while valuing the diversity of our region. Our actions will bring people together to help build social capital and community capacity, while forging support networks within community and creating a genuine sense of belonging.

Intended community outcomes

- Partnerships with networks, committees, not for profits, community groups and services
- Community connections to community club and groups
- Greater intercultural connections
- Social connections and social cohesion (social capital)
- Intergenerational connections
- Service sector implemented proactive solutions with community
- Place-based projects (sense of belonging)
- Community connection to supports and services
- Councillors provided opportunities to connect to community
- Partnerships with and support for neighbourhood centres, connecting with community
- Feelings of safety, belonging and confidence in the community

Indicators of success

- Reported loneliness and social isolation reduced from 45% national average
- Increased grant funded projects aimed at social connection/cohesion
- Increased partnerships with community groups, networks, small groups and clubs
- Increased club/ group memberships with greater diversity (intercultural and intergenerational)
- Increased vulnerable community participation
- Greater social cohesion compared to the national index statistics
- Projects achieved within the Bundaberg, hinterland and coastal Regions
- Increased Councillor participation and connection to community
- Increase in traffic to Council platforms, especially those related to community development

Measures

- Comparing reported social isolation/loneliness to Australian Institute Health and Welfare (AIHW) research, Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey, local service results and feedback
- Comparison to nation through the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute Mapping Social Cohesion (measures: sense of belonging, worth, social inclusion and justice, political participation, acceptance and rejection)
- Number of grant-funded projects, particularly those aimed at social cohesion/ connection/capital
- Increased online platform traffic and engagement
- Increased number of projects delivered in outer suburbs
- Increase in projects with partnerships with community and services
- Reported improved feelings of safety in the community
- Reported increase in traffic to Council platforms, especially those related to community development
- Reported increased uptake from councillors attending activities

Encouraging participation and leadership

To provide greater opportunities for all residents to participate and have a say. The community will be encouraged and supported to have active roles in leading positive solutions or impacts across the region.

Intended community outcomes	Indicators of success	Measures
 Leadership of 'participatory action groups' as per identified concerns of community Facilitation or support of low cost/ free activities, workshops, events, or forums across focus areas Participation in community networks or alliances, and consultations to encourage action groups, leadership and collaboration Greater volunteerism 	 Increased participation of those with lived experience Greater number of community volunteering Increase in number of youth activities 	 Comparison of participation from previous activities and current attendance numbers Consult networks/ committees on community involvement in action groups Activities and
 Greater volunteerism Promotion and development of leadership in community Greater youth engagement in networks and activities Better attitudes that support equality, inclusion and diversity 	 Increase of parent/ guardian involvement in activities 	 Activities and programs have participation rate of 75% or greater Reported increase of parental engagement in community initiatives

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Encouraging participation and leadership

To provide greater opportunities for all residents to participate and have a say. The community will be encouraged and supported to have active roles in leading positive solutions or impacts across the region.

Intended community outcomes	Indicators of success	Measures
 Community development participation in internal Council Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Action (IDEA) and other wellbeing groups 	 Number of 'action groups' led by community 	 Feedback of increased number of community members signed
 Greater participation in culturally diverse activities 	 Number of participants 	up for volunteeringCompleted
 Support of community services and community groups to promote activities for greater participation 	in training/ workshops for digital skills, or other capacity	feedback – perceived increased understanding and
 Improved marketing and engagement skills of community groups and 	building opportunities	actioning of equity, inclusion, and
clubs (digital literacy, social media, websites and digital marketing)	 Increase in community 	diversity principlesReported increase
 Increased parental engagement in community initiatives 	leaders emerging	in new community leaders emerging
and programsEngagement with leaders from across the region	 Regular scope of influence with internal 	 Reported attendance of staff at every internal

Greater diversity in leadership roles

with internal wellbeing groups

at every internal wellbeing group



Accessible communities

To create accessible communities that support capacity, education, and response of community; leading to improved health and wellbeing (mental, physical and social), through creating safer more accessible environments that promote active lifestyles for all.

Identify opportunities for advice and support Promote equitable access and responsiveness for all Networks and alliances to provide community driven projects Accessible built and natural environments Greater opportunities for people with lived experience to provide feedback/advice Information and communication systems are accessible (translation or interpreter options) Enhanced knowledge and awareness of services and supports, including Council's grants program Community can identify shared actions for supporting people of all ages and backgrounds Voices of those with lived experience included Greater opportunities to access activities for social connection in safe and supportive environments
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