



Baw Baw Shire Community Vision.

July 2021



**The next 20 years
and beyond.**





Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians and their ongoing connection to the land and waters that make up Baw Baw Shire. We pay our respects to their Elders; past, present and emerging.

We thank the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for caring for Country and continuing the customs that maintain the longest practised culture in the world. A healthy and well Baw Baw Shire involves embracing the lived experiences and contributions of all cultures in our community; this starts with the recognition and inclusion of First Nations peoples.

Recognition of diversity and Inclusion

We recognise and celebrate the diversity of our community, we acknowledge and respect the skills, insights and life experiences of all community members irrespective of gender, ethnicity, ability, sexuality or age.

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Introduction.

Developing a vision for our future helps us to prioritise our actions of today and of tomorrow.

This Community Vision has been informed by over 360 members of our Community. It was developed through a deliberation process with a panel of 42 community representative and it sets out our community aspirations for the future of Baw Baw Shire for the next 20 years and beyond.

Our Community Vision reflects our community's passion, energy and care for Baw Baw Shire. It is a region so many of us are proud to call home.

A region of natural beauty and productive land. A Thriving rural region to visit, live in and discover.

The purpose of this document is to outline the community goals for Baw Baw Shire's future. Our Community Vision has been developed to inform and guide the planning and priorities of Baw Baw Shire Council. It is also a resource for other local organisations and agencies in how they can support and engage with our community.

Our future for Baw Baw Shire is...

Sustainable.

Sustainable towns and villages that continue to benefit from our beautiful rural and natural environment.

Healthy.

Healthy and well people, living in safe, connected communities and healthy environments.



BAW BAW COMMUNITY VISION

Thriving.

Thriving, diverse and resilient communities.

Creating our Community Vision.

The 12 months leading up to creating our Community Vision has been like nothing our community has ever experienced before.

In addition, there has also been, and continues to be, significant growth and change within Baw Baw Shire over recent years. While these may bring challenges, it mostly creates positive opportunity.

In 2011, Baw Baw Shire Council and the community came together to develop BawBaw 2050.

This work captured the community's aspirations, at that time, of happy, healthy people; living sustainably and in harmony with our natural environment; with thriving villages and productive, inspiring landscapes. BawBaw 2050 was used to develop the 2013-2017 and 2017-2021 Council Plans and has guided Baw Baw Shire Council's service and project delivery, alongside other organisations and agencies across the region.

Now, ten years later, over 360 members of the Baw Baw Shire community have been involved in building a Community Vision for the next 20 years and beyond.

Our new Community Vision builds on similar themes to those captured in BawBaw 2050, highlighting what our residents value the most and our collective goals for the future. It is a critical piece of information to inform Baw Baw Shire Council's planning and decision making, including future Baw Baw Shire Council Plans, Finance Plans and Asset Plans.

Baw Baw Shire Council has helped to facilitate the development of this Community Vision, however, this Vision is owned by the community.

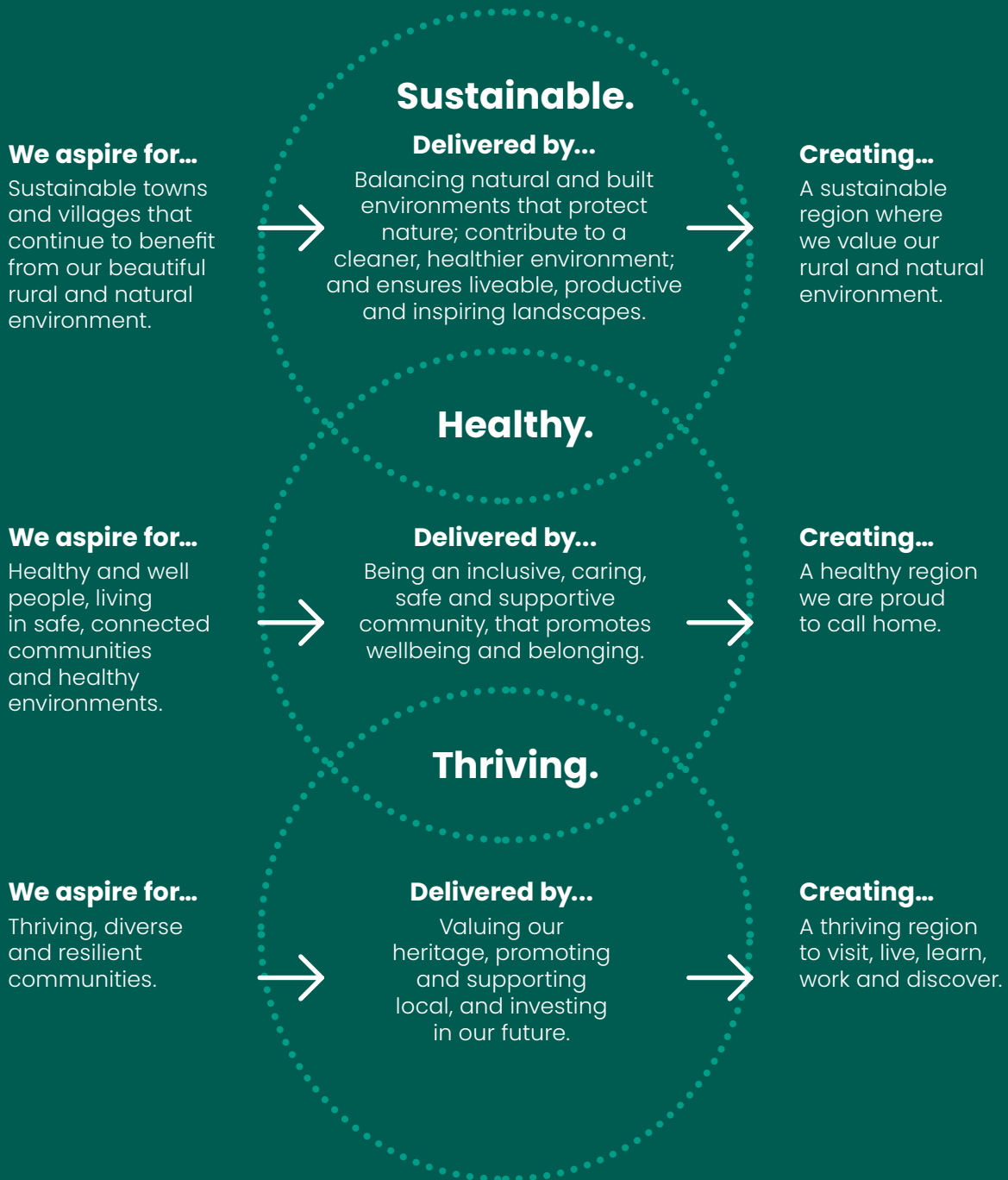
While many community members have provided input into the Community Vision, it has been developed by the 42-member community panel who have participated in a deliberative engagement process. The community panel participated in several working sessions between March and June 2021, exploring a range of information including the Community Vision survey, with over 300 responses from community members; feedback from six community focus groups with different stakeholders from across Baw Baw Shire; and insights, reflections and future direction documents for the region drawn from Baw Baw Shire Council, State Government and a range of other organisations.

This Community Vision is for our whole community. It is not just words on a page, but a bold description, drawn from our 42-member community panel, on what we want our future to look like.

It is important to recognise and call out that everyone has a role to play in achieving this Vision, from every community member to Baw Baw Shire Council and the many organisations and agencies that support the community. Together, by understanding our future goals, we can better plan, organise activities and invest in the right resources.

Community Vision.

Our vision for Baw Baw Shire for the next 20 years and beyond is for every individual, every household and every community throughout the region. It has been created by our community for our community. It is the future we want to work towards together.



These statements are a vision of the future and are purposefully aspirational in nature. This is the future our community wants. In delivering to this, we recognise the importance of learning from our past, building on our strengths as a region today, and looking to the future and the areas we can influence and that influence us. **The following pages break down these statements further, highlighting the aspirations and goals that make up a Sustainable, Healthy and Thriving Baw Baw Shire for the next 20 years and beyond.**

Sustainable.

The future for Baw Baw Shire is **sustainable towns and villages that continue to benefit from our beautiful rural and natural environment.**

Our future goals as a community...

1. Sustainable built environments that protect nature and meet the needs of a growing community.

Demonstrated through...

- 1.1 Well planned built environments that considers our region's landscape and both the existing and the future needs of our community.
- 1.2 Environmentally sustainable development for residential areas throughout Baw Baw Shire that consider key areas, such as, site layout and liveability, streets, energy, ecology, water management, urban heat, and materials and waste. Delivering solutions for communities that respect our region's urban, rural and natural landscapes.
- 1.3 Infrastructure (e.g. roads, public transport, public amenities) that keeps pace with our region's growing population and changing technology, enabling business and broader community to stay local.

- 1.4 Equitable investment across the community to support both regional town growth and preserve rural towns and villages.

2. Protected, sustainable and productive natural environments.

Demonstrated through...

- 2.1 Commitment to sustainable and renewable energy and low emissions technology to demonstrate our action as a community and support a healthy, clean and sustainable environment.
- 2.2 Consistent and clear protection of nature across our built environments, from tree coverage on our streets, to the natural landscapes and waterways through our towns and villages.
- 2.3 Balance the demand for new housing development and infrastructure (e.g. roads) with the protection and support of productive agriculture land and agricultural industry across the region.
- 2.4 Effective design and management of our waste (e.g. sewerage, recycling), transition to low emissions and reduced exposure to air and noise pollution that keeps pace with a growing and thriving region.

Examples of future goals that demonstrate **sustainable** from members of our community:



Sustainable design in how we develop regional towns. Protect our rural and natural environment in balance with increasing demand and population growth.



Preservation and investment in state parks.



Build on rich cultural heritage of land management (traditional custodianship).



Investment in renewable energy, low emissions technology across households and industry throughout our region.



Sustainable and managed growth enabled through robust protections and policies (such as Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines) that help inform future decisions.

Healthy.

The future for Baw Baw Shire is **healthy and well people, living in safe, connected communities and healthy environments.**

Our future goals as a community...

3. **Healthy and well people and communities.**

Demonstrated through...

- 3.1 High quality, accessible and local healthcare options available throughout our Baw Baw Shire.
- 3.2 Health and wellbeing services that are connected and actively work together, providing care and support to those with multiple needs.
- 3.3 Investment in health infrastructure, with the diverse and specialist services needed to support our community of today and the future.
- 3.4 Resourced and effective services that support those in our community when they need it, and which positively impact their lives.

4. **Connected and inclusive communities, creating a strong sense of safety and belonging.**

Demonstrated through...

- 4.1 Safe, accessible and inclusive community spaces and places throughout Baw Baw Shire that change alongside our community and help people connect.
- 4.2 A welcoming and accepting community for all people, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, ability, sexuality or age.

5. **Healthy environments, resilient communities.**

Demonstrated through...

- 5.1 Protected rural and natural environments that support the health of our local wildlife, trees, rivers and forests; as well as places and landscapes for our community to enjoy and gain positive mental, social and physical health benefits.
- 5.2 Resilient people and communities prepared and ready to deal with significant challenges and disruptions, including the impacts of climate change and extreme events.

Examples of future goals that demonstrate **healthy** from members of our community:



Shared spaces and services have the facilities that enable community to use and enjoy our spaces. (e.g. baby change rooms, walking paths, etc.).



Robust protection policies and overlays and planning schemes that look after the health of our environment.



A new hospital in Baw Baw Shire supporting the health and wellbeing of our growing population.



More organised sport that gets our community active and connected.



Establish and support community groups, services and funds to help communities prepare and respond to crises, e.g. bushfires, floods and pandemics.



Supported and connected community services to enable better access across the region for many in our community, in particular older residents or those living with a disability.

Thriving.

The future for Baw Baw Shire is **thriving, diverse and resilient communities.**

Our future goals as a community...

6. A strong economy, creating and sustaining local jobs.

Demonstrated through...

- 6.1 A diverse, self-sustaining and resilient economy focussed on local industry and small business; helping businesses to thrive across the region.
- 6.2 Supports that encourage local jobs. Helping people across Baw Baw Shire work and stay in the region.
- 6.3 Innovation and technology across our leading industries (e.g. healthcare and social assistance, agriculture, food and forestry, education and training, manufacturing and tourism) that strengthens our economy and drives investment.

7. Education, tourism and cultural offerings that help our region to flourish.

Demonstrated through...

- 7.1 The best of Baw Baw Shire is actively promoted within and beyond our region to attract tourism and generate investment in our local economy.
- 7.2 Diverse and vibrant recreation and cultural places, spaces and offerings that bring our community together (e.g. arts, parks, community hubs).

- 7.3 Access to high quality and diverse tertiary education options available to people across the community, including physical campuses, as well as remote learning opportunities.
- 7.4 Training and learning options that focus on relevant job ready skills, support our local economy and industry, and help provide opportunities for emerging talent and young people to work in the region.

8. Future ready infrastructure and transport options that help our community better access services, work and education throughout Baw Baw Shire.

Demonstrated through...

- 8.1 Accessible, practical and safe public transport available throughout Baw Baw Shire connecting our towns and villages, providing meaningful alternatives to reach services, work and education.
- 8.2 Increased V/Line services and alternate transport that provide more options and ease of access into and out of the region.
- 8.3 Commitment and support of evolving transport options and embracing changing travel behaviour, from electric cars and bikes, to autonomous vehicles.

Examples of future goals that demonstrate **thriving** from members of our community:



Diverse employment options (with a focus on pathways for young people and relevant rural trades) across our region. Providing more opportunities for people to work locally.



Support of eco-tourism, using our beautiful natural assets to support local business and jobs.



Increased public transport options in rural parts of our region.



Encourage innovation, new skills and training for local industry.



Better use of existing and investment in new community spaces and events across our community.



Investment in emerging transport infrastructure to support improved access across Baw Baw Shire.

Thank you.

Capturing goals for the future is no simple task. It has required time, energy and passion from everyone involved. A thank you to every member of Baw Baw Shire community who has taken the time to participate, whether through the community survey, a focus group or as part of the community panel.

This Community Vision is owned by the Baw Baw Shire community. It will inform Baw Baw Shire Council's current and future planning. It is a capture of the future we want, for the next 20 years and beyond.

Our future for Baw Baw Shire will create ...

Sustainable.

... A sustainable region where we value our rural and natural environment.

Healthy.

... A region we are proud to call home.



**BAW BAW
COMMUNITY
VISION**

Thriving.

... A thriving region to visit, live, learn, work and discover.

Appendix 1: Preparing our vision.

This Community Vision is the culmination of six months work.

Seeking the views of over 360 members of our community and working alongside the 42-member community panel to capture, reflect and develop statements that represent what we love our about our region today and what we aspire for the next 20 years and beyond. In total 12 events and a number of community consultations were held between March and June 2021. These included:

- **Six focus groups** with a range of stakeholder groups from across Baw Baw Shire, such as new residents, environmental groups, business groups, community service organisations, rural and remote residents and Councillors;
- **Community consultations**, facilitated through Council and partner organisations, such as children and young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives;
- **Community survey**, available to the whole community, receiving over 300 responses; and
- **Five community panel working sessions**, both online and face-to-face, covering over 16 hours of discussion, reflection and development.

Appendix 1: Preparing our vision.

Our 42-member community panel, independently recruited as a representative community group, have acted as the collective voice for the community.

Their task was not to think as 42 individuals, but to reflect and discuss as a community of over 55,000 people. To support the community panel, inputs were collated and provided from the above consultations, alongside pre-existing data and community consultations undertaken by Baw Baw Shire Council and other community organisations over recent years. These inputs along with dedicated time spent understanding the process and their role in it, helped the community panel be prepared and energised about the task.



Information packs that collated extensive information from across consultations and pre-existing data and community engagement.



A full day, face-to-face, workshop to collaborate, discuss and develop thinking around the future vision.

Appendix 2: The role of Council.

Baw Baw Shire Council provides a range of services that aim to maintain and improve the quality of life for the Baw Baw Shire community.

Council's role encompasses a wide range of services to the community, such as: maternal and child health, strategic and town planning, roads, drainage, urban operations, community compliance, environmental health, arts and culture, building surveying, emergency management, and aged and disability services.

There are many other organisations, State and Federal Government departments which are also responsible for providing the services, facilities and infrastructure needed by the community.

In developing this Community Vision, we recognise that many organisations and agencies have an important role to play, from Council to the local, state and federal organisations and agencies that support the community. We can not achieve this vision alone.

Council will use this Community Vision to inform future Council Plans, Finance Plans and Asset Plans. Council, with the support of the community, will advocate to the appropriate authority to ensure community needs are being met.

Council through this process and beyond will continue to work alongside community to understand future goals, so that planning is better, the right activities are organised and there is investment in the right resources.



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Shire Council**

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