



2022-2024

# State of our City

**maitland**  
CITY COUNCIL



# Contents

## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Wonnarua People as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land within the Maitland Local Government Area. Council pays respect to all Aboriginal Elders, past, present and future with a spiritual connection to these lands.

<b>Welcome</b>	<b>4</b>
Message from our Mayor	4
Message from our General Manager	5
About this report	6
<b>Our Maitland</b>	<b>8</b>
Our city, our people	8
Our opportunities and challenges	10
<b>State of our City</b>	<b>12</b>
Implementing our Community Strategic Plan	13
State of our community	14
Driving Maitland's Future	18
<b>Let's connect with each other</b>	<b>20</b>
Getting around our city	22
Places that connect us	26
Welcoming and inclusive	30
<b>Let's create opportunities</b>	<b>34</b>
Housing options and city growth	36
Economic development	40
Central Maitland	44
<b>Let's live sustainably</b>	<b>48</b>
Valuing our environment	50
Sustainable future	54
Reduce our waste	58
<b>Let's achieve together</b>	<b>62</b>
Build trusted services	64
Foster an engaged workforce	68
Create a resilient future	72
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>76</b>
Glossary	84
References and research	85



Mayor Philip Penfold

## A message from our Mayor

**As we reflect on the 2022-2024 term of Council, there is much that Maitland can take pride in, despite facing significant challenges.**

The devastating floods tested our resilience, but they also showcased the strength of our community and the dedication of our Council. We made significant investments in vital infrastructure, particularly in road improvements, ensuring our city is well equipped to meet the demands of a growing population. Our recreation facilities received a boost, with the Harold Gregson Reserve project enhancing spaces for families and communities to enjoy.

A major milestone was the adoption of our first ever Environmental Sustainability Strategy, marking a strong commitment to sustainability and future proofing Maitland. We also launched key services, such as the bulky waste collection, which has been widely embraced by our residents, and we made strides in digital transformation with the introduction of our new website and the MyCouncil App, making it easier for our community to connect and engage with us.

This term also saw a significant leadership transition, with the retirement of our long serving General Manager after 25 years of dedicated service and the appointment of a new General Manager to lead us into the future.

These are just some of the highlights over this term. It has been a privilege to serve as Mayor, and on behalf of my fellow Councillors, I extend my deepest thanks to Maitland City Council's dedicated staff. Together, we are working towards a future for Maitland where our community can thrive - living, working, and enjoying all that our city has to offer.



General Manager Jeff Smith

## A message from our General Manager

**It has been an absolute pleasure to lead Maitland City Council over the past 12 months as we've delivered significant achievements, and I'm even more excited about the opportunities we've identified for the years ahead.**

With change comes great opportunity, and I am deeply passionate about ensuring the outcomes of our work enhance the wellbeing and quality of life for our community.

Over the past year, we've undertaken many important changes, including a restructure that aligns with our commitment to delivering on the goals and aspirations of our community. Together, we have worked to reset our corporate vision: Working together to foster a culture built on trust, empowering an engaged workforce that embraces change.

We are confident that with this renewed focus and commitment, we can seize the opportunities ahead and continue meeting the needs of the Maitland community - today and for decades to come.

It's important to note that the only way to achieve these results is by having a highly dedicated team at Maitland City Council. From our Executive Leadership Team, Managers, and staff to our Councillors, it's a credit to each and every one of you.



## About this report

**The State of our City report shows our progress in working towards our collective vision under our Community Strategic Plan. It highlights our key achievements under each theme and presents trend data to guide Maitland's future direction.**

Required under the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) framework, this report details our progress towards our community goals under our Community Strategic Plan (CSP). It is presented to our newly elected council for noting at the second council meeting and provides key information to assist the new council to undertake a review of the CSP.

The State of our City report highlights both our successes and areas for improvement.

Reflecting on our progress allows us to identify future opportunities and challenges. With significant growth already experienced and forecast for the next 20 years, Maitland faces substantial change that we need to be prepared for to retain our strong sense of community and improve our quality of life into the future.

Each theme includes criteria with which to track progress, key initiatives undertaken to deliver on a theme's goals, an analysis of current issues and future state of the issue, and metrics that will allow us to monitor our performance in the future.

The baseline of metrics is an important new addition that will inform Council's review of the Community Strategic Plan and progress in achieving the objectives. These benchmarks will help track our performance, guide strategic decisions, and ensure transparency and accountability.

## What is Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR)?

Legislated by the *Local Government Act 1993*, the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework allows New South Wales councils to draw their plans together, to understand how they interact and inform each other, and to get the maximum benefit from their efforts by planning holistically for the community's future.

## Why is IPR important?

Maitland City Council operates in an increasingly complex environment, with responsibilities under more than 50 different pieces of legislation and direct relationships with over 20 NSW and Australian Government agencies.

The IPR framework allows Council to navigate these complexities in a meaningful and purposeful way, and to:

- Integrate community priorities into strategies and plans
- Support the community and stakeholders to play an active role in shaping the future of their community
- Articulate the community's vision and priorities
- Assign resourcing to support delivery of Council's vision and priorities, while also balancing aspirations with affordability
- Maintain accountability and transparency through regular monitoring and reporting.





The local government area covers 396km<sup>2</sup> from Woodberry in the east to Harpers Hill in the west, Tocal to the north, and Gillieston Heights to the south. Over 95,000 residents are settled in town centres, new and growing suburbs and quiet rural areas. By 2041, we expect around 145,000<sup>1</sup> people will call our city home.

The original inhabitants of this area are the people of the Wonnarua Nation, 'people of the mountains and the plains'. Bordering nations and clans include Worimi, Darkinjung, Kamilaroi, Geawegal, Gringai, Awabakal, Birpai and Wiradjuri.

Maitland is one of the oldest regional centres in Australia, built on the banks of the Hunter River. The Hunter River meanders through rural and urban areas, providing a scenic backdrop to our everyday lives. Whilst the river's serenity sometimes becomes more turbulent, the flood prone nature of parts of the city has led to a distinctive land use pattern and built form, with urban areas having clear limits that overlook idyllic pastoral areas.

We are a busy and productive community, and we have a thriving local economy diversified across health, construction, service and knowledge industries. Maitland supports 35,227 jobs and has an annual economic output of \$14.29 billion.<sup>2</sup>

The city's continued population growth is an important strength for the local economy. It enables industries and businesses access to broad workforces within our city and draws from the neighbouring areas due to its central location in the region. Growth, coupled with the lifestyle benefits of our city, attract and retain workforces to support the key industries that drive our economy.



# Our Maitland

## Our city, our people

Scenic beauty, unique heritage, rural landscape, welcoming people and convenient location are some of the factors that have led to our city being one of the fastest growing cities in Australia.

1 Planning NSW population  
2 Remplan Aug 2024

# Our opportunities and challenges

## Population growth

Maitland welcomes more than 2,000 new residents into our community each year, which equates to approximately 2.4 per cent growth annually<sup>3</sup>. Such high growth presents our council with some very distinct challenges, including increased demand for essential services and infrastructure to accommodate the expanding community. The recent growth has also seen around 1,000 new dwellings built each year.

## Housing

Housing demand in Maitland continues to outstrip supply, particularly for middle to low-income brackets. Regional growth and migration from major cities, has resulted in soaring house prices and rental costs, causing significant mortgage and rental stress. Addressing these challenges involves increasing housing supply, promoting affordable housing projects, and implementing policies to mitigate homelessness and housing insecurity.

## Low education

At the 2021 Census, less than a quarter (24.8 per cent) of Maitland's population above the age of 15 had attained a post-school qualification of Diploma or above. With nine out of 10 future jobs estimated to require post school qualifications, there is likely to be a significant decline in demand for an unqualified labour force. This will have a substantial impact on the Maitland economy, polarising employment opportunities and increasing economic inequality into the future.

## Protecting the environment

Environmental protection is crucial for Maitland's sustainable future. The region's natural resources, including its green spaces, waterways, and biodiversity, are critical assets that must be preserved. Strategies to protect the environment include promoting green infrastructure, enhancing public spaces, and implementing sustainable land use practices. Additionally, efforts to reduce carbon emissions and increase climate resilience are essential. This includes supporting renewable energy initiatives, improving waste management, and encouraging eco-friendly transportation options.

## Changing demographics

Maitland's demographic profile is shifting. Our local government area ranks among Australia's top regions for millennial inflow, largely due to domestic migration from nearby areas such as Lake Macquarie and Newcastle.

By 2041, an additional 14,800 individuals aged 65 and over are projected to reside in the area<sup>4</sup>. This demographic change necessitates enhanced healthcare services, age friendly infrastructure, and accessible housing options for older adults. It also presents opportunities for economic growth in sectors such as healthcare, aged care, and related services. Policies must focus on creating inclusive communities that support the wellbeing and active participation of older residents.

The large demographic of young families in Maitland presents challenges in ensuring adequate and accessible services such as childcare, education, healthcare, and family friendly infrastructure. There is a growing need for affordable housing, safe neighbourhoods, and diverse community programs that cater to various age groups. Additionally, economic pressures faced by young families, like managing mortgages and saving for education, require targeted support. Long term planning is crucial to address the evolving needs of these families as their children grow, ensuring Maitland remains a thriving and supportive community.

## Economy

Maitland's economy is diverse, with strong sectors in healthcare, education, retail, and manufacturing. Continued economic growth and diversification are vital for the region's prosperity.

Currently, a large portion of our working population travels outside of the LGA for work. Opportunities include supporting local businesses, attracting new industries, and fostering innovation. Investments in infrastructure, such as the new Maitland Hospital and educational institutions, play a crucial role in driving economic development. Additionally, promoting tourism, leveraging the region's cultural and natural attractions, and enhancing digital connectivity are key strategies to boost economic opportunities and job creation.

## Staying connected

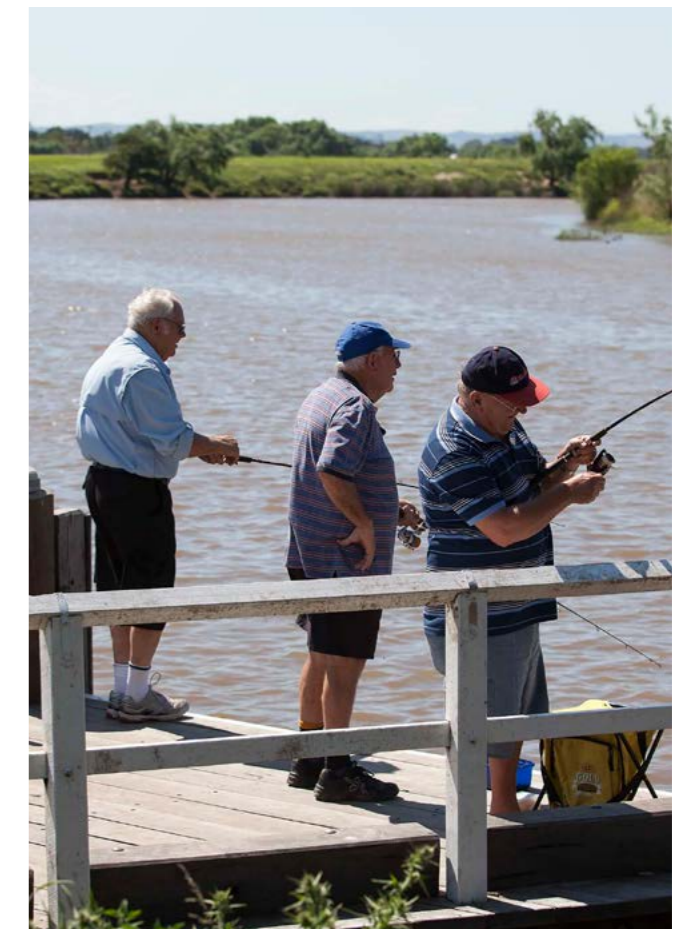
Connectivity is a critical factor in ensuring Maitland residents and businesses can thrive. This involves improving transport infrastructure, including roads, public transport, and active transport networks such as walking and cycling paths. Digital connectivity is equally important, with the need for high speed internet and reliable telecommunications to support remote work, education, and business operations. Enhancing connectivity also includes fostering community engagement and ensuring residents have access to information and services, thereby strengthening social cohesion and resilience.

## Sustainable development

Given Maitland's rapid growth, there is a significant opportunity to support development by embracing smart and sustainable practices. By focusing on vertical growth - building up rather than out - Maitland can preserve green spaces, reduce urban sprawl, and make more efficient use of existing infrastructure. This approach not only minimises environmental impact but also supports a higher quality of urban living, with better access to amenities and services. Prioritising sustainable development ensures that Maitland can continue to grow while maintaining its commitment to environmental conservation and community wellbeing.

## Flood plains

By strategically utilising flood plains, we can create multifunctional green spaces that not only mitigate the impacts of flooding but also provide recreational areas, wildlife habitats, and agricultural land. These areas can support biodiversity, improve water quality, and offer educational opportunities focused on environmental conservation. Embracing flood plains as valuable assets enables Maitland to balance development with natural processes, fostering a more sustainable and adaptive urban environment.





# State of our City

Maitland's Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032 was endorsed on 14 June 2022. The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is the highest level of plan that Council prepares and was developed through extensive consultation. It sets out the community's shared vision, aspirations for the future and includes 16 long term goals alongside supporting strategies to help achieve them.

## Implementing our Community Strategic Plan

The first Community Strategic Plan, endorsed in 2012, marked a focus on long term planning for our community, outlining key priorities and future aspirations for at least the next decade.

This first plan saw a focus on improving the appearance of the city, in particular our parks, playgrounds, footpaths, cycleways, the river, and addressing issues in Central Maitland. As a result, the central business district now has more diverse retail, cultural, and service opportunities, with better connections between events and recreational activities along the river.

It has steered the expansion of Council initiatives, notably in the success of our flagship events in Central Maitland, place activation that has better connected events and recreational opportunities to the river, award winning projects like The Levee and The Riverlink building redevelopment, as well as enhancements to Maitland Regional Sports Complex and Maitland Aquatic Centre.

Reviewed and updated with each new council term, the CSP reflects the community's evolving feedback and priorities. Ten years later, the main messages received from the community in the review of the CSP were around increasing opportunities for social connectivity and wellbeing, easing frustration around traffic congestion, addressing concerns around environmental management and environmental impacts, and wanting more long term planning to address infrastructure needs and growth.

These aspirations were captured under four themes, with each listing what we want (our objectives) and what we will do (our strategies):

- **Let's connect with each other**
- **Let's create opportunities**
- **Let's live sustainably**
- **Let's achieve together.**

This renewed focus on managing growth reflects the changes happening across the Hunter region and the impacts felt at the local level. As our roads get busier, housing becomes more unaffordable and environmental issues more visible, like in the recent years of flooding, our community wants to clearly see our plan for managing these issues into the future.

## State of our community

Understanding the state of our community from a wellbeing perspective is crucial to fostering a thriving, inclusive environment. By analysing data from the SGS Cities and Regions Wellbeing Index, alongside insights from our own community satisfaction survey, we gain a comprehensive view of the factors that impact quality of life – from economic stability to social connections and health.

These data points help us identify areas where wellbeing can be enhanced, guiding our priorities and resource allocation. With this informed approach, we ensure that our initiatives are aligned with the needs and aspirations of our residents, promoting overall wellbeing and liveability.



### Colour key

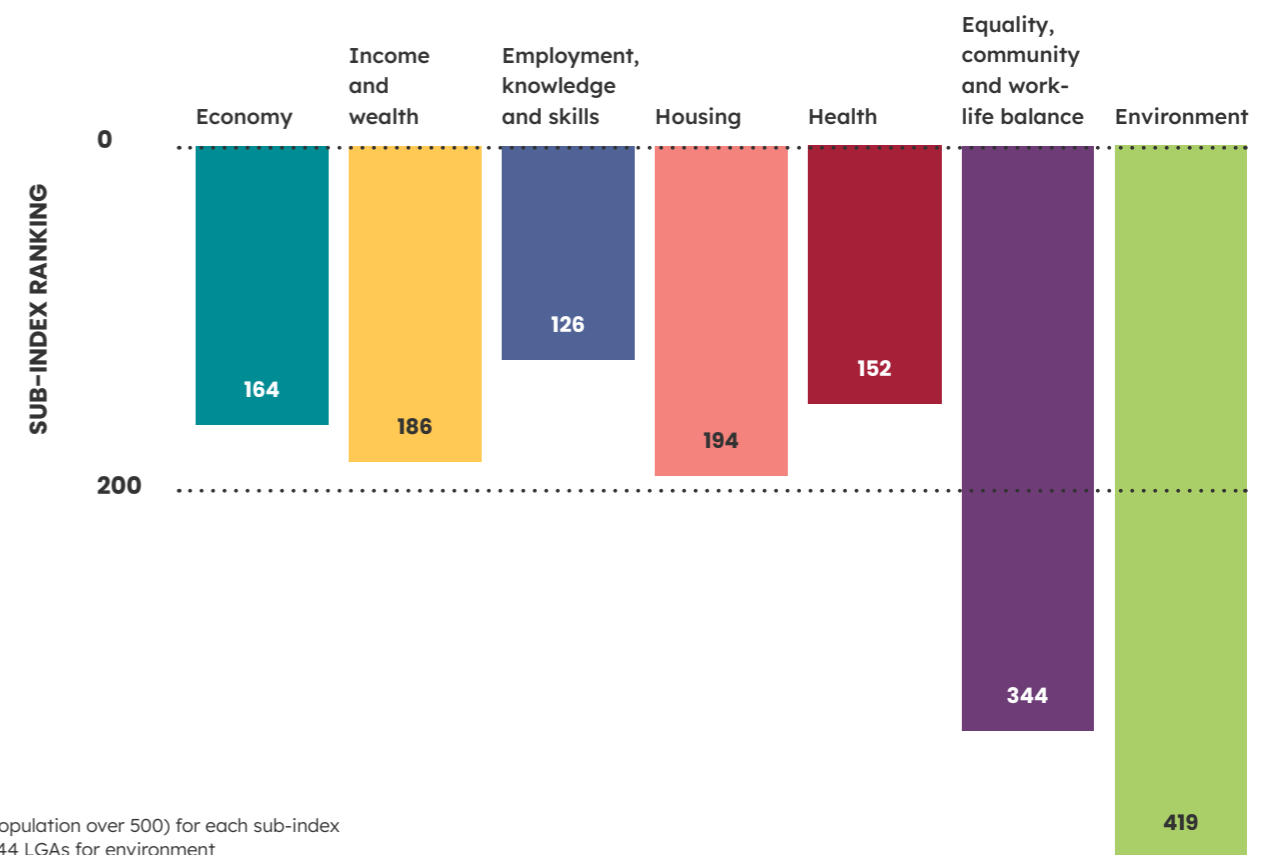
- Economy
- Income and wealth
- Employment, knowledge and skills
- Housing
- Health
- Equality, community and work-life balance
- Environment

DIMENSION	DEFINITION
<b>ECONOMY</b>	A region's economic output, productivity, and diversity shows how well the local economy is performing.
<b>INCOME AND WEALTH</b>	Communities with higher incomes and greater levels of wealth provide greater levels of security, stability and opportunities.
<b>EMPLOYMENT, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS</b>	Includes levels of education and engagement in the workforce which can contribute to financial and broader personal satisfaction.
<b>HOUSING</b>	Includes rates of homelessness, affordability, and overcrowding. As shelter is a basic human need, issues around housing access impact wellbeing.
<b>HEALTH</b>	Considers life expectancy and rates of illness, which can be linked to access to healthcare and cultural factors.
<b>EQUALITY, COMMUNITY AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE</b>	Includes volunteer rates, work-life balance, gender and First Nations equality indicators.
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	Assesses a location's risk to environmental hazards and access to national parks, reserves, and protected areas.

## Maitland's Overall Cities and Regional Wellbeing Index Score



## Maitland's national rank out of a total of 518 LGAs



(with a population over 500) for each sub-index and all 544 LGAs for environment







**m**

**Liveability and Wellbeing at Maitland**



**78%**

I am satisfied with my mental and physical health



**71%**

The Maitland community is welcoming to people from different cultures



**69%**

The sporting facilities and active lifestyle opportunities in the area meet my needs



**66%**

I feel safe in my local neighbourhood



**56%**

I feel connected to the local communities



**50%**

There are meaningful employment opportunities across Maitland



**38%**

Medical, mental health and social services are accessible and adequate



**86%**

My current home is suitable for my needs and is adequate in size



**72%**

There is plenty of accessible open spaces in my neighbourhood



**55%**

The natural environments and green spaces are well preserved



**54%**

I can afford a reasonable standard of housing in my area



**66%**

Maitland has a diverse range of events and activities



**33%**

Provision of services and opportunities for young or older people and other hard to reach community groups



**27%**

There are diverse housing options available for everyone across Maitland LGA



**66%**

My household is prepared for natural disasters in the Maitland LGA

# Driving Maitland's Future: strategic priorities, project excellence, and service delivery

Integrating the focus on strategy, project execution, and service delivery, capturing our holistic approach to Maitland's growth and priorities.



## Shaping strategic direction

Reflects the intentional process of strategy development, focusing on the vision and long term goals.

- Environmental Sustainability Strategy
- Local Housing Strategy
- Rural Lands Strategy
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Generic Plan of Management
- Neighbourhood Plans



## Executing projects with purpose

Emphasises the importance of delivering projects that align with broader objectives and have a clear impact.

- Harold Gregson Reserve
- Raymond Terrace Road upgrades
- New Maitland Administration Centre
- Revitalisation of the Town Hall
- Upgrades to Cooks Square Park, East Maitland
- Upgrades to John Wilkinson Sporting Complex, Bolwarra
- Enhancements to the historic grandstand and amenities at Robins Oval
- First stage of the Morpeth to Walka shared pathway
- Customer Driven Transformation Program
- Improved household bulky waste disposal options
- Stage 1 and 2 Maitland Resource Recovery Facility



## Delivering quality services to our community

Highlights the commitment to providing excellent, responsive services that meet the evolving needs of the community.

- Asset management and planning
- Aquatic centres
- Building projects and services
- Cemetery operations
- City and visitor economy
- City events and activation
- Community engagement
- Community planning and development
- Corporate strategy
- Customer experience
- Development and compliance
- Digital information security services
- Emergency management
- Environmental management
- Finance and property
- Floodplain and estuary management
- Governance and leadership
- Land use planning
- Libraries and learning
- Maitland Regional Art Gallery
- Major venues and facilities
- Marketing and communication
- Parks and open spaces
- People and culture
- Risk, safety and wellbeing
- Roads and transport infrastructure
- Waste management





# Let's connect with each other

## Community outcomes

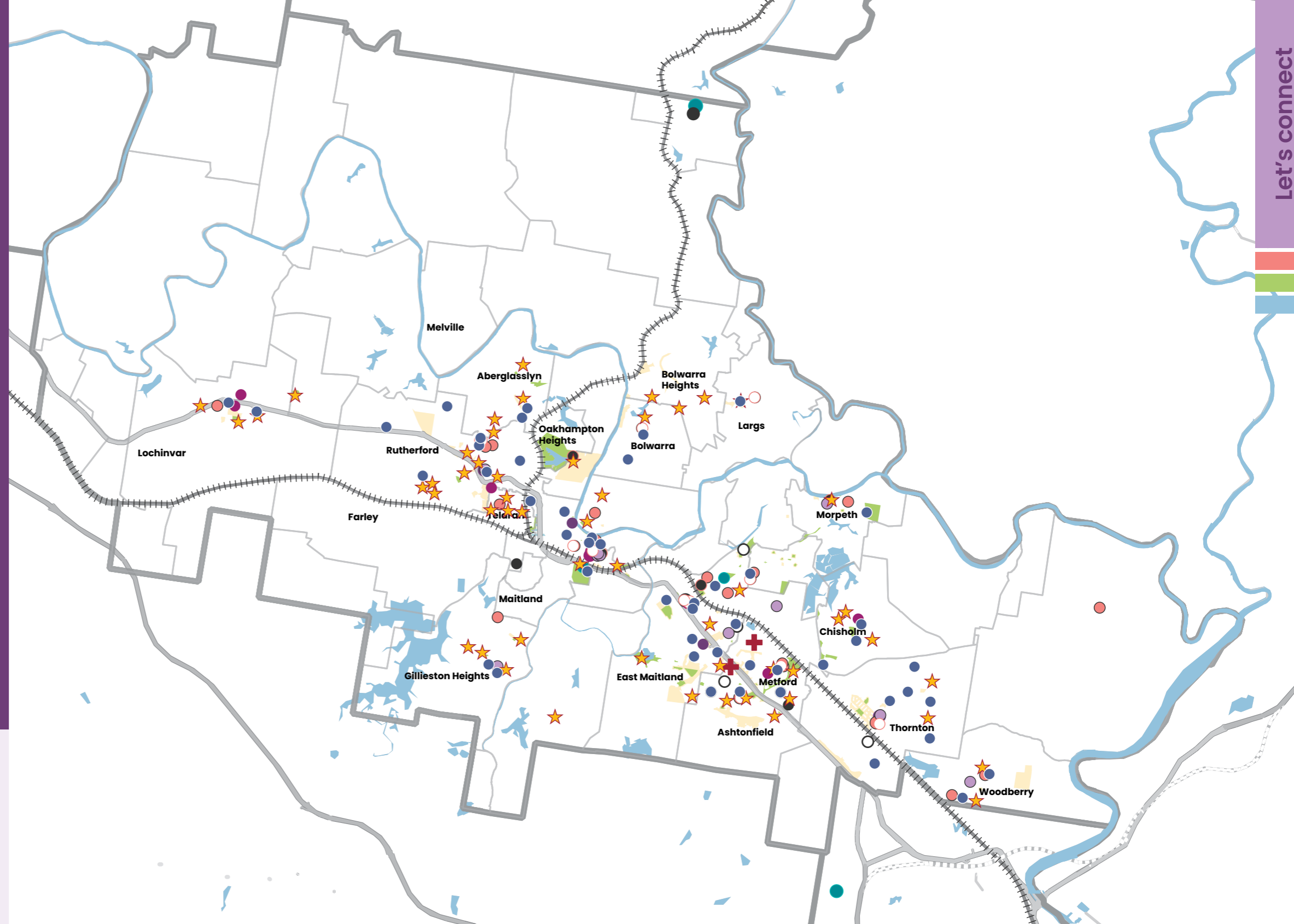
- To stay friendly, happy and proud as our city grows
- To easily get where we want to go
- To acknowledge First Nations peoples and their stewardship of the land within our city
- To be healthy and active with access to local services and facilities
- To celebrate what makes our city unique - our history, our people and our river.

## Measuring progress

We welcome our new residents but recognise that the rapid rate of growth can bring challenges. Maintaining our quality of life, community feel and unique identity through this rapid change is a key concern for our community.

## Where do we want to be?

- Connected through programs and activities
- Satisfied with transport options and infrastructure
- Better understand our First Nations peoples and their connection to the land and waterways
- Access a range of local sporting, leisure and cultural facilities and activities
- Recognise our heritage
- Have outdoor spaces with sufficient shade.



- Parks
- Council owned open space
- ★ Playgrounds

- Libraries
- Aquatics Centres
- + Hospitals

- ### Education Facilities
- Public School
  - Catholic School
  - Tertiary Education
  - Other Schools

- Cultural Facilities
- Community Facilities
- Before and After School Care
- Child Care Facilities



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# Getting around our city

Key achievements during 2022-2024



**\$26 million**

upgrades at the intersection of Government Road and Raymond Terrace Road in Thornton



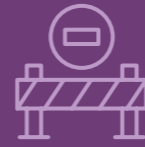
**\$3 million**

spend on road works that better connect the growing suburb of Farley with Rutherford and beyond



**\$67 million**

capital works spend on roads, bridges and footpaths



**\$27 million**

invested in roads, bridges and footpath maintenance

2022-2024 data unless stated

Where we are at



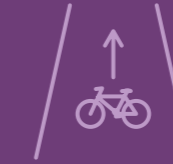
**Nine out of ten people drive to work<sup>6</sup>**



**0.9% use public transport<sup>9</sup>**



**Average walkscore of 36<sup>7</sup>**



**379km of cycleways and footpaths**



**1.8% walk or ride to work<sup>8</sup>**



**780km of roads**

## How we are progressing

Like many regional cities in Australia, Maitland heavily depends on private cars. Our local road network is under strain due to new residential developments, many of which are far from public transport options like railway stations and bus interchanges.

The Community Strategic Plan has provided our direction to resolve existing road infrastructure issues and see that transport infrastructure keeps pace with growth. It has driven the community's priority to see infrastructure that connects people and places through active transport options such as pedestrian paths and cycleways.

Travel to work data from the 2021 Census shows a drop in public transport usage across the city, although this data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic and will need reassessment at the next census. There are many opportunities to improve the accessibility and safety of our public transport system, ensuring sheltered, well-lit bus stops that are connected to footpaths and shared pathways to enhance accessibility for all users.

Shared pathways offer a chance to create a sustainable transport network, providing good connections for both recreation and those who can't or choose not to drive. Most of our suburbs have a 'walkscore' under 50<sup>5</sup>, meaning most errands require a car. Expanding pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and connecting it to key areas is essential to encourage walking or cycling, especially for short trips.

We need to continue integrating land use and transport planning around our centres, transport nodes, and areas of high amenity. This will enhance connectivity between centres and suburbs, reduce car dependency, and create opportunities to invest in public and active transport infrastructure.



## Highlight stories

### Investment in enhancing the Thornton Road Network

Maitland Council has played a crucial role in advocating for funding to support essential upgrades to the Thornton Road Network. Through collaborative efforts with the NSW Government, substantial progress is being made to improve this vital infrastructure.

Currently, construction is underway on a \$26 million upgrade at the intersection of Government Road and Raymond Terrace Road in Thornton. This project, jointly funded by Council and State, aims to widen the road and install traffic lights, ultimately enhancing safety, efficiency, and smoothness for travellers. We anticipate completing this work in late 2024.

In addition, design works are advancing with nearly \$3 million in road improvements aimed at better connecting the expanding suburb of Farley with Rutherford and surrounding areas. This initiative includes the recent upgrade of Wollombi Road from Green Street in Telarah to Owl Pen Lane in Farley, complemented by a new shared pathway providing residents with a safer alternative to driving.

5,7 Walkscore 6,8,9 ABS Census data

### Major infrastructure investments in our community

Securing funding for major road infrastructure is a long term endeavour that requires consistent advocacy and strategic positioning. Council has demonstrated this commitment through years of dedicated efforts to obtain necessary funds for significant infrastructure improvements.

This ongoing advocacy has resulted in securing additional grant funding of nearly \$11 million this financial year, earmarked for critical upgrades to community infrastructure, including road improvements on Melville Ford Bridge, Melville Ford Road, and Maitland Vale Road.

The funding received will enable the replacement of Melville Ford Bridge with a new dual lane concrete structure over the Hunter River, which will not only address current needs but also increase the bridge's height to improve flood resilience. Additionally, \$6 million in grant funding is allocated for rebuilding sections of Maitland Vale Road and Melville Ford Road, enhancing their flood resilience.

### Preserving Maitland's roads

Maintaining roads is crucial for ensuring safe and reliable transportation, a cornerstone of community wellbeing and economic vitality. In recent years, the challenges of road maintenance have been intensified by persistent rain and extreme weather events.

Maitland has faced the daunting task of preserving its road infrastructure amidst two significant flood events. Water is the enemy of roads, weakening foundations and accelerating deterioration. The resilience of Maitland's roads is essential, not just for today but for the future, as we strive to safeguard our community's connectivity and growth.

We have invested \$94.1 million in maintenance and capital works of our roads with large infrastructure renewal of the following roads: Mount Vincent Road, East Maitland, Woodberry Road and Lawson Avenue, Woodberry and Maitland Vale Road, Lambs Valley.

### Addressing potholes: Our commitment to road safety and quality

At Maitland City Council, we take potholes seriously and are committed to maintaining the safety and quality of our roads. Over the past two years, we have filled thousands of potholes across the region, reflecting our proactive approach to addressing this common issue.

Our dedication to road repairs is evident in our efforts to manage and respond to pothole requests efficiently, with an average fill time of less than five days. We temporarily added an extra pothole repair crew and committed additional staff to ensure swift action on repairs. This enhanced focus aims to minimise disruptions and improve road safety for all residents.

Our ongoing commitment to maintaining high quality roads is an integral part of our broader infrastructure strategy, which includes significant projects such as the Thornton Road Network upgrades. By addressing potholes promptly and effectively, we continue to uphold our promise to keep Maitland's roads safe and reliable.

### Enhancing mobility: Our commitment to footpaths, cycleways, and shared pathways

We understand well designed footpaths, cycleways, and shared pathways are crucial for promoting active lifestyles and ensuring safe, accessible travel options for all residents. Our commitment to enhancing these essential components of our transportation infrastructure reflects our broader vision of creating a connected and thriving community.

Council have completed footpath upgrades across the city over the last two years including at Hartley Drive in Thornton, Lowe Street in Metford, Lawes Street in East Maitland, Goldingham Street in Tenambit and Gillies Street in Rutherford.

New shared pathways and improvements have also been completed on Government Road in Thornton, shared pathway and exercise stations installed at Norm Chapman Oval in Rutherford and the shared pathway extended along the riverbank connecting the CBD to the Maitland Regional Sports Complex. The Morpeth to Walka shared pathway project has also progressed with work completed on Stage 2B, which sees the pathway extended along Morpeth Road from Steamer Street, and along Queens Wharf Road from Morpeth Road to the car park.

Through strategic planning and community engagement, we are working on several projects aimed at expanding and enhancing our network of footpaths, cycleways, and shared pathways. These projects not only improve connectivity and accessibility but also contribute to a healthier and more vibrant community.

## Community indicators

Community indicators provide important information about the direction our community is heading.

Our indicators are presented as trends that show us where shifts are occurring. We use these trends to identify emerging needs and opportunities, guiding our decision making and helping us adapt our focus to better align with the priorities outlined in our Community Strategic Plan.

INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND
% of people that drive	89.2% (22/23)	Maintaining	Decreasing
% of people that walk	8.7% (22/23)	Decreasing	Increasing
Number of suburbs with a walkscore above 50 (somewhat walkable – some errands can be accomplished on foot)	2	Baseline*	Increasing
Community satisfaction with traffic management	2.68	Maintaining	Increasing
Community satisfaction with maintenance of local roads	2.5	Maintaining	Increasing
Community satisfaction with footpaths	3.04	Baseline*	Increasing

Additional information including source of data can be found in Appendix 1  
2023/24 data unless stated

\*First time we have measured this information



# Places that connect us

Key achievements during 2022-2024



**2**

new skate parks opened at Largs and Woodberry



**\$7 million**

investment into Harold Gregson Reserve, the final stage of the Maitland Regional Sports Precinct



**\$14 million**

capital investment in open space and recreation assets



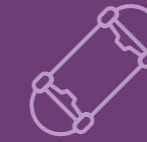
**2,128**

events and programs held at our libraries

Where we are at



**4 public Libraries**



**7 skate parks**



**16 community halls**



**450ha passive and public open space**



**83 playgrounds**



**137ha active and open spaces**

2022-2024 data unless stated

## How we are progressing

Maitland offers a variety of green open spaces, parks, playgrounds, aquatic centres, health facilities, and educational opportunities. Access to quality community infrastructure is vital for health and wellbeing. Understanding where young families are moving and where our population is ageing helps us make informed decisions about infrastructure needs.

Council manages many active and passive open spaces and works closely with sporting clubs to understand their needs. While Council does not run health and education facilities, it plays a crucial role in planning and advocating for these services to ensure residents have access to safe healthcare and educational opportunities.

As our population grows, demand on existing facilities and services will increase, necessitating additional infrastructure to meet community needs and enhance our city's liveability. Schools, hospitals, emergency services, and community and sport facilities support our wellbeing. Cultural infrastructure, such as community halls, libraries, art galleries, public art, and heritage buildings, brings people together to celebrate and share our culture.

Many residents feel that infrastructure has not kept pace with development. Despite Council's budget and development contributions, there is a gap between what is needed and what can be provided. The western precinct lacks community facilities, recreational opportunities, and open space. The central and eastern precincts are at or near capacity with limited room to grow. We must address these challenges to ensure all residents have access to the facilities they need.



## Highlight stories

### Enhancing recreation and inclusion: community skate parks

In a bid to provide enhanced recreational opportunities and foster community engagement, two skate parks have been developed through active consultation with local residents and funding initiatives. These parks cater to a diverse group of skaters, scooters, BMX riders, rollerskaters, and bladers, offering a safe and inclusive environment for physical activity and social interaction.

The Woodberry Skate Park, which opened in March 2023, has quickly become a vibrant hub for skaters, scooters, BMXers, rollerskaters, and bladers.

This park was thoughtfully designed in close collaboration with the community, ensuring it met the varied needs of its users. It boasts a dynamic skate bowl complete with extensions and a vert wall, a street section filled with various skate elements, and a completely overhauled BMX pump track.

This facility plays a crucial role in promoting social inclusion, physical activity, and community engagement, particularly benefiting residents in low socioeconomic areas.

Similarly, the Largs Skate Park has recently opened, marking a significant \$754,000 investment aimed at enriching the recreational landscape for the local community. Designed and developed in close collaboration with residents, this modern facility features a pump track, half pipe, volcano, and a grind rail. The park also prioritises the comfort and convenience of its visitors, with well-placed seating areas, bins, and drinking fountains. Additionally, two large shade shelters offer ample protection from the sun, creating a welcoming environment for both spectators and skaters.

Both Woodberry and Largs Skate Parks exemplify how community driven projects can create inclusive and engaging recreational spaces. These parks not only enhance the physical and social wellbeing of their users but also contribute significantly to the overall development and cohesion of the community.

### Regional play space: Harold Gregson Reserve

The final stage of upgrades to Harold Gregson Reserve were completed throughout the year and are now open to the public. The \$7 million hub was jointly funded by the State Government's Resources for Regions Fund, with the project aiming to establish a central hub for sports and entertainment in Central Maitland, enriching community life for years to come. The completion of Harold Gregson Reserve is the final part of the broader \$27 million Maitland Regional Sports Complex project.

The new playspace includes a basketball court, skate park, a play tower, events lawn, amphitheatre and more, with Harold Gregson Reserve emerging as a distinctive venue encouraging physical activity. The space also includes two dual port electric vehicle chargers serving four car spaces. It serves as a significant attraction, drawing people towards Central Maitland.

### Engage and connect: Maitland libraries programming and events

Maitland Libraries ran a suite of regular programs throughout the years including Baby Book Club, Storytimes and Digital Literacy workshops. In addition, a number of events were also held between July 2022 and June 2024, with more than 2100 events being held and over 26,400 attending.

Highlight events included a new author talk series known as Literature Live, a series of events for teens and tweens during Youth Week, dance and art workshops during Seniors Festival, a 'tech help bar' during an International Women's Day event held in conjunction with Carrie's Place, an International Men's Day talk headlined by keynote speaker Craig Hamilton and traditional Irish storytelling with Niall de Burca.

Another key event included delivering approximately 500 hours of direct digital literacy programming and technology assistance to customers during the 2022/23 and 2023/24 years. Over that period, more than 1000 people have been supported to increase their confidence and skills using technology.

### Inclusive amenities for everyone

In recent years, we have focused on making our facilities more inclusive. Investing in sports and recreation is vital for community wellbeing and development, providing opportunities for physical activity, fostering social interactions, and strengthening community bonds. Inclusive facilities ensure everyone, regardless of age, ability, or socioeconomic background, can participate and benefit, creating a more cohesive, vibrant, and resilient community.

Modular amenities were completed as part of the ongoing upgrade of facilities and changerooms at Cooks Square Park, East Maitland. The project, aimed at enhancing gender inclusivity and accessibility, was made possible through funding from the NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund.

Maitland Park's outer field amenities have also had an upgrade with new toilets, gender inclusive changerooms and plenty of storage set to benefit sporting clubs and players. Jointly funded by Maitland City Council and the NSW Government, the \$800,000 project is a boost for the cricket, touch football and football clubs that use Maitland Park.

Improved changeroom facilities have also been completed at Beryl Humble Sports Complex in Tenambit, with more than \$100,000 of upgrades improving accessibility for local user groups and our wider community. A new gender inclusive and accessible amenities block has also been completed at the new Harold Gregson Reserve, as well as a universal and accessible toilet being installed at Wirraway Park in Thornton.

## Community indicators

Community indicators provide important information about the direction our community is heading. Our indicators are presented as trends that show us where shifts are occurring. We use these trends to identify emerging needs and opportunities, guiding our decision making and helping us adapt our focus to better align with the priorities outlined in our Community Strategic Plan.

INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND
Community satisfaction with Maitland Libraries	96%	Maintaining	Maintaining
There is plenty of accessible open space in my neighbourhood	72%	Baseline* 	Maintaining
Our community spaces, neighbourhoods, and facilities are welcoming to all	68%	Baseline* 	Maintaining
Community satisfaction with sportsgrounds and ovals	90%	Maintaining	Maintaining
I feel connected to the local community	56%	Baseline* 	Increasing
I feel safe in my local neighbourhood	66%	Baseline* 	Increasing

Additional information including source of data can be found in Appendix 1 2023/24 data unless stated

\*First time we have measured this information



# Welcoming and inclusive

Key achievements during 2022-2024



**416**

new citizens welcomed in 13 ceremonies



**7,318**

carer visits to Maitland Aquatic Centre



**Disability Inclusion Action Plan** adopted



**IMAGInE Awards** for Upriver Downriver - Maitland Regional Art Gallery

## Where we are at



6,738 (7.5%) Aboriginal people currently call Maitland home<sup>12</sup>



11 suburbs under 1,000 SEIFA score<sup>13</sup>



Increasing levels of disadvantage (SEIFA score in 2021 was 988, Maitland ranks 313/547)<sup>14</sup>



71% agree the Maitland community is welcoming to different cultures<sup>15</sup>



6.7% of people in the Maitland LGA have a disability<sup>16</sup>



34% of our population have one or more long term health conditions<sup>17</sup>

2022-2024 data unless stated

## How we are progressing

Creating a welcoming community in Maitland involves fostering inclusivity and diversity. Socially connected communities are stronger, more resilient and share local values. As our city grows and changes, it is necessary to strengthen social connections within and between our diverse communities to build resilience through understanding and trust.

Maitland's cultural diversity is growing, with 13 per cent<sup>10</sup> of residents born overseas and nine per cent speaking a language other than English at home. Recognising this diversity as a strength, we support it through various initiatives outlined in the Maitland Cultural Plan 2016. Additionally, our city celebrates its Aboriginal heritage, with 7.5 per cent<sup>11</sup> of residents identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, significantly higher than the NSW average. We continue to work with local Aboriginal communities to strengthen and celebrate their culture and identity.

Our Access and Inclusion Reference Group collaborates with us to address the needs of those living with disabilities and facing exclusionary practices. Their feedback has informed several

strategies and projects, such as the upcoming Aquatics Strategy and Economic Development Strategy.

Initiatives like multicultural festivals, community fairs, and inclusive sports events bring people together to celebrate diversity. Providing accessible information about local services in multiple languages supports newcomers. Strengthening partnerships with community organisations and advocacy groups further enhances our efforts to create a welcoming environment for all residents.

## Highlight stories

### Creating inclusive play: Everyone Can Play Guidelines

Designing inclusive and accessible play spaces is crucial for ensuring that all members of the community, regardless of ability, have the opportunity to engage, connect, and enjoy recreational activities. Such spaces foster a sense of belonging and promote equal opportunities for play, which is essential for the development and wellbeing of all children.

In alignment with the NSW Government's Everyone Can Play Guidelines, we have redesigned several local play spaces to enhance inclusivity. This includes the Morpeth Common play space and the Vi Denny play space in Telarah.

The Morpeth Common play space features exploratory and nature play equipment inspired by its natural surroundings, encouraging unstructured and imaginative play. Similarly, the Vi Denny play space at Telarah is designed to spark creativity and exploration through its interactive elements.

These thoughtfully designed play spaces ensure that everyone, regardless of their abilities, can experience the joy of play and connection within their community.

### Adoption of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Council adopted the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2026 (DIAP) in November 2023, which outlines how Council will contribute to making Maitland a more inclusive and accessible city for everyone. The DIAP 2023-2026 was prepared in line with the NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Local Government Guidelines.

Together with the Community Disability Alliance Hunter, we collaborated to enhance community inclusivity by providing individuals with disabilities a platform to share their experiences and challenges in accessing services and participating in community life.

The DIAP extended Council's ongoing efforts to promote inclusivity. It outlined a two and a half year plan to support individuals with disabilities. Council engaged in discussions with the community, service providers, and businesses to explore ways to create a more inclusive city, which has informed the creation of the DIAP 2023-2026 document.

### Creative connections: The Art & Dementia Program

Programs that promote social interaction and creative expression are essential for the wellbeing of individuals and communities. They provide valuable opportunities for engagement, reducing feelings of isolation and fostering connections among participants. One such initiative is Maitland Regional Art Gallery's Art & Dementia Program, a 90 minute social and creative exhibition tour specifically designed for people with dementia and their carers.

10-12, 17 ABS Census data 13, 14 SEIFA Score 15 Community Satisfaction Survey 2024 16 REMPLAN



Guided by a trained facilitator, the program uses art to spark conversations and encourage self-expression through art-making. This approach enables participants to express their thoughts and emotions in a friendly and supportive environment. The Art & Dementia Program offers a unique opportunity for those living with dementia and their carers to reconnect and connect with their peers, aiming to combat social isolation and develop ongoing quality relationships.

Proudly sponsored by the NSW Government Community Development Fund, the Art & Dementia Program exemplifies the positive impact of inclusive, community focused initiatives.

### A new approach to Aboriginal engagement

Maitland City Council is committed to creating meaningful and inclusive engagement processes that ensure all voices within our community are heard, particularly those of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents. In our ongoing efforts to foster true representation, we have adopted a new approach that emphasises deeper, more authentic engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. By collecting and analysing the demographics of our community,

we can better assess whether our engagement efforts are truly reflective of Maitland’s diverse population.

This new approach has already shown positive results in recent key initiatives, including the Maitland’s Future Community Strategic Plan, our Communication and Engagement Strategy, and the Community Satisfaction Survey.

With Aboriginal people comprising approximately 7.5 per cent\*\* of Maitland’s population, our engagement efforts have not yet achieved this level of participation. While there has been some improvement, we recognise there is still significant work to be done in achieving consistent representation that aligns with the actual makeup of our community.

Our goal is to continue building on these early successes by refining our engagement strategies to ensure every voice is included in shaping future decisions. We are committed to listening, learning, and improving our outreach efforts to reach the full spectrum of Aboriginal residents in our city. By creating more accessible and culturally appropriate engagement opportunities, we are confident that we can foster stronger, more representative relationships with the Aboriginal community.

## Community indicators

Community indicators provide important information about the direction our community is heading.

Our indicators are presented as trends that show us where shifts are occurring. We use these trends to identify emerging needs and opportunities, guiding our decision making and helping us adapt our focus to better align with the priorities outlined in our Community Strategic Plan.

INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND
Overall quality of life	90%	Maintaining ▶	Increasing ▲
Medical, mental health and social services are accessible and adequate	38%	Baseline* ▼▲	Increasing ▲
Provision of services and opportunities for younger or older people and other hard to reach community groups	33%	Baseline* ▼▲	Increasing ▲
The Maitland community is welcoming to people from many different cultures	71%	Baseline* ▼▲	Increasing ▲
Residents that did voluntary work through an organisation or group	11.1%	Decreasing (13.5% in 2016) ▼	Increasing ▲

Additional information including source of data can be found in Appendix 1 2023/24 data unless stated

\*First time we have measured this information

\*\*ABS Census data 15 Community Satisfaction Survey 2024





# Let's create opportunities

## Community outcomes

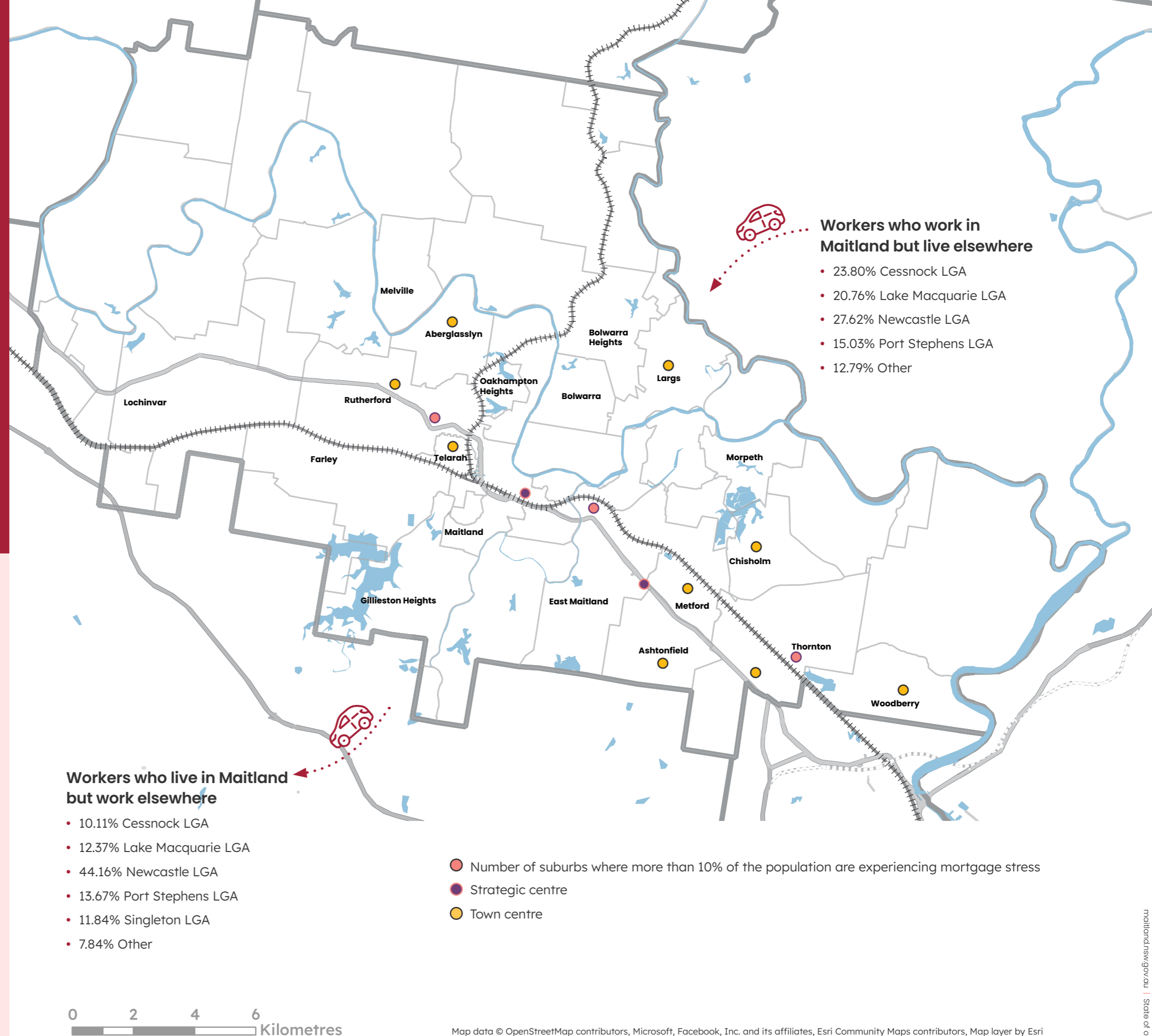
- To shop and work locally
- To afford the house we want in the neighbourhood we like
- To have Central Maitland as the vibrant heart of our city
- To show off our city.

## Measuring progress

Key economic areas in Maitland continue to thrive, with a vibrant lifestyle precinct rich in heritage and events. Our growth is supported by new urban release areas that bolster the greenfield housing supply, ensuring ample space for our expanding population. We benefit from a strategic location providing access to education, employment, and essential community amenities, while our diverse economic sectors and cultural attractions enhance the city's appeal to residents and visitors alike.

## Where do we want to be?

- Able to work and shop in Maitland
- Have access to a range of affordable housing
- Our city centre will be vibrant and host a range of unique experiences
- We will welcome visitors to our city and show off our iconic attractions.



# Housing options and city growth

Key achievements during 2022-2024



**Local Housing Strategy adopted**



**1,100**  
housing lots approved on average per year



**6 people a day**  
growth in Maitland



**\$846+ million**  
planned investment in our city from development applications

2022-2024 data unless stated

Where we are at



**87% of our dwellings are single freestanding homes<sup>18</sup>**



**35% rental stress<sup>19</sup>**



**11% mortgage stress\***



**35,413 dwellings<sup>20</sup>**



**Average house price \$730,000 (March 2024)<sup>21</sup>**



**70% of growth is due to migration from neighbouring LGA's\*\***

## How we are progressing

The NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 2022 projections estimated Maitland's population would grow by an additional 54,800 residents between 2021 (from 89,750) and 2041 (to 144,550), with a forecast growth rate of 61 per cent or an average growth rate of 2.4 per cent over the next 20 years.

However, Maitland's population growth in 2023 has already surpassed these expectations, and based on current growth rates, we are on track to reach 100,000 residents within the next two years. This figure is approximately 1,300 people more than the Department of Planning's estimate for 2023, indicating that we are currently exceeding the projected population trajectory of 144,500 people by 2041.

This rapid urban expansion underscores the importance of strategic planning to accommodate the increasing demand for diverse and affordable housing. Our Community Strategic Plan, recognised our community's desire to live in the neighbourhoods we love, while also preserving the unique character and cultural identity of our area.

As our urban footprint has expanded from 2,200 hectares in 1980 to 6,200 hectares today, urban sprawl remains a key concern of our community. Our continued growth over the next 20 years will require new housing developments to integrate effectively with public and active transport, community services and facilities, to create liveable, resilient and sustainable neighbourhoods. Community engagement is essential to ensure that development meets the needs of all residents.

Our population is growing and changing, and our household sizes are getting smaller which highlights the need for a greater mix of housing types within the city to meet the needs of smaller and more diverse households. Housing needs to be planned and delivered in areas where residents can access public transport, employment, open space and services. Increasing housing choice means our residents will have access to smaller and more affordable housing when they need it.

New urban release areas such as Thornton North, Aberglasslyn, Lochinvar, Farley, Anambah, and Gillieston Heights will continue to play a significant role in providing greenfield housing for the Greater Newcastle area, supported by infill developments in established suburbs. While infill housing currently

accounts for about 10 per cent of total dwellings in Maitland, this proportion is expected to increase as demand for smaller, more affordable housing near services grows.



## Highlight stories

### Guiding rural lands and housing development: strategies aligned with community input

Effective planning and management of rural lands and housing are vital for balancing growth with the preservation of natural and scenic qualities. These strategies ensure that community needs and preferences are addressed while fostering sustainable development and economic opportunity.

Through extensive consultation, we have gathered valuable feedback on how you want rural lands and housing to be planned and managed. In response, we have developed two key strategies: the Rural Land Strategy 2041 and the Local Housing Strategy 2041.

The Rural Land Strategy is designed to address the pressures on rural land by enhancing economic opportunities while safeguarding the natural, ecological, and scenic values of these areas.

Meanwhile, the Local Housing Strategy aims to meet the demands of population growth and

demographic changes by evaluating future housing needs, identifying optimal locations, and influencing better housing outcomes.

Together, these strategies will guide thoughtful and responsive development in our community.

### Maitland's role in greenfield development and regional growth

Maitland is at the forefront of housing development in the Hunter Region and is geared to contribute approximately 25 per cent<sup>22</sup> of the region's required dwellings by 2041.

Our commitment to greenfield development ensures new residential and commercial areas are strategically developed, maximising land use while maintaining a focus on creating connected, liveable communities that support regional growth and vitality.

As the Lower Hunter region continues to experience rapid population growth, it is essential for Maitland to play its part in accommodating this expansion and meeting the ambitious targets set by the State Government.

Our healthy supply pipeline of residential land ensures Maitland is well equipped to meet these targets, providing much needed housing and infrastructure while maintaining our commitment to sustainability.

Over the past few years, we have on average approved over 1,000 lots per year. Greenfield development in Maitland not only supports the region's growth but also helps alleviate pressure on more densely populated areas.

By leading in greenfield initiatives, Maitland is contributing to the long term prosperity and resilience of the entire Hunter Region, ensuring growth is both sustainable and inclusive.

### Regionally significant strategic growth area

Anambah to Branxton is emerging as a key strategic growth area within Maitland, playing a crucial role in accommodating the region's rapid population expansion. Located to the west of Maitland, Anambah is set to become a significant hub for both residential and commercial development. This area has been carefully selected for its potential to support large scale growth while maintaining the quality of life and community values that are integral to Maitland's identity.

While still in its early stages of planning, conversations have already begun with neighbouring councils, landowners and government agencies to collaborate on the development of this strategic growth area.

These partnerships aim to ensure the growth between Anambah and Branxton is well coordinated and aligned with the Hunter Regional Plan's infrastructure first and place-based approach.

By working together, we can enhance the efficiency of infrastructure development, support balanced regional growth, and create a cohesive approach to managing the expansion of our communities. This collaborative effort underscores our commitment to fostering sustainable and integrated development across the entire corridor.

## Community indicators

Community indicators provide important information about the direction our community is heading. Our indicators are presented as trends that show us where shifts are occurring. We use these trends to identify emerging needs and opportunities, guiding our decision making and helping us adapt our focus to better align with the priorities outlined in our Community Strategic Plan.

INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND
% of residential dwellings that are social housing	5%	Baseline* ▼ ▲	Increasing ▲
Ratio of greenfield to infill housing	90:10	Increasing ▲	Decreasing ▼
% of single detached dwellings	87% (compared to 65.5% in NSW)	Maintaining ►	Decreasing ▼
Urban footprint	6,200 ha	Increasing ▲	Maintaining ►
I can afford a reasonable standard of housing in my area	54%	Baseline* ▼ ▲	Increasing ▲
My current home is suitable for my needs and is adequate in size	86%	Baseline* ▼ ▲	Maintaining ►
There are diverse housing options available for everyone across the Maitland local government area	27%	Baseline* ▼ ▲	Increasing ▲

Additional information including source of data can be found in Appendix 1 2023/24 data unless stated  
\*First time we have measured this information



# Economic development

Key achievements during 2022-2024



**1,000+**

responses to the Economic Development Strategy Engagement survey



**Destination Management Plan**

progressed with investment into Harold Gregson Reserve



**708,000**

visitors to Maitland during 2022/23



**\$174 million**

injected into local economy from visitors during 2022/23

2022-2024 data unless stated

Where we are at



**25% of Maitland's residents**

have above diploma qualifications<sup>23</sup>



**More than 50%**

of jobs in the Hunter Region are in Newcastle<sup>26</sup>



**Nine out of 10 future jobs**

require post school qualifications<sup>24</sup>



**54% of our working population**

leaves Maitland to work<sup>27</sup>



**Maitland accounts for**

10% of all jobs in the Hunter Region<sup>25</sup>



**19.8% of jobs**

are in healthcare and social assistance<sup>28</sup>

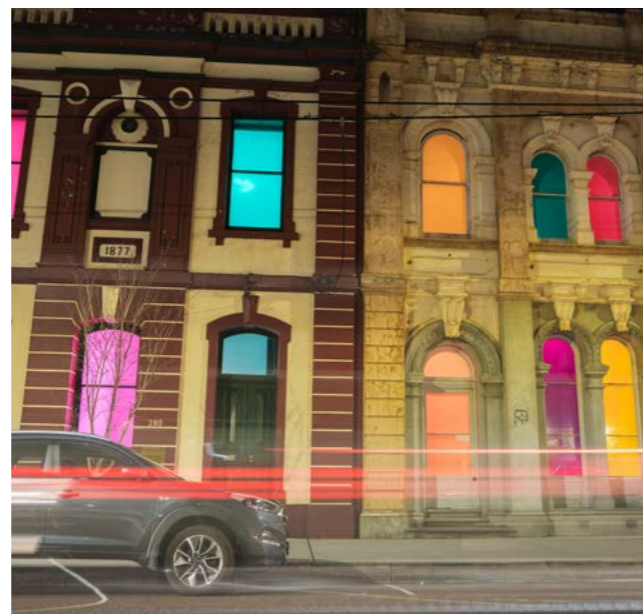
## How we are progressing

Maitland is advancing with a diverse and resilient economy, featuring strong sectors in health, agriculture, manufacturing, and retail. However, there are ongoing challenges, particularly in creating jobs for young people and those with lower qualifications. The city also competes with larger urban centres that can lure businesses and talent away from Maitland.

To ensure continued economic growth and resilience, we are actively supporting local businesses, promoting entrepreneurship, and working to attract new industries. As part of our Destination Management Plan, efforts are being made to strengthen our visitor economy. These efforts aim to boost local businesses by attracting more tourists to the area. Programs that provide grants, mentoring, and networking opportunities for start ups and small businesses are key to fostering innovation and economic strength in our community.

Investing in education and skills training remains a priority, preparing our workforce to meet the demands of a rapidly changing job market. As Maitland's population grows and economic

conditions improve, we are seizing the opportunity to enhance our living environment, expand job opportunities, and build a more prosperous future. By addressing crucial issues such as community wellbeing, preserving green spaces, and diversifying job opportunities, Maitland is positioning itself to thrive even as the influence of the mining sector diminishes.



## Highlight stories

### Engaging for Maitland's Economic Development direction

Significant progress has been made in community and stakeholder engagement, data analysis, and the early stages of drafting an Economic Development Strategy for Maitland. The economic future quiz, which received over 2,200 ideas from more than 1,100 responses, provided valuable insights into the community's economic preferences and shared values, helping to inform the strategy.

External engagement with key industry stakeholders, including meetings with the Bloomfield Group, Port of Newcastle, Maitland Business Chamber, and others, was a major focus. Ongoing discussions with stakeholders like Maitland Showground and Royal Newcastle Aero Club continue to refine the strategy.

An extensive period of community consultation has been completed, with feedback playing a significant role in shaping the key themes, priorities, and actions under consideration for the strategy.

### A blend of historic charm and modern accommodation

In recent developments, Maitland has taken significant steps to enhance its Central Maitland area with new accommodation projects that preserve its historic charm while meeting modern needs.

In October 2023, Council approved a transformative plan to convert the historic Maitland Mercury building on High Street into a mixed use accommodation and event venue. This project will see the conversion of 258 High Street into a tourist accommodation facility featuring 26 rooms, a reception area, gallery, lounge, bar, and dining hall. Additionally, a new two storey building at 2 Hunter Street will house a function centre and commercial rental spaces. This development is designed to preserve the area's architectural style while addressing the community's demand for more accommodation options in Central Maitland, in line with the Destination Management Plan 2030.

<sup>27</sup> ABS Census data <sup>23, 25, 26, 28</sup> Remplan Aug 2024 <sup>24</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia - Australian Government

Maitland welcomed the opening of Punthill Apartments in August 2024, the first hotel to launch in the town in over a decade. Located in the heart of Maitland, Punthill Apartments offers 76 modern apartments, ideal for both business and leisure travellers. The hotel boasts conferencing facilities, high speed internet, an on-site gym, and secure parking. This development highlights Council's commitment to increasing the supply and enhancing the quality of visitor accommodation in the city.

The availability of quality accommodation in the city centre is crucial for Maitland's growth and vibrancy. As a hub of cultural and economic activity, Central Maitland attracts visitors, business travellers, and event goers who contribute to the local economy. By offering a variety of accommodation options, the city can better cater to these visitors, ensuring they have comfortable and convenient places to stay. This not only supports the local hospitality industry but also encourages longer stays, increased spending, and a more vibrant city centre that benefits both residents and visitors alike.

### Council supporting local businesses

Maitland City Council has been playing a crucial role in fostering a thriving business environment, which is vital for the city's continued growth and prosperity. As home to 5,740 businesses, Maitland's economic landscape is diverse and dynamic, contributing significantly to the region's overall development. Council's commitment to supporting local enterprises is evident in its active engagement with the business community and its sponsorship of key events that bring together business leaders, entrepreneurs, and community members.

In July 2024, Council proudly hosted the Maitland Business Chamber at Maitland Town Hall for the celebration of their 75th anniversary gala. The event saw around 160 guests come together to honour local businesses that have been the economic heart of our city for decades. This milestone event was not just a celebration of the past but also a reaffirmation of the ongoing partnership between Council and the business community.

Council's support extends beyond this single event, as it also sponsors other significant Maitland Business Chamber events throughout the year. These include the Women in Business Breakfast in March and the Small Business Summit in October. By providing venue hire sponsorship for these events, Council is helping to create platforms for

networking, knowledge sharing, and collaboration among local businesses.

The role of Council in supporting local businesses is integral to ensuring Maitland continues to be a vibrant, economically resilient city. With 5,740 businesses contributing to the local economy, Council's initiatives are essential in providing the resources, opportunities, and environment necessary for these businesses to thrive. Whether through event sponsorship, strategic planning, or ongoing support services, Council is dedicated to empowering local businesses, ensuring they remain the backbone of Maitland's economic success.

### Maitland's sporting and entertainment precinct

We recently completed the final stage of the \$7 million redevelopment of Harold Gregson Reserve, with the official opening of the park's new play tower, events lawn and amphitheatre. The completion of Harold Gregson Reserve is the final part of the broader \$27 million Maitland Regional Sports Complex project.

Located in the heart of Maitland, this precinct is more than just a collection of sportsgrounds; it is a dynamic space that brings together athletes, families, and spectators from across the region. Featuring state of the art facilities for football, cricket, netball, and other sports, as well as areas designed for concerts, festivals, and community events, the precinct is a cornerstone of Maitland's identity as a vibrant and connected city.

As Maitland continues to grow at a rapid rate, the importance of having such a precinct cannot be overstated. It provides not only a place for recreation and entertainment but also a sense of community and belonging for residents. The precinct serves as a gathering point where people of all ages can come together to participate in and enjoy sports and cultural events. This active and engaged community spirit is essential in a city that is rapidly expanding, helping to foster connections among new and long-standing residents alike.

Moreover, the sporting and entertainment precinct plays a key role in supporting Maitland's economic growth. It attracts visitors from surrounding areas, boosting local businesses and enhancing the city's reputation as a destination for both sports and entertainment. The presence of such a facility in Maitland also helps to attract and retain talent, as it offers residents a high quality of life with access to top-notch amenities.

### Destination Management Plan: Enhancing Maitland's appeal as a thriving and connected destination

Maitland's Destination Management Plan is a strategic blueprint designed to guide the city's development as a vibrant and attractive destination for both residents and visitors. This plan is important for shaping the future of Maitland, as it outlines key initiatives to enhance the city's appeal through cultural, recreational, and economic opportunities. By focusing on sustainable tourism, community engagement, and acknowledging Maitland's unique heritage, the Destination Management Plan ensures the city grows in a way that is both inclusive and economically robust.

Implementing the Destination Management Plan has been vital for attracting investment, boosting the local economy, and cementing Maitland's reputation as a dynamic and desirable place to live, work, and visit. Key projects like the Morpeth to Walka shared pathway, live music events in Central Maitland and along the river, lane activations, and upgrades to Maitland Town Hall, have highlighted Maitland's potential as a major

venue and are all pivotal to this vision. Additionally, developments at Harold Gregson Reserve further showcase the city's commitment to creating vibrant, engaging spaces for the community and visitors alike.

The closure of Walka Water Works and Maitland Gaol presents challenges for the city, as these iconic sites have been central to both Maitland's identity and its tourism economy. These closures have created a gap in the city's offerings, impacting the number of visitors to the area. Maitland City Council is actively working towards a solution to address these challenges.

## Community indicators

Community indicators provide important information about the direction our community is heading.

Our indicators are presented as trends that show us where shifts are occurring. We use these trends to identify emerging needs and opportunities, guiding our decision making and helping us adapt our focus to better align with the priorities outlined in our Community Strategic Plan.

INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND
Number of working age people in Maitland	43,773	Increasing ▲	Increasing ▲
Number of people that work in Maitland	35,227	Increasing ▲	Increasing ▲
% of workers that live in Maitland and work out of region	54%	Increasing ▲	Decreasing ▼
% of residents in the labour force with formal professional qualifications (above diploma qualifications)	25%	Increasing ▲	Increasing ▲
% of total economic output attributed to the Tourism sector	1.8%	Increasing ▲	Increasing ▲

Additional information including source of data can be found in Appendix 1 2023/24 data unless stated

\*First time we have measured this information

# Central Maitland

Key achievements during 2022-2024



## New

Town Hall upgrades completed in 2023



## Maitland Regional Sports Complex

completed with the final stage at Harold Gregson Reserve opening



## 260,000

people visited Central Maitland



## 15

flagship events held

Where we are at



## 6,891 employees based in Central Maitland<sup>29</sup>



## Home of The Levee precinct



## Central Maitland is flood zone



## Home to the Art Gallery and Town Hall



## Highest employment area<sup>30</sup>



## 1,972 people live in Central Maitland<sup>31</sup>

2022-2024 data unless stated

## How we are progressing

Central Maitland is the city's major regional centre with strategic importance. It has a high diversity of economic activity and provides a wide range of services and historic civic functions.

Revitalising Central Maitland is important for economic and social vitality. The area needs to be attractive to both residents and visitors and offer a mix of retail, dining, entertainment, and cultural experiences.

It serves as the heart of commercial activity by housing businesses, offices, and retail outlets. This concentration of economic activity fosters job creation, attracts investment, and drives local economic growth.

Central Maitland's strategic location ensures excellent accessibility, with well connected transportation links facilitating easy movement for both locals and visitors. This connectivity supports efficient commuting and encourages foot traffic to businesses and attractions. Moreover, Central Maitland plays a pivotal role in urban planning and development, with investments and redevelopment projects enhancing its infrastructure and stimulating further growth.

In essence, Central Maitland not only defines the city's character but also fosters economic vitality, cultural enrichment, and community engagement, making it a cornerstone of Maitland's continued success and appeal.

Central Maitland hosts a diverse array of events throughout the year that play a crucial role in the city's vibrancy. From cultural festivals and community gatherings to sports events and markets, these activities draw residents and visitors alike, fostering a lively atmosphere and stimulating local economic activity. The regular events enhance community engagement, support local businesses, and boost the city's profile as a dynamic and attractive destination.

However, Central Maitland faces significant challenges due to its location in a flood zone. Flooding poses risks to infrastructure, disrupts events, and can cause damage to properties and businesses. Efforts to mitigate these challenges include investing in improved drainage systems and flood management strategies. Additionally, urban planning and development must account for these risks to ensure new projects are resilient to potential flooding impacts.

## Highlight stories

### Events bringing Central Maitland to life

In April 2024, Hunter Valley Steamfest once again made history in Maitland, when more than 50,000 people came to enjoy the festivities. This festival has been held since 1986, celebrating steam powered trains, and bringing the community together. Lots of planning went into making it a fun time for families, with music, performances, guided history walks, markets, and food trucks.

Maitland Taste turned The Levee into a bustling hub with over 11,000 people attending over the three day event in May 2024. The event showcased local produce, restaurants, and chefs through a plethora of engaging activities and stalls.

Maitland Riverlights made a grand comeback in 2023, attracting over 15,000 people to The Levee to celebrate 30 different cultures, expanding from a single day affair to a full week of festivities.

The warm aroma of freshly ground coffee beans, rich melted chocolate and decadent dishes saw crowds of more than 15,000 coffee and chocolate lovers head to Central Maitland in August 2023 during Maitland Aroma Coffee and Chocolate Festival.

More than 15,000 people packed into The Levee at Central Maitland and Lorn in December 2023 to check out our annual New Year's Eve celebrations and fireworks display and kick off 2024 in style.

### Maitland's iconic Riverlink building

Acacia Dining is a collaboration between MasterChef alumni, Reece Hignell, and Maitland resident and former head chef at Foghorn Brewery, Tori Tokpah. Both have impressive hospitality backgrounds and are striving to bring a vibrant and refined dining experience to The Levee at Maitland. Hignell also launched his business Cakeboi in Newcastle in 2020 after his second stint on MasterChef, where he finished in fifth place.

Having tenants like Reece Hignell and Tori Tokpah operating their business out of our Riverlink building benefits everyone involved. It not only drives success for their individual business but also positively impacts the broader business community within the precinct. Their presence enhances the vibrancy of the area, creating a ripple effect that benefits surrounding businesses and the community as a whole.

## Maitland Regional Art Gallery drives community vibrancy

In January 2024, Maitland Regional Art Gallery set a new record for attendance during its Free Art January, with over 12,000 people visiting the site to participate in exhibitions, events, and workshops.

This milestone marks more than just a successful event; it highlights the immense opportunity that having an art gallery in the city centre provides for both the council and the local area.

The gallery's vibrant presence in the heart of Maitland contributes to the cultural and economic vitality of the city. The increased attendance can be attributed to extended opening hours and enhanced funding for holiday and workshop programs, which facilitated the introduction of drop in stations. Additionally, this funding enabled the engagement of art tutors, offering art making activities throughout January in all gallery spaces.

The gallery was awarded winner in six categories at the AMaGA awards in 2023, an impressive achievement announced at the Australian Museums and Galleries Association's National Conference.

The gallery's successful launch of its 2024 exhibition program, along with its forward plan and artistic program endorsed by Create NSW, further solidifies its role as a cultural hub. In March, the autumn series of exhibitions was introduced, featuring a diverse mix of cultural experiences across various art forms. This continued growth and development not only enriches the local community but also positions Maitland as a thriving centre for artistic and cultural engagement.

## Pregnant Woman by Ron Mueck arrives at Maitland Regional Art Gallery

Renowned sculpture *Pregnant Woman* by Ron Mueck arrived at Maitland Regional Art Gallery in April 2024 and is the debut of the artwork in a New South Wales regional area. *Pregnant Woman* is on long term loan from the National Gallery of Australia, supported by the Australian Government through the Sharing the National Collection initiative.

Throughout the year, this sculpture will be displayed alongside our collection and exhibitions, fostering new discussions and ideas on themes such as family, motherhood, and birth. *Pregnant Woman* is a monumental artwork that will significantly highlight the representation of the

human body in art. This exhibition is free to the public and will be available to view until June 2025.

## Activating our city

Central Maitland's laneways have been transformed into vibrant, unique spaces through the 'Maitlanes' initiative, showcasing the power of place activation in energising Central Maitland. These laneways, adorned with murals, overhead decorative lighting, soundscapes, augmented reality experiences, additional seating, and greenery, became lively hubs of creativity and community interaction during a three month activation period.

The official launch event, Maitlanes Live, drew nearly 1,500 attendees. The evening featured a diverse array of programming, including workshops, educational talks, themed trivia, live music, stand up comedy, DJs, roving performers, kids' craft activities, and food trucks, all spread across the seven activated laneways.

Running from February through to April 2023, the Maitlanes activation program brought new life to the city's core, with events every Thursday to Sunday. The program included free children's workshops, pop up events, live comedy, yoga classes, Easter themed activities, outdoor dining nights, live music, roving performers, and food trucks. This initiative not only enlivened Central Maitland but also supported local creatives, entertainers, artists, and businesses, making Central Maitland a dynamic and engaging destination.

## Attracting sports events to Maitland

Nearly 7,000 spectators gathered to watch the Newcastle Jets Women in their largest home crowd at Maitland in April 2024. Bringing a high profile game like this to a regional city like Maitland creates significant excitement and fosters a sense of community pride.

The record breaking attendance highlighted how much Maitland embraced the event, showcasing the city's enthusiasm and passion for top-tier sports. Hosting such games not only energises local fans but also puts Maitland on the map as a vibrant and supportive location for major sporting events.



## Community indicators

Community indicators provide important information about the direction our community is heading. Our indicators are presented as trends that show us where shifts are occurring. We use these trends to identify emerging needs and opportunities, guiding our decision making and helping us adapt our focus to better align with the priorities outlined in our Community Strategic Plan.

INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND
Total economic output for Central Maitland	\$1.9 million	Baseline* (Central Maitland 2023 Release 2) ▼ ▲	Increasing ▲
Average spend per day for domestic daytrip in Central Maitland	\$187	Baseline* (Central Maitland 2023 Release 2) ▼ ▲	Increasing ▲
Number of visitors at city centre events	130,000 per annum	Increasing ▲	Increasing ▲
Number of people employed within Central Maitland	6,891	Increasing ▲	Increasing ▲

Additional information including source of data can be found in Appendix 1 2023/24 data unless stated

\*First time we have measured this information





# Let's live sustainably

## Community outcomes

- To love and look after our great outdoors
- To reduce our reliance on non-renewable natural resources
- To be ready in case of more hot days, storms and floods
- To reduce our waste

## Measuring progress

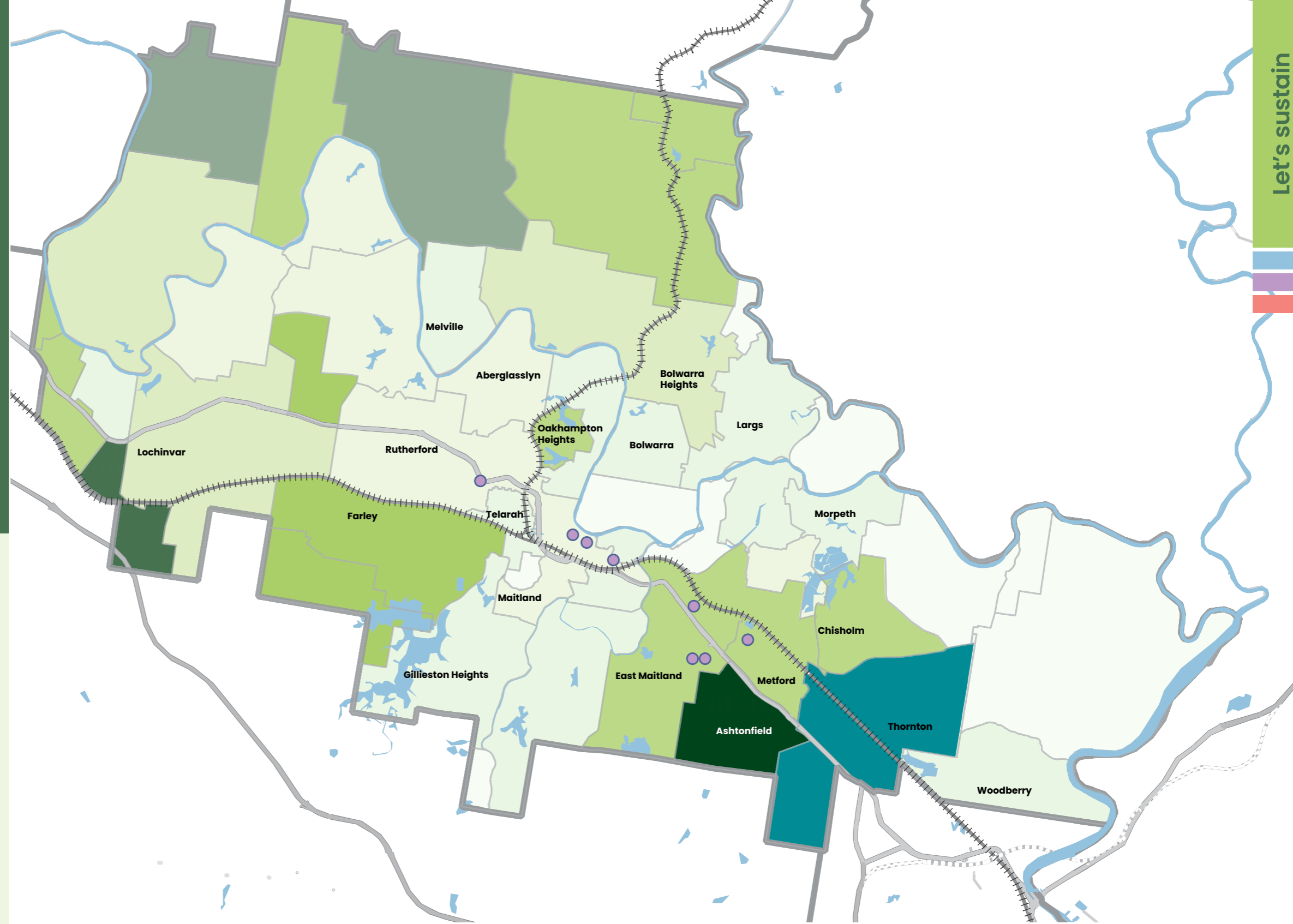
Maitland is making strides in enhancing our natural environment. Our waterways and catchments are increasingly healthier, supported by ongoing conservation efforts and sustainable land management practices. The city is actively working to expand green spaces, with more trees being planted and shaded areas delivered to improve liveability and combat the urban heat island effect.

Our waste reduction initiatives are yielding results, with a notable decrease in the amount of waste being sent to landfill. Additionally, we are enhancing access to natural areas for recreation, allowing residents and visitors to enjoy Maitland's great outdoors responsibly.

By focusing on protecting our threatened species and ecological communities, we are reducing environmental risks, ensuring that our natural heritage is safeguarded for future generations.

## Where do we want to be?

- Our waterways and catchments will be healthy
- There will be more trees and shade across the city
- The amount of waste we send to landfill will be less
- We will have access to natural areas for recreation
- The risk to our threatened species and ecological communities will be reduced.

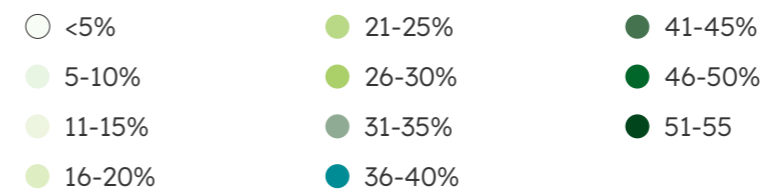


## EV charging locations

Multiple charging points are available in most locations. 52 are available across the LGA.



## Canopy cover percentage by suburb



Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Facebook, Inc. and its affiliates, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri

# Valuing our environment

Key achievements during 2022-2024



**12,622**

seedlings planted



**19**

community planting days



**5**

active Landcare sites



**20**

nest boxes installed across two bushland sites in East Maitland and Rutherford



**15.6% tree canopy coverage**



**16% participation in environmental volunteering**



**8,534 ha native vegetation**



**Nine threatened ecological communities**



**425.6km of rivers and creeks**



**Hunter River ranked 126/160 for river health<sup>31</sup>**

2022-2024 data unless stated

## How we are progressing

Over the years, Maitland's natural ecosystems have changed significantly due to land clearing for timber, agriculture and urbanisation leading to widespread land degradation, habitat loss and reduced biodiversity. In addition, various activities have impacted aquatic ecosystems negatively through the discharge of pollutants, erosion and sedimentation of our local waterways.

The community highly values Maitland's rural landscape and local environment, the protection and improvement of which was highlighted during consultation as a key priority. Over the last two decades the community has contributed significantly to revegetation, regeneration and weed management projects for the improvement of the natural environment.

Maitland possesses remnant bushland that provides habitat for a vast array of species, including threatened species such as squirrel gliders and powerful owls. In turn, these species are essential for the health of our local ecosystems.

The Hunter River, Paterson River and Lochinvar, Wallis, Swamp Fishery, Stoney and Four Mile

Creeks are our key waterways. Creeks, rivers and floodplains provide important 'ecosystem services' to our community including storm water drainage, flood storage and mitigation, water for irrigation and stock, visual amenity and recreation opportunities and cultural values.

Maitland retains a variety of significant wetland habitats including Tenambit, Woodberry, Wentworth and Dagworth Swamps. These wetlands provide feeding habitat for internationally important migratory species such as Latham's Snipe, a shy wetland bird that breeds in Japan and Russia and flies 8,500km to eastern Australia each year to spend its non breeding season feasting on tasty critters in mudflats and shallow open water.



## Highlight stories

### Educating our youth

Environmental education is a crucial part of building a sustainable future, and Maitland City Council is committed to starting this education early. This year, our Environment team reached 33 daycares, teaching young children about the importance of recycling, water conservation, composting, and energy saving. By introducing these concepts at a young age, we help children understand their role in protecting the environment and set the stage for lifelong sustainable habits.

In addition to daycare programs, our School Environment Program provided resources to five local schools to enhance native vegetation and improve vegetable gardens. These hands on projects allow students to connect with nature and learn the value of sustainability in a tangible way. As they engage with these projects, they develop a deeper appreciation for the environment and the impact of their actions.

Council recently organised a water education session at the Gillieston Heights Community Hub aimed at supporting Year 8 students in understanding the importance of water conservation and management. The session provided valuable insights into the local water system, emphasising sustainable practices and the significance of water conservation efforts.

Through interactive activities and informative presentations, students gained a deeper understanding of the environmental impact of water usage and learned practical tips to reduce water consumption in their daily lives.

By embedding environmental education into the curriculum from daycare through high school, we not only educate students but also empower them to become advocates for change in their communities. The knowledge and values they gain through these programs have a ripple effect, influencing their families and peers, and contributing to a broader culture of environmental stewardship in Maitland.

31 NSW estuaries for health

## Protecting our riverbank

Protecting our riverbanks is important for maintaining the health and sustainability of our natural environment and for the protection of our community.

Maitland City Council has endorsed a comprehensive educational project plan to address erosion issues along our riverbank, which is a significant concern given the impacts of four wheel drive vehicles, boating, and flood events. To ensure the plan effectively meets community needs, extensive consultation was conducted, gathering input on proposed concept plans for sites in Lorn, Morpeth, and Melville Ford.

The project focuses on enhancing riverbank resilience through tree planting, signage, and beautification efforts. These measures are designed to reinforce the fragile nature of our riverbanks and foster greater community understanding and appreciation. This important work is supported by funding from the NSW Government's Coastal and Estuary Program, underscoring a commitment to safeguarding our natural resources for future generations.

Maitland is championing the development of the Hunter Estuary Coastal Management Program on behalf of the five Lower Hunter Councils. Studies have shown the Hunter Estuary's health is poor and needs significant assistance to bring it to a standard to meet our community values. The process of developing and implementing a coastal management program is an important strategic opportunity for Councils and public authorities to work together in a Hunter Estuary Alliance.

## Partnerships to protect our natural environment

Partnering to protect our environment is essential for achieving meaningful and lasting change. Collaborative efforts between local governments, community groups, and individuals amplify our ability to address environmental challenges effectively. By pooling resources, expertise, and enthusiasm, we create a united front capable of implementing impactful initiatives that go beyond what any single entity could accomplish alone. These partnerships foster innovation and provide diverse perspectives, making it possible to develop comprehensive solutions for complex environmental issues.

Groups like Landcare play a pivotal role in this collaborative approach by focusing on the restoration and sustainable management of natural landscapes. Their hands on work in planting trees, managing invasive species, and

maintaining healthy ecosystems directly benefits local environments and communities. Landcare volunteers bring invaluable local knowledge and a deep commitment to environmental stewardship, bridging the gap between scientific research and practical application. Their efforts not only enhance biodiversity and improve land health but also educate and engage the broader community in environmental care.

Council also collaborated with a consultant to carry out a biodiversity corridor analysis, which is crucial for sustaining natural ecosystems. The initiative began with an assessment of the current functionality of mapped corridors, which are vital for species movement and maintaining biodiversity.

Challenges were identified to restore connectivity, and improvement strategies were devised to prioritise corridor improvement. Progress highlighted the need for collective conservation efforts, ensuring accessible pathways for future generations.

Council has been working collaboratively with multiple external stakeholders on the sustainable management of flying foxes living in Maitland's urban areas. In partnership with Local Government NSW, Council is restoring healthy, suitable habitat for flying foxes away from residential homes and private land. The development of the Regent Street Flying fox Management Plan is also underway, with funding assistance provided by the NSW Department Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. Both these initiatives aim to protect and conserve threatened grey headed flying foxes and their habitats while managing wildlife human conflict.

Council has also partnered with the NSW Environmental Trust to restore threatened ecological communities within the LGA. Through the implementation of revegetation efforts, installation of artificial nest boxes and weed management works, this partnership is creating new habitat and restoring the integrity of ecological communities vulnerable to extinction.



## Community indicators

Community indicators provide important information about the direction our community is heading.

Our indicators are presented as trends that show us where shifts are occurring. We use these trends to identify emerging needs and opportunities, guiding our decision making and helping us adapt our focus to better align with the priorities outlined in our Community Strategic Plan.

INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND
The natural environments and green spaces are well preserved	55%	Increasing ▲	Increasing ▲
% canopy cover (trees over 3m high)	15.6%	Decreasing ▼	Increasing ▲
Hectares of native vegetation	8,534	Maintaining ►	Increasing ▲
Number of threatened ecological communities	9	Maintaining ►	Decreasing ▼
Number of street trees planted annually	200	Increasing ▲	Increasing ▲
Health classification of Hunter River	Fair	Maintaining ►	Increasing ▲

Additional information including source of data can be found in Appendix 1

2023/24 data unless stated

\*First time we have measured this information

# Sustainable future

Key achievements during 2022-2024



**Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030**

adopted in October 2023



**1,000+**

responses to inform our Environmental Sustainability Strategy



**2 accolades**

at the Local Government NSW Excellence in the Environment Awards



**40**

regional meetings and initiatives attended in 2023-24

Where we are at



**Partnered with the SDG Hunter Region Taskforce**



**Community CO<sub>2</sub> emissions**

811,000t (8.66t per person) (22/23)



**31% of homes in Maitland have solar panels**



**52 public EV charging ports**



**186L of water per person per day for residential use**



**Council operational CO<sub>2</sub> emissions**

9,313t (19/20)

2022-2024 data unless stated

## How we are progressing

Maitland and our surrounding Hunter Region is well known for its historic climate variability and extremes. Historical records show that rainfall varies between years and decades, and we can move quickly from drought conditions and extremely hot summers to wet, rainy seasons and floods.

Our town centres are surrounded by floodplains and we are known for large historic floods, as well as our recent event in July 2022. We benefit from the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme, which provides flood risk management to 250,000 people across the Hunter. The scheme includes management areas in Morpeth, Largs, Wentworth, Maitland and East Maitland.

Despite the protection the scheme provides, average residual flood damages across the Hunter are estimated at \$200 million annually.

Our climate is changing. The latest climate science shows Maitland is likely to experience increasing temperatures, more hot days and greater chance of weather conditions that increase the likelihood of fire ignition, intensity, and spread. We are also

likely to experience increasing rainfall in autumn and decreasing rainfall in winter and spring. In recent years we've experienced extreme heat, drought, bushfires and flood, and our community has pulled together through these events.

Community resilience to natural hazards like extreme heat, drought, bushfires and floods refers to our capacity to bounce back after a shock or disturbance. This includes not only how we maintain our livelihoods and lifestyles, but also how we transform them in response to change. Two key indicators we have used to understand our community's current level of resilience include preparedness (how prepared we feel for an extreme event) and connectedness (how connected we feel to our community). We found there is room for improvement both in connectedness and preparedness.

## Highlight stories

### Council signs off on new sustainability strategy

The adoption of Maitland City Council's first Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030 in October 2023 represents a pivotal moment in our commitment to creating a more liveable and sustainable community. This milestone is more than just a plan; it reflects our collective vision for a thriving Maitland that aligns with community aspirations and NSW Government targets. By embracing this strategy, we are setting the foundation for a future where environmental stewardship and economic growth go hand in hand, ensuring Maitland continues to prosper while safeguarding the natural environment that makes our city unique.

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030, is the first of its kind for Maitland and presents a comprehensive set of achievable objectives for enhancement that aligns with both community expectations and NSW Government targets.

The strategy is built around four core themes identified through extensive community consultation: advancing a circular economy to prolong resource use and minimise waste, preserving and protecting green and blue spaces, fostering resilient and liveable communities, and promoting sustainable living practices. The strategy aims to boost community health and economic opportunities by improving the local environment.

With 13 specific targets, the strategy will guide Council efforts in areas such as creating functional biodiversity corridors, enhancing waterway health, increasing canopy cover in residential areas, and achieving net zero emissions by 2050. It also aims to reduce illegal dumping and protect vital natural spaces.

Community feedback was instrumental in shaping the strategy. Over 1,000 responses were gathered through phone and online surveys in 2022, playing a pivotal role in shaping the strategy's focal points, strategic orientation, and outlined actions.

## Taking a regional approach to environmental sustainability

The Environment and Sustainability team participates in regional forums, joint sustainability projects and initiatives, as resourcing allows, including:

- Joining the Hunter Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Goals reporting task group and supporting the preparation of a regional report card. With the report card parameters for the region finalised, the University of Newcastle is preparing a final regional dashboard.
- Attending the inaugural Hunter Resilience Network meeting facilitated by the Hunter Joint Organisation in the fourth quarter and meeting with Hunter Water to discuss their upcoming climate reporting initiative and how Council could support it. Council officers attended a Hunter Joint Organisation demonstration of digital sand tables ('simtables') for natural disaster resilience education and used the same technique at the Maitland Youth Forum.
- Participating in Hunter Joint Organisation Net Zero Network, regional grant applications and assessments of regional resourcing needs to transition the region to net zero per state policy.
- Attending a quarterly Lower Hunter Water strategy group meeting run by Hunter Water to discuss issues relating to water supply, stormwater, water sensitive cities and community water resilience initiatives.
- Hosting agencies and neighbouring councils for a consultation session during the preparation of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy in September 2022. Council invited neighbouring councils to provide input on the draft Strategy while on exhibition.

## Environment and Sustainability team gains recognition

Being recognised as leaders in environmental stewardship is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our people. Such recognition not only validates our efforts but also inspires continued innovation and excellence in protecting and enhancing our local environment. It is crucial for our community to see the impact of our initiatives and the positive difference our teams are making.

Maitland City Council's Environment and Sustainability team recently gained statewide recognition by winning two accolades at the Local Government NSW Excellence in the Environment Awards. These awards celebrate the team's

outstanding achievements in managing and protecting our local environment. The team won the Division B award for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment through on ground works and secured the Division B award for their ongoing efforts in transitioning to a circular economy.

Further highlighting our commitment to sustainability, Council staff have been collaborating to implement significant changes at our aquatic's facilities. By using data to drive decision-making, including fitting data loggers and partnering with Hunter Water for a water usage audit, we achieved remarkable outcomes.

Between 2019 and 2023, we reduced electricity emissions by 40 per cent, greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 25 per cent between 2021 and 2023 and cut water consumption by 4,423 kilolitres - which is equivalent to the size of two 50m pools. These accomplishments underscore the power of collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders in achieving our sustainability goals.

These honours reflect our commitment to environmental leadership and the great work being done by our team to ensure a sustainable future for Maitland.



## Community indicators

Community indicators provide important information about the direction our community is heading.

Our indicators are presented as trends that show us where shifts are occurring. We use these trends to identify emerging needs and opportunities, guiding our decision making and helping us adapt our focus to better align with the priorities outlined in our Community Strategic Plan.

INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND
Council operational CO <sub>2</sub> emissions	9,313t (2019-20)	Decreasing ▼	Decreasing ▼
Number of public EV charging ports in the city	52 unrestricted access	Increasing ▲	Increasing ▲
Community CO <sub>2</sub> emissions	811,000t (2022-23)	Decreasing ▼	Decreasing ▼
CO <sub>2</sub> emissions per person	8.66t (2022-23)	Decreasing ▼	Decreasing ▼
Per capita daily residential water use	186L	Increasing ▲	Decreasing ▼
Level of residents preparedness for natural hazards	66%	Increasing ►	Increasing ▲
Kilometres of shared pathway in the city	323km	Increasing ▲	Increasing ▲

Additional information including source of data can be found in Appendix 1 2023/24 data unless stated

\*First time we have measured this information

# Reduce our waste

Key achievements during 2022-2024



**38%**

waste diversion rate



**84%**

satisfaction with the Maitland Resource Recovery Facility



**5,600**

Bulky waste kerbside collections completed



**12,470**

Mattresses recycled

2022-2024 data unless stated

Where we are at



**21% by weight is recyclable material**



**Food waste makes up 24% of the general waste bin by weight**



**7,000 bins get serviced daily by garbage trucks**



**69% satisfaction with managing illegal dumping**



**35,000 properties have three bins**



**1,200 new households are added each year**

## How we are progressing

Maitland's 35,000 properties have waste collected at the kerbside. Residual waste in the red bin goes to landfill, with recycling and garden organics going to reprocessing facilities outside the LGA.

Our waste transfer station will bring some of this processing back to Maitland, creating jobs and better circular economy outcomes.

Recent community consultation showed the community is supportive of Council providing additional recycling, composting, and other services to enable 80 per cent of household waste to be diverted from landfill, in line with Australian and NSW Government targets. Engagement also showed strong community support for improving access to local recycling and resource recovery facilities to reduce landfill.

Maitland currently achieves a 38 per cent diversion of domestic waste from landfill. There are opportunities for a reduction to waste to landfill, particularly food organics, soft plastics, textiles, and recyclables (cans, glass, cardboard) in the wrong bin. Capture and recycling of these materials will progress Maitland towards the 2030 target.

## Highlight stories

### Enhancing waste management services for a cleaner Maitland

Effective waste management is essential for maintaining a clean and sustainable city, and Maitland is committed to providing residents with convenient and flexible options to manage their waste responsibly. Starting in July 2023, households have been able to book up to two occasions each year for the removal of bulky items such as furniture, e-waste, mattresses, and bundled green waste directly from their kerbside. In addition, residents can choose to receive up to two 250kg waste vouchers each financial year or combine options, including one scheduled kerbside collection and one 250kg waste voucher.

This enhanced service has proven to be highly effective, with more than 5,600 kerbside waste collections completed throughout the first year of operation, processing over 840 tonnes of waste.

Additionally, 9,400 digital vouchers were redeemed for use at the waste facility, demonstrating the community's strong engagement with these waste management options. These efforts are crucial in

reducing illegal dumping, minimizing landfill waste, and ensuring Maitland remains a clean, attractive, and environmentally responsible city.

### Transforming Maitland's waste facility

Maitland's waste management facility is undergoing a significant transformation, with the first phase of major upgrades completed in September 2023. These improvements mark the beginning of a comprehensive four stage plan to enhance the facility's capabilities, focusing on accessibility, wayfinding, and resource recovery.

Stage one has laid a strong foundation for Maitland's commitment to sustainability, introducing new recycling and circular economy initiatives that are critical to the city's long term environmental goals. The upgrades have improved the facility's layout, making it easier for customers to navigate and separate recyclables, thereby increasing the efficiency of resource recovery.

In a bid to further encourage recycling, Council has expanded the range of items that can be disposed of for free. In addition to metals, cardboard, and problem waste, residents can now drop off household quantities of polystyrene and

textiles at no cost. Timber is also accepted at the facility, now with a reduced gate fee, making it more affordable for residents to dispose of these materials responsibly.

With the success of stage one, stage two works commenced in May 2024, signalling the next step in the facility's evolution. The continued upgrades will further enhance the facility's capacity to manage waste sustainably and support Maitland's vision for a cleaner, greener future. As the transformation progresses, the facility will play a crucial role in reducing waste, promoting recycling, and advancing the city's circular economy, ensuring that Maitland remains at the forefront of sustainable waste management practices.

### RecycleSmart

As part of our ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability, Maitland City Council is proud to partner with RecycleSmart to offer an innovative solution for managing problem waste. This service not only helps residents properly dispose of items that cannot be placed in regular recycling bins but also reinforces our dedication to reducing waste and promoting responsible environmental practices.

RecycleSmart offers a free home collection service for problem waste that can't be placed in the yellow recycling bin, such as batteries, e waste, clothes, and soft plastics.

Following a preliminary six month trial, and a subsequent one year extension, Maitland Council is now committed to continuing its partnership with RecycleSmart on an ongoing basis.

Households in the Maitland LGA can request two bags of recycling to be collected from their doorstep for free on a regular basis, using the RecycleSmart application. We are the only local government in the Hunter to offer this service to its residents.

Since it launched, we have seen uptake of the service continue to grow. An estimated 10,000kg of eligible waste has been collected from Maitland households between November 2022 to June 2024.

### Meet Maitland's colourful Waste Heroes

Engaging the community in sustainability initiatives is vital for creating a lasting impact, and Maitland City Council understands the importance of involving residents from the ground up.

By inviting local school children to design the imagery for our waste trucks, we not only empower the younger generation but also foster a sense of ownership and pride in our shared

environmental goals. This collaboration helps to build stronger community buy in, as residents see their ideas and creativity reflected in the services that directly impact their lives. Moreover, it serves as a powerful educational tool, raising awareness about recycling and waste reduction in a fun and relatable way.

Council has furnished its fleet of waste trucks with a collection of colourful cartoon characters, designed and submitted by creative local schoolchildren to reinforce responsibilities around recycling and reuse practices.

Called our 'Waste Heroes', these nine characters were envisioned by 11 imaginative local school children. Each character comes with their own inspiring ideas on how we can follow their lead, change our everyday habits and work to reduce everyday waste.

Looking ahead, the Waste Heroes will join forces in a more comprehensive waste education campaign, aimed at educating the Maitland community, young and old, on how they can positively reduce, reuse and recycle everyday waste. This is all a part of implementing Council's Waste Services Management Plan, adopted in 2023.

## Community indicators

Community indicators provide important information about the direction our community is heading.

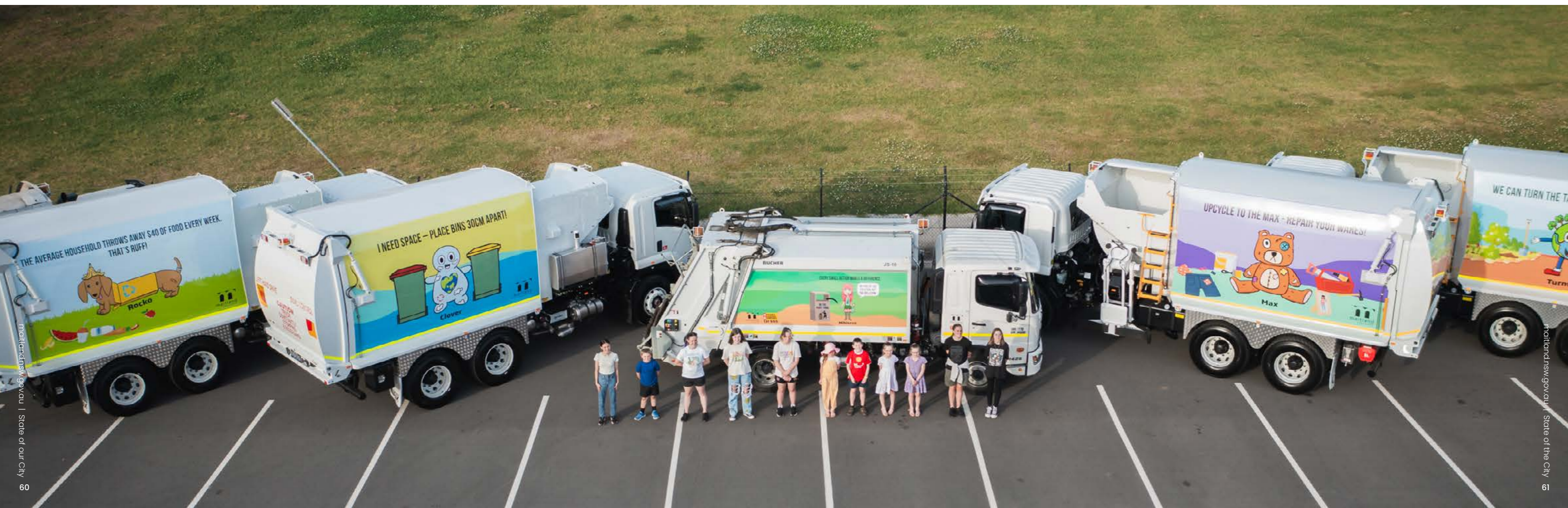
Our indicators are presented as trends that show us where shifts are occurring. We use these trends to identify emerging needs and opportunities, guiding our decision making and helping us adapt our focus to better align with the priorities outlined in our Community Strategic Plan.

INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND
Domestic resource recovery rate	38%	Decreasing ▼	Increasing ▲
% general waste made up of food waste by weight	24%	Maintaining ►	Decreasing ▼
% general waste made up of recyclable material by weight	21%	Maintaining ►	Decreasing ▼
Tonnes of waste collected	24,586	Decreasing ▼	Decreasing ▼
Tonnes of recyclables collected	5,112	Decreasing ▼	Decreasing ▼
Tonnes of organics collected	9,465	Decreasing ▼	Decreasing ▼

Additional information including source of data can be found in Appendix 1

2023/24 data unless stated

\*First time we have measured this information





# Let's achieve together

## Community outcomes

- Trusted services
- Engaged workforce
- Resilient future

## Measuring progress

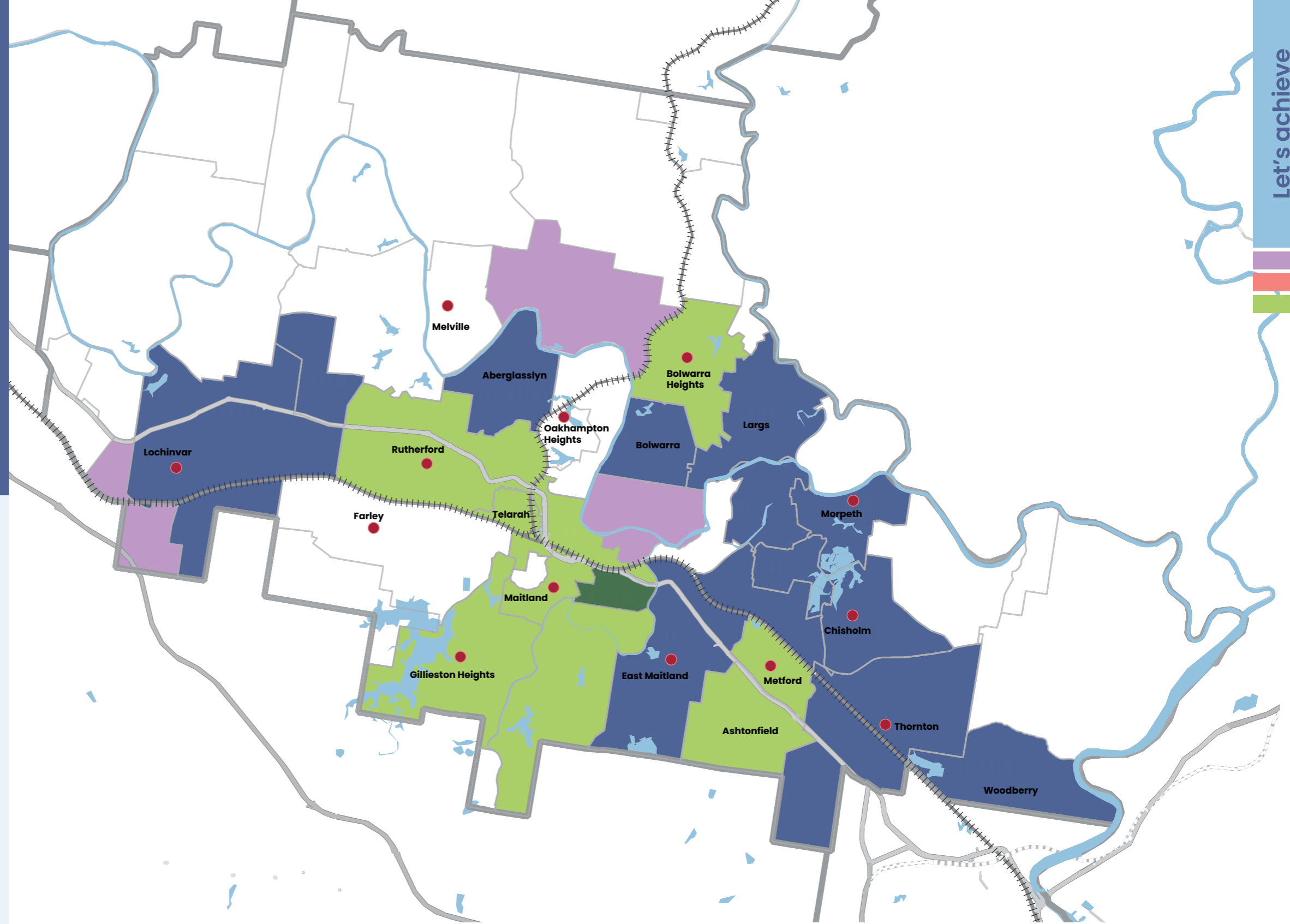
Maitland City Council is dedicated to advancing trusted services, fostering an engaged workforce, and building a resilient future for our community.

We measure our progress by regularly assessing service quality through resident feedback and performance reviews to ensure reliability and effectiveness. Employee engagement is tracked through surveys that evaluate job satisfaction and professional development, aiming to enhance motivation and retention.

To build a resilient future, we evaluate the success of our strategies in infrastructure, emergency preparedness, and sustainability, using risk assessments and scenario planning to prepare for and adapt to challenges. This comprehensive approach ensures we meet our community's needs while securing a stable and resilient future for Maitland.

## Where do we want to be?

- We will be aware of our community and elected leaders
- We will actively participate in discussions and decisions about the services, plans and programs of Maitland City Council
- We will enjoy an innovative and digital approach to the services provided by Maitland City Council
- We will be satisfied with the performance of Maitland City Council.



● Grant funding recieved for suburbs during 2022-2024 period

● 2.5-3.0

● 3.0-3.5

● 3.5-4.0

● 4.0-4.5

Suburbs left blank did not have sufficient results for an average score to be calculated.

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# Build trusted services

Key achievements during 2022-2024



**MyCouncil Online Portal**

was implemented



**3,750**

pieces of data collected during our engagement for Maitland's Future



**40% trust measure**



**Continuous conversation**

launched as a new approach to engagement

Where we are at



**12 Councillors and one Mayor**



**Six senior management roles**



**96,000 residents**



**4.1/5 Customer Satisfaction Score**



**707 Maitland Your Say members**



**27 service areas**

2022-2024 data unless stated

## How we are progressing

Effective community engagement is vital for ensuring that Maitland's residents have a voice in local decision making processes. The council must adopt transparent, inclusive, and participatory approaches to engage diverse groups within the community. This includes using various platforms, such as public meetings, surveys, social media, and workshops, to gather input and feedback.

Building strong relationships with community organisations and leaders can also enhance trust and collaboration. Successful community engagement leads to better informed policies and a more empowered community. Regularly updating the community on council activities and decisions through newsletters, websites, and public forums can increase transparency. Providing opportunities for residents to participate in planning and development projects can ensure that their needs and concerns are considered. Recognising and addressing barriers to participation, such as language or mobility issues, can make engagement efforts more inclusive and effective.

Building and maintaining trust between the council and the community is essential for effective governance. Transparency in decision making, accountability, and responsiveness to community concerns are key factors in fostering trust. The council should regularly communicate its activities, decisions, and financial status to the public. Addressing conflicts of interest and ensuring that council members are accessible and approachable can also strengthen trust. A trustworthy council is better positioned to implement policies and projects that benefit the community.

Regularly seeking community feedback and acting on it demonstrates responsiveness and accountability.

## Highlight stories

### Our flood response: safeguarding our community and strengthening resilience

Following the July 2022 floods, Maitland faced its most challenging cleanup in 15 years, as floodwaters inundated properties, isolated entire communities, and blocked roads in several

suburbs. This was the second devastating flood event in just four months, leading to significant damage to infrastructure across the city. In response, Council stood united, taking decisive action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our community. Our libraries and community centres were swiftly transformed into places of refuge and comfort, offering shelter and support to those affected. Meanwhile, Council crews worked tirelessly around the clock to maintain essential services, repair damage, and keep the city running safely.

This swift and dedicated response in the face of disaster strengthened the bond of trust between the Council and the community. By taking the lead and providing unwavering support during such a critical time, Council demonstrated its commitment to protecting the people of Maitland. The community's resilience, bolstered by the Council's efforts, is a testament to the importance of reliable leadership in times of crisis, building trust that will continue to guide and unite us in the future.

### Delivering exceptional service and enhanced customer experience through digital transformation

Digital transformation is crucial for modernising our services, but it's even more important that this transformation is driven by how our customers interact with us. We aim to create an experience that feels seamless and engaging rather than merely transactional. Our Customer Driven Transformation Program, which began in 2021, embodies this vision by integrating our Customer Experience Plan with the Digital Transformation Strategy and Roadmap. Our new approach to customer engagement and investment in customer experience is a cornerstone of our strategy to build trust and enhance satisfaction.

Since it began, the program has introduced several key initiatives to enhance our customer experience and safeguard information security. Notable advancements include the launch of a comprehensive digital mapping service that provides information on development application tracking, council facility locations, bin collection days, public parking, and bushfire prone vegetation. Additionally, we have strengthened



our cybersecurity measures with improved infrastructure, security testing, and formal training for staff and councillors.

Delivering exceptional service and enhanced customer experience through digital transformation has not only modernized our services but has significantly increased staff satisfaction. Since 2021, our Customer Driven Transformation Program has focused on how our customers interact with us, prioritizing a seamless and engaging experience. A key outcome of this program has been a 19 per cent increase in staff satisfaction with the use of technology compared to previous surveys, a direct result of the digital transformation program and our ongoing efforts to improve organisational effectiveness and efficiency.

The program's impact is seen through several initiatives, including the launch of a comprehensive digital mapping service and enhanced cybersecurity measures. Involving customers through a human centered design approach, we introduced solutions like the MyCouncil self service portal, streamlining workflows and providing a personalised, efficient experience. These innovations reflect our commitment to delivering exceptional service, driven by both technology and customer engagement.

### Shaping Maitland's future together

The Community Strategic Plan is more than a vision for Maitland's future - it's a reflection of what our community values today and aspires to in the years ahead. This plan drives Council decisions on essential matters like services, facilities, and development, ensuring they align with our collective priorities.

In alignment with Council elections every four years, we review this plan to stay in tune with our community's evolving needs. Our approach emphasises genuine listening rather than relying solely on surveys. By engaging directly with over 2,000 residents through 45 activities, we gathered more than 3,745 pieces of feedback, ensuring a diverse range of voices were heard, including youth, multicultural groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and those with disabilities.

As we develop and present the updated Community Strategic Plan in late 2024, we will ensure the community has another chance to review and provide feedback before its final adoption. Your input is crucial as it shapes not just our plans, but our future together.

## Community indicators

Community indicators provide important information about the direction our community is heading.

Our indicators are presented as trends that show us where shifts are occurring. We use these trends to identify emerging needs and opportunities, guiding our decision making and helping us adapt our focus to better align with the priorities outlined in our Community Strategic Plan.

INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND
Number of projects engaged on	42	Maintaining ▶	Maintaining ▶
Number of visits to Maitland Your Say site	28,917 visitors 5,229 contributions on Maitland Your Say site	Increasing ▲	Increasing ▲
Council provides me with opportunities to participate in the planning and decision making processes	35%	Baseline* ▼▲	Increasing ▲
Requests lodged via MyCouncil online portal	8,630	Increasing ▲	Increasing ▲
Trust measure	40%	Baseline* ▼▲	Increasing ▲

Additional information including source of data can be found in Appendix 1

2023/24 data unless stated

\*First time we have measured this information

# Foster an engaged workforce

Key achievements during 2022-2024



**New**

Maitland Administration Centre opened in 2023



**14**

listening sessions held



**Organisational Development**

team established



**74%**

engagement score

2022-2024 data unless stated

Where we are at



**650 employees (headcount)**



**49 Smith Sessions held and every 2nd at the Depot**



**42% female senior leaders**



**65% wellbeing score in the staff survey**



**26 participants in our Pathways Program**



**71% participation rate in the staff survey**

## How we are progressing

Our move into the new Maitland Administration Centred in early 2023 marked a significant milestone, reflecting our commitment to modernising and enhancing our work environment. The new facility, designed with ample open space, natural light, and greenery, provides a refreshed and inspiring atmosphere that fosters collaboration and wellbeing. Bringing all administrative staff under one roof not only streamlines operations but also cultivates a stronger sense of unity and collective purpose.

As part of our ongoing efforts to invest in our people, we have continued our Pathways Program. Comprising of apprentices, trainees, cadets and graduates, the program currently has 26 participants from various departments, ranging from customer experience to engineering. This program is particularly vital in addressing challenges in hard to employ spaces, such as engineering, where talent is often scarce. By nurturing and developing our own workforce through initiatives like this, we are ensuring a pipeline of skilled professionals who are ready to meet the needs of our community.

Our new General Manager dedicated his first six months in the role to understanding the needs and aspirations of our organisation, ensuring that our strategies and initiatives align with our goals. A new Organisational Development team has been established as a result, emphasising the importance of our people. We are not only enhancing employee satisfaction and productivity but also reinforcing our commitment to a supportive, engaged, and trusted workplace culture.

These advancements illustrate our proactive efforts to create an engaged and resilient organisation, capable of adapting to future challenges while prioritising the wellbeing and development of our people.

An engaged workforce is crucial to the success of Maitland and its community. When employees feel valued and connected to their work, they go above and beyond, delivering exceptional services and fostering stronger relationships with the community. This dedication leads to enhanced collaboration, innovation, and a culture of continuous improvement, all of which benefit the city and its residents. By creating a supportive work environment that prioritises

employee wellbeing and engagement, Maitland builds a workforce that is empowered to make a meaningful, positive impact on the community, helping it thrive.

Our team of over 600 employees, representing diverse backgrounds and professions, forms a dynamic workforce dedicated to delivering outcomes for our community. We are always mindful that every decision we make directly influences the lifestyle our residents value. As a Council, we take pride in our pivotal role in shaping Maitland into a city its residents are proud to call home, and we fully embrace our responsibilities within the broader Hunter region.



## Highlight stories

### Bringing our team together: fostering collaboration in our new administration building

On 3 June 2023, the Maitland Administration Centre and the neighbouring Maitland Town Hall were officially opened. The new building, situated at 263 High Street in Maitland, is across from the Maitland Regional Art Gallery. It also includes the historic 19th century Town Hall Café, accessible from the foyer of the Maitland Administration Centre. Before the transition, our team of over 300 staff members were working across various sites, such as the former Administration Building, offices at Ken Tubman Drive, Maitland Library, and the Visitor Information Centre.

Our new office space is purpose built and offers a range of modern amenities, including a flexible multipurpose design, community areas, and proximity to the surrounding green spaces. One of the main drivers when designing the building was to create a modern work environment and provide a facility our staff and community would be proud of.

Our new Administration Centre enhances collaboration, communication, and workplace health and wellbeing by featuring more efficient systems and greater workplace flexibility. The fit out provided staff with contemporary dedicated kitchen and dining facilities and meeting rooms to encourage better communication and collaborative decision making. All these elements are working together to promote improved connectivity and create an environment where staff can deliver better outcomes for our community.

### Investment in organisational development

After listening to our staff through the engagement survey and listening sessions, we made the strategic decision to establish a new department dedicated to organisational development. This initiative marks the start of an exciting journey to enhance the council’s capabilities and better align our workforce with the evolving needs of our community.

The new Organisational Development department in the People and Performance group, is envisioned as a cornerstone for the development and growth of our people. As the team is still in its early stages of formation, their initial focus will be on establishing foundational practices and strategies that will drive long term success.

For the Council, this investment signifies a commitment to building a more resilient and engaged organisation. By concentrating on areas such as leadership development, employee engagement and growth, the department will play a crucial role in ensuring that Maitland City Council not only meets its current objectives but is also prepared to navigate future challenges.

The importance of this department lies in its ability to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness. Through targeted training programs, performance development systems, and strategic alignment initiatives, the Organisational Development team will help streamline processes and optimise resource allocation. This, in turn, will contribute to better service delivery and more effective use of public resources.

### Employee engagement: shaping a more engaged workforce

As part of fostering an engaged and motivated workforce, Maitland City Council conducts biennial employee engagement surveys. These surveys provide valuable insights into the sentiments and experiences of our employees, offering a snapshot of our organisational health and areas for improvement.

The results of the most recent survey, conducted in June 2023, were encouraging, revealing positive feedback about various aspects of our work environment and culture. With 90 per cent employees expressed satisfaction with their roles and 87 per cent with the supportive nature of their colleagues, reflecting a strong foundation of engagement, a positive work environment, and a sense of commitment within the team. These results suggest that we are doing well in fostering a supportive and fulfilling workplace, which can contribute to higher morale, productivity, and retention. It also signals a healthy foundation for further growth and development in employee relations.

Also encouraging, was the significant positive feedback and significant improvement regarding our efforts to enhance flexibility and technology in the workplace. With a 19 per cent increase with technology compared to last survey results and a significant increase with flexible work arrangements.

However, it also highlighted several opportunities for growth, underscoring the importance of continuously listening to and addressing employee needs.

One of the key findings was the need for enhanced professional development opportunities. Many employees felt that access to training and career advancement resources could be improved, a sentiment that we took seriously.

As a direct response, Council established a new Organisational Development department. This department is designed to focus on professional growth, leadership development, and strategic alignment, directly addressing the gaps identified in the survey. By investing in this new team, we are not only responding to the survey results but also laying the groundwork for a more engaged workforce.

This initiative exemplifies how we leverage employee engagement results to drive meaningful change. The surveys are crucial for understanding our strengths and identifying areas for growth. By prioritising feedback and taking proactive steps to address issues, we are dedicated to creating a work environment where every employee feels valued and supported.

The next survey is scheduled for 2025, and we are eager to see how our ongoing efforts resonate with our employees. The insights gained will continue to guide our initiatives, ensuring that we remain responsive to employee needs and dedicated to building a more engaged workforce.

### General Manager listening sessions: shaping our future through staff insights

When our new General Manager arrived in July 2023, he made it clear that listening would be at the heart of his leadership approach. Understanding that true change begins with understanding the people who drive the organisation, he embarked on a series of listening sessions. Over the course of several months, he conducted 14 sessions, engaging directly with 220 staff members, external stakeholders and Councillors. These sessions were not just about gathering feedback; they were about fostering a culture where every voice was valued, and every concern was heard.

The insights gained from these sessions were invaluable. Employees shared what was working well within the organisation, but more importantly, they candidly discussed areas that needed improvement. This open dialogue laid the foundation for a ‘roadmap for cultural change’, designed to address these concerns and elevate the organisation to new heights.

The roadmap was more than just a plan; it was a commitment to making Maitland City Council an even greater place to work. It outlined 16 clear initiatives aimed at improving processes and systems, enhancing communication, fostering

continuous improvement and investing in our people. Within the first six months, 94 per cent of these initiatives had already been implemented or are well on their way to being completed, a testament to our dedication to responding swiftly and effectively to employee feedback.

In addition to these initiatives, an organisational restructure was undertaken with initial salary savings of over \$1 million. This restructure was directly aligned with the insights gathered from the listening sessions, ensuring that the changes made were not only strategic but also deeply resonant with the needs and desires of the staff. By realigning roles, responsibilities, and workflows, the restructure aimed to create a more efficient and collaborative environment, one where everyone could thrive.

This journey underscores the importance of listening and responding, aligning perfectly with our vision of creating trusted services and an engaged workforce. It highlights that meaningful change begins with understanding the people and acting on their feedback, so we can create a workplace where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute their best. The success of the first six months is just the beginning, as we continue to build on this foundation, making our organisation a place where people are proud to work and where their voices truly shape the future.

## Community indicators

Community indicators provide important information about the direction our community is heading.

Our indicators are presented as trends that show us where shifts are occurring. We use these trends to identify emerging needs and opportunities, guiding our decision making and helping us adapt our focus to better align with the priorities outlined in our Community Strategic Plan.

INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND
Employee engagement survey results	74%	Maintaining	Increasing
Employee turnover and retention rates	11%	Decreasing	Maintaining
Participation rates in study assistance	21	Increasing	Increasing
% of workforce that is local	47%	Maintaining	Maintaining

Additional information including source of data can be found in Appendix 1 2023/24 data unless stated

\*First time we have measured this information

# Create a resilient future

Key achievements during 2022-2024



**\$55 million**

in successful grant applications



**\$126 million**

invested in capital works



**\$207 million**

generated in rates and annual charges



**4/6**

financial ratios met in 2022/23

2022-2024 data unless stated

Where we are at



**118 grants applications submitted**



**56% of income comes from rate revenue**



**\$327 million spent to provide services and facilities**



**86% overall satisfaction Council's performance**



**We manage \$2 billion worth of assets**



**\$49 million in developer contributions received**

## How we are progressing

Ensuring the financial resilience of Maitland City Council is crucial for sustainable development and effective service delivery. Recently, the council has undergone a restructure to establish a standalone Finance group, underscoring our commitment to financial sustainability.

This restructuring aligns with the new General Manager's approach to fostering a culture of improvement and innovation, emphasising a thirst for data driven decision making. We are changing the way we leverage technology to capture data effectively, enabling us to make informed decisions that enhance our financial management.

Our focus on integrated planning and reporting ensures we take a holistic approach to our planning processes. To support this, we have developed working panels that bring together diverse perspectives and expertise, facilitating comprehensive discussions around budget priorities and strategic initiatives.

Prudent financial management, diversified revenue streams, and effective budgeting remain paramount as we strive to balance expenditures

with income. Building reserves and reducing debt levels will further enhance our financial stability, while long term financial plans that consider potential risks and economic fluctuations will strengthen our resilience.

Engaging with the community about our budget priorities and financial decisions fosters understanding and support for the council's fiscal policies, ensuring that we can continue to fund essential services and infrastructure projects that benefit all residents.



## Highlight stories

### Driving excellence through continuous improvement

Continuous improvement is now a critical priority for us as we chart a path forward, and we are committed to fostering a culture of ongoing reflection, innovation, and learning. This approach is essential to adapting to the dynamic needs of our growing community, elevating service delivery, and ensuring that our operations meet the highest standards of efficiency and effectiveness. Continuous improvement is not just about addressing current gaps but proactively seeking opportunities to innovate, streamline, and hold ourselves accountable to the community we serve. Our goal is to consistently raise the bar, delivering greater value and impact.

In recent years, we have taken concrete steps to demonstrate this commitment. We've launched a comprehensive policy review program, initiated service reviews, and established working panels to improve internal processes.

A renewed focus on our Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework has further aligned our strategic goals with day to day operations. To support this, we've invested in a process mapping tool to streamline workflows and launched a new Organisational Development team to drive capability building initiatives. These efforts are enhanced by our customer and digital transformation projects, designed to improve user experience and responsiveness.

Additionally, we have emphasised the importance of collaboration and transparency, especially at our senior managers' meetings, where cross-department teamwork has become a focus. With the implementation of numerous frameworks to formalise and standardise processes, we are laying the groundwork for a more efficient and agile organisation - one that is continually evolving to meet the expectations of the community and to drive future growth with purpose and accountability.

## Maximising opportunities through strategic grants

For a council like Maitland, consistently applying for grants is not just a strategy; it's a necessity. As a council that heavily relies on rate income, securing external funding is vital for delivering significant infrastructure and community projects that enhance the quality of life for our residents. The reality is that ambitious undertakings - such as major roadworks, recreational facilities, and other essential services - often require support beyond what local rates can provide. This is where state and federal funding becomes crucial, enabling us to undertake projects that align with community needs and our long term vision.

Recognising this need, we have taken proactive steps to bolster our grant application efforts by appointing a dedicated staff member to coordinate and seek out funding opportunities. This commitment has yielded impressive results: we have applied for over 118 grants with a success rate of around 64 per cent, securing more than \$55 million in the past two years alone. These funds have been instrumental in driving investments back into our city, facilitating critical road projects that improve connectivity and safety, as well as recreational projects that promote wellbeing and community engagement.

By actively pursuing these funding opportunities, we not only amplify our capacity to deliver transformative projects but also demonstrate our commitment to responsible financial management and community development. Each grant secured represents a step toward a more vibrant, connected, and sustainable Maitland, ensuring that we can continue to provide the services and infrastructure our residents deserve. This ongoing effort to leverage external funding sources is a testament to our dedication to making Maitland a better place to live, work, and play.

## Shaping a sustainable future through long term planning

Endorsement of several key strategic documents marks a significant step forward in shaping the city's future. The endorsement of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy, Rural Lands Strategy, and Local Housing Strategy, provides essential guidance and a strategic framework for the our actions and decisions moving forward.

The endorsement of these strategies is not merely a formality; it is a critical process that establishes a clear vision and direction for Maitland's development. Each strategy serves as a roadmap, outlining specific goals, actions, and priorities that

align with the Council's overarching vision for the city. By formalising these strategies, we ensure all efforts are coordinated, purposeful, and aligned with our long term objectives.

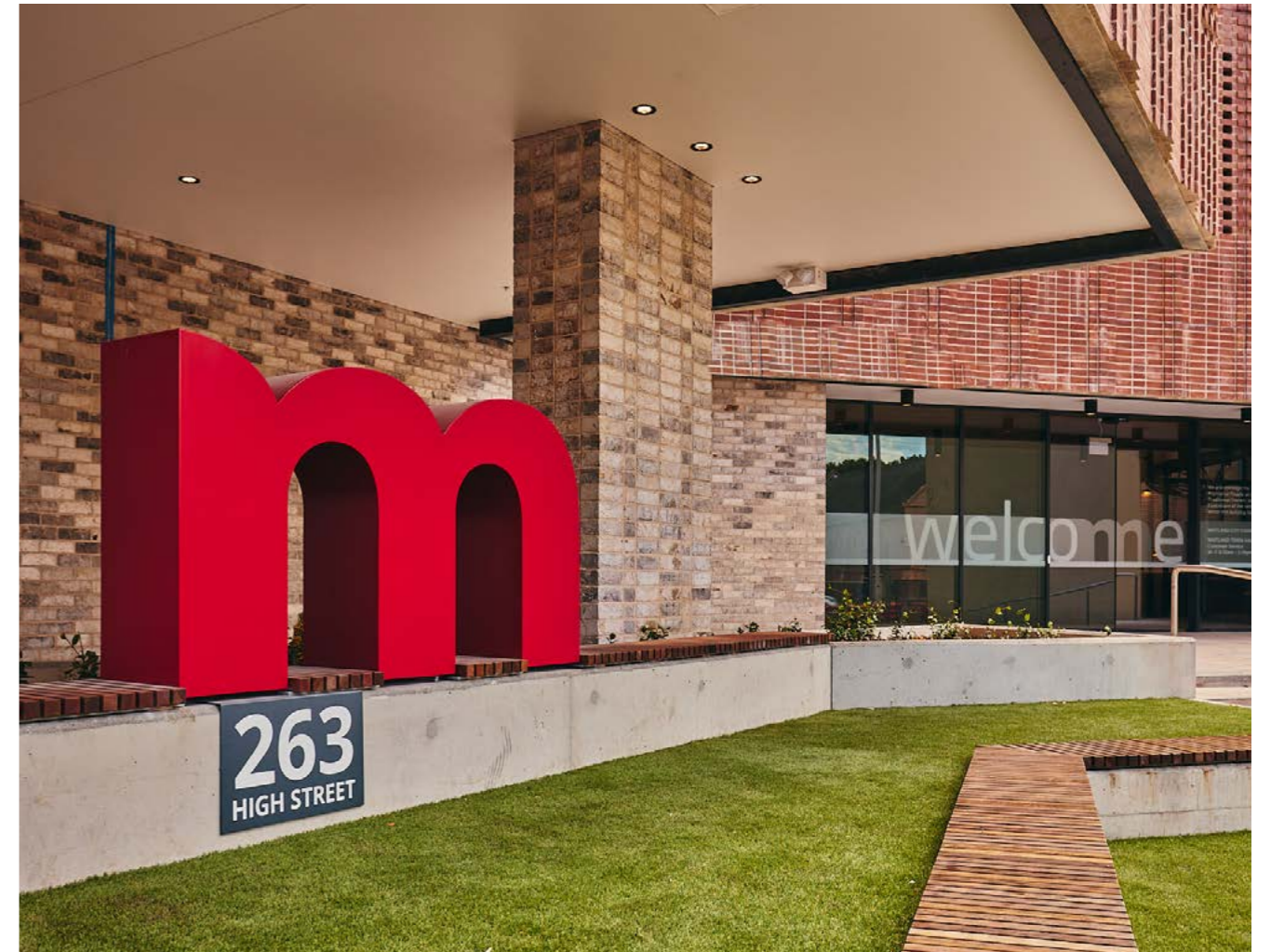
The Environmental Sustainability Strategy is a cornerstone of our commitment to protecting and enhancing our natural environment. This strategy outlines our approach to reducing environmental impact, promoting sustainable practices, and preparing for the challenges posed by hazardous events. With this endorsement, the Council sets a clear path for integrating sustainability into all aspects of our operations and development, ensuring that environmental considerations are in all our decision making processes.

The Rural Lands Strategy addresses the unique needs and opportunities of Maitland's rural areas. This strategy focuses on preserving the character and vitality of our rural lands while promoting sustainable land use and development practices. By endorsing this strategy, the Council affirms its dedication to balancing rural preservation with responsible growth, ensuring that our rural communities continue to thrive while remaining integral to the city's overall development.

The Local Housing Strategy is crucial for managing Maitland's rapid growth and ensuring that our housing needs are met effectively. This strategy outlines plans for diverse and affordable housing options, addressing the challenges of a growing population and providing a framework for future housing development. The endorsement of this strategy highlights Council's commitment to creating vibrant and accessible communities, supporting residents at all stages of life.

By endorsing these strategic documents, Maitland City Council provides a clear and cohesive direction for the future. These strategies offer guidance on the 'how' and 'what' of our actions, ensuring every initiative is aligned with our long term goals and contributes to the overall vision for Maitland.

As we move forward, these strategies will serve as essential tools in navigating the complexities of urban and rural development, environmental stewardship, and housing needs. They will guide our decisions, shape our priorities, and ensure Maitland continues to evolve in a manner that reflects our values and aspirations.



## Community indicators

Community indicators provide important information about the direction our community is heading.

Our indicators are presented as trends that show us where shifts are occurring. We use these trends to identify emerging needs and opportunities, guiding our decision making and helping us adapt our focus to better align with the priorities outlined in our Community Strategic Plan.

INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND
Annual budget surplus/deficit figures	Deficit	Maintaining ▶	Increasing ▲
Agree that Council will continue to fulfil it's commitment and obligation in the future	41%	Baseline* ▼ ▲	Increasing ▲
Debt levels and debt servicing ratios	>2	Decreasing ▼	Increasing ▲
Results of financial audits	Unqualified audit option	Maintaining ▶	Maintaining ▶
Community satisfaction with long term planning	2.98	Maintaining ▶	Increasing ▲

Additional information including source of data can be found in Appendix 1  
2023/24 data unless stated

\*First time we have measured this information

# Appendix

THEME	PRIORITY	COMMUNITY INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND	SOURCE
Let's connect	Getting around our city	% of people that drive	89.20%	Maintaining	Decreasing	<a href="#">Household Travel Survey 2022/23</a>
		% of people that walk	8.70%	Decreasing	Increasing	<a href="#">Household Travel Survey 2022/23</a>
		Number of suburbs with a walkscore above 50 (somewhat walkable – some errands can be accomplished on foot)	2	Baseline	Increasing	Walkscore
		Community satisfaction with traffic management	2.68	Maintaining	Increasing	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		Community satisfaction with maintenance of local roads	2.5	Maintaining	Increasing	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		Community satisfaction with footpaths	3.04	Baseline	Increasing	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
	Places that connect us	Community satisfaction with Maitland Libraries	96%	Maintaining	Maintaining	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		There is plenty of accessible open space in my neighbourhood	72%	Baseline	Maintaining	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		Our community spaces, neighbourhoods, and facilities are welcoming to all	68%	Baseline	Maintaining	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		Community satisfaction with sportsgrounds and ovals	90%	Maintaining	Maintaining	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		I feel connected to the local community	56%	Baseline	Increasing	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		I feel safe in my local neighbourhood	66%	Baseline	Increasing	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
	Welcoming and inclusive	Overall quality of life	90%	Maintaining	Increasing	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		Medical, mental health and social services are accessible and adequate	38%	Baseline	Increasing	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		Provision of services and opportunities for younger or older people and other hard to reach community groups	33%	Baseline	Increasing	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		The Maitland community is welcoming to people from different cultures	71%	Baseline	Increasing	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		Residents that did voluntary work through an organisation or group	11.1%	Decreasing (13.5% in 2016)	Decreasing	Increasing

THEME	PRIORITY	COMMUNITY INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND	SOURCE	
Let's create	Housing options and city growth	% of residential dwellings that are social housing	5%	Baseline	▼ ▲	Increasing ▲	Maitland City Council Local Housing Strategy 2041
		Ratio of greenfield to infill housing	90:10	Increasing	▲	Decreasing ▼	Maitland City Council Local Housing Strategy 2041
		% of single detached dwellings	87% (compared to 65.5% in NSW)	Maintaining	▶	Decreasing ▼	ABS Census data 2021
		Urban footprint	6,200 ha	Increasing	▲	Maintaining ▶	Maitland City Council Local Housing Strategy 2041
		I can afford a reasonable standard of housing in my area	54%	Baseline	▼ ▲	Increasing ▲	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		My current home is suitable for my needs and is adequate in size	86%	Baseline	▼ ▲	Maintaining ▶	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		There are diverse housing options available for everyone across the Maitland local government area	27%	Baseline	▼ ▲	Increasing ▲	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
	Economic development	Number of working age people in Maitland	43,773	Increasing	▲	Increasing ▲	REMPPLAN
		Number of people that work in Maitland	35,227	Increasing	▲	Increasing ▲	REMPPLAN
		% of workers that live in Maitland and work out of region	54%	Increasing	▲	Decreasing ▼	REMPPLAN
		% of residents in the labour force with formal professional qualifications (above diploma qualifications)	25%	Increasing	▲	Increasing ▲	REMPPLAN
		% of total output attributed to the Tourism sector	1.8%	Increasing	▲	Increasing ▲	REMPPLAN
	Central Maitland	Total economic output for Central Maitland	\$1,903,260 million	Baseline (Central Maitland (2023 Release 2)	▼ ▲	Increasing ▲	REMPPLAN Central Maitland Release 2
		Average spend per day for domestic daytrip in Central Maitland	\$187	Baseline (Central Maitland (2023 Release 2)	▼ ▲	Increasing ▲	REMPPLAN Central Maitland Release 2
		Number of visitors at city centre events	130,000 per annum	Increasing	▲	Increasing ▲	Annual Report 2023/24
		Number of people employed within Central Maitland	6,891	Increasing	▲	Increasing ▲	REMPPLAN



THEME	PRIORITY	COMMUNITY INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND	SOURCE		
Let's sustain	Valuing our environment	The natural environments and green spaces are well preserved	55%	Increasing	▲	Increasing	▲	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		% canopy cover (trees over 3m high)	15.60%	Decreasing	▼	Increasing	▲	Maitland City Council Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030
		Hectares of native vegetation	8,534	Maintaining	▶	Increasing	▲	Maitland City Council Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030
		Number of threatened ecological communities	9	Maintaining	▶	Decreasing	▼	Maitland City Council Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030
		Number of street trees planted annually	200	Increasing	▲	Increasing	▲	Annual Report 2023/24
		Health classification of Hunter River	Fair	Maintaining	▶	Increasing	▲	NSW Estuaries for health 2024
	Sustainable future	Council operational CO2 emissions	9,313t	Decreasing	▼	Decreasing	▼	Maitland City Council Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030
		Number of public EV charging ports in the city	52 unrestricted access	Increasing	▲	Increasing	▲	Internal data source
		Community CO2 emissions	811,000t	Decreasing	▼	Decreasing	▼	Maitland City Council Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030
		CO2 emissions per person	8.66t	Decreasing	▼	Decreasing	▼	Maitland City Council Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030
		Per capita daily residential water use	186L	Increasing	▲	Decreasing	▼	Maitland City Council Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030
		Level of residents preparedness for natural hazards	66%	Increasing	▲	Increasing	▲	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
	Reduce our waste	Kilometers of shared pathway in the city	323km	Increasing	▲	Increasing	▲	Annual Report 2023/24
		Domestic resource recovery rate	38%	Decreasing	▼	Increasing	▲	Maitland City Council Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030
		% general waste made up of food waste by weight	24%	Maintaining	▶	Decreasing	▼	Maitland City Council Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030
		% general waste made up of recyclable material by weight	21%	Maintaining	▶	Decreasing	▼	Maitland City Council Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030
		Tonnes waste collected	24,586	Decreasing	▼	Decreasing	▼	Annual Report 2023/24
		Tonnes of recyclables collected	5,112	Decreasing	▼	Decreasing	▼	Annual Report 2023/24
	Tonnes of organics collected	9,465	Decreasing	▼	Decreasing	▼	Annual Report 2023/24	

THEME	PRIORITY	COMMUNITY INDICATOR	CURRENT STATE	CURRENT TREND	DESIRED TREND	SOURCE		
Let's achieve	Build trusted services	Number of projects engaged on	42	Maintaining	►	Maintaining	►	Internal data source
		Number of visits to Maitland Your Say site	28,917 visitors 5,229 contributions via Maitland Your Say	Increasing	▲	Increasing	▲	Internal data source
		Council provides me with opportunities to participate in the planning and decision making process	35%	Baseline	▼ ▲	Increasing	▲	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		Requests lodged via MyCouncil online portal	8,630	Increasing	▲	Increasing	▲	Internal data source
		Trust measure	40%	Baseline	▼ ▲	Increasing	▲	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
	Foster an engaged workforce	Employee engagement survey results	74%	Maintaining	►	Increasing	▲	Council staff survey 2023
		Employee turnover and retention rates	11%	Decreasing	▼	Maintaining	►	Annual Report 2023/24
		Participation rates in study assistance	21	Increasing	▲	Increasing	▲	Internal data source
		% of workforce that is local	47%	Maintaining	►	Maintaining	►	Internal data source
	Create a resilient future	Annual budget surplus/deficit figures	Deficit	Maintaining	►	Increasing	▲	Annual Report 2023/24
		Agree that Council will continue to fulfill it's commitment and obligation in the future	41%	Baseline	▼ ▲	Increasing	▲	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
		Debt levels and debt servicing ratios	>2	Decreasing	▼	Increasing	▲	Annual Report 2023/24
		Results of financial audits	Unqualified audit option	Maintaining	►	Maintaining	►	Annual Report 2023/24
		Community satisfaction with long term planning	2.98	Maintaining	►	Increasing	▲	Community Satisfaction Survey 2024

Baseline represents the first time we have measured this information

% of residents that agree are those who indicated they agree or strongly agree with the statement

Community satisfaction is those who have indicated they are somewhat satisfied, satisfied and very satisfied

Community indicators are used to track trends and ensure the changes that have occurred are moving us towards our vision. They show the high-level impacts of Council's service delivery on our city and the community.

Current trend is the trend we are currently experiencing.

Desired trend is the trend we are hoping to see in the future.

## Glossary

**ABS** Australian Bureau of Statistics.

**ADVOCACY** The act of speaking or arguing in favour of something, such as a cause, idea, or policy. In the context of the Strategic Priorities, it refers to another sphere of government or organisation delivering a service or outcome for the city.

**BIODIVERSITY** The variety of all living things including plants, animals and microorganisms, their genes and the ecosystems of which they are a part.

**BMX** Bicycle motocross.

**CBD** Central Business District.

**CIRCULAR ECONOMY** is a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible.

**CO<sub>2</sub>** Carbon Dioxide.

**COMMUNITY** A community is a diverse and dynamic network encompassing residents, businesses, sporting groups, cultural organisations, and other stakeholders who live, work, and engage in shared activities within Maitland.

**CRWI** Cities and Regional Wellbeing Index Score.

**CSP** Community Strategic Plan.

**DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION (DA)** a merit based assessment conducted directly through MCC.

**DIAP** Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

**EV** Electric Vehicle.

**IPR** Integrated Planning and Reporting.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA (LGA)** Maitland LGA covers an area of 392sqkm.

**MAITLAND'S FUTURE** This is our Community Strategic Plan which provides clear strategic direction for the long term, and identifies the main priorities, aspirations and future vision of the community.

**PARTNERING** A structured approach to working together with other parties to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome.

**RISK MANAGEMENT** A discipline for developing appropriate procedures to reduce the possibility of adverse effects from future events.

**SEIFA** Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT** is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their needs.

**TARGET** A goal to be reached by a specific date which may be higher than the forecasted performance. It aims to continually improve performance.

**WE / OUR / US** in this document refers collectively to the community of Maitland and Maitland City Council.

### Abbreviations

Ha hectare.

km kilometre.

l litres.

m metres.

t tonnes.

## References and research

### Maitland's strategies and plans

- [Local Strategic Planning Statement](#)
- [Local Housing Strategy 2041](#)
- [Rural Land Strategy 2041](#)
- Customer Experience Plan 2019 (Internal document)
- Economic Development Strategy (draft)
- [Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030](#)
- [Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2024-2028](#)
- [Maitland Social Profile 2025](#)

### External resources

- [Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021, Maitland: Region Data Summary](#)
- [NSW DIPE 2020, NSW 2023 Population Projections, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, accessed April 2024](#)
- [NSW Office of Local Government \(OLG\), Integrated Planning & Reporting Handbook for Local Councils in NSW \(September 2021\)](#)
- [Remplan 2021, 'Maitland City Council: Economy, Jobs and Business Insights', accessed June 2024](#)
- [Walk Score Maitland, NSW](#)
- Open data network – Environment
- [NSW Government Public table, Sales Report accessed June 2024](#)

### Internal resources

- Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2022
- Community Satisfaction Survey Results 2024
- Long Term Financial Plan 2022-2032
- Financial Statements 2022-23
- Financial Statements 2023-24
- ArcGIS mapping data
- Annual Report 2022-23
- Annual Report 2023-24



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CITY COUNCIL