

EVOLVE GRIFFITH

2021-2025

**An Economic Development Strategy
for Promoting Prosperity**
Griffith City Council



Evolve Griffith: An Economic Development Strategy for Promoting Prosperity, 2021-2025 has been prepared with the assistance of:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

A Framework for Promoting Prosperity

Evolve Griffith is Council's five-year plan to support the vibrancy, diversity and sustainability of the City of Griffith, to 2025 and beyond.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to affect cities and regions throughout Australia and around the world, the need to understand the local impacts on business and industry and to develop appropriate responses to help promote and support economic development is perhaps more important than ever before.

Beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, Council is committed to supporting sustainable population and employment growth. Retaining and growing Griffith's population will support local service delivery, attract government funding and support stable, or even higher property prices. It will also serve to retain existing businesses and attract new investment, generating more opportunities for employment, creating a multiplier effect of more people, more investment and more jobs.

Informed by a well-developed understanding of the City's (and wider Western Riverina region's) economic development structure, dynamics and potential, Evolve Griffith presents a plan of action to facilitate and support local economic activity now and into the future.

Built on partnerships and alliances between Griffith City Council, State and Federal government agencies, regional development bodies, local businesses and the community, Evolve Griffith delivers a clear, actionable and achievable road map for economic development focused on the growth and retention of existing businesses and residents; new industry development; the attraction of visitors; and increased employment.

In preparing this strategy, Council engaged with a diversity of government, industry and community stakeholders via a series of targeted stakeholder consultations. The strategy consultations have been instrumental in helping to establish a vision for the economy of the future and to guide Council's efforts in promoting and facilitating economic development.

Designed to effect positive change, the opportunities for action presented in this economic development strategy, will help facilitate the resilience, competitiveness and success of local businesses and the capacity of the Griffith community to attract investment, diversify the local economy and provide the foundations for the jobs of the future.

The economic development strategy themes and actions are targeted and informed. They have been framed to help realise Council's and the community's economic development objective as articulated in the city's Community Strategic Plan Guiding Griffith 2040, to provide and manage assets, services and facilities which enable economic activity to occur, to support the development of a skilled workforce with opportunities for employment and to encourage the city's economy to grow sustainably into the future.

Griffith City Council's Economic Development Objective

Broadly speaking, 'economic development' refers to the continuous process of growing an area's level of income and capital (wealth) and distributing that wealth (through local expenditure and jobs) to the community.

Typically measured in terms of income and employment, economic development is also measured by improvements in education, skills, health, culture, community wellbeing, a sense of place and the environment. Ultimately, economic development is about prosperity; improving quality of life. For Griffith City Council, which has a role to play in promoting, encouraging and enabling economic activity, supporting economic development requires a strategic, informed and targeted approach.

To this end, Evolve Griffith:

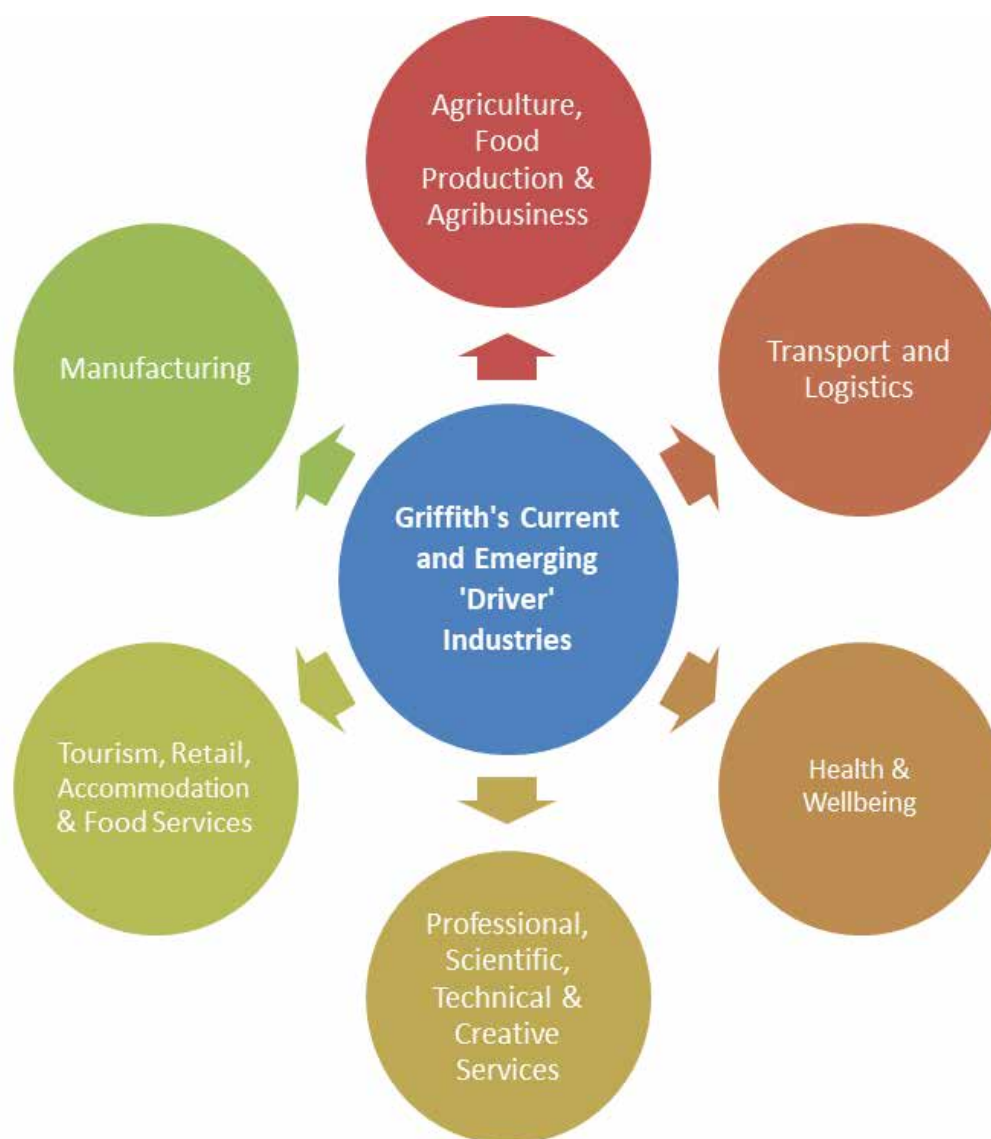
- Establishes a detailed understanding of the economic structure and dynamics of the Griffith local government area (LGA) and relevant regional policy settings which influence and inform a framework for

prosperity;

- Articulates economic development issues, challenges and opportunities for Griffith City Council to consider in its role as a facilitator and promoter of economic development;
- Identifies collaborative partnerships, where Council can engage with other stakeholders on matters concerning local and regional economic development; and
- Provides Griffith City Council with an informed, actionable and achievable 'roadmap' for economic development to 2025.

Griffith City Council recognises that it has a vital role to play in the leadership, organisation, delivery and promotion of local economic development. Guided by this strategy, Council is committed to creating the conditions for more effective economic partnerships and enabling innovation and entrepreneurship. Economic development is about capitalising on comparative and competitive advantage. Griffith's future prosperity will be underpinned by innovation and value-creation in the area's traditional economic mainstays of manufacturing and agriculture; related opportunities in the transport and logistics sector; new investments in industries such as health care, research and education; tourism and related industries including sport and recreation, retail and the accommodation and food services sector; and opportunities to attract and grow knowledge-intensive activity in the professional, scientific, technical and creative services sectors.

Griffith's Economic Drivers



A Strategic Focus on the Enablers of Prosperity

The themes and actions presented in this strategy guide Griffith City Council's efforts on its role as an 'enabler' of economic development.

The opportunities for action focus on the ways in which Council can use its planning and regulatory functions, its resources and its collaborative relationships with other organisations to help stimulate investment, attract new residents, support the growth of existing businesses and grow the local visitor economy through effective promotion and destination management.

Evolve Griffith focuses on the enablers of economic development. These refer to the services, infrastructure and support mechanisms required to facilitate positive change. At the local government level, they include:

- Local roads.
- Developable residential, commercial and industrial land.
- The form and function of the Griffith city centre and other settlements.
- Community services and facilities including sporting, cultural and recreational facilities.

At the wider regional level and beyond, the enablers of economic development include those attributes which Griffith City Council is not directly responsible for, but which it can help influence through its regional economic partnerships and advocacy efforts including, for example:

- Regional transport and communications infrastructure.
- Power and water.
- Health care and social assistance services.
- Education infrastructure and workforce skills.

Collectively, these enablers of economic activity help define Griffith's (and the Western Riverina region's) economic development potential and its appeal as a place to visit, work, live and invest in.

A focus on how Council can effectively influence the enablers of economic development - either as a lead agent of change or in support of others - underpins Evolve Griffith as a visionary, yet practical and outcomes-oriented economic development strategy.

Regional in scope with a global frame of reference, Evolve Griffith articulates and promotes a partnership approach between Council and other stakeholders in government, the non-government sector, the community and industry.

Having regard for the city's and region's broader policy and planning framework, Council recognises and promotes its role in economic development as being one in which it pro-actively and constructively works with the other stakeholders to promote Griffith as the regional service centre of the Western Riverina and as an attractive destination for people to live, work and play. This is reflected in the economic development vision and Council's charter to promote and support economic development.

A Vision and Charter for Griffith's Economic Development

Evolve Griffith is informed by socio-economic research, analysis and targeted stakeholder consultation. The economic development strategy themes and actions reflect stakeholder views regarding Griffith's key issues, challenges and opportunities, which combined, inform the vision for economic development.

The economic development vision is supported by Griffith City Council's economic development charter. This articulates Council's commitment to promoting, facilitating and co-ordinating local economic development activities.

Economic Development Vision for The City of Griffith

Building on its strategic location, its industry strengths and capabilities and its role as the service centre to the Western Riverina, by 2040, Griffith will be widely known for its vibrant- and connected communities and as a location of choice in which to live, work, visit and invest.

Griffith City Council's Economic Development Charter

Griffith City Council supports economic development through strategic planning, information-sharing, advocacy, infrastructure provision and service delivery, to help encourage businesses to establish and grow, and to cultivate Griffith's appeal as a place to live, learn and prosper.

Guided by its Economic Development Charter and the Action Plan presented in this strategy, Griffith City Council continuously strives to provide the enabling environment to help facilitate the competitiveness and success of businesses across all sectors of the local economy. To focus Council's efforts in this regard, opportunities for action have been identified across three strategic themes.

Strategic Themes



Economic Development Strategy Themes

Evolve Griffith documents opportunities for Griffith City Council and its partners in government, the non-government sector, industry and the community to address collaboratively, to help facilitate change towards a prosperous future. To this end, it contains three strategy themes. Opportunities for action have been identified and categorised under the three strategic themes.

These are opportunities that Council and its partners can focus on to help activate and grow the local economy. The opportunities for action are informed by the economic development vision and Council's charter. Prioritising where Council's resources can best be directed for the purpose of facilitating and promoting economic development is a key consideration of Evolve Griffith.

Priority Opportunities for Action

Priority projects and activities for implementation are to be determined by Griffith City Council and reviewed annually. Priorities are informed by the application of a broad set of assessment criteria which consider both the anticipated benefits and Griffith City Council's capacity to implement the opportunity in question, either as the lead, or in a support role in partnership with other stakeholders.

Some opportunities are focused on catalyst project planning and development initiatives which require action combined with a well-planned course of project implementation for the desired outcomes to be realised over time.

Other opportunities for action are focused on strategic program implementation and are initiatives that can be addressed as part of Griffith City Council's day-to-day economic development planning and facilitation functions.

In a number of cases, these actions seek to build on or continue initiatives already in place.

The Immediate Challenge of COVID-19: An Economic Recovery Plan

In delivering this economic development strategy, Griffith City Council is focused first and foremost on immediate-term initiatives to help address the impacts of COVID-19 on local businesses and the community, and with a longer-term view to strategies and actions that will help to enable and facilitate Griffith's economic development in a post-pandemic world. The immediate-term initiatives, which are designed to assist economic recovery, include:

- Providing local businesses with information on and access to services offering support for planning through adversity - including financial counselling, business continuity management, human resource management, taxation support, mental health support, etc. This includes support available through, for example, the networking and referral services offered by State and Federal Government agencies.
- Supporting local businesses by investigating and promoting local procurement options.
- Supporting local business start-ups and expansions by continuing to work to ensure (and promote) a supportive and enabling regulatory environment.
- Through its role as a local leader, restoring business confidence (and community confidence) by broadcasting positive messages about Griffith's economic recovery and local initiatives that are designed to support the recovery effort.



Photo credit: Visit Griffith

Led by the Economic Development Unit, these initiatives are being delivered by Griffith City Council and its partners in the context of a longer-term strategic framework for economic development promotion and facilitation.

Cultivating Collaborative Partnerships for Effective Strategy Implementation

Evolve Griffith will be implemented by Council and led by its Economic Development Unit. Council will work in partnership with the NSW and Australian Governments, regional development bodies, peak industry bodies, the city's and wider region's education and training providers and other supporting partners across the Western Riverina region.

Griffith's businesses and residents will continue to be engaged at a partnership level to ensure effective communication on the progress of strategy implementation and commitment to realising Council's and the community's economic development agenda.



An aerial photograph of Griffith, Australia, showing a suburban residential area with numerous houses and trees. In the background, there are green fields and distant mountains under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. A large, colorful geometric overlay consisting of overlapping hexagons in shades of blue, purple, and teal is positioned in the top right corner. The text "EVOLVE GRIFFITH" is written in a stylized, outlined font within the purple hexagons of this overlay.

EVOLVE GRIFFITH



1. Introduction

1.1 Strategy Purpose and Objectives

Evolve Griffith is Council's five-year plan to support the vibrancy, diversity and sustainability of the City of Griffith, to 2025 and beyond.

Griffith is located in the heart of the Western Riverina region. With a population of around 27,000, it offers an attractive regional city lifestyle underpinned by strong agricultural heritage and manufacturing prowess, demographic diversity, recreation, arts and cultural heritage assets and the strength and depth of retail and hospitality services.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting cities and regions throughout Australia, the need to understand the local impacts on business and industry and to develop appropriate responses to help promote and support economic development is perhaps more important than ever before.

Beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, Council is committed to supporting sustainable population and employment growth. Retaining and growing Griffith's population will support local service delivery, attract government funding and support stable, or even higher property prices. It will also serve to retain existing businesses and attract new investment, generating more opportunities for employment, creating a multiplier effect of more people, more investment and more jobs.

Informed by a well-developed understanding of the city's (and Western Riverina region's) economic development structure, dynamics and potential, Evolve Griffith presents a plan of action to facilitate and support local economic activity now and into the future.

Economic development is a continuous process. It is typically measured in terms of income and employment but also by improvements in education, skills, health, culture, community wellbeing, a sense of place and the environment. Ultimately, it is about

improving quality of life or, to capture the concept in a single word, it is about 'prosperity'.

For Griffith City Council, which has a role to play in promoting, encouraging and enabling economic activity, supporting economic development requires a strategic, informed and targeted approach. To this end, Evolve Griffith:

- Establishes a detailed understanding of the economic structure and dynamics of the Griffith local government area (LGA) and relevant regional policy settings which influence and inform a framework for prosperity;
- Articulates economic development issues, challenges and opportunities for Griffith City Council to consider in its role as a facilitator and promoter of economic development;
- Identifies collaborative partnerships, where Council can engage with other stakeholders on matters concerning local and regional economic development; and
- Provides Griffith City Council with an informed, actionable and achievable 'roadmap' for economic development to 2025.

Built on partnerships and alliances between Griffith City Council, State and Federal government agencies, regional development bodies, local businesses and the community, Evolve Griffith delivers a clear, actionable and achievable road map for economic development focused on the growth and retention of existing businesses and residents; new industry development; the attraction of visitors; and increased employment.

Designed to affect positive change, the opportunities for action presented in this economic development strategy, when implemented, will help facilitate the resilience, competitiveness and success of local businesses and the capacity of the Griffith community to attract investment, diversify the local economy and provide the foundations for the jobs of the future. Strategic, informed and targeted, the strategy themes and actions have been framed to help realise Council's and the community's economic development objective as articulated in the Council's

Community Strategic Plan Guiding Griffith 2040.

Evolve Griffith supports Council's objective to provide and manage assets, services and facilities which enable economic activity to occur, to support the development of a skilled workforce with opportunities for employment and to encourage the City's economy to grow sustainably into the future.

1.2 Leveraging Collaborative Pathways to Prosperity

In preparing this strategy, Council engaged with a diversity of government, industry and community stakeholders via a series of targeted stakeholder consultations. The consultations were instrumental in helping to establish a vision for the economy of the future and to guide Council's efforts in promoting and facilitating economic development.

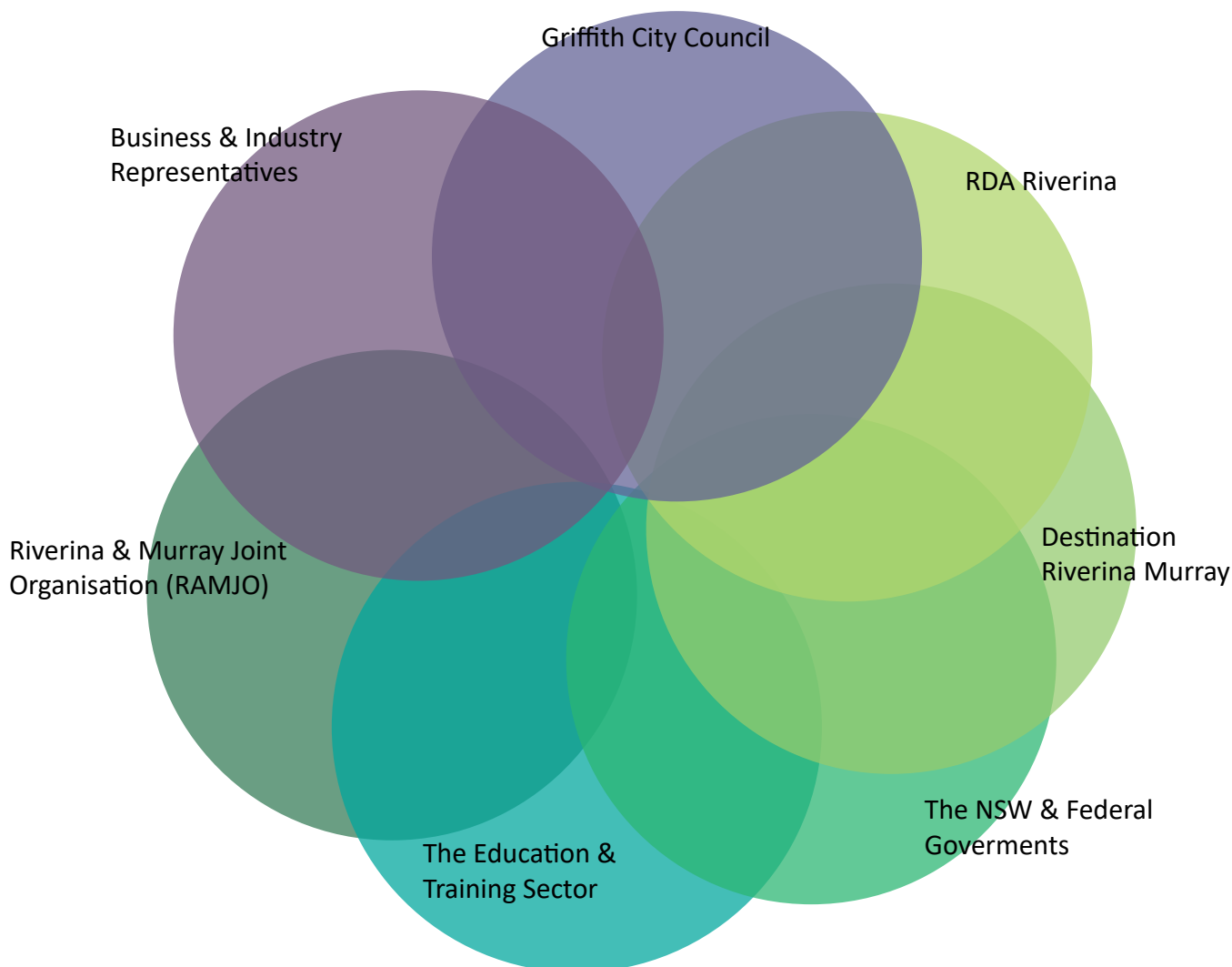
Regional in scope and with a global frame of reference, *Evolve Griffith* articulates and promotes a partnership approach between Griffith City Council

and other stakeholders in government, the non-government sector, the community and industry.

Evolve Griffith acknowledges and embraces the city's and region's broader policy and planning framework and regional development priorities as articulated in key policy and planning documents. It also responds to the many issues, challenges and opportunities raised by the city's residents and business communities, captured through the Guiding Griffith 2040 Community Strategic Planning process.

Griffith City Council recognises and promotes its role in economic development as being one in which it pro-actively and constructively works with the other tiers of government, non-government bodies, industry stakeholders and the community to help promote Griffith and the Western Riverina region as a location of choice for people to live, work and play. The themes and opportunities for action presented in this strategy reflect Council's important role as a promoter, supporter and enabler of economic development.

Griffith's Economic Development Partners





Griffith is located 573km west of Sydney, 463km north of Melbourne and 358km north west of Canberra

- Education infrastructure and workforce skills.

Collectively, these enablers of economic activity help define Griffith's (and the wider Western Riverina region's) economic development potential and its appeal as a place to visit, work, live and invest in. A focus on how Council can effectively influence the enablers of economic development - either as a lead agent of change or in support of others - underpins Evolve Griffith as a visionary, yet practical and outcomes-oriented economic development strategy.

1.3 A Focus on the Enablers of Economic Development

While business and industry drives economic growth and development, State and Federal Government, sponsored regional development agencies and local government authorities directly influence the enabling environment for prosperity. The enablers of economic development refer to the services, infrastructure and support mechanisms required to facilitate positive change. At the local government level, they include:

- Local roads.
- Developable residential, commercial and industrial land.
- The form and function of the Griffith city centre and other settlements.
- Community services and facilities including sporting, cultural and recreational facilities.

At the wider regional level and beyond, the enablers of economic development include those attributes which Council is not directly responsible for, but which it can help influence through its regional economic partnerships including, for example:

- Regional transport and communications infrastructure.
- Power and water.
- Health care and social assistance services.

1.4 Griffith City Council's Economic Development Roles and Functions

Having regard for the enablers of economic development, there are six 'core' areas of activity which underpin Council's role in the implementation of this strategy. These are:

- 1. Research and Information Brokerage** - Griffith City Council has a vital role to play in supporting local business and industry through the organisation, delivery and promotion of economic development. Council will continue to take the initiative in establishing and nurturing effective economic partnerships and enabling industry innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly through networking, facilitation and information sharing on a diversity of matters, effectively working as a local 'solutions broker'.
- 2. Strategic Planning and Place Management** - Griffith City Council will continue to work to promote and deliver a regulatory and land use planning environment that is open, engaging and supportive of local business opportunity. Council will ensure that adequate land and floorspace is available for commercial and industrial development and for other economic activity, through its local regulatory and land use planning regime, as well as working to support existing and emerging industry clusters by

providing signals relevant to the performance and locational requirements of industry. Council will also continue to promote the city’s strong sense of place and the functioning of its centres through master planning, development control, place activation and improvement programs.

3. Investment in Local Infrastructure and Services - Council is committed to nurturing the foundations for prosperity; strategic infrastructure, community services and facilities, services and facilities for visitors, access to employment and places where industry can invest and do business. In its role as a facilitator of business activity, Griffith City Council will continue to plan for and provide those critical infrastructure items that fall under its remit and advocate for those items that fall outside of Council’s direct control.

4. Local Business Support - Local enterprise presents huge potential to take advantage of new investment opportunities and Council understands that economic development requires the support of local businesses to encourage continued investment and employment creation from business and industry already located in Griffith and surrounding areas. Council will continue to liaise with business and industry, representative organisations, peak industry bodies and education and training providers to network ideas and articulate workforce planning priorities that need to be addressed.

5. Tourism Promotion and Investment Attraction - Investment is fundamental to economic development, and access to international, national and regional markets, including visitor markets, is a key determinant of sustainable economic

growth. Council will continue to help facilitate private sector investment by promoting what the City has to offer prospective investors, including potential new residents. Through the delivery of the Griffith Destination Tourism Plan 2021-2024 and in collaboration with Destination Riverina Murray, it will also pro-actively promote Griffith and the Western Riverina region as a key visitor destination. Importantly, Council will continue to attract government investment in the region’s critical strategic infrastructure needs, by identifying priorities and preparing business cases to inform both Council and other government funding support for key projects.

6. Economic Development Advocacy and Partnerships - Griffith City Council will continue to work hard in providing a unifying voice for local communities and for local businesses across all sectors of the economy when lobbying State and Federal Governments on key industry or infrastructure issues. Nurturing and promoting positive collaborative partnerships will form an essential ingredient of Griffith’s economic success.

These six core areas of economic development activity described above are interrelated and the initiatives of Griffith City Council and its partners will often cut across more than one. The strategic themes and opportunities for action presented in this strategy reflect these key roles and functions in the context of identified challenges and opportunities for economic development, and Council’s collaborative partnerships with other stakeholders in addressing positive economic change.

Figure 3. Griffith City Council’s ‘Core’ Economic Development Activities





2. The Immediate Challenge: COVID-19

2.1 The COVID Challenge

According to the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA), the current outlook for the Australian and global economies continues to be driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2, 2020) reported that Australia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell 7.0 per cent in the June quarter 2020, the largest quarterly fall on record. According to the RBA, in line with the economic contraction, total hours worked are expected to decline by around 20 per cent and the unemployment rate is forecast to rise to around 10 per cent in the June quarter.

At the time of writing, the latest available unemployment figures from the Australian Labour Force Survey (December quarter 2020) reflect much of the negative impact that COVID-19 has had on the labour market since March 2020. Nevertheless, as the data is 'smoothed' across the last four quarters, it will only be when the March quarter 2021 estimates are released that the unemployment data will fully reflect the post-March 2020 impact of COVID-19 on local labour markets. It is expected that unemployment rates across Australia's regions and locales, which have been trending upwards, will continue to do so. There is a need therefore, to prepare for a commensurate increase in unemployment in Griffith.

The economic outlook will be shaped by the extent to which activity and the labour market continues to be affected by social distancing and other containment restrictions, which in turn will be determined by what is necessary to manage the health aspects of the current crisis. Other factors that will be important are the responses of households and businesses to changes in the economic environment, and the effectiveness of policy support, including at the local government level.

COVID-19 has negatively affected the Australian economy by disrupting consumer demand and business supply. Consumer sentiment has deteriorated significantly, weakening demand across most industries. Households have scaled back

discretionary spending due to fears relating to rising unemployment and economic uncertainty.

According to IBISWorld (July 2020), while Australia has been relatively successful in containing COVID-19, supply chain disruptions, and ongoing travel and tourism restrictions continue to hinder economic activity. Those industries that are expected to be most adversely affected by the aftermath of COVID-19 include manufacturing, mining, agriculture, some store-based retailing and the accommodation and food services sector (including tourism operators).

Despite the adverse economic impacts, some sectors are expected to outperform during the COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing has pushed many consumers to online channels for shopping, communication, food purchases and working arrangements. This trend has driven a surge in sectors such as online shopping, postal services, and data storage services. Other industries have suffered direct negative effects, but have also seen positive factors, such as rising demand for repairs and maintenance services replacing new purchases.

It is plausible that the current economic disruption will have some long-lasting effects, not only because it will take some time to restore workforces and re-establish businesses but also because it could also affect mindsets and the behaviours of consumers and businesses. This could result in structural change in the economy. Changes in the financial position of households and businesses could also have long-lasting effects.

2.2 An Economic Recovery Plan

In delivering this strategy, Griffith City Council is focused first and foremost on immediate-term initiatives to help address the impacts of COVID-19 on local businesses and the community, and with a longer-term view to strategies and actions that will help to enable and facilitate Griffith's economic development in a post-pandemic world. This includes strategies to address some of Griffith's most pertinent challenges associated with the impacts of the Murray Darling Basin Plan and the impacts on the availability of irrigation water and Griffith's housing and workforce challenges.

In the immediate-term, some initiatives, which are designed to assist economic recovery, include:

- Providing local businesses with information on and access to services offering support for planning through adversity - including financial counselling, business continuity management, human resource management, taxation support, mental health support, etc. This includes support available through, for example, the networking and referral services offered by State and Federal Government agencies.
- Supporting local businesses by investigating and promoting local procurement options.
- Supporting local business start-ups and expansions by continuing to work to ensure (and promote) a supportive and enabling regulatory environment.
- Through its role as a local leader, restoring business confidence (and community confidence) by broadcasting positive messages about Griffith's economic recovery and local initiatives that are designed to support the recovery effort.

These initiatives are being delivered by Council and its partners in the context of a longer-term strategic framework for economic development promotion and facilitation. As part of its efforts to assist local business and industry through the post-pandemic recovery effort, Griffith City Council will continue to look at ways to leverage the NSW Government's COVID-19 Recovery Plan.



Informing a Framework for Prosperity

Economic Overview

3. Informing a Framework for Prosperity

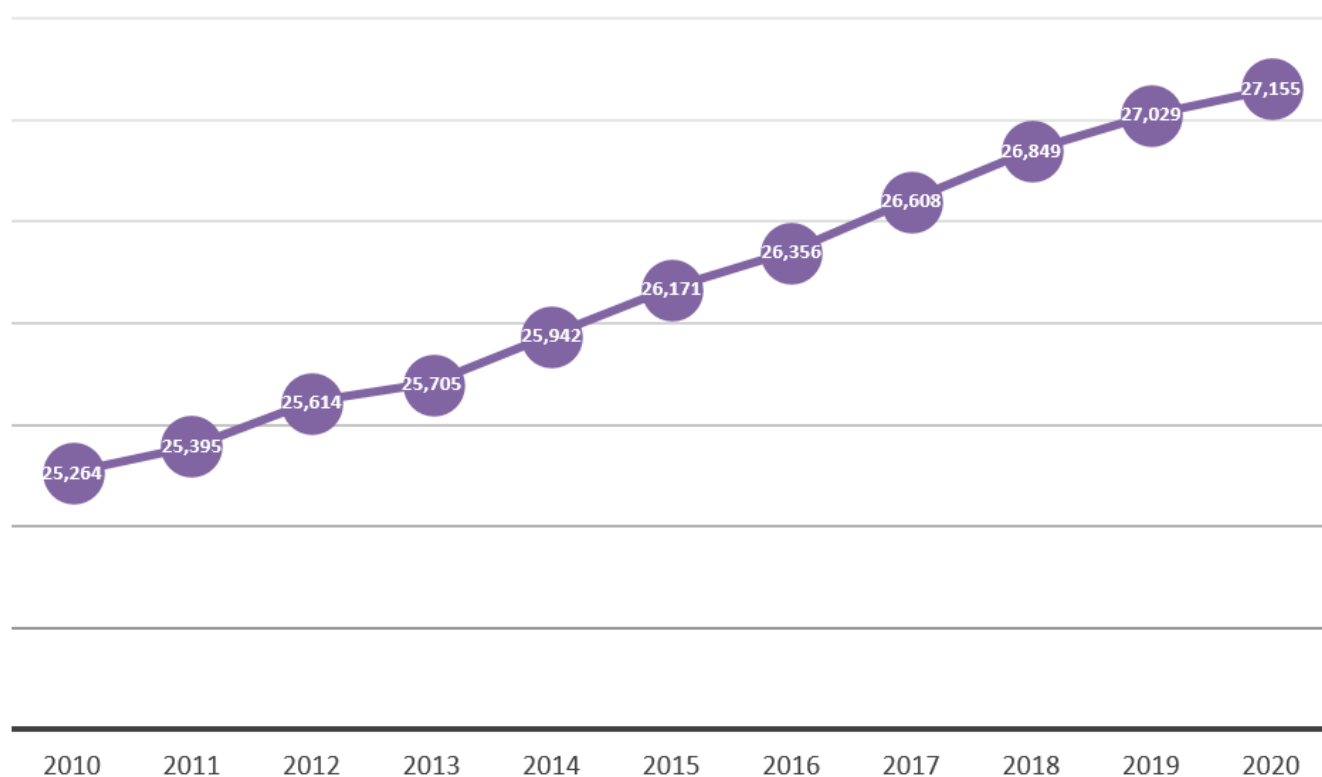
3.1 Population

Griffith is a progressive city offering excellent cultural and recreational facilities, vibrant retail, food and wine experiences, essential services and infrastructure. Griffith has a population of 27,155 and services a regional catchment of around 55,000 people. With a gross regional product (GRP) of \$1.87 billion, Griffith is home to 3,200 businesses and around 14,200 jobs (<https://economy.id.com.au/griffith>).

Data from the National Skills Commission (December 2020) reveals that Griffith City has an unemployment rate of just 3.9% compared to the regional NSW average of 5.9% and the NSW average of 6.1%.¹

The median age of the Griffith LGA's population is 37 compared to 38 for both NSW and Australia. Griffith has an ethnically-diverse population and according to the last Census (2016), the three largest ancestries in Griffith City were Australian, English and Italian.

Figure 4. Population, Griffith City, 2010 - 2020



Source: http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=ABS_ERP_LGA2020 with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates

Griffith's population has increased steadily over the past decade at just under 1% per annum. By comparison, the population of NSW increased on average by 1.3% per annum over the same ten-year period. Griffith's population is forecast to continue to grow at its current rate, to approximately 30,500 by 2036.

¹ The COVID-19 pandemic began to have a significant impact on the Australian labour market from mid-March 2020, when non-essential services were shut down and trading restrictions were implemented. The December quarter 2020 Small Area Labour Markets (SALM) estimates reflect much of the negative impact that COVID-19 has had on the labour market since March 2020. Nevertheless, as the data is 'smoothed' across the four quarters, it will only be when the March quarter 2021 estimates are released that the smoothed series unemployment data will fully reflect the post-March 2020 labour market (i.e. the impact of COVID-19 on small area labour markets).

3.2 Labour Force and Skills Profile

Education Qualifications

According to the 2016 ABS Census of Population and Housing, one-fifth (21%) of people aged 15 years and over in the Griffith local government area (LGA) had a vocational educational qualification, which was lower than that for Regional NSW (24%) and higher than that for the State as a whole (18%).

More people aged 15 years and over in Griffith reported 'no qualification' (48%) compared to Regional NSW (42%) and NSW (39%).

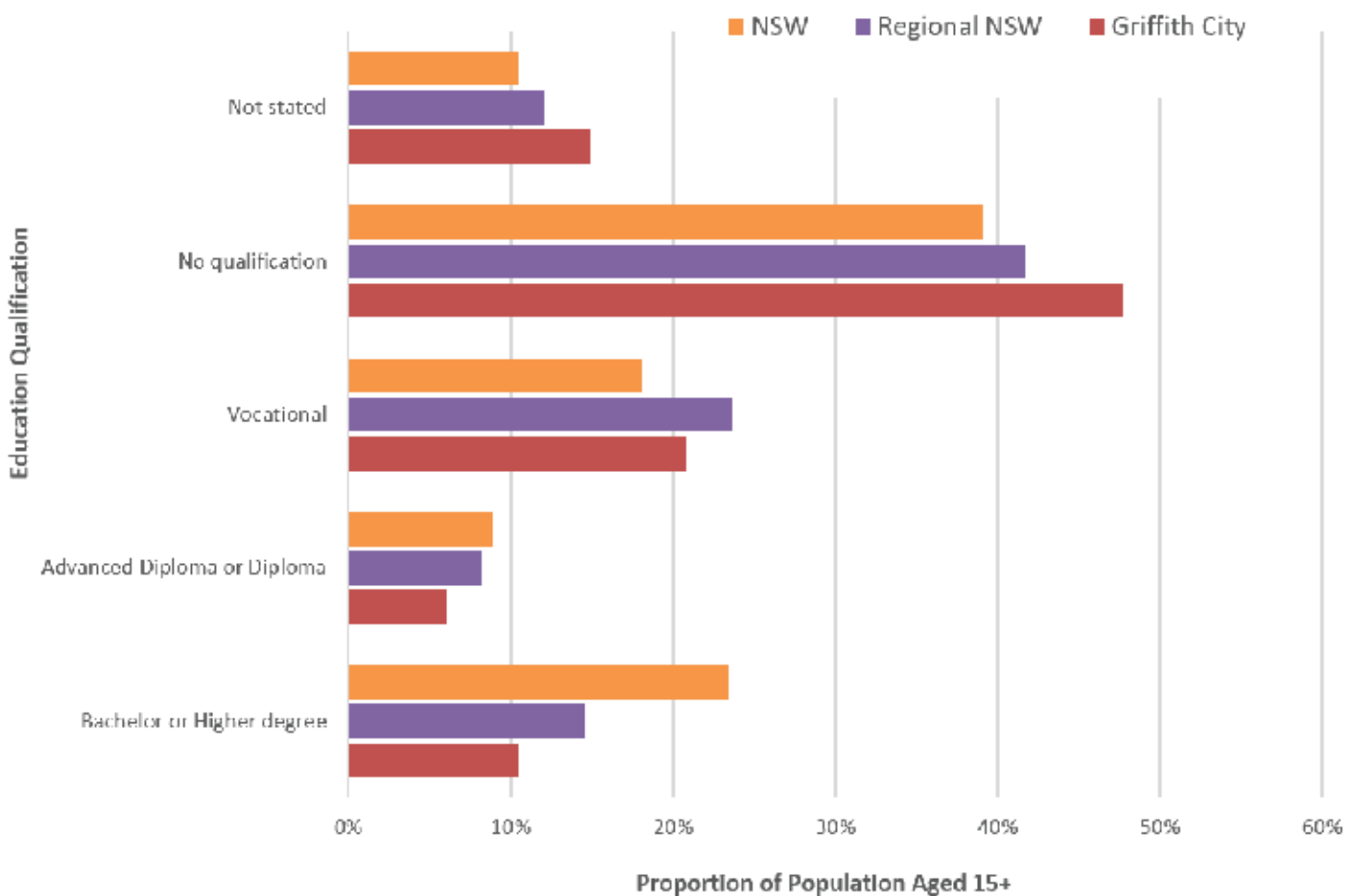
Only 11% of Griffith City's population aged 15 years and over had a Bachelor's Degree or higher compared to 15% across Regional NSW and 23% for the State as a whole.

Occupational Profile

According to the latest Census data, Griffith City has a proportionally higher 'blue collar' working population than the Regional NSW and NSW average, with more labourers than any other occupation. Griffith's comparatively higher number of sales workers reflects the city's role as a regional service centre and the importance of retail as a local employer.

Griffith also has a high proportion of working residents who are managers (which includes farmers), who account for 15% of the LGA's working population compared to 13% for Regional NSW and 13.5% for the State as a whole. A much lower share of Griffith's working residents are 'professionals', suggesting there is an opportunity to explore and address this local skills gap.

Figure 5. Education Qualifications, Griffith City, Regional NSW and NSW, 2016



Source: economy.id with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates

Figure 6. Occupational Profile, Griffith City, Regional NSW and NSW, 2016



Source: economy.id with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates

3.3 Industry and Employment Profile

Local Jobs Profile

There are 14,198 jobs located in the Griffith LGA. Manufacturing accounts for the largest share of local jobs (2,477 jobs or 17% of the total) followed by Health Care and Social Assistance, Agriculture, Retail Trade and Construction.

Griffith's health care and social assistance sector accounts for 13.5% of local jobs. The largest manufacturing sub-sectors include food and beverage product manufacturing. Other local manufacturing industries include metal product manufacturing activities and machinery and equipment manufacturing.

The significance of Griffith's manufacturing industry as a provider of local jobs is clearly illustrated in the comparative representation of employment by industry against the NSW average. Manufacturing accounts for 17% of jobs in the Griffith LGA compared to a State-wide average of 7%.

The role of Griffith's agricultural sector as a local employer is also evident in the data, with the industry accounting for 12% of local jobs compared to the NSW average of just 2%.

*Data from economic.id sourced on 5 May 2021 and is subject to change dependant on adjustments to State Accounts

Figure 7. Employment by Industry (Jobs by Location), Griffith City, 2019/20

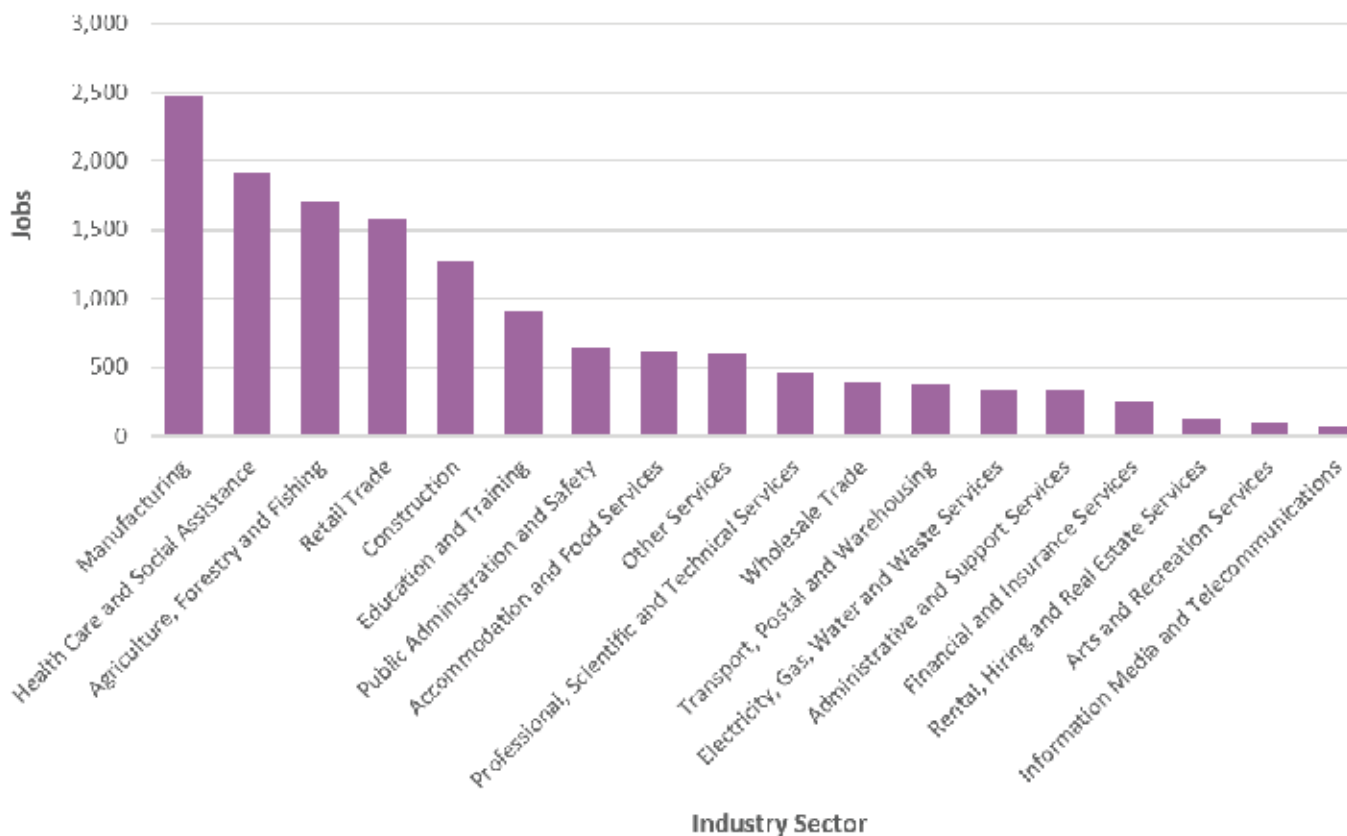
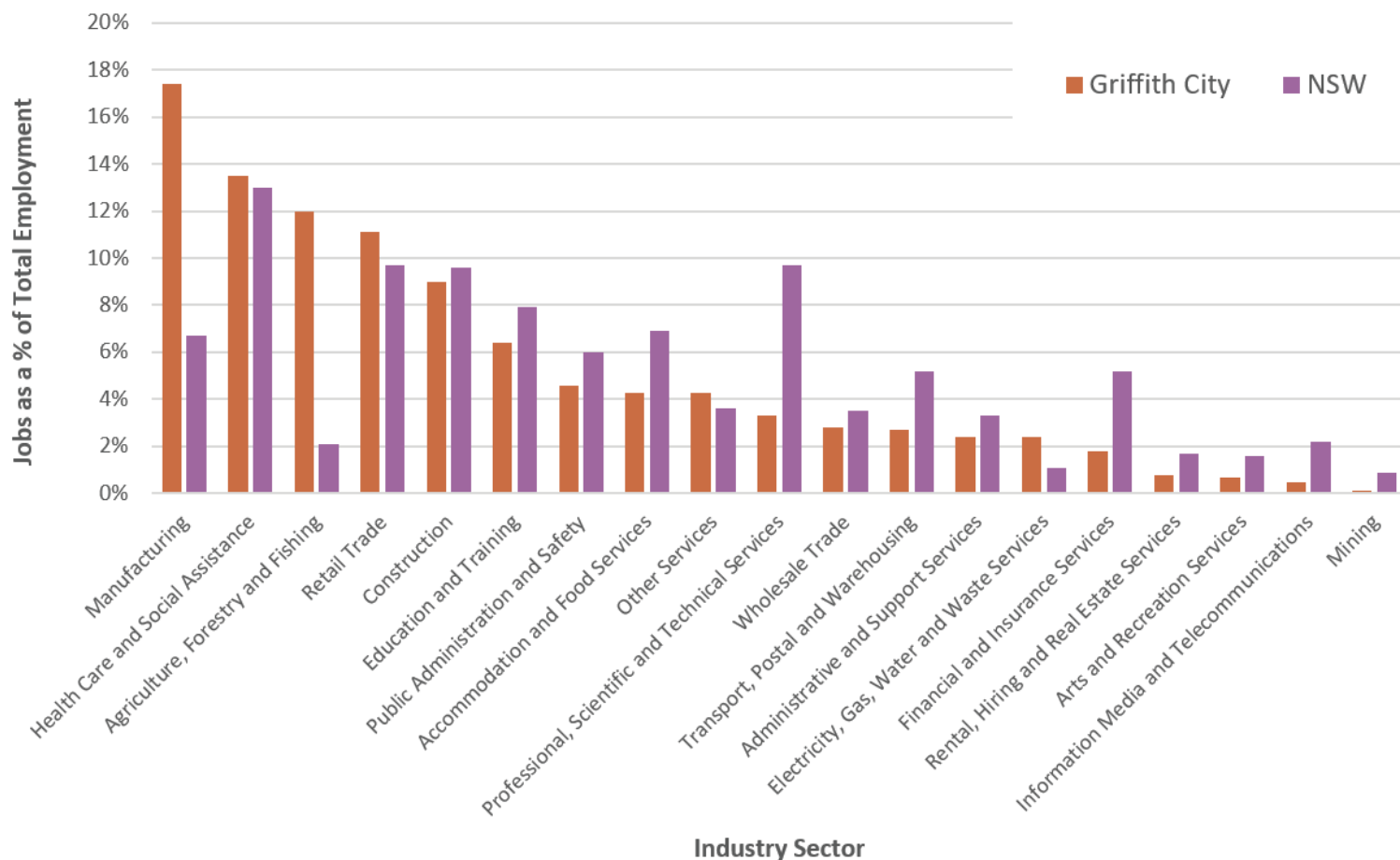


Figure 8. Employment by Industry (%), Griffith City and NSW, 2019/20



Source: economy.id with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates

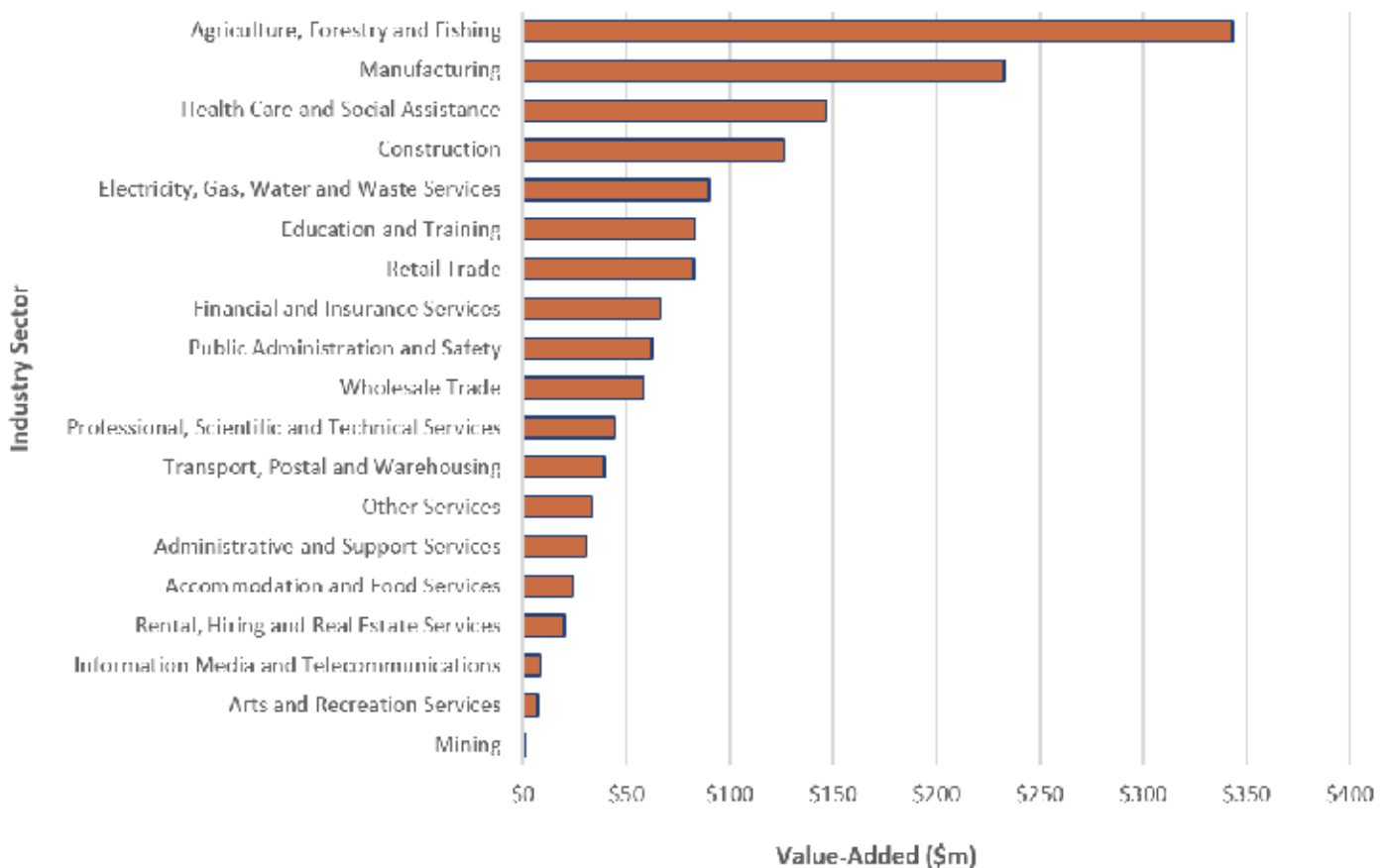
Industry Value

Value-added (or industry's contribution to Gross Regional Product) is an indicator of business productivity. It is the value of goods and services produced by an industry less the cost of production inputs. In value terms, Griffith's economy is driven by activity in the manufacturing, agriculture, construction and health care and social assistance sectors.

Agriculture is the largest contributor to industry value-added in Griffith, accounting for \$343 million or almost one-quarter (23%) of the total. Griffith's agricultural industry activities include livestock production (beef, sheep and poultry), table and wine grapes, citrus fruits and cereal crops including wheat, rice and other crops.

As well as being the largest provider of jobs locally, Griffith's manufacturing sector accounts for 16% (\$233 million) of local industry value-added. Other major contributors to local economic output include the health care and social assistance sector, which contributes \$146 million in industry value-added or 10% of the total, followed by the construction industry.

Figure 9. Value-Added by Industry (\$m), Griffith City, 2019/20



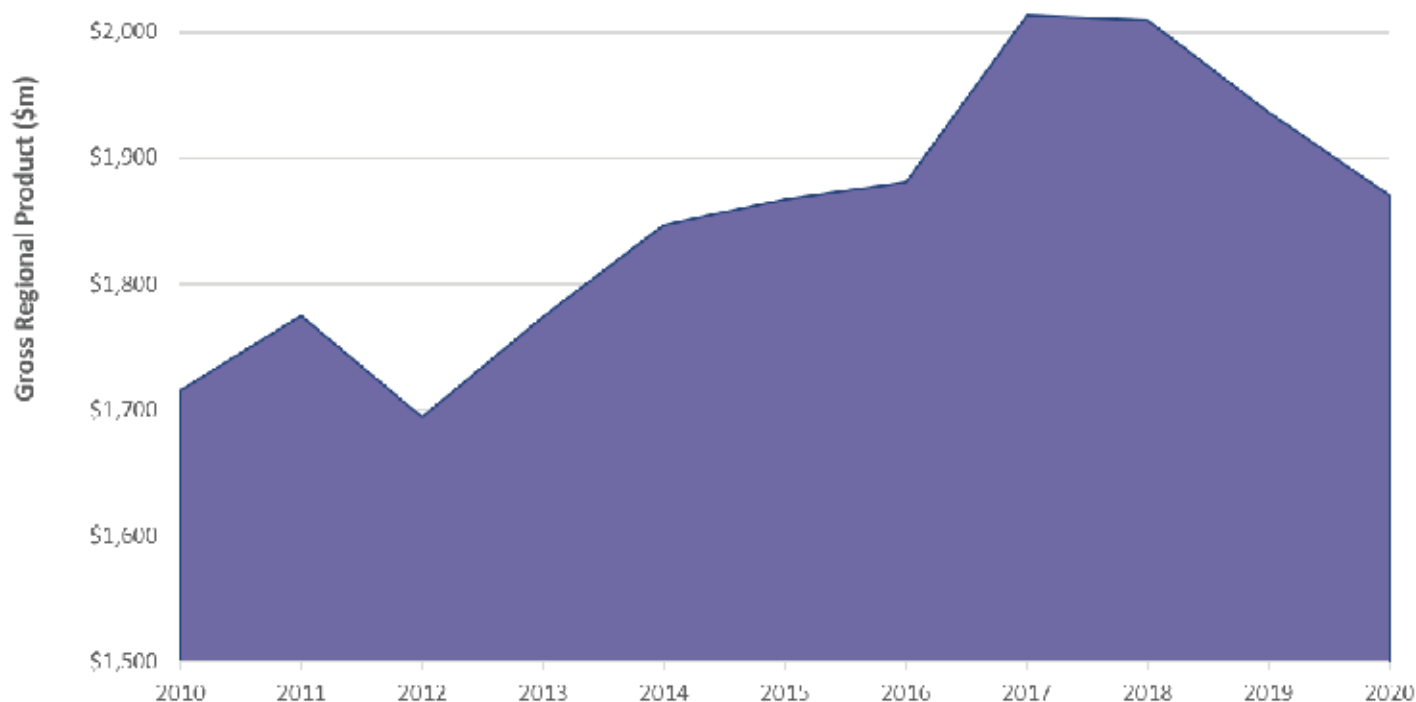
Source: economy.id with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates

Gross Regional Product (GRP) is a measure of size or net wealth generated by the local economy. It refers to the total money value of all goods and services produced in the local economy over a one-year period.

Griffith City's GRP was \$1.87 billion in the year ending June 2020, down 3.4% on the previous year. As illustrated below, over the ten-year period to 2020, Griffith's GRP has fluctuated considerably, hitting a low point in 2012 and then rising steadily until 2017.

Since 2017, Griffith's GRP has been in decline, from approximately \$2 billion in 2017 to \$1.87 billion in 2020, a decline of \$143 million over three years.

Figure 10. Gross Regional Product (\$m), Griffith City, 2010 - 2020



Source: economy.id and NIEIR with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates

Griffith's Employment Capacity

One goal of promoting and facilitating local economic development is to maximise employment opportunities locally, leading to a more sustainable community. 'Employment capacity' is a simple way of looking at whether the Griffith economy could theoretically provide jobs for all its residents if they were to choose to work locally.

Employment capacity refers to the number of local jobs in an industry, divided by the number of local residents employed (anywhere) in that industry. A value over 1.0 means there are more jobs available than residents employed in that industry. A number less than 1.0 means there are more residents employed than jobs available in that sector.

This is a theoretical exercise as, even if there are enough jobs provided locally, there will always be some people who choose to commute out of the Griffith LGA to work elsewhere.

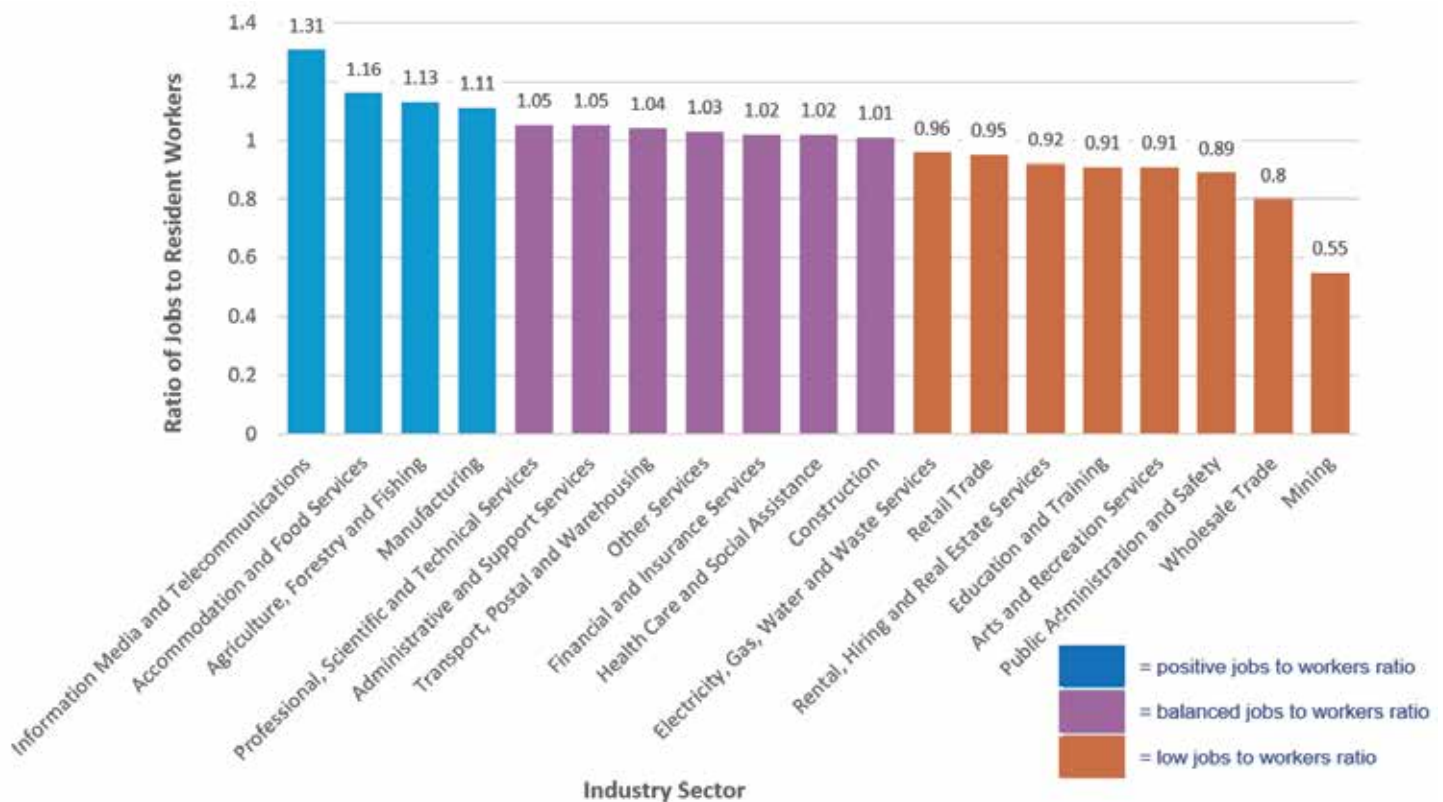
As illustrated below, the jobs to resident workers ratio for Griffith City in 2019/20 was 1.02, meaning that there were more jobs than resident workers. Information, Media and Telecommunications had the highest ratio (1.31), while the lowest ratio was found in Mining (0.55).

Retail Trade, one of Griffith's largest employers, has fewer available jobs than residents who work in that industry. On the contrary, Accommodation and Food Services has more local jobs than resident workers.

The existence of more local jobs than resident workers in some 'professional services' sectors suggests there may be an opportunity to attract more skilled workers to live and work in Griffith.

*Data from economic.id sourced on 5 May 2021 and is subject to change dependant on adjustments to State Accounts.

Figure 11. Employment Capacity by Industry, Griffith City, 2019/20



Source: economy.id with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates

Griffith's Tourism Profile

Up until March 2020, Australia's tourism sector had been growing strongly, and according to IBISWorld (March 2021), the tourism industry is projected to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and expand over the next five years.

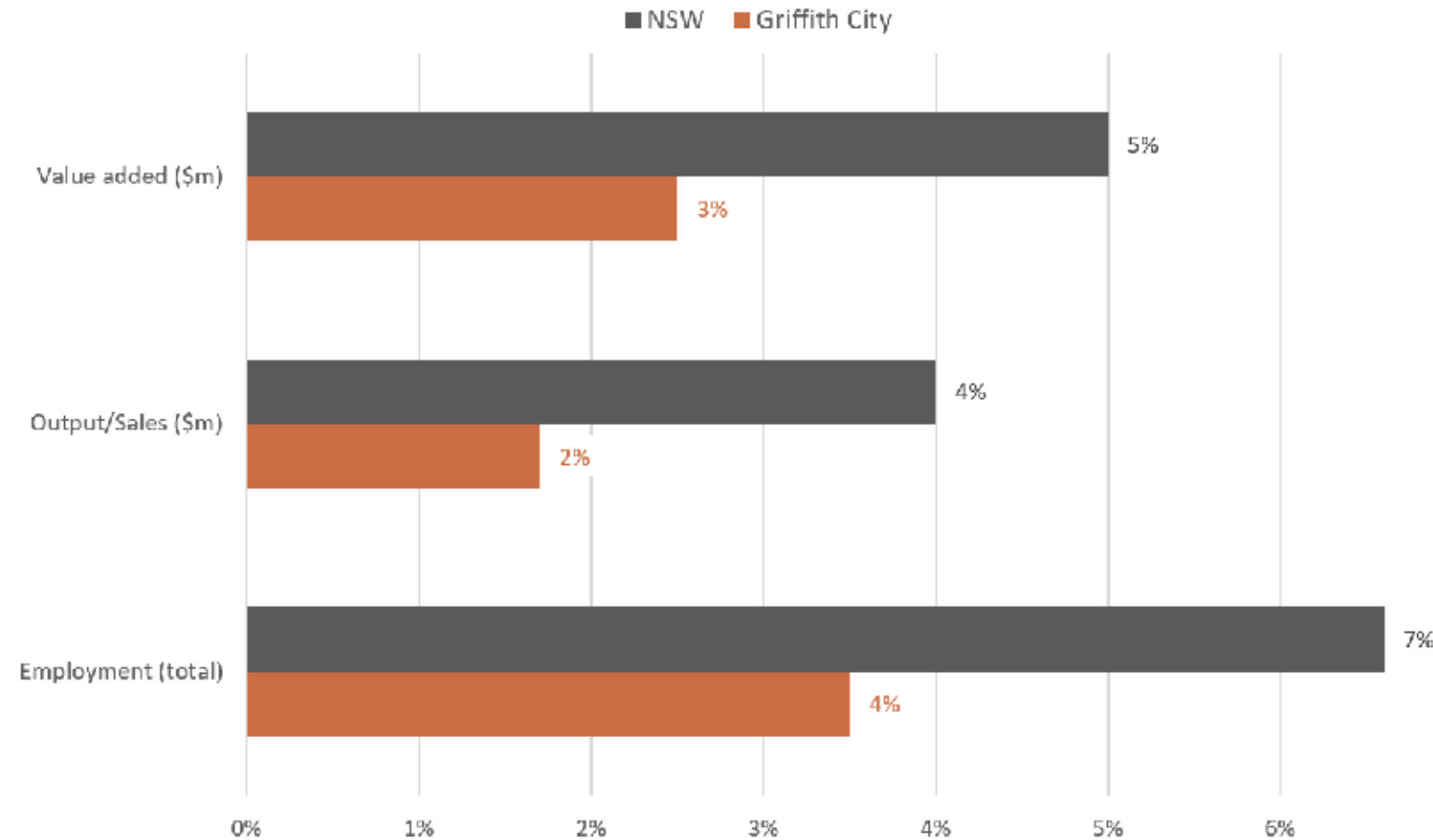
However, several factors are likely to slow the industry's recovery in the short term, including ongoing fears surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federal Government's likely cautious approach to the easing of Australia's international border controls, and the downturn of the global economy. As a result, domestic households and businesses are likely to remain strong drivers of industry performance.

Nevertheless, the industry should start to see a more pronounced recovery once inbound travel restrictions ease. If the Australian Government can reach safe travel zone agreements (as it has with New Zealand) with other countries that have successfully contained the virus, then more inbound travel could be expected by late 2021. If inbound travel restrictions do continue to ease, the tourism industry should start to see a more pronounced recovery.

According to Destination NSW, the tourism and events sector is vital to the State's economy, contributing billions in revenue and providing for approximately one in every 15 jobs in NSW.

The value of tourism and hospitality across three key indicators for Griffith compared to the State average - value-added, output and employment - is illustrated below. The tourism and hospitality sector accounts for only 4% of total employment in Griffith City compared to 7% across NSW. Tourism employment (and the industry's contribution to local economic output) has also been falling. The local tourism and hospitality sector also falls short compared to the NSW average in its contribution to output and industry value-added. This suggests there is scope to enhance the contribution of the visitor economy to economic development in Griffith.

Figure 12. The Contribution of Tourism and Hospitality to Employment, Output and Value Added, Griffith City and NSW, 2019/20



Source: economy.id and NIEIR with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates

3.4 Industry Growth and Share

Another means of informing an assessment of how the local economy is evolving and how it could develop, involves an assessment of industry trends and prospects.

Figure 12 presents an employment growth-share matrix for selected industries in the Griffith LGA. It shows how each local industry performs relative to NSW as a whole with respect to its relative specialisation, as indicated by its location quotient (LQ) , its rate of average annual growth and its size as measured by the number of jobs in that industry sector.

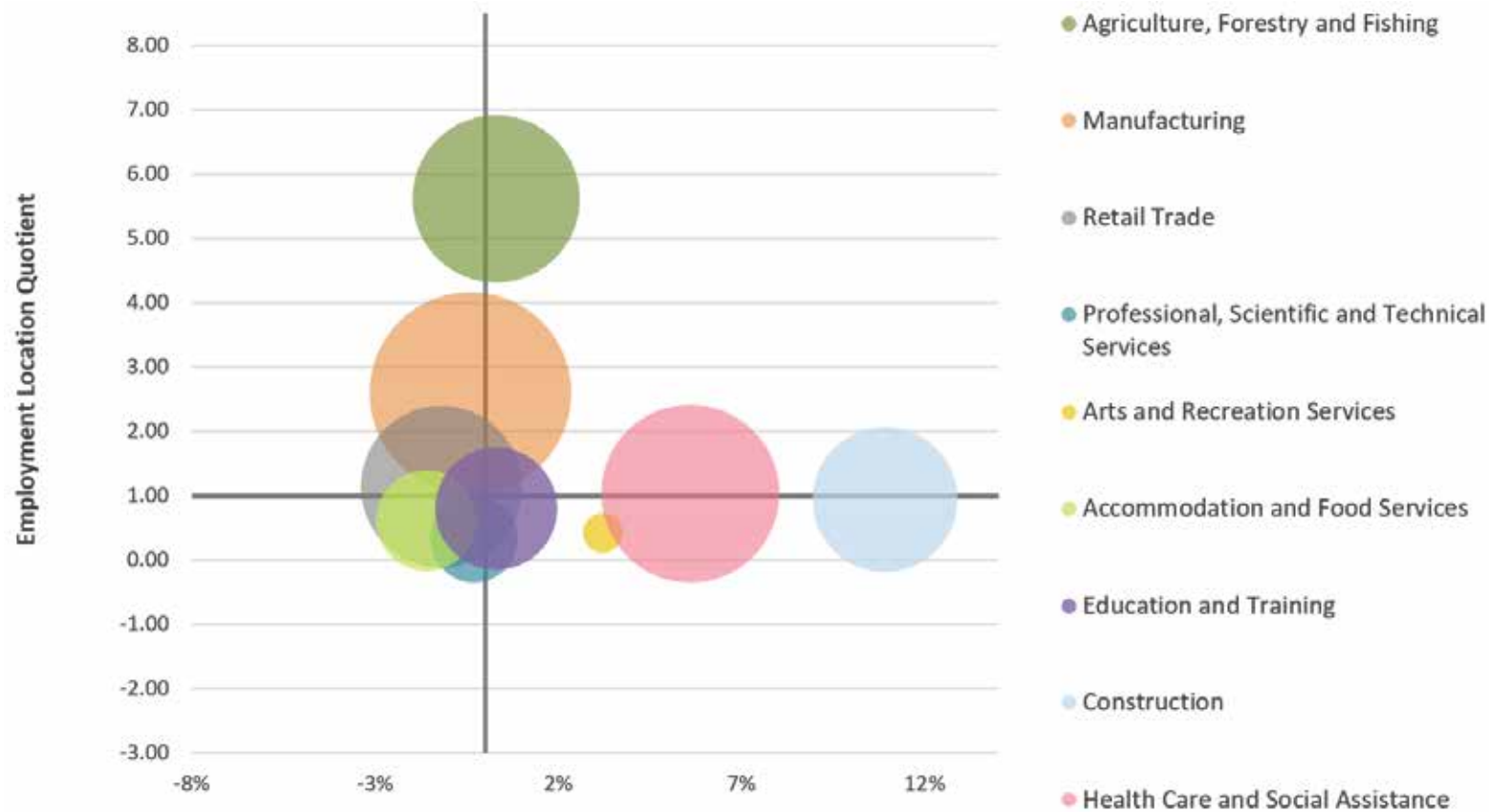
Stages in the growth-share matrix are as follows:

- **Expanding:** If in the top right quadrant (high average annual growth and higher than average concentration), this implies a strong, adaptive industry sector, which is good news for local economic development.
- **Emerging:** If in the lower right quadrant (high average annual growth / below average concentration), this is also good news, implying an emerging, growing industry that may need assistance to mature.
- **Transforming:** If in the upper left quadrant (lower than average annual growth and above average concentration), this is not good news, implying the industry is at risk (overall) and needing to increase innovation and productivity to compete with other regions.

² A location quotient (LQ) shows the percentage of local employment in a particular industry divided by the percentage of the NSW average that this industry makes up. Where the LQ=1, that industry is exactly as prevalent as in NSW. A location quotient greater than 1.2 indicates a significant specialisation of the industry in the local area – possibly a key economic strength. Anything over 2 is a major specialisation.

- **Seed or Transitioning:** If in the lower left quadrant (lower than average growth/lower than average concentration), this could imply that the industry is neither developed nor growing, or it could also mean that it is a 'seed' industry with potential for growth.

Figure 13. Industry Employment Growth-Share (Selected Industries), Griffith to NSW, 2014/15 to 2019/20



Average Annual Employment Growth Rate, Griffith City, 2014/15 to 2019/20

Source: economy.id and NIEIR with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates

Both manufacturing and agriculture, Griffith's largest employers, are in a state of transformation. Retail trade too, which has been affected by evolving consumer spending patterns (not to mention the more recent impacts of COVID-19) is in a state of transformation.

Griffith's high-growth sectors (in employment terms) include health and construction as well as arts and recreation services (though from a very small base).

Griffith's emerging industries include education and training, health care and social assistance, along with recreation, arts and the creative industries.

The professional services, as well as the accommodation and food services sector (perhaps the best proxy for the local tourism industry) could be considered seed industries with potential for growth.

3.5 Regional Competitiveness Effect by Industry

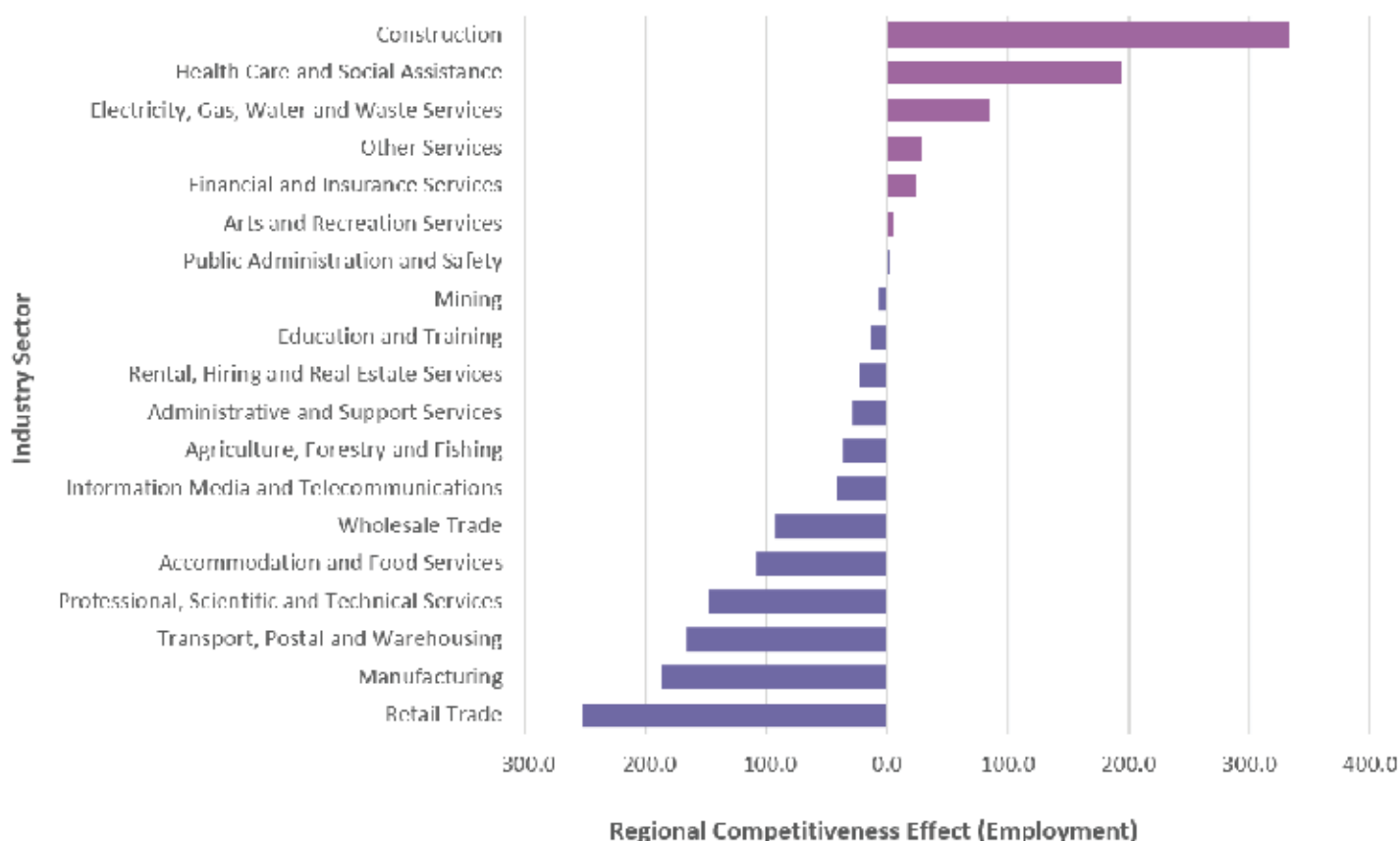
Shift-share analysis provides a useful way of interpreting changes in economic variables between different time periods. It is a way of breaking the growth or decline in an industry into three components: national/ state economic performance; broader industry performance; and regional (local) competitiveness.

The regional competitive effect for an industry generally indicates how the local industry has performed against benchmark trends.

As illustrated in Figure 13, an industry with a positive regional competitive effect (such as Griffith's construction sector) suggests local characteristics support above-trend employment growth. A negative effect (e.g. for retail trade) suggests local characteristics have inhibited growth.

In the figure below, the change in employment by industry shows the net change attributed to local / regional factors.

Figure 14. Regional Competitiveness Effect by Industry, Griffith City, 2014/15 - 2019/20



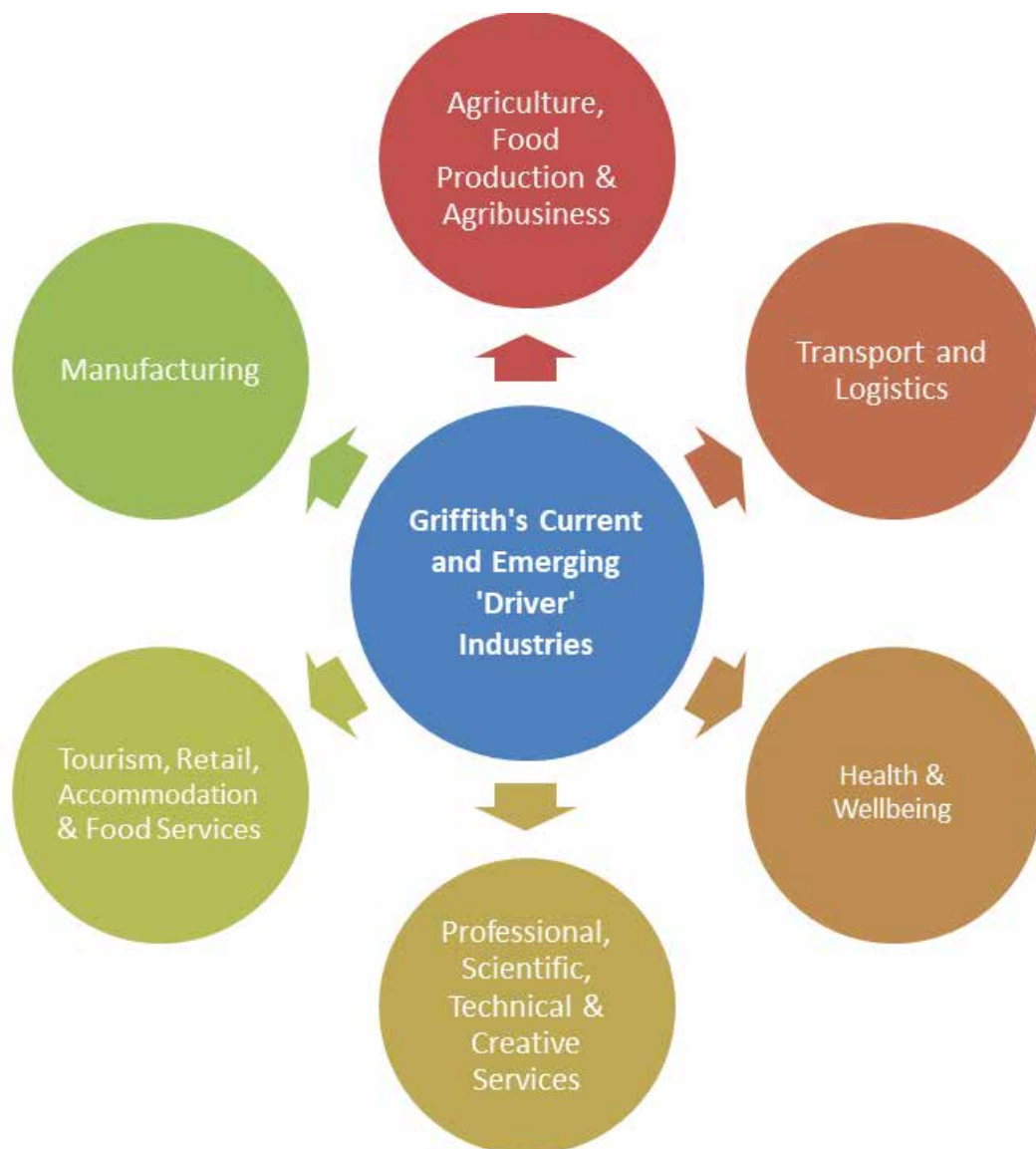
Source: economy.id and NIEIR with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates

In Griffith, the strongest regional competitiveness effect between 2014/15 and 2019/20 (in employment terms) was experienced in the agricultural sector followed by health care and social assistance, the utilities sector and the other services sector. Financial and insurance services and arts and recreation services are also strong. These activities could be further developed, building on Griffith's lifestyle attributes to attract, for example, government departments and the arts / cultural and creative services. In the same period, the weakest regional competitive effect was experienced in Griffith's retail trade sector, its manufacturing industry and the transport, postal and warehousing sector and wholesale trade sectors suggesting these industries are in a period of transition.

3.6 Griffith's 'Focal' Industries

Economic development is about capitalising on comparative and competitive advantage. Griffith's future will be underpinned by innovation and value-creation in the area's traditional economic mainstays of manufacturing and agriculture; related opportunities in the transport and logistics sector; new investments in industries such as health care, research and education; tourism and related industries including sport and recreation, retail and the accommodation and food services sector; and opportunities to attract and grow knowledge-intensive activity in the professional services sectors.

Figure 15. Griffith's Economic Drivers



While business and industry will continue to drive local prosperity, Griffith City Council recognises that it has a vital role to play in the leadership, organisation, delivery and promotion of local economic development. Guided by this economic development strategy, Council is committed to creating the conditions for more effective economic partnerships and enabling innovation and entrepreneurship.



A Roadmap to Prosperity

Capitalising on strengths and opportunities
Overcoming challenges



4.1 The Economic Development Vision and Charter

The economic development strategy themes and actions presented herein reflect stakeholder views regarding Griffith's key attributes, issues, challenges and opportunities for growth, which combined, inform the vision for economic development.

The economic development vision is supported by Griffith City Council's economic development charter. This articulates Council's commitment to promoting, facilitating and co-ordinating local economic development activities.

Economic Development Vision for the City of Griffith
Building on its strategic location, its industry strengths and capabilities and its role as the service centre to the Western Riverina, by 2040, Griffith will be widely known for its vibrant and connected communities and as a location of choice in which to live, work, visit and invest.

Griffith City Council's Economic Development Charter
Griffith City Council supports economic development through strategic planning, information-sharing, advocacy, infrastructure provision and service delivery, to help encourage businesses to establish and grow, and to cultivate Griffith's appeal as a place to live, learn and prosper.

Guided by its economic development charter and the action plan presented in this strategy, Griffith City Council continuously strives to provide the enabling environment to help facilitate the competitiveness and success of businesses across all sectors of the local economy.

Through its role as an information-broker, promoter, facilitator and coordinator of activities to support economic development, Griffith City Council:

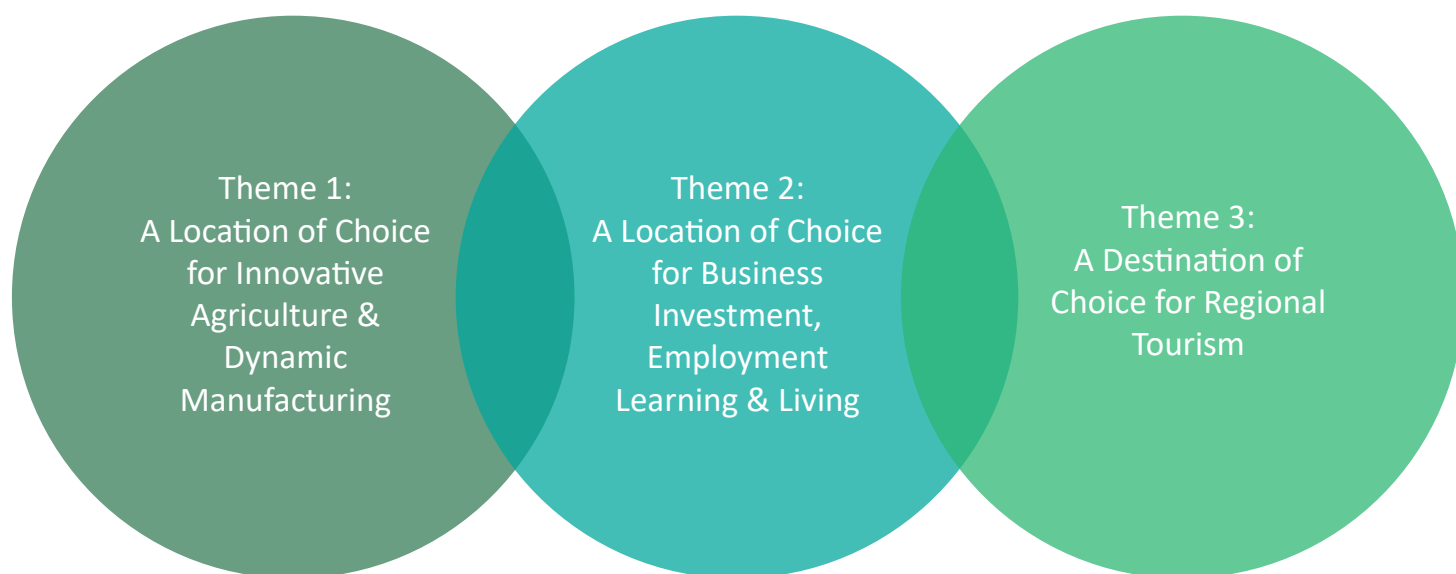
- Prioritises opportunities that build on Griffith's attributes, capabilities and opportunities in farming and food production, manufacturing, transport and logistics, health & wellbeing, agribusiness and other service industries.
- Prioritises initiatives that support investment in 'knowledge-based' economic activities including research, education, and the professional, scientific, technical and creative services.
- Engages with local home-based, micro and small-to-medium businesses to address shared challenges and opportunities for capacity-building, innovation and investment.
- Undertakes a partnership approach to tourism promotion and development, working in collaboration with tourism agencies and the industry to enhance branding, marketing, product development, visitor servicing and support infrastructure.
- Plans, prioritises and advocates for strategic infrastructure which enables Griffith's businesses and the community to prosper.

4.2 Evolve Griffith: Economic Development Strategy Themes

The preceding sections of this strategy articulate Griffith's economic development strengths and attributes as well as key challenges and opportunities for Council and its partners in government, the non-government sector, industry and the community to address collaboratively, to help facilitate change towards a prosperous future. The opportunities for action presented herein, are informed by the findings of the research, targeted consultation and analysis together with the vision for prosperity and Griffith City Council's economic development charter.

Prioritising where Griffith City Council's resources can best be directed for the purpose of facilitating and promoting economic development is a key consideration of Evolve Griffith, which contains three themes as illustrated below.

Figure 16. Evolve Griffith: Economic Development Strategy Themes



Opportunities for action have been identified and categorised under the three strategic themes. These are opportunities that Council and its partners can focus on to help activate and grow the local economy. Each theme includes:

- **Strategic Objective** – this is a statement setting out what the target outcome is for that theme.
- **Current Strengths & Future Opportunities** – a set of reasons and a logical basis for opportunities identified.
- **Opportunities for Action** – these are the actions to be pursued in order to realise the stated objective.
- **Priority Score** – This is a combined benefit and capacity score out of 5.

Some opportunities for action are focused on catalyst project planning and development initiatives which require action combined with a well-planned course of project implementation for the desired outcomes to be realised. Others are focused on strategic program implementation. These are initiatives that can be addressed as part of Griffith City Council's day-to-day economic development planning and facilitation functions in a strategic and informed manner. In a number of cases, these actions seek to build on or continue initiatives already in place.

The majority of the opportunities for action will be 'Council-led' in that they involve specific tasks for Council and an allocation of human, physical and financial resources. Others refer to 'Council-supported' activities and these are advocacy or support initiatives where the implementation of the actions is to be led by agencies other than Council.

Each strategy theme is addressed in turn as follows.



THEME ONE

A Location of Choice for
Innovative Agriculture and
Dynamic Manufacturing

5.1 Theme 1: A Location of Choice for Innovative Agriculture and Dynamic Manufacturing

Strategic Objective

Promote Griffith's and the Western Riverina's sustainable economic development through initiatives that support and promote manufacturing and agriculture as the city's economic foundations and the pillars of future prosperity.

5.2 Current Strengths & Future Opportunities

A Strong Manufacturing Industry Base

- Griffith has a competitive advantage in manufacturing (dominated by food and beverage product manufacturing), which is the city's largest provider of jobs and contributor to economic output. Employing almost 2,500 people and contributing \$233 million or 16% of the City's total industry value-added. Manufacturing is intrinsically linked to Griffith's (and the Western Riverina's) agricultural industry, and a key feature of the region is the scale of its operations and the intensity of investment in agribusiness and the food and beverage product manufacturing sectors.
- The significance of Griffith's manufacturing industry as a provider of local jobs is clearly illustrated in the comparative representation of employment by industry against the NSW average. Manufacturing accounts for 17% of jobs in the Griffith LGA compared to a State-wide average of 7%.
- Wine production, ranging from boutique wineries to some of the largest in the world, also plays a big part in Griffith's economic development.
- Employment in Griffith's food and beverage product manufacturing sector has increased over the past five years.
- Griffith is a leader in metal product manufacturing and machinery and equipment manufacturing, which makes a significant contribution to local economic activity and employment.
- Poultry production is a growth industry in Griffith, with the local manufacture of chicken sheds serving the industry's rapid expansion.

A Rich Agricultural Region

- Griffith's manufacturing capabilities are intrinsically linked to its profile as one of Australia's most productive and diverse agricultural regions. Agriculture is Griffith's traditional economic mainstay and a principal driver of local economic activity.
- Griffith's agricultural industry activities include livestock production (beef, sheep and poultry), table and wine grapes, citrus fruits and cereal crops including wheat, rice and other crops.
- More recently, local producers have adopted more sustainable farming practices and further diversified into high value, long yield crops such as nuts, cotton, olives and vegetables. Aquaculture is also a growing industry in the Griffith area.
- Griffith has strong food product supply chains connecting it to the wider Western Riverina region.
- Supporting the area's agricultural industry, Griffith is home to a wealth of professional service providers in agribusiness, agricultural engineering, finance and insurance and other agricultural industry support services.
- Agriculture also presents opportunities for agri-tourism in Griffith, by tapping into the growing demand for food and wine and for authentic rural and regional experiences as part of the overall visitor experience.

Growing the Horticultural Sector

- The horticultural sector is a rapidly-growing industry and is Australia's third-largest agricultural sector after livestock and broad acre farming. Griffith's long-standing agricultural capabilities provides good scope for greater diversification of horticultural production, particularly in high-value crops and packaged produce targeting export markets.
- Fundamental to the success of the region's agricultural sector is the availability of irrigation water. The effects of the drought, (one of the most severe droughts in NSW on record) have contributed to a decline in agricultural industry output over the past five years or more.
- In response to changing horticultural practices, there is an opportunity for Griffith to pro-actively attract and support the growth of controlled environment horticulture.

- Agriculture is transitioning towards the production of high-value commodities using new technologies, underpinned by research and development into new ways of producing. This enables farmers to be more efficient, less wasteful, more productive and more profitable.
- Griffith's agricultural capabilities make it well-placed to develop an 'ag-tech eco-system' which invests in R&D, new technologies and new start-ups to grow value in the region's agricultural economy.
- Investment in new agricultural technologies and ways of producing also requires a commensurate investment in skills and workforce planning to meet changing industry needs.

Rail Freight Interchange Opportunities

Griffith's industry pillars of manufacturing and agriculture are supported in their development by quality transport connections. Two major highways, The Kidman and Burley Griffin Way, connect the region to Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra and Adelaide, providing B-Doubles and road trains with access to major markets, distribution and warehousing.

The region's transport and logistics sector is on the cusp of realising significant economic opportunity and the planned development of the Riverina Intermodal Freight & Logistics Hub will help improve accessibility to domestic markets as well as increase freight options for exports and imports.

The location of the current rail freight interchange in the middle of the city presents both challenges and opportunities. Presently, freight has to be sent into the city before it is transported out to market by rail. This is inefficient and presents land use conflicts in Griffith's city centre.

Griffith City Council is working in collaboration with Leeton Shire Council on a proposal to upgrade the WR Connect intermodal facility located between Griffith and Leeton. The proposal has the potential to enhance the efficiency of freight movement in the Western Riverina, improve connectivity to and throughout the Inland Rail at Junee, and create investor confidence for the wider region. A rail freight interchange improvement project plan has been completed and the project has progressed to business case stage.

Griffith City Council recognises the importance of key stakeholders continuing to work together in a positive fashion to ensure a positive freight and logistics industry outcome for the Western Riverina region.

Council's priority is that the WR Connect site be fully operational as soon as possible and it is continuing to work with LINX to support it in transferring its operations to the WR Connect site. However, re-location is still subject to the completion of the business case and securing further funding to assist with the move.

Long-term, there is an opportunity to consider alternative land uses for the existing interchange in the Griffith CBD, with a focus on urban revitalisation (housing, retail, commercial and entertainment uses) in the heart of the city. This requires on-going engagement with and input from a diversity of stakeholders including the site's existing landholders.

Transport

- Public transport services are considered by some to be lacking in parts of Griffith. It is understood that the State Government, through Transport for NSW, is reviewing and improving regional bus services in Griffith.
- Council should continue to engage with infrastructure agencies and service providers to ensure Griffith is well-served with reliable and cost-effective road, rail and air transport.
- Griffith Airport is a vibrant air transport hub and key asset for the city and the region. Griffith's export-orientation and the large number of fly-in fly-out workers means the airport is critical to future economic development.

Water and Power

- Water is essential to economic activity in the Griffith area. To grow and prosper, the horticultural sector - and industry in Griffith more generally - requires improved water security.
- Council has a role to play in engaging with the State and Federal Governments to lobby for fair and affordable water allocations which serve the region's role and potential as the Food Bowl of Australia.
- The cost of electricity is a constraint on the capacity of the local manufacturing sector to remain competitive.

5.3 Opportunities for Action

Action	Priority	Responsible
Continue to contribute to the rail freight interchange improvement project plan, collaborating with project partners to provide support for the preparation of a full business case. Continue to work with LINX Logistics to support the organisation in transferring its operations from the Griffith CBD to the WR Connect site	2.9	WR Connect Project Group
Investigate alternative land uses for the existing freight interchange in the Griffith CBD, with a focus on urban revitalisation (housing, retail, commercial and entertainment uses) in the heart of the city.	3	WR Connect Project Group
Continue to engage with the State and Federal Governments to advocate for reliable and cost-effective means of transport that is accessible to all industries in Griffith, including import and export via air, rail and road.	2.8	GCC
Collaborate with industry, government agency and education and training partners to commission a Future of Agriculture Employment Study. The study would research and identify industry trends and the future of work in the food and agribusiness sector, current and emerging industry skills gaps, the estimated demand for the 'jobs of the future' and the region's likely workforce needs and training priorities.	2.6	GCC
Building on the Grow Our Own initiative, co-ordinate a proposal to partner with TAFE NSW Griffith, Charles Sturt University, Western Riverina Community College, local industry stakeholders and Murrumbidgee Regional High School, to design an integrated training pathway for the local school-leavers looking to establish a career in food and agribusiness.	3.1	Grow Our Own Committee
Coordinate a Griffith Rural Lands Study to identify an appropriate balance of zoning to accommodate the needs of key rural land uses including agriculture, industry, biodiversity, tourism, recreation and rural residential, whilst allowing for flexibility and innovation to ensure the potential for future land use conflicts is reduced and to avoid fragmentation of productive farming land.	2.5	GCC
Continue the preparation of a Griffith Local Lands Strategy to plan for and deliver serviced commercial / industrial land in Griffith in line with anticipated industry requirements.	2.9	GCC
Council will host an annual regional water forum and invite relevant stakeholders including irrigation and community based organisations. The purpose of the forum will be to receive input from these stakeholders and inform Council's future planning and advocacy.	3.1	GCC
Engage with energy suppliers to determine priority energy infrastructure requirements and costs to supply reliable and affordable energy, including renewables.	3.1	GCC
Support opportunities for establishing a recognised regional food product brand to assist the efforts of local producers to develop the area's profile as a high-quality, fresh, clean and green premium food and fibre producing area.	2.6	GCC
Work with the Federal and State Governments to promote and deliver small business support programs applicable to newly-established and emerging agribusiness operators in the Griffith area.	3.1	GCC
Facilitate links between newly-established and emerging agribusiness operators in the Griffith area and the Agribusiness SkillsPoint at TAFE NSW Griffith.	2.4	GCC

THEME TWO

A Location of Choice for
Business Investment, Working,
Learning and Living





6.1 Theme 2: A Location of Choice for Business Investment, Learning and Living

Strategic Objective

Consolidate Griffith's appeal as a location of choice for businesses and for residents who value its regional city lifestyle underpinned by a vibrant retail sector, arts and culture, sport and recreation, health care and education and access to quality employment and a diversity of housing. A region's population is one of its most important resources and population change is a significant factor underpinning Griffith's economic prosperity. Griffith City Council will continue to promote what Griffith and the Western Riverina has to offer as a lifestyle location and it will back this up with investment in projects and programs which help to deliver quality infrastructure and support services to local businesses and residents.

Griffith City Council is committed to maintaining a standard of infrastructure and services that supports and enhances liveability. This includes its recreation, leisure and entertainment facilities, its cultural facilities, the quality of its parks and streetscapes and its community services and facilities. Investment in and promotion of these assets is central to supporting the development of Griffith as a location of choice in which to live, work and play.

6.2 Current Strengths & Future Opportunities

A Commercial Hub and Gateway to the Riverina

- Council promotes a 'can-do' attitude to support local businesses. As an information-broker and facilitator, Council is well-positioned to facilitate new business investment with information on business assistance programs on offer from State and Federal Government agencies, as well as the status of the local economy, industry trends and prospects and locations for investment, including the availability of industrial land to assist with the crucial decision of site selection.
- Griffith is a commercial, retail and services hub for the Western Riverina. Behind only manufacturing and the health care and social assistance sector, retail is one of Griffith's largest provider of jobs.
- Griffith has an appealing regional city lifestyle underpinned by its strong agricultural heritage, its demographic diversity, its quality produce and its many quality cafes and restaurants. Griffith also has a strong 'night-time economy'. A lot of businesses in Griffith are family-owned businesses.
- Griffith Airport is a busy, vibrant air transport hub serving as a key gateway for the Riverina region. In 2018 passenger numbers through Griffith Airport increased by 8.4% to 80,000 making it the 45th busiest in Australia.

A Strong Community and Diverse Labour Force

- Griffith is a welcoming, vibrant and multi-cultural community. The labour force is diverse, offering a range of skills from unskilled to skilled labour. The Griffith Now Hiring Program, which links jobs seekers and current vacancies, supports this.
- Central to the needs of business is a skilled and adaptable workforce. Access to skilled labour is influenced by the availability of education and training, levels of workforce participation and the mobility and flexibility of labour. Griffith's youth needs access to education and training services and facilities with the programs and the infrastructure in place to support their employment aspirations and the requirements of local business and industry.
- Statistically, according to demographer Bernard Salt, Griffith is one of the most desirable places in Australia to live. It has low unemployment, good population growth and affordable housing. Griffith has a consistently low level of unemployment compared to regional and State averages.

Education, Training and Workforce Development

- Griffith has some notable skills gaps, including professionals and managers, as well as some trades (e.g. welders). Attracting quality teachers has also been identified as a challenge in Griffith. This is something Council is working to address through the Griffith Now Hiring program.
- Businesses need access to workers with appropriate skills, and human capital is one of the most important inputs to economic activity. As a supporter and promoter of Griffith's 'engines of growth' in manufacturing and agriculture, Griffith City Council advocates for workforce planning and development programs and education and training initiatives which will build workforce capacity by addressing the skills needed to equip the workforce of the future.
- Griffith City Council recognises the opportunities to address local skills gaps and build workforce capacity through a Designated Area Migration Agreement. This is a formal agreement between the Australian Government and a regional, state or territory authority. It provides access to more overseas workers than the standard skilled migration program and is designed to provide flexibility for regions to respond to their unique economic and labour market conditions.
- Griffith provides good access to tertiary education and training through the Western Riverina Country Universities Centre (CUC), Charles Sturt University (CSU) and TAFE NSW Griffith (including TAFE Digital and the Agribusiness Skills Point). (CSU is the only university with a physical campus in the region).
- Workforce planning and promotion is a priority in Griffith with a number of stakeholders working to provide local career pathways for the region's youth (e.g. the Griffith Now Hiring and Grow Our Own programs). These efforts should continue to be resourced.
- Skilled migration is important, and programs should continue to be developed which support skilled migrants to settle and stay in Griffith.
- Griffith's Country Universities Centre was at capacity and Council collaborated with CUC to secure a larger premises to house the facility. CUC will relocate to the new Griffith Community Centre being constructed in Olympic Street.
- Griffith's education capabilities should continue to be leveraged to nurture and retain the area's youth. For example, TAFE Griffith NSW offers alternative pathways to university degrees.
- Murrumbidgee Regional High School, which was established as a merged school entity in 2019, has more school-based apprenticeships than any other school in NSW. The amalgamation of the Wade and Griffith High Schools into the dual-campus Murrumbidgee Regional High School has brought with it significant new investments in services, facilities and staff training, as well as the modernisation of the school curriculum, which will significantly benefit Griffith's youth.
- By reducing barriers and providing opportunities through education, the Western Riverina Community College, based in Griffith, provides alternative pathways to employment for the local community.

Griffith's Retail Challenge

- Griffith's trade sector is suffering from a general industry downturn as consumer behaviours evolve (e.g. more online shopping). This has been compounded by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The stakeholder consultations undertaken to date suggest that Griffith's retail / commercial centre suffers from a number of inactive spaces. Griffith City Council has been engaged in a number of projects and programs designed to support the local retail sector and other businesses in the city's commercial centres (see text box overleaf).
- Griffith City Council can continue to play a direct role in helping to revitalise the city's retail precincts by:
 - a) Taking pro-active place improvement measures to enhance and activate public spaces through intelligent design; and
 - b) Providing retailers with access to support services, including business support programs offered by other agencies and organising events such as local 'business inspiration workshops' with guest speakers presenting on informative, topical subjects of relevance to local retailers.
- Griffith City Council plays a leading role in shaping the city's urban form and function and its sense of place through master planning, place activation and infrastructure improvement programs.
- Council can also seek out State and Federal Government funding support for place activation and urban improvement programs that will have positive and lasting economic benefits.

A Strong and Growing Health Care Sector

- Griffith's health care industry is growing, and while there are some gaps in access to specialist services, the capacity of the local health care sector is well-served by Griffith Base Hospital and St Vincent's Private Community Hospital. The Griffith Base Hospital's \$250 million redevelopment project presents an opportunity to capitalise on the city's growing health sector, to meet the evolving needs of the community and to support the attraction of new residents and businesses.
- Employment in Griffith's health care sector has grown in recent years, and planned investments in new hospital facilities will support more jobs in the near future.
- The consultations suggested that some specialist health services are still lacking in Griffith and this requires ongoing attention.

Lifestyle and Liveability

- Investment attraction requires a strategic and targeted approach to attract business owners and, perhaps more importantly, their families to want to live and work in the region. Housing diversity and affordability are crucial elements in regional migration decisions, especially for family migration but also for all household types. Griffith City Council's Housing Strategy is designed to facilitate housing choice and affordability as a key attribute that can be promoted as a crucial component of the city's lifestyle offer.
- Griffith can look for ways to build on the work it does with the Griffith Now Hiring program to promote its regional city lifestyle to attract people and new investment, to Griffith and the city's smaller settlements.
- Griffith's size and socio-economic diversity coupled with its climate, its services, its relative affordability and its connectivity by air offers a work-life balance which gives it a point of difference to capital city living. These attributes should continue to be promoted.
- Like other regional centres, Griffith has suffered from the effects of its youth leaving the area to work or study elsewhere. The Grow Our Own campaign, designed to encourage young people to live and work in Griffith, is a positive initiative that encourages local businesses to invest in employment and training, something that should continue to be encouraged.
- In recent years, Griffith has seen an increase in the number of fly-in fly-out (FIFO) contractors and short-stay workers coming into town to work in a variety of sectors such as nursing for example. This could partly reflect a lack of quality housing in Griffith. As a result, some businesses need to 'import' their staff.
- It is considered by a number of stakeholders consulted that programs which are building the profile and the capacity of the area to attract more professionals to live and work in Griffith, including doctors and other professionals, will help to address Griffith's 'workforce challenge'.
- Griffith City Council pro-actively lobbies the State and Federal Governments on a range of matters in the interests of the Griffith community. Griffith's role as the regional service centre of the Western Riverina presents an opportunity to continue to engage with State and Federal Government agencies to encourage the re-location of some services (and staff) to Griffith, building on recent successes.
- Despite its strengths and attributes, Griffith, like elsewhere, has pockets of socio-economic disadvantage (health, housing and education). These challenges should continue to be recognised and addressed by the region's community and economic development agencies in a collaborative and constructive fashion.

Housing Initiatives

- Despite Griffith's enviable regional city lifestyle, the consultations undertaken suggested that a shortage of quality low to medium-cost housing is a major constraint on economic development.



- Discussions held during the targeted consultations suggested that housing shortfalls constrain Griffith's capacity to attract business investment and skilled labour, including professionals, such as teachers and health care professionals as well as government bureaucrats and their families.
- The stakeholder consultations suggested short-term accommodation options for visiting professionals (e.g. doctors) is limited. It was also suggested that Griffith has a rental housing shortage, placing upward pressure on rental prices.
- Analysis undertaken on behalf of Council during the preparation of the Griffith Housing Strategy (2019) showed that Griffith has a higher than average rate of homelessness compared with NSW, and has experienced an increase in the number and rate of people who are homeless and who are marginally housed since 2011. This includes a high rate of people who are living in severely overcrowded dwellings, in cars and temporary or insecure accommodation rather than 'street homelessness'.
- Griffith City Council recognises that there has been a lack of housing diversity and a relatively high level of housing stress in Griffith. In 2019 Council commissioned a new housing strategy to address the city's housing shortfall.
- The resulting Griffith Housing Strategy, which has been adopted by Council, provides a detailed analysis of the current state of housing availability in Griffith and suggests methods of increasing access to diverse housing options for key target groups in the City experiencing housing stress.
- The Housing Strategy determined that Griffith is under-supplied with smaller dwellings and requires a larger supply of 1 and 2 bedroom strata dwellings. The projected increase in the number of dwellings required is 1,744 dwellings by 2036.
- The Griffith Housing Strategy is now being implemented by Council to help address rental housing shortfalls and housing stress.

Sport, Recreation, Leisure & Entertainment and The Arts

- While Griffith has an appealing regional city lifestyle, it is considered by some that there is "not enough to do" during down time. Council recognises the need to continually explore and expand options for recreation, leisure and entertainment in Griffith. Recent grant funding rounds have specifically concentrated on facilities for the community, especially youth.
- Griffith City Council is spending over \$26 million on new basketball and netball courts, new synthetic athletics and hockey fields, a 50-metre swimming pool and upgraded change rooms.
- The development of regional sporting infrastructure (a multi-sports precinct) presents an opportunity to serve a growing population, and to host major sporting events to help attract people to Griffith.
- Council is investing \$2 million in the Lake Wyangan Filtration and Wetlands Project to improve the quality of water entering the lake.
- Although only a very small sector of employment, the arts and creative industries have been growing in Griffith. The creative services industries provide inputs to many other sectors while the arts support the city's appeal as a place to live and enjoy.

Start-up / Micro Business Support

- There are a number of start-ups in the Griffith area, yet the consultations suggest there is limited understanding / knowledge of the local 'business start-up ecosystem' supporting fledgling businesses, including support infrastructure, facilities, information, approvals processes, processes, business advice, etc.).
- Both Griffith City Council and other agencies provide access to advice and a range of services designed to support local business start-ups and development. For example, Griffith City Council is a partner in Service NSW's Easy to do Business program. This is a free business concierge service for start-up businesses that streamlines the registration, license, development and paperwork process giving the business one point of contact for the entire support process.
- Griffith Women in Business runs events and workshops on a bi-monthly basis to inspire, connect and educate local professionals to grow their business. Council's Economic Development Coordinator is on this committee and regularly assists with event organisation and promotion.
- Griffith City Council is planning the development of a new information service / newsletter to newly-registered ABN holders, which would act as a 'welcome pack' including information, advice and contact details directing them where to start with their business assistance or information enquiries.
- Griffith City Council can also continue to support prospective businesses / start-ups by pro-actively promoting business support and advisory services offered by agencies such as Business NSW, AusIndustry and

Digital Infrastructure

- There is a perception held by some that parts of Griffith suffer from digital infrastructure shortfalls (internet connectivity) and there are low levels of 'digital inclusion' amongst some segments of the community, which needs to be addressed.

Industrial Land Capabilities

- Griffith has some perceived and potential land use conflicts with some industrial / commercial uses, including wineries, in close proximity to residential areas.
- There is a need to ensure that Griffith has sufficient and well-located serviced industrial land to accommodate future growth.

6.3 Opportunities for Action

Action	Priority	Responsible
Micro and Small Business Support:	2.1	GCC
Establish a quarterly Griffith Business Breakfast Forum with a program of guest speakers on subjects designed to address topical business interests and local priorities.		
Collaborate with the Department of Regional NSW and AusIndustry to facilitate information on and access to State and Federal Government programs which are designed to grow the capacity of new and developing micro and small businesses. Provide information and referrals to business development and mentoring services that are available.	2.9	GCC, Dept Regional NSW, AusIndustry
Working with NSW Trade & Investment and Austrade, promote and facilitate local business access to State and Federal Government export market development programs.	3	GCC
Continue to produce monthly business newsletters to promote news, events, training, grants, assistance and incentives.	3.8	GCC
Undertake a market assessment and business case for a Griffith Business Start-up Program and Workspace to support emerging entrepreneurs to establish and grow their business ideas. As part of the business case, identify potential CBD workspace locations and program funding sources.	2.1	GCC
Support Griffith's Indigenous businesses by promoting government programs designed to enhance business capacity and skills.	2.1	GCC
Support Griffith Women in Business Committee with governance and administration services	3.6	GCC
Review Council's land use planning and regulatory processes to facilitate an enabling environment for business growth and development in Griffith.	3.3	GCC
Continue to work with Service NSW to scope opportunities to promote the Easy to do Business Program in Griffith to help address potential red tape in the form of time delays, regulations complexities and duplication issues that business owners face when starting or growing a business.	3.1	GCC & Service NSW
Skills and Investment Attraction:	3.1	GCC & Grow Our Own committee
Continue to support efforts to match skilled labour with local business and industry needs through the Griffith Now Hiring program and Grow Our Own campaign.		
Continue to design and implement media and marketing strategies to enhance the appeal of Griffith as a destination to invest, live and work in, focused on Griffith's regional city lifestyle underpinned by local employment opportunities and options for education and training, health and housing.	3.8	GCC

Collaborate with RDA Riverina and neighbouring Councils to explore opportunities to address local skills gaps and build workforce capacity through a Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA).	3.3	GCC & RDA Riverina
Continue to produce and promote a regularly updated Invest Griffith Prospectus and promote in key markets.	3.6	GCC
Work with and lobby the NSW Government to establish Griffith as an ideal State Government decentralisation location.	3.1	GCC
Regularly update and maintain Griffith Economic Development website with relevant and current information	3.8	GCC
Continue to support and promote the Country Universities Centre Western Riverina in delivering distance tertiary education opportunities to students in Griffith and the surrounding region.	3.6	GCC
Infrastructure and Services: Audit and review Council-controlled roads requiring upgrades on the basis of safety, conflicting uses (e.g. trucks vs. residents and tourists) and efficiency using the Heavy Vehicle Strategy. Continue working with Transport for NSW to prioritise road upgrades to improve efficiency, reduce the impacts of heavy vehicles and to improve travel times.	3.5	GCC
Promote Griffith Airport as a key asset for attracting visitors and investment to the Western Riverina.	3.3	GCC
Review airport infrastructure to keep up with changing aircraft capabilities.	3	GCVC
Investigate and document cellular and data connectivity in the Griffith LGA and advocate for staged improvements in collaboration with the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation.	3.3	GCC & RAMJO
Continually liaise with State and Federal Government funding agencies and monitor grants programs to ensure that business cases for priority projects are at the ready when project funding opportunities arise.	3.3	GCC
Continue to support the development of the Griffith Base Hospital as a state-of-the-art regional medical and health facility.	3.8	GCC
Lifestyle and Liveability: Continue to implement the Griffith Housing Strategy in line with identified priorities.	3.1	GCC
Develop partnerships with local communities to facilitate sustainable town centre place activation; identify key project opportunities that could form the catalyst for local community-Council partnerships.	3.1	GCC
Continue Council's capital works program, streetscape improvements to enhance the visual appeal of Griffith's retail / commercial precincts.	3	GCC
Investigate interest from CBD retail traders to participate in facilitated 'retail inspiration' workshops and similar events with leading experts / guest speakers to promote best-practice visual merchandising, branding and customer service to support the vitality and growth of Griffith's retail core.	2.8	GCC

6.4 Major Theme 2 Initiatives

Griffith Now Hiring Program

The Griffith Now Hiring marketing program links job seekers with current vacancies through the use of both local and state-wide marketing including:

- Fortnightly newsletters
- Google Adwords to drive website traffic
- Facebook and Instagram promotions
- Promotional videos

The program focuses on promoting local job opportunities, Griffith's enviable lifestyle and affordable living to potential re-locaters from metropolitan areas. Now more than ever Griffith City Council and its partners in government, the non-government sector and industry wants to support local job seekers to drive employment levels back up.

The Griffith Now Hiring website griffithnowhiring.com.au/ will also have a new job search function that lists Griffith's job availabilities in different industry categories based on employer submissions.

Griffith City Council's Housing Support Initiatives

The Griffith Housing Strategy provides a detailed analysis of the current state of housing availability in Griffith with recommendations to enhance access to diverse housing options for key target groups in the City experiencing housing stress.

Griffith City Council has implemented almost all of the recommendations set out in the strategy, for example:

- The Lake Wyangan Precinct Masterplan is complete, inclusive of medium density housing and a suggested housing mix.
- The Collina subdivisions of almost 400 blocks will be completed by the end of 2021. A development application has also been lodged for the next Collina farm slated for subdivision.
- Griffith City Council is working with Community Housing Provider, Argyle to build affordable housing in Griffith.
- Council was successful in its application for Federal Government Building Better Regions funding of \$6 million alongside partner Argyle to develop the \$12 million Griffin Green affordable housing subdivision. This includes 20 affordable town houses and approximately 45 serviced blocks available for the development of additional affordable housing.
- Council has endorsed the provision of rebates and incentives for affordable housing and secondary dwellings to waive development fees and contributions.
- Griffith's new Development Control Plan has been adopted in accordance with the guidelines laid out in the Housing Strategy and Council is working towards updating the Local Environmental Plan and Land Use Strategy to rezone land for further housing development opportunities.
- A manufactured housing estate in Collina has also been approved by Council.

Griffith City Council's Retail and Business Support Initiatives

Griffith City Council has been engaged in a number of projects and programs designed to support the local retail sector and other businesses in the city's commercial centres, for example:

- Council has completed Stage 2 of the Yambil Street upgrade as part of the CBD Upgrade Strategy. Stage 3 is now underway. The Urban Design team and CBD Upgrade Committee work together on actions to revitalise the CBD and in turn, help boost the local retail sector
- Council pro-actively seeks out and applies for grants to support place activation and commercial centre development. For example:
 - Council recently applied for and received a Place Activation grant for Kooyoo Street worth \$350,000.
 - Council was awarded a \$1 million Infrastructure Grant including \$100,000 for City Entrances, \$340,000 for Banna Avenue Bright Lights and \$450,000 for Carpark Railway St, with the balance allocated to pathway improvements.
- Through the Stronger Country Communities 2 program, Council delivered a new community stage in Memorial Park to entice more people into Griffith's main street. Another community stage is also being

delivered in Community Gardens as part of the Stronger Communities Fund and will also incorporate a new public toilet facility.

- Tourism and events in Griffith's main street helps drive visitation and retail spend in the CBD.
- Council actively supports outdoor dining including allowing restaurants to construct external dining areas on Council footpaths.
- Council has received Safer Communities Program grant funding (\$410,000) to install 81 additional CCTV cameras throughout the city.
- Council sponsors, promotes and facilitates workshops that assist local businesses to grow. The Griffith Business Survey provided insight that local businesses would like more training on marketing, social media and business planning. This has and will be Council's training focus going forward.
- Council's monthly 'Evolve' business newsletter promotes workshops, incentives, grants, opportunities and news to local businesses.
- Council is actively seeking opportunities and initiatives that promote local shopping like markets and late-night shopping events.



THEME THREE

A Destination of Choice for
Regional Tourism

7.1 Theme 3: A Destination of Choice for Regional Tourism

Strategic Objective

Position Griffith as a vibrant destination for visitors offering a diversity of cultural, natural, leisure-based and sporting experiences with new investment creating quality jobs and visitation growth equivalent to at least the State average.

Griffith City Council recognises there is scope to enhance the contribution of tourism to the City's economic development. Specifically, there is an opportunity to explore ways to tap into and grow existing visitor markets including the VFR (visiting friends and relatives) market, the drive tourism market (particularly families and grey nomads) and the corporate traveller market.

To do this, Griffith requires the development of a strong brand. The area is a popular stop-over for grey nomad travellers and the City has a strong calendar of major events delivered under its 'Visit Griffith' banner. Growing Griffith's visitor economy will however require further investment in the necessary support infrastructure, including a choice of quality short-stay accommodation.

7.2 Current Strengths & Future Opportunities

Tourism Appeal

- Griffith has a strong 'brand' and is a popular stop-over for grey nomad travellers. The city has a strong calendar of major events delivered under its 'Visit Griffith' banner.
- Griffith's tourism sector is an emerging driver of economic activity and employment. By undertaking a strategic, informed and targeted approach to promotion and destination management, tourism has the potential to be a pillar of the City's future prosperity.

Growing the Visitor Economy

- While tourism is only a small industry in Griffith, there is an opportunity to explore ways to tap into and grow existing visitor markets including the VFR (visiting friends and relatives) market, grey nomads and the corporate traveller market. While corporate travellers account for a large share of visitors to Griffith, there is a lack of diversity of venue types to accommodate a wide variety of business conferences and events.
- While Griffith and the wider region has a rich agricultural heritage, agri-tourism and food and beverage tourism (including wine) is under-developed, with only a couple of good cellar door wine experiences of note. New investments in cellar door experiences could attract more visitors to the area. This requires targeted promotion and destination management. There are potential links between the region's agricultural sector and tourism, by capitalising on local historical agricultural strengths and capabilities and emerging opportunities in nature-based tourism, as well as food and wine (and craft beer) tourism.
- There is scope to market Griffith to attract more tourists to stop and stay in the area, supported by good destination management (infrastructure, events, entertainment, accommodation, visitor information and customer service). Griffith's rich multi-culturalism can be leveraged to attract visitors. Griffith City Council recognises the importance of destination management in supporting the region's tourism potential, and the new Griffith Destination Tourism Plan 2021-2024 was completed in February 2021.
- The Griffith and Western Riverina Accommodation Investment Prospectus, which was prepared in November 2019 by Destination Riverina Murray, revealed that the existing supply of visitor accommodation in the area is inadequate to meet changing consumer desires for quality, contemporary and experiential accommodation. It suggested significant investment is needed to improve and expand the accommodation supply to match the high-quality regional tourism offering.
- According to the Griffith Destination Tourism Plan 2021-2024, there is a lack of quality contemporary budget accommodation in the region. Griffith should be able to support budget accommodation, targeting younger markets and budget travellers. Quality backpackers would be suited to touring international markets, fruit pickers, short stay student market.
- The region has a limited number of single self-contained properties listed on Airbnb. The delivery of quality self-contained properties is needed to meet projected demand for visitors to the region.
- The consultations undertaken to inform this strategy confirmed there is a lack of diversity in visitor accommodation in Griffith, particularly 4-star motels/hotels. There is also a lack of caravan park capacity to

accommodate the families and grey nomad markets. Opportunities to explore include RV campsites, as well as farm stays, eco-lodges, boutique-style bed and breakfasts or glamping facilities targeting high-end, high-value tourists.

7.3 Opportunities for Action

Action	Priority	Responsible
Support implementation of the Council-adopted Griffith Destination Tourism Plan 2021-2024 to address matters concerning critical visitor economy infrastructure such as signage, roads, telecommunications, visitor accommodation, information and marketing, the (built and natural) environment and governance / regional tourism partnerships.	3.6	GCC
Explore opportunities to enhance the visitor accommodation offer in Griffith by confirming visitor segment needs and expectations, undertaking regular market assessments and preparing business cases.	3.1	GCC
Review existing festivals and events (including sporting, music and cultural festivals) and identify opportunities for existing and emerging events throughout Griffith and the Western Riverina region to become part of a wider, coordinated calendar of events.	3.1	GCC
In collaboration with Destination Riverina Murray, local producers, accommodation providers and others working in the tourism space, explore the concept of a Western Riverina farm gate food trail.	2.9	GCC & Destination Riverina Murray
Develop a guideline for Griffith's hospitality businesses to improve levels of service addressing issues such as shopfront presentation, visual merchandising, customer service training for staff and hours of operation.	2.1	GCC
Develop and promote a customer service campaign for Griffith's retail, food and hospitality businesses, targeting both traditional and non-traditional tourism businesses, to facilitate a consistent, quality visitor experience.	2.5	GCC
Investigate how Griffith City Council can facilitate access to business support and training resources in the tourism sector, leveraging State and Federal Government programs where available.	2.8	GCC
Formalise working relationships with neighbouring Councils, RDA Riverina, Destination Riverina Murray and local tourism operators to explore and agree on a shared, consistent regional destination brand for the Western Riverina.	2.9	GCC
Design and implement a Griffith / Western Riverina post-experience visitor survey program to improve awareness and understanding of visitor experiences and needs and to better target marketing resources.	2.8	GCC
Liaise on an ongoing basis with State and Federal funding agencies and monitor tourism industry grants programs. Ensure that business cases for priority tourism projects are at the ready.	3.1	GCC

Strategy Implementation Framework

Effectively implementing the Strategy



Photo credit: Visit Griffith

8. Strategy Implementation Framework

8.1 Informing Prioritisation of Opportunities for Action

Effective strategy implementation must be cognisant of available resources and the capabilities of Griffith City Council to progress the opportunities identified. To allow for effective implementation over time, the opportunities presented in this strategy are to be prioritised by Council and reviewed annually.

The prioritisation of actions to support Griffith's economic development is guided by two broad sets of assessment criteria – **benefits realisation** and **capacity to implement**. Each is explained in turn.

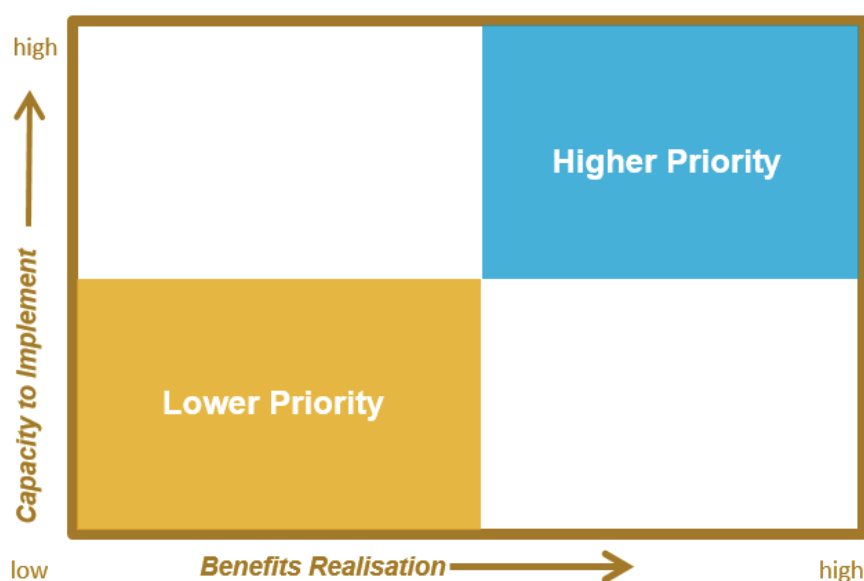
Benefits Realisation:

- What **benefits** will the opportunity deliver to Griffith's residents and businesses if realised?
- Will it bring more business investment to Griffith and the surrounding region, and is it the sort of investment we want?
- Does it build on Griffith's and the Western Riverina's existing industry profile, capabilities and competitive advantages?
- Will it help to create more jobs in key and emerging industry sectors such as food and food products, transport and logistics, health, education and the visitor economy?
- Will it help to reduce leakages and retain and re-circulate more income in the local economy?
- Are there other potential impacts (e.g. social, environmental, cultural) to consider?

Capacity to Implement:

- What is Griffith City Council's capacity to implement the project or activity?
 - Is it consistent with the community's vision and values as articulated in the Community Strategic Plan, Guiding Griffith 2040?
 - Is it consistent with Council's land use planning and policy objectives?
 - Does Council have the organisational capacity to implement the project?
 - Does Griffith City Council have the financial resources and the human resources?
 - Is the necessary support infrastructure available (or can it be realistically built/accessed)?
- Implementation - who is best placed to drive the opportunity? Is it Council as the lead, as a partner or is it the responsibility of other organisations with support from Council?

Figure 17. Economic Opportunity Assessment Matrix



Strategy implementation priorities are identified through the application of these broad set of assessment criteria, determining to what extent the opportunity in question concerned is a higher, medium or lower priority.

Applying the assessment criteria and effectively 'rating' and 'ranking' each action determines those that are considered the highest priority and which, as a result, are short-term actions.

The opportunities for action in this strategy have been assessed and scored by Griffith City Council and the Business Development and Major Projects Committee. Benefit realisation and the capacity to implement have been considered for each action.

8.2 The Immediate Priority: COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan

Priority projects and activities for implementation are identified based on the application of the broad set of assessment criteria described above.

In delivering Evolve Griffith, Griffith City Council is focused first and foremost on immediate-term initiatives to help address the impacts of COVID-19 on local businesses and the community, including:

- Providing local businesses with information on and access to services offering support for planning through adversity - including financial counselling, business continuity management, human resource management, taxation support, mental health support, etc. This includes support available through the networking and referral services offered by State and Federal Government agencies.
- Supporting local businesses by investigating and promoting local procurement options.
- Supporting local business start-ups and expansions by continuing to work to ensure (and promote) a supportive and enabling regulatory environment.
- Through its role as a local leader, restoring business confidence (and community confidence) by broadcasting positive messages about Griffith's economic recovery and local initiatives that are designed to support the recovery effort.

Led by its Economic Development Unit, these initiatives are being delivered by Griffith City Council and its partners in the context of a longer-term strategic framework for economic development promotion and facilitation.

8.3 Cultivating Collaborative Partnerships for Effective Implementation

Evolve Griffith will be implemented by Council, led by its Economic Development Unit, in partnership with the NSW and Australian Governments, regional development bodies, peak industry bodies, the city's and wider region's education and training providers and other supporting partners across the Western Riverina region. Griffith City's businesses and residents will continue to be engaged at a partnership level to ensure effective communication on the progress of strategy implementation and commitment to realising Council's and the community's economic development agenda.

8.4 Monitoring Economic Development Strategy Progress

Evolve Griffith has been prepared in the context of the role of economic development in Council's broader program of work and strategic objectives, and wider regional priorities. Initiatives set out in this strategy will be monitored through the following methods and sources:

- Regular (annual) business confidence surveys;
- Customer / visitor satisfaction surveys;
- Subscription to regularly updated and tailored socio-demographic and economic data sources such as profile.id and economy.id;
- National Skills Commission data on unemployment and labour force trends;
- NSW Government population projections; and
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data.

The set performance measures will be reported annually.

Evolve Griffith: An Economic Development Strategy for Promoting Prosperity, 2021-25 will be reviewed annually with an update anticipated in five years.

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