



CORPORATE PLAN

2025-2029



Etheridge Shire Council



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Message from the Mayor

" I am pleased to present Etheridge Shire Council's Corporate Plan for 2025 - 2029. "

Cr. Barry Hughes

Council has just recently completed a review of the existing Corporate Plan. It is councils' duty to present the revised version of the Corporate Plan that will serve the current Council as a working document for the next five years.

Information for the revision process has been collated utilising valuable input from Councillors and staff, as well as strong participation in the survey and local meetings from communities across the Shire.

The new Corporate Plan will guide and assist Councils deliberations, bringing clarity to decision making processes across all aspects of Councils business.

The KPI's forming the cornerstones around the revised Corporate Plan consist of

- A sustainable Transport network that meets community needs.
- A sustainable Environment of natural assets, water, wastewater and waste management.
- A diversified Economic development ensures a prosperous shire.
- Quality Social infrastructure makes the shire a desirable place to live.
- Best practice corporate governance and organisational excellence.

It is the expectation of this Council and officers of council, that the plan offers itself as a significant tool to help achieve the necessary changes to be undertaken on a proactive platform. This will ensure effective financial and physical performances from whole of council delivering a sustainable future for all shire residents.

In revising the existing Corporate Plan council has considered extensively the changing dynamics across community's and industries within the shire, and in doing so has provided strategic pathways and objectives to achieve cost effective outcomes.

Council has a very clear intention to remain engaged with whole of community to maintain a high level of service provision and connectivity as well as strong leadership through advocacy to all levels of government.

I look forward to working closely with your council to ensure that community expectations match the capacity of council to deliver through continuity of engagement, encouragement of council and community partnerships and collaboration, plus a robust management approach to achieve the goals set out in this document.

Barry Hughes
MAYOR

Elected Representatives

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.... "Our Councillors represent the level of government most closely linked to the community.

Etheridge Shire Council comprises a Mayor and four councillors.

Councillors are elected to serve a four-year term and their role is to make decisions and provide democratic leadership

on the infrastructure, facilities, services and works programs that are needed for the region.

The next elections are scheduled for March 2028"

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Regional Profile

The early history of the Etheridge Shire is synonymous with famous explorers such as Leichhardt (1844-45), Gregory (1855-56), McKinlay (1862) and Jardine (1864), all of whom traversed the area seeking minerals, timber and good pastoral land.

Etheridge Shire Council – Administration Building Georgetown History also records that in 1869 a young geologist named Richard Daintree explored the area around 41 Mile Creek and the Gilbert and Copperfield rivers, revealing the presence of payable gold. May 1870 saw the establishment of the community of Etheridge, along the banks of the Etheridge River. In November of the same year, this new settlement became known as Georgetown, named after the first gold commissioner in the region, Howard St. George.

The Etheridge Shire Council was first called the “Einasleigh Divisional Board” which then became the Einasleigh Shire Council in 1902 before changing its name to the Etheridge Shire Council in March 1919, because Council’s mail was being sent to Einasleigh instead of Georgetown.

The grazing occupation of the Gulf Savannah originated with Carpentaria Downs, which in the mid 1800’s was partially owned by sea captain Robert Towns, founder of both Burketown and Townsville. The main pastoral settlements appeared in the eastern part of the Shire, where large individual areas were taken up. In many cases these settlements remain some of the largest stations in the Shire today.

Relics of the famous gold rush days can still be found throughout the district and the settlements of Mt Surprise, Einasleigh, and Forsyth, together with Georgetown, remain a fossickers dream. The Etheridge goldfield, the “poor mans” goldfield, has never been worked out, and modern-day prospectors armed with metal detectors still search for specimens such as coloured topaz, agates, sapphires, smoky quartz and other precious stones, as well as nuggets of gold.

The Etheridge Shire covers approximately 39,039 square kilometres of Queensland’s Gulf Savannah Region. The Shire is connected by four main communities being: Mt Surprise, Einasleigh, Forsyth and Georgetown and two smaller communities: Kidston and Oak Park.

Local Government’s role as a third tier of government in Australia is defined in State Government legislation - being the Local Government Act 2009. Council comprises of a Mayor and four Councillors elected on an undivided basis every four years.

The Shire will be faced with many changes and challenges over the next 5 - 10 years to maintain social, environmental and financial sustainability. It is of concern that the Shire population has been diminishing and growing older and that the Shire youth are not returning after leaving for their education.

Assessment of Local Conditions

The Etheridge Shire has experienced a steady decline in population over the last five years, leaving an estimated population of 726 people at 30 June 2023. The decline in population inversely reflects the increase in local unemployment and has caused considerable changes to the local demographics.

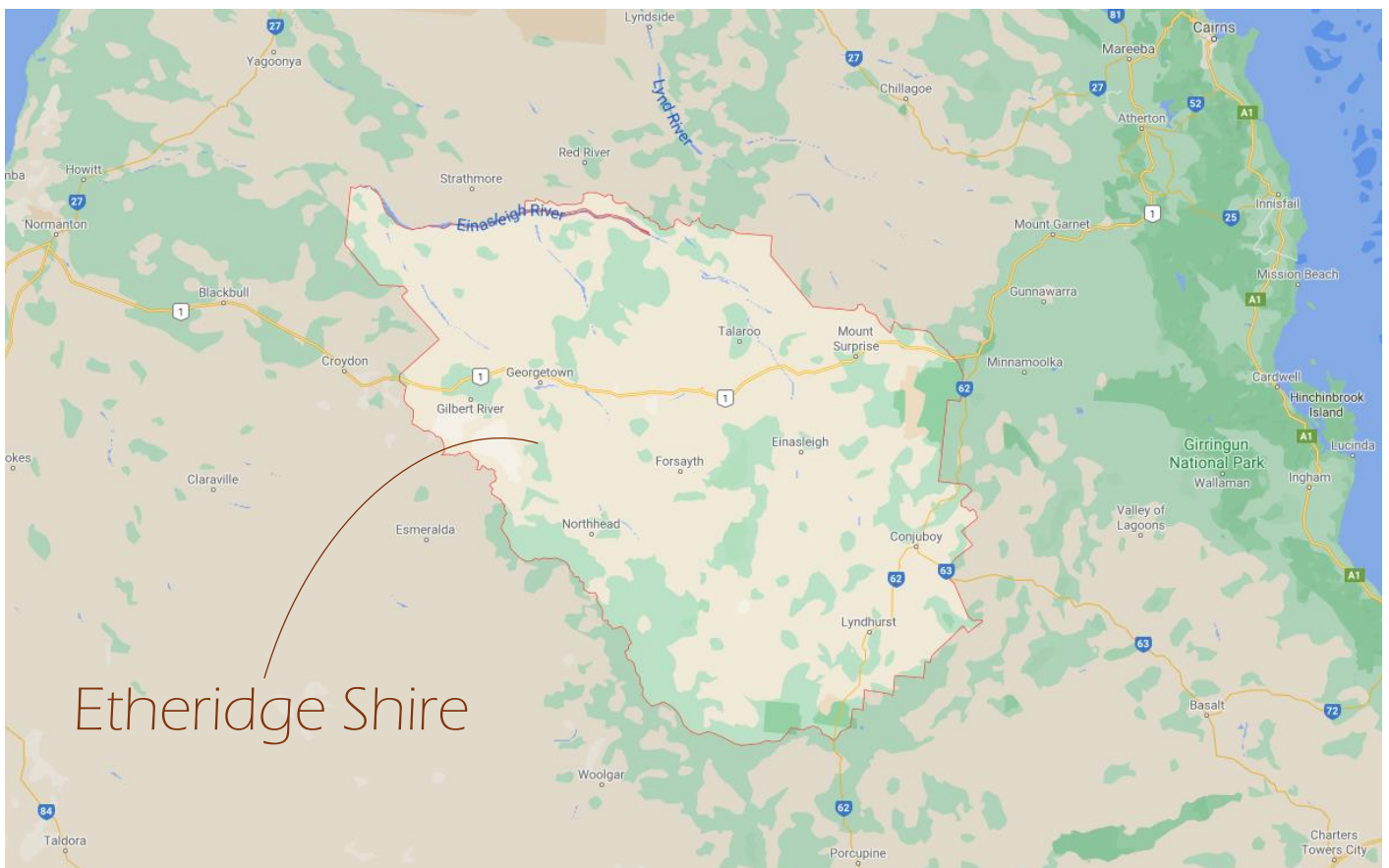
Positively, the population median age, which was 47.0 years in 2018, had reduced to 44.4 years in 2023. The proportion of residents aged 45+ now make up 41.3% of the shire, while those below 25 make up 31.2%. The 25-44 age group commonly associated with young families is 27.6% (see: <http://profile.id.com.au/fnqroc/population?WebID=160>).

In 2022/23, The economy's "Value Added" for Etheridge Shire was \$94.7M. Agriculture, predominately beef cattle was \$57M or 60%. The "value added" from tourism was \$9M. The difference between 'local employment' (408) and 'employed residents' (363) indicates that approximately 45 (11%) people employed in the Shire live outside the Shire.

Even with the employment statistics, the unemployment rate of 1.8% is below the regional rate of 3.3% (for further detail, go to: <http://economy.id.com.au/fnqroc/about?WebID=160>.)

Table 1 - Etheridge Shire Population Estimate: 2004 to 2024

2004	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
1,022	1,018	1,013	1,009	1,004	1,000	988	976	964	952	940	926	819	804	793	794	803	724	726



Vision Statement & Guiding Principles

our Mission

... To lead the community in line with our guiding principles to achieve our shared vision...

our Vision

...Etheridge Shire is a place of innovation, diversity, and opportunity for all. We have vibrant and unique communities that are provided with community focused services that maintain our country centric ways of life. Dynamic leadership ensures sustainable communities, economies, and best practices for our environment...

Our Guiding Principles

- Safe** - We focus on creating a safe workplace to ensure the wellbeing of our staff and the community;
- Teamwork** - We work together as one council towards shared goals and for the greater good of the community;
- Respect** - We will be inclusive, treat people with courtesy and fairness, and ensure each individual is valued and heard;
- Integrity** - We will behave in a way that is honest, open, and transparent. We will take responsibility for our actions and strive for excellence;
- Value** - We aim to deliver services efficiently, effectively and in an environmentally and financially sustainable manner; and
- Engagement** - We engage with our staff and community to inform our decision making, and create awareness of our activities.

Corporate Plan Aims & Outcomes

Aim 1 – Roads/Transport

A sustainable transport network that meets community needs

Outcome

1.1 Shire rural roads are all weather, town streets are bitumen with footpaths, kerb, channelling and drainage.

1.2 Transport and Main Roads is committed to developing a network that is fully sealed to Road Train Route standard.

1.3 There are multiple public transport options.

Strategy No.	Strategy	Performance Measure
1.1.1	An asset management strategy to support the monitoring, maintenance, replacement and enhancement of council's road assets.	Asset management Works Program annually adopted.
1.1.2	Develop and implement a comprehensive, sustainable and funded, 10-year Capital Works Program for roads, incorporating road train access and drainage.	10 Year Capital Works Program annually adopted.
1.1.3	Lobby for adequate funding to enable the repair of the shire road network affected by natural disaster.	Quantity of work completed.
1.1.4	Work with regional groups and our communities to upgrade Local Roads of Regional Significance (LRRS).	Number of LLRS roads and funding opportunities.
1.2.1	Maintain relationship with the Department of Transport and Main Roads to undertake road construction and maintenance (Road Train Routes).	% of works program completed.
1.2.2	Continue to lobby to raise the national profile of the Georgetown to Forsyth, Kennedy, Gulf and Gregory Development Roads and Bridges and for additional funding for high priority widening and sealing.	% of works program completed.
1.3.1	An asset management strategy to support the monitoring, maintenance, replacement and enhancement of council's airports and airfield assets.	Asset management Works Program annually adopted.
1.3.2	Advocate for improved airfield infrastructure and services.	Number of meetings attended and funding obtained.
1.3.3	Advocate for improved rail and bus services.	Number of services available.

Aim 2 – Environment

A sustainable Environment of natural assets, water, wastewater and waste management

Outcome

2.1 Best practice water and wastewater management.

2.2 Best practice waste management.

2.3 Best practice natural environment and pest management.

2.4 An energy efficient shire.

2.5 Industry has sustainable environmental practices.

Strategy No.	Strategy	Performance Measure
2.1.1	An asset management strategy to support the monitoring, maintenance, replacement and enhancement of council's water and wastewater assets.	Asset management Works Program annually adopted.
2.1.2	Develop and implement a comprehensive, sustainable and funded, 10-year Capital Works Program to deliver good quality, reliable water and wastewater supplies for all communities.	10 Year Capital Works Program annually adopted.
2.1.3	Water Reservoirs are operating and environmentally compliant.	% Compliance.
2.1.4	Lobby for adequate funding to enable the repair and maintenance of shire water and wastewater network affected by natural disaster or other events.	Number of meetings attended and funding obtained.
2.2.1	An asset management strategy to support the monitoring, maintenance, replacement and enhancement of council's collection and waste management facilities throughout shire.	Asset management Works Program annually adopted.
2.2.2	Waste transfer stations are operating and environmentally compliant	% Compliance.
2.3.1	Develop Council's Biosecurity Plan in consultation with landowners and other stakeholders to reduce the impact of existing and emerging pests and weeds.	Works program annually adopted.
2.3.2	In partnership with the community and external agencies, promote and support best practice management of the natural environment.	Number of meetings attended and funding obtained.
2.4.1	Support of renewable energy, carbon reduction programs and council's carbon footprint.	Quantity of Renewable energy and carbon credits.
2.5.1	Companies and industries are environmentally compliant.	% Compliance.

Aim 3 – Economic

A diversified economic development ensures a prosperous Shire

Outcome

3.1 A variety of land and housing options for the community.

3.2 A diversified economic base: rural, tourism, mining and support services.

3.3 Large scale projects provide a legacy for our communities.

Strategy No.	Strategy	Performance Measure
3.1.1	Maintain a compliant planning scheme that supports the future development of our shire.	% Compliance.
3.1.2	Review and update the asset management strategy to support the monitoring, maintenance, replacement and enhancement of council's housing stock.	Asset management Works Program annually adopted.
	Plan and develop a range of land and housing options for youth, families and older members of the communities.	
3.1.3	Advocating for the release of land or State Land for future development across the shire.	Number of meetings attended and funding obtained.
3.2.1	Facilitate the development and marketing of a distinctive regional image.	Growth in economic development.
3.2.2	Support community development to expand and meet the growing needs of the region through infrastructure, income diversification and advocacy.	Growth in economic development, tourism numbers, rural products, mining, renewable energy.
3.2.3	Support skills development (youth, business, industry).	Number of programs conducted.
3.2.4	Career pathway and employment opportunities for youth.	% of under 35 consistent with state average.
3.2.5	Improve business and policy outcomes to support local businesses.	% of local spent dollars.
3.2.6	Advocate for the development of the Etheridge Agriculture Precinct and associated agricultural , including commodities ie water, industries.	Number of meetings attended and funding obtained.
3.3.1	Companies of large-scale projects operate with a suitable social licence to our community.	Employment by Industry.
3.3.2	Large-scale projects provide long term benefits to our community.	Value Added by Industry Sector.

Aim 4 – Social

Quality social infrastructure makes the shire a desirable place to live

Outcome

4.1 An active community with a variety of recreational activities.

4.2 An invigorated Community with a variety of multi-age services.

4.3 A culturally aware community.

4.4 A variety of modern communication mechanisms available for the whole Shire.

Strategy No.	Strategy	Performance Measure
4.1.1	Review and update the comprehensive asset management strategy to support the monitoring, maintenance, replacement and enhancement of council's parks, garden and recreational facilities.	Asset management Works Program annually adopted.
4.1.2	Establishment suitable recreational activities/facilities at water reservoirs.	% of works program completed.
4.1.3	Enhance and improve the aesthetics of each town.	% of works program completed.
4.1.4	Advocate for funding for additional sport and recreation infrastructure.	Number of meetings attended and funding obtained.
4.2.1	Review and update the comprehensive asset management strategy to support the monitoring, maintenance, replacement and enhancement of Council's Health, assisted living, childcare facilities	Asset management Works Program annually adopted.
4.2.2	Ensure that services to the community for childcare, youth hostel and assisted living services are provided.	Operational performance and customer feedback.
4.2.3	Construct care facilities to retain citizens in the community.	% of works program completed.
4.2.4	Advocate and facilitate the provision and improvement of central and remote health services.	Number of meetings attended and funding obtained.
4.2.5	Advocate and facilitate for improvements in educational services to be provided within the shire.	Number of meetings attended and funding obtained.
4.2.6	Advocate for policing and emergency capability and service delivery across the Shire.	Number of meetings attended.
4.3.1	Review and update the comprehensive asset management strategy to support the monitoring, maintenance, replacement and enhancement of council's social infrastructure.	Asset management Works Program annually adopted.
4.3.2	Provide libraries, as learning and information centres.	Operational performance and customer feedback.
4.3.3	Engage with and support local arts and cultural groups.	Number of meetings attended.

Strategy No.	Strategy	Performance Measure
4.3.4	Build and strengthen the Shire's identity through the support and provision of a variety of events and branding our corporate image.	Number of events held and funding obtained.
4.3.5	Encourage local historians to preserve and promote local history and heritage.	Number of meetings attended.
4.4.1	Improve co-operation and communication with relevant stakeholders and all levels of government in the strategic planning of future community infrastructure.	Number of meetings attended and funding obtained.
4.4.2	Review and update the comprehensive asset management strategy to support the maintenance, replacement and enhancement of council's communication assets.	Asset management Works Program annually adopted.



Aim 5 – Governance

Best practice corporate governance and organisational excellence

Outcome

5.1 Effective communication between council and the community and across the community.

5.2 Council operations support quality service provision and good governance.

5.1 Council provides community leadership through financial sustainability and an open and accountable governance structure.

5.4 Desirable staffing balance that reflects Council and community expectations.

5.5 Council is effective in attracting and retaining qualified, experienced and committed staff.

5.6 Council is effective in planning, preparing and responding to natural disasters.

Strategy No.	Strategy	Performance Measure
5.1.1	Using appropriate media, promote civil and respectful discussion and participation in relevant issues.	Community Survey.
5.1.2	Disseminate accurate and relevant information within the organization, the community and other relevant audiences.	Community Survey.
5.1.3	Review the current practice of holding consultation meetings throughout the Shire and distribution of newsletter 'Inform' to maximise effective community engagement.	Number of "community connect" meetings.
5.1.4	Council will embrace exceptional customer service, valuing staff and promoting ethical standards of practice, supported by clear policies and strategies.	Community Survey.
5.2.1	Ensure the transparency of council's administration and promote awareness within the community of council's financial management and other strategies.	Operational performance and customer feedback.
5.2.2	Pursue opportunities for external income sources to enhance financial capacity beyond traditional methods.	Financial Position.
5.2.3	Ensure the efficiency of procurement and stores activity.	% Compliance.
5.2.4	Ensure the efficiency of depot and engineering administration.	% of works program completed.
5.2.5	Maintain a profitable fleet business and manage contractor hire arrangements.	% profitability of plant.
5.3.1	Ensure a preparedness to respond to natural disasters and other emergencies and engage in planning activities aimed at minimising the impact of such disasters on the community.	Number of events and community feedback.

Strategy No.	Strategy	Performance Measure
5.3.2	Maintain a compliant, resourced disaster management plan.	% Compliance.
5.4.1	Expect an environment of honesty and integrity in which elected members, managers and staff work together in a spirit of trust and teamwork.	Annual Staff and contractor Survey.
5.4.2	Actively participate in the membership of regional development and other organisations in order to achieve mutual regional priorities.	Number of meetings attended.
5.4.3	Councillors take a leadership role in the community, serve as a role model and provide strategic direction for the continued growth and development of the region.	Number of meetings attended.
5.5.1	Develop, review and implement a staffing strategy to the efficiency of council operations.	Strategy adopted.
5.5.2	Council processes, service levels and use of technology provide an efficient use of resources.	Number of processes reviewed.
5.5.3	Provide accountable, professional, responsible, timely and accessible services to external and internal customers that reflect the values of the organization.	KPI: External - Snap send solve, Internal - Council Requests.
5.6.1	Ensure councillors and staff are provided with relevant skills and professional development opportunities to achieve stated strategic priorities and corporate objectives.	% of works program completed.
5.6.2	Implement effective HRM strategy throughout the organisation.	Staff turnover.
5.6.3	Develop and implement organisation well-being programs.	% Compliance.
5.6.4	Develop and implement proactive WHS and enterprise risk strategies to reduce threats to the council and the community.	% Compliance.



Financial Capability to Implement this Corporate Plan

Financing the infrastructure and services required to support the strategies and objectives outlined within the Corporate Plan, while improving services and public facilities remains a significant challenge.

The limited revenue base of the Council continues to result in high reliance on State and Federal Government funding for major projects. The implementation of a number of strategies identified within the plan is therefore subject to obtaining this funding. Economically, Council will develop a robust strategy to pursue funding streams to support all developments across Council's business.

Etheridge Shire Council maintains a 10 - year Strategic Financial Plan and is in the process of developing a 10 - year Asset Management Plan that will cover the life of the Corporate Plan and beyond. In simple terms, these plans identify planned expenditure and management of assets on council's activities and facilities over the 10 - years from where the funds have come and what the cumulative financial impacts of this will be on the shire as a whole. It is council's financial blueprint for the future and a living document that is required to be regularly reviewed.

The Corporate Plan encapsulates significant infrastructure improvements necessary to facilitate desired growth over the forthcoming five to ten years. The financial plan identifies the use of significant own - source revenue raised through rates and charges as well as external grants and borrowings as being necessary to implement these requirements.

The extension of the timeframe for the Financial Plan beyond that of the Corporate Plan ensures that council is aware of the ongoing impact of maintenance and debt servicing relating to new and improved facilities. Care is taken to ensure that debt relating to specific assets is extinguished well in advance of the end of the useful life of the asset.

Councillors and the Executive Management Team will ensure that council remains in a sustainable financial position.

The *Local Government Act 2009* requires all local governments to prepare and adopt a Corporate Plan covering a period of at least five years. Under the terms of the Act, the Corporate Plan is to be the basis for council's operational plans and budgets in each year.

Council discussed the development of this Corporate Plan at its regular community consultation meetings through-out the Shire, through articles in the 'Inform' newsletter and through its social media sites.

Council is required to make assessments of progress towards implementing its corporate and operational plans. Those assessments are contained in formal written reports and must be presented to a meeting of council at regular intervals of not more than three months.

The key threat to the sustainability of the Shire is the economic decline of its community. Council will continue to lobby for grants and subsidies to fund its operations, but will also seek to exploit opportunities and innovative ways to create jobs, economic growth and prosperity and address social and economic disadvantage.