

Wingecarribee Shire Council has been working with the community to find opportunities to create jobs in the Southern Highlands. The first public meeting, the Economic Summit, was held in June 2015 to discuss project ideas and how they relate to the 2031 Community Plan. The Investment Summit held in October 2015 was the first opportunity to promote projects chosen by the community to potential investors.

As a result of the Economic Summit, 120 projects were grouped across the following sectors: Water, Food, Shelter, Learning, Energy, Transport, Recreation, Technology, Art, and Business. Since June 2015 the sector groups have been doing the groundwork and research required to determine the commercial feasibility of priority projects in order to retain and create employment over the next 15 years.

Our enthusiastic and committed “brains trusts” from the Southern Highlands manage and promote most of these projects. Community support of our jobs strategy will be the key to ongoing business and job creation in the region. It is our mission to transition over 8,000 jobs that are likely to be lost over the next 15 years due to technological advances.

Council’s role is to:

1. Facilitate project meetings as appropriate.
2. Help with research.
3. Ensure a “whole of community” approach.
4. Monitor/manage progress across all economic sectors.

We anticipate job creation across all sectors via start-ups, as well as supporting and growing existing businesses. The region will also attract “best of breed” companies and individuals wishing to relocate to the Southern Highlands for professional and lifestyle reasons. It is a win-win for all concerned.

Here is a brief outline of the 10 sectors in our Economic Framework and where jobs will be created:

### **1. Water**

**1/3/2016** - This group is looking at how to better use and manage our limited water supply in the local region. Foundation work is being carried out to determine water sustainability. Following this, jobs will be created, e.g. improving dam management, design and production of low-pressure water systems, custom made water tanks and artistically inspired water-saving taps.

**19/4/2016** – Visiting University of Technology Sydney (UTS) 26/27<sup>th</sup> April to peer review water sector group model that shows limitations on water by 2031.

**2/5/2016** – Met with UTS 26/27 April - Subject to the UTS final report due mid-May, as our bulk water agreement requires us to be in lock step with Sydney, it makes sense to align our water actions/strategies with the Water NSW actions/strategies which will be driven by the level of Warragamba Dam. Initial analysis of bore usage in the Shire highlighted the importance of a bore management system (using satellite monitoring technology?).

**Expected Sector Jobs by 2031:** Steady at 300.

### **2. Food**

**1/3/2016** - Nine Food and Wine clusters are being formed in different parts of the Southern Highlands. Cluster members promote each other’s products and services to visitors. The Joadja cluster was launched

last year, and Moss Vale cluster is launching in March. This project retains and creates local jobs as wineries and food producers get busier.

The “On the Grow” project has taken the first steps towards building a strong local food system with the January launch of the new Railway Street Farmers Market, on the greens each Thursday - the first weekly growers’ market in the Highlands. On the Grow aims to support local farmers through developing shorter food chains, offer affordable access to local produce, and create a strong brand for the authentic and vibrant food culture, and innovative practice in the Southern Highlands.

A major opportunity is to see how we can improve our farming systems to be able to better deliver food locally and to Sydney. Fresh food in Sydney is being compromised as the urban sprawl continues and the Shire could be part of the Sydney Food Future solution. This is a key project that has the potential to create thousands of jobs as people of all ages work on the farms learning new farming techniques.

Additional jobs will be created in the processing and distribution of food. Discussions between Council and Sydney University of Technology (UTS) are in progress regarding this project.

<http://www.sydneyfoodfutures.net/>

The Food Sector links with water (farming requirements); shelter (housing on the farms); energy (renewable energy) and transport (solar power and batteries).

**19/4/2016** – Moss Vale Railways Street Farmers Market “Boots for Change” Thursday 14/4. Bundanoon Community Gardens seeking new site.

“On the Grow” – Seeking land. This project has possible earnings of \$9m from only 7 products

Food Clusters – Moss Vale started. Robertson is next. Trends from Joadja first six months show 200-300 FTEs once all clusters are established.

**2/05/2016** – An apparent lack of suitable land and good soil is being double checked against data from Sydney Food Futures. These constraints undermine the use of traditional intensive farming techniques. These issues may be able to be addressed via other farming opportunities, such as Aquaponics and/or Vertical Farming.

*Aquaponics:* An aquaponics system with an estimated set up cost of \$1m for a 100 square metre greenhouse can generate an estimated return of 30% p.a. using 5-10% of water used in traditional normal farming. We have existing aquaponics expertise in the region. Currently seeking local potential sites and investigating the possibility of supplying related technologies to Sydney region ex the Southern Highlands.

*Vertical Farming:* A multi-level vertical farming design provides 8 times more growing area than the single level greenhouse or traditional methods. This low-cost low-tech approach uses 10% of the water used by traditional methods. Related equipment could be engineered in the Southern Highlands.

Vertical Farming References:

[www.ukulimatech.co.ke](http://www.ukulimatech.co.ke)

[www.ricardoes.com](http://www.ricardoes.com) (Port Macquarie)

<http://openag.media.mit.edu/hardware/>

<https://www.media.mit.edu/research/groups/personal-food-computer>

**Expected Sector Jobs by 2031:** Reduced by 30,000 to 3000. (The result of moving away from traditional intensive agriculture due to water and land/soil constraints shifting emphasis to Aquaponics/Vertical farming and “back filling” Sydney with Aquaponics/Vertical Farming.)

### 3. Shelter

**1/3/2016** - Significant opportunity exists to develop a prefabricated sustainable housing industry in the region. This could include a portion of the new housing estates planned for the area south of Sydney. It can create jobs for local building manufacturers and builders. Shelter is linked to food.

**19/4/2016** – Shelter Group working on a commercially sensitive project that could be a game changer for Australian housing and lead to SH participation in Campbelltown housing developments as well as a tourist destination attraction.

**2/5/2016** – Possible local housing precinct development with a focus on sustainability. Investigating the potential impact of 3D printing for buildings. e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WbgaZYTmP5o>

**Expected Sector Jobs by 2031:** Steady at 250

### 4. Energy

A group has been formed to reduce our reliance on grid-electricity and establish solar powered projects for the Southern Highlands, as well as other regions. Jobs can be created via the distribution and instalment of solar power. Energy is linked to food, water, shelter, transport, recreation and business.

**19/4/2016** – Energy Group company focussing on Community-funded energy projects in the Shire. Speaking with Council re available land. Council has supporting a letter for a grant application. Any land access likely to be on a commercial basis.

**2/5/2016** – Anecdotal evidence suggests an increasing interest in solar energy in the region. (Two very early stage larger scale solar projects plus retrofitting existing buildings with “smart” technologies.)

**Expected Sector Jobs by 2031:** Steady at 300 jobs.

### 5. Transport

The Transport Sector is liaising with community members concerned about train timetables between here and Sydney, to assist locals with travel.

This sector is also looking at introducing electric bicycles (on road and off road) to the area for locals and tourists. This will produce a small number of jobs in the supply and maintenance of the bicycles, which will grow as the uptake increases. Transport is linked to recreation via bike tracks and trails for mountain bikes.

**19/4/2016** – 80by20 Group had first public meeting re train schedules (join via Facebook). Quarterly meetings. Data gathering at present. 15 or so people attended first meeting held.

Electric bikes – interest from local businessman looking at hiring ebikes and collaborating with Welcome Centre. Also interested in e-trikes, cargo ebikes, Tuk Tuks.

Recent High Speed Rail (HSR) Comments in SMH – a quick comparison between HSR and Hyperloop <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyperloop> - ex Tesla owner Elon Musk:

- Hyperloop option is about 25%-30% of the cost of HSR.
- Hyperloop could be completed decades earlier than HSR.
- Hyperloop is 2-3 times faster than HSR (allowing maximum speeds for HSR and 75% of maximum speed for Hyperloop).
- Bang for the buck - Hyperloop is 8-10 times more cost effective than HSR (before taking account of the productivity cost of HSR being delaying for decades and related opportunity costs).

**2/5/2016** – Sydney to Canberra corridor strategy being reviewed to determine the potential impact of Hyperloop technology.

Assessing regional impact of driverless trucks. Estimated 400% trucking industry improvement means despite job losses, change will occur. Specific potential impacts include:

- Trucking freight costs drop by 75% due to labour savings
- 24/7 operations doubles transport mileage for 25% of the current cost
- Better fuel efficiency due to optimum truck speeds
- Estimated 1% increase in unemployment (drivers)
- More job losses re highway food, truck stops, accommodation, etc.
- Road design changes due to slow lanes a major infrastructural cost
- Improved road safety

**Expected Sector Jobs by 2031:** Steady at 160 jobs.

## 6. Technology

**1/3/2016** - Fast community-owned broadband, in addition to the NBN, can attract new information businesses/workers to the area. Faster technology will enable meaningful, achievable work for people in the Southern Highlands. Expected jobs include web based media creators, semi-retired workers, and technology innovators. Technology is a must for learning and business projects.

**19/4/2016** – An Internet Infrastructure provider has provided initial discussion proposal for a fast network that would leapfrog NBN performance. If we go ahead SH would have one of the fastest regional Internet services in the world. The aim is to kick-start technology developments for the region and attract tech-centric companies from around the world.

Smart City proponent developing proposal for initial analysis of the region (expenses only).

**2/5/2016** – Redtrain Networks presenting information to Council on 4/5/2016 for an initial start up project in Moss Vale CBD probably combining 1Gbit fibre and 1Gbit wireless technologies. Assuming this project went ahead feedback from local sources suggests it would “transform” Moss Vale.

Attended Parramatta “Smart Cities” Workshop hosted by the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce. Focus was on hardware related infrastructure and the local government sector. Will be following up re the benefits of taking a “whole of community” approach using the “Connecting Communities” process ex New Zealand.

Early planning for Technology sector suppliers from the region to establish regular “meetups” offering the community free help with technology. This is designed to be a win-win – the public finding solutions to technology issues and the technology suppliers generating new business leads.

**Expected Sector Jobs by 2031:** Steady at 400 jobs.

## 7. Art

**1/3/2016** - The Arts Sector is being championed by SHAPE, which intends developing a world class performing arts sector, creating local jobs and attracting performers from outside the region.

**19/4/2016** – Nothing significant to report.

**2/5/2016** – Nothing significant to report.

**Expected Sector Jobs by 2031:** Steady at 300 jobs.

## 8. Recreation

**1/3/2016** - The major project in this sector is to promote the Southern Highlands as an outdoor adventure destination for locals and visitors. We intend seeking funding from the State government to increase our

tracks and trails from 100km to 400km. The Southern Highlands is also ideal for developing fishing and water sports, like kayaking.

Jobs will be created in developing these outdoor recreation attractions; building tracks and trails, cleaning / developing waterways and fishing spots, and managing and marketing these attractions to Australian and overseas visitors.

**19/4/2016** – Thirlmere to Mittagong Railside Trail project (Josh Patterson – Recreation Planner, WSC). Considerable interest in collaboration with Trainworks and Wollondilly Shire. Trainworks coordinating with Welcome Centre for steam trains ex Sydney to SH. Have possible funding for scoping study outside of WSC. Trainworks likes the idea of a recreation “zone” – Wollondilly/Wingecarribee.

Recreation Show – Moss Vale – November <http://www.adventureshow.com.au/> - significant event. Only one of its kind in Australia. Positions SH as a “Playground” for Sydney / NSW. Could impact on visitor mix / volumes as the show expands thinking on what “recreation” actually means.

Mountain Bikes and cycling links with Tracks, Trails, Streams. 400km of tracks and trails plus fishing (seeking support ex NSW Government). Initial “finger in the air” budget will be redone in next few weeks by external party to verify estimated additional GDP for NSW State. Initial estimate \$10m+ per annum after 5 years. Plus the local impact of an additional 150,000 recreation visitors per annum to SH but this could be revised downwards. Ebikes are an important part of this strategy

Recreation Group working towards establishing a holistic role that facilitates all non-organised recreation in the SH.

**2/5/2016** – A work in progress.

**Expected Sector Jobs by 2031:** Steady at 250 jobs.

## 9. Business

**1/3/2016** - The Business Sector focuses on start-ups, attracting “best of breed” companies, and supporting and growing existing businesses. We want to help local businesses adapt and grow, and hence there are plans to establish a volunteer Business Mentoring Program to support small businesses. Businesses will be matched with a suitable mentor and will have access to trained, experienced professionals. Council is in discussion with BEC and commercial sponsors regarding this program.

**19/4/2016** – Working through mentoring options – at this stage with BEC. Also considering broadening net for corporate support. ABR Database should be live within 2-3 weeks. 12,000 businesses in the SH. Detailed analysis to be done – approximately 5,500 are GST registered.

**2/5/2016** – Work in progress. New ABR database services making it easier to access ABN-related data, coupled with the addition of significant new data fields, is set to transform this resource. Possibility that our internal CRM (Client Relationship Management) system will form the basis of the ABR nationwide design once it is operational.

**Expected Sector Jobs by 2031:** Steady at 3000 jobs (new plus retained).

## 10. Learning

**1/3/2016** - One immediate job creation opportunity involves contracting part time early retirees (e.g. U3A members) to research and write advertising-supported articles for the Internet. At the same time the retirees can mentor younger unemployed people, helping to re-skill them for 21<sup>st</sup> Century jobs. Learning is linked to technology as high speed Internet is a pre-requisite for this project to work.

Other Learning Sector projects include looking at matching emerging industries and short courses for people out of work, and the best models internationally on teaching people how to learn, with a view to developing a centre of excellence in the Southern Highlands.

**19/4/2016** – Speaking to local IT experts re U3A members developing web content on a piece rate basis. Has the potential for participants to earn a significant second income (\$1000+ a week) after 2-3 years plus the possibility of using U3A members as mentors for young people.

**2/5/2016** – A work in Progress.

**Expected Sector Jobs by 2031:** Steady at 500

## Other

**18/05/2016** – Planning for promotion of 2016 Economic Workshop (renamed Economic Summit) underway. Aiming for 150-200 people taking part. Date will be 21<sup>st</sup> June at Mittagong RSL.

Budget on track although some previous projects have been reprioritised.

**2/5/2016** – Preparing video interviews to provide a succinct update of the 10 Sectors within the Economic Development Framework. Will also be promoting selected videos of Sector presentations from October 2015 Investment Summit. 2016 Economic Workshop will also be promoted using a banner across Bong Bong Street for 2 weeks. Objective is to add 100-150 new people to the 250+ people who have been part of the journey so far and to set the scene for wider promotion of the region in anticipation of the October 2016 Investment Summit.

### **Revised 2031 Job Estimates Summary**

Water	Food	Shelter	Energy	Transport	Technology	Art	Recreation	Business	Learning	Total
300	3000	250	300	160	400	300	250	3000	500	8460

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