



Shaping Hay's Future

A 10-year Economic Transition Roadmap

Creating the future economy we want

March 2026



Acknowledgement of Country



Hay Shire Council and The Next Economy acknowledge the Wiradjuri, Nari Nari and Yitha Yitha people and the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, meet and work.

We recognise our communities are also made up of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples descended from additional mobs and clans who call the Hay Plains and Riverina region their home. We wish to pay our respects to Elders past and present and recognise the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our region and across Australia.

About The Next Economy

The Next Economy (TNE) works with regions, government, industry and civil society leaders to build climate-safe, regenerative and socially just economies.

We are a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee and a registered charity with ACNC. We have Deductible Gift Recipient status through the auspices of The Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal. To support us, visit www.nexteconomy.com.au/donate

Find out more at: www.nexteconomy.com.au

Acknowledgement

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Front cover image: Aerial view of a straight road stretching across the plains at twilight.

Photo supplied by Hay Shire Council. Photographer: Ron Bonham.

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Foreword



I am honoured to be Mayor of Hay at this moment in our long, proud history, and to share with you this Roadmap for our future.

From the outset, I want to be clear: while Council co-ordinated this work with the support of The Next Economy, this Roadmap belongs to the Hay community. You shaped it. You guided it. And you will be the ones who bring it to life.

The world around us is changing – in society, in our climate, and in Australia’s energy system. Much of that change is outside our control. Across energy, agriculture, industry, transport and our homes, shifts are already underway.

What we do with that change is up to us.

We realised early that we needed to be in the driver’s seat – for change to happen with us, not to us. Good planning takes time, which is why we’re acting now with a ten-year, community-led economic transition roadmap.

Our economy is more than numbers on a page. It’s people, connections, livelihoods and the landscapes we care for.

We’ve always been proud stewards of our land and community, and this Roadmap builds on those roots so we can seize opportunities, manage change well and achieve the future we want.

This Roadmap reflects countless hours of conversations, workshops and interviews with hundreds of Hay locals, who shared their wisdom quietly and generously.

There’s a lot to do, and it is challenging work at times, but we’re already moving. The groundwork is happening and real momentum is building.

Now we need the whole Hay community to be part of it – whether you’ve been involved from day one or you’re just now joining us. This Roadmap will only succeed if all of us work together to deliver it. This includes Council, residents, businesses, other levels of government and partners, as well as those that may be new to Hay – new residents, visitors and representatives of emerging businesses and industries.

Council will do what we can to represent our community, to facilitate and to support. Realising this vision, however, requires leadership and action from all of us.

This is the legacy we’re creating for future generations – let’s make it the very best it can be.

Carol Oataway

Mayor, Hay Shire Council

Executive Summary

Hay's economy is changing – and together, we have the strengths and shared values to shape a thriving future. On the one hand, global market shifts, climate pressures and the transition to net zero are reshaping industries and supply chains, while locally we face rising costs, housing shortages, workforce gaps and ageing infrastructure. These challenges, among others, create uncertainty. But they also open doors for innovation, collaboration and bold solutions that put people and place at the centre.

Hay's agricultural heritage, strategic location and strong community networks provide a solid foundation for resilience and growth. Positioned on major freight routes and at the heart of the South West Renewable Energy Zone, Hay is well placed to leverage some of the \$17 billion in private investment to diversify its economy and create new opportunities. **Acting early ensures these benefits stay local and strengthen our region for generations to come.**

Recent wins – expanding childcare, unlocking land for housing and forming strategic industry partnerships – show what's possible when we plan ahead. Now is the time to build on this momentum and secure a prosperous future for Hay.

Big opportunities are here now – not just on the horizon – and deliberate action is required to capture value locally. Acting strategically ensures these opportunities translate into lasting local benefits. Renewable energy development can also drive skills, business growth and infrastructure investment. Meanwhile, industry diversification

in construction and manufacturing will broaden the economic base and reduce vulnerability. And improving housing, childcare and digital connectivity will unlock workforce potential and attract new enterprises.

The Hay Economic Transition Roadmap is by the community, for the community – turning our vision and aspirations into action. Developed through engagement with more than 250 residents and stakeholders throughout 2024 and 2025, the Roadmap reflects local priorities, aspirations and capabilities. It provides clear direction for managing disruption and shaping a future economy that works for people and place. Led by Hay Shire Council with support from The Next Economy, it is designed to catalyse coordinated, collective action that aligns investment with community values.

Our 2035 vision is clear – resilient communities, a prosperous region and thriving ecosystems.

Healthy, connected communities will have meaningful work and time for what matters. A diverse, sustainable economy will circulate value locally and protect natural assets. Housing and services will meet the needs of all generations with dignity and wellbeing. This vision guides every decision and action in the Roadmap.



Transport connectivity is critical in Hay.
Image courtesy of Hay Shire Council

The Roadmap makes it practical – plan, learn and deliver. The Roadmap outlines a range of actions under seven strategic levers that target critical points in Hay’s economic system to create lasting impact. It also outlines roles and responsibilities for local government, businesses, industry, investors, educators, researchers, NGOs and community members – because everyone has a role to play in shaping Hay’s future.

The Roadmap builds on two key foundations: the Regional Resilience Plan and the Early Insights Paper. The Regional Resilience Plan sets out long term strategies for social, environmental and economic resilience, while the Early Insights Paper captures research and community engagement findings regarding the economy that informed this Roadmap. Together, they provide the evidence base and whole of system frame for economic transition. Both can be found on Council’s website.

A visual summary of the Roadmap is on the following page.

The Roadmap builds on two key pieces of work completed in 2024-25: **The Hay and Carrathool Regional Resilience Plan** and **the Hay Economic Transition Early Insights Paper**.

To find out more visit

www.hay.nsw.gov.au/Economic-Development

Hay Shire Council and community leaders more broadly are laying the groundwork required to be in the driver’s seat of change. Our people are demonstrating strong local leadership, doing the work to understand our economy, engaging people on the journey early and preparing plans that are already delivering real results, including:

- Innovative approaches to **local governance of community benefit funds** are being finalised to ensure strategic value and a long-lasting legacy is created for our community.
- An **additional property has been provided to the Hay Children’s Services** to expand its capacity with the service now well positioned to apply for funding to re-purpose the building.
- The **Local Environment Plan has been updated** to remove minimum lot size requirements – unlocking land for infill housing investment.
- Investigations are underway to deliver over **17 new dwellings** for essential workers and independent living.
- There are several **future-focused emerging industry opportunities** to position Hay as a hub for innovation and sustainability.
- Our region is being **recognised nationally as leading the way**, sharing insights and lessons learned with others navigating similar transitions.

We measure success by the wellbeing of our people and the environment, not just growth.

Hay’s future economy depends on and prioritises liveability, inclusion and environmental care. By focusing on resilience and shared value, Hay can build an economy that supports people and protects the landscapes and way of life we value.

Shaping Hay's Future

A 10-Year Economic Transition Roadmap

Creating the future economy we want, by building a resilient

regional economy that supports people, place and prosperity

Local leadership

Building strong local leadership, governance and coordination so Hay is in the driver's seat of its own future.

Workforce

Ensuring people have the skills and capabilities they need to fully participate in the region's future economy.

Childcare

Expanding childcare services tailored to Hay's unique context helps more families and skilled workers return to work.

Strategic levers for change

Housing

Increasing the variety and supply of housing, while managing demand peaks, to retain residents and strengthen the local economy.

Business & industry

Broadening Hay's economic base, enabling a thriving, connected ecosystem of local businesses, industries and workers.

Land & natural resources

Managing our land & natural resources and evolving the land-based economy to sustain livelihoods and strengthen long-term regional resilience.

Transport & infrastructure

Securing the reliable, connected and future-ready transport & infrastructure and essential services our region needs to stay productive and resilient.



Our 2035 Vision

In 2035, our communities – including local governments, businesses, industries and households – will have the capacity to adapt to climate, social and economic challenges.

We'll stay healthy and vibrant, with safe places to live, work and raise future generations.



Healthy and connected communities



Prosperous regional economy



Thriving ecosystems



Sustainable development

- **Local businesses**

are adapting, thriving and keeping more value circulating locally

- **Agriculture**

and production remains at the heart of Hay's economy

- **Meaningful work**

and economic opportunities are available to everyone

- **Regional centre**

that is confident and connected

- **For people & place**

building a resilient regional economy that works for the well-being of everyone



The future economy we want



Hay Shire
COUNCIL



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The imperative to act

Sunshine on the Hay Plains. Image courtesy of Hay Shire Council

Change in Hay is happening at a pace and scale not seen in decades. Rising costs, climate pressures and global market shifts are colliding with local challenges like housing shortages, workforce gaps and ageing infrastructure.

At the same time, new opportunities are emerging in renewable energy, industry diversification, agriculture, construction and manufacturing.

These pressures and possibilities stem from the design of our economy and how it currently operates.

An economy is more than markets, businesses and jobs – it is how we provide for each other through work, services and community contributions. When working well, it is the foundation of community wellbeing and livelihoods, enabling our region to use its strengths to shape a more inclusive and sustainable future.

This is why economic development is a key priority for Hay Shire Council and why Council worked with the community to create the **Hay Economic Transition Roadmap**.

How change is managed locally will determine the direction of the Hay region.

The **Roadmap** helps us move from reacting to challenges to taking coordinated, long-term action. It focuses on addressing root causes, preparing the region for disruption and ensuring our economy supports the wellbeing of our people and place.

Recent wins – such as expanded childcare, new housing partnerships and the establishment of new industries – show what’s possible when Hay collaborates and leverages its local assets.

With clear strategy and collective effort, Hay can navigate change with confidence and turn future disruptions into opportunities to build a strong foundation for generations to come.

Thinking about the economy differently

A growing movement in Australia and globally is reframing the economy as a system for collective wellbeing. In practice, this means sharing value fairly, measuring success by what matters and building economies around organisations that do good for communities and ecosystems.

Approaches such as circularity, community wealth building, economic democracy and doughnut economics are being tested around the world and offer practical lessons for regions like Hay, where local strengths and identity can drive inclusive and sustainable development.¹

¹Trebeck, Katherine and Wakefield, Jolee (2025). The economy we could have: the economy of today, the divides it creates, and the alternatives. The Next Economy, Brisbane. October 2025.



The iconic One Tree Hotel stands as an important reminder of how the local economy and community has changed. Image courtesy of Hay Shire Council. Photographer: Claire Stribbles.

Hay's economy today

Hay's economy is more than numbers on a page – it is a living system shaped by people, place and relationships. It combines deep agricultural expertise, remoteness and a low population density with strong community networks and a strategic location that connects the region to national supply chains. This mix creates resilience, but also complexity: informal collaboration underpins everyday life, while global market shifts and climate pressures increasingly influence local decisions.

Understanding the key dynamics of this system – the patterns, pressures or forces that shape how the local economy behaves and changes – is essential for managing a transition that benefits the whole community. Equally important is understanding the unique 'clusters' that make up Hay's economy.

These clusters represent groups of related economic activities, people, services and industries that naturally connect, overlap and rely on each other.

The clusters and dynamics presented in the Roadmap were identified through consultation with community and regional stakeholders. They were first shared in the **Hay Economic Transition Roadmap Early Insights Paper** in 2025. The Early Insights Paper summarises the early findings from research and engagement, offering an overview of how Hay's economy works, its strengths and where local action is needed to respond to a rapidly changing global context. It is available on Council's website.

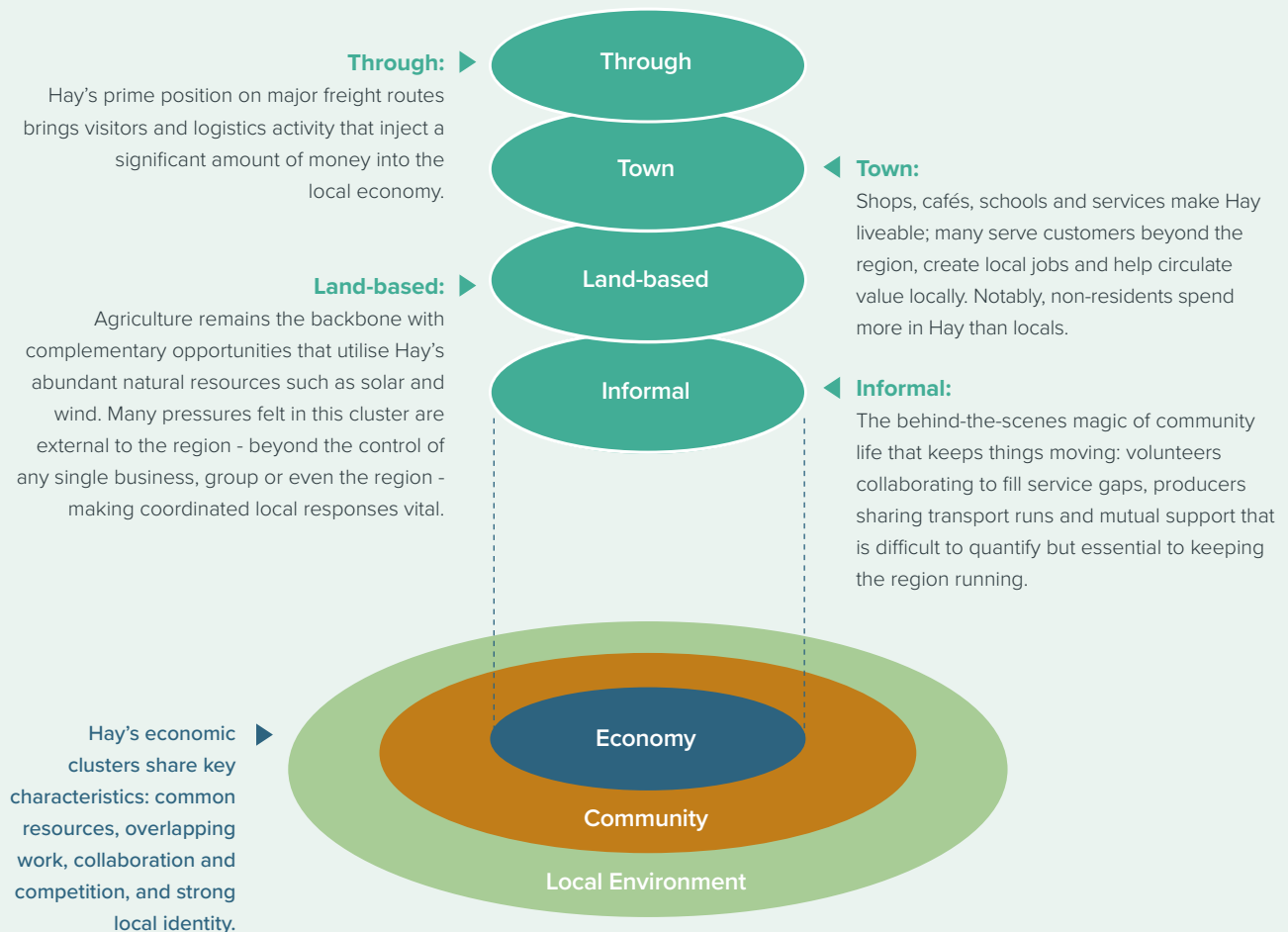


Figure 2. Hay's economic clusters are dynamic and interconnected, sharing key characteristics: common resources, overlapping work, collaboration and competition and strong local identity.



Middle of everywhere

Connectivity is a strength, but without investment in roads, technology and services the region risks sliding toward isolation.



Local capture capacity

Local benefits may not be created from new opportunities without business collaboration, innovation, improved local procurement, skills and partnerships.



Limits to success

Housing shortages, childcare gaps and ageing infrastructure cap growth and make attraction and retention harder.



Small giant

Strong community networks achieve a lot for a small place, but over reliance on a few people creates burnout and vulnerability.



Fragmentation

Silos across business, sectors and community organisations build on opportunities to share resources, support cohesion, solve problems and build bigger opportunities.

Figure 3. There are dynamics within the local economy that influence how things work in Hay's economy.



The vast landscape of the Hay plains provides a backdrop to life and work in Hay. Image courtesy of Hay Shire Council.

Hay Snapshot

Hay sits at the intersection of significant geographic, economic and climatic transitions – a position that brings challenges and opportunities. Isolation, climate extremes and limited infrastructure are real constraints, but they also drive creativity and bold action.

Landscape

Hay Shire, in the western Riverina of south-west NSW, spans **11,326km²** – nearly five times the size of the ACT – with a population just shy of **3,000**, three-quarters in the township. Centrally located between Adelaide and Sydney, albeit geographically closer to Melbourne, the region is classified as remote.

Positioned on key east–west and north–south freight routes, Hay captures significant visitor and through-traffic spend – more than 50% of local transactions come from non-residents.

The region is rural, with fertile agricultural land, rich biodiversity and landscapes defined by the lower Murrumbidgee and Lachlan Rivers, and vast Hay Plains. Hay is positioned in a grassland transition zone between temperate climates to the south-east and desert climates, beyond the region, to the north-west. Seasonal, annual and global climatic cycles mean the region can be very wet or very dry affecting agriculture land-uses and property sizes across the region.

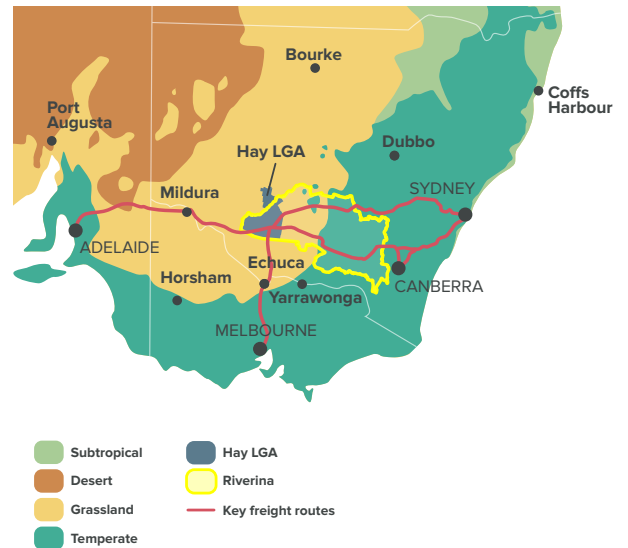
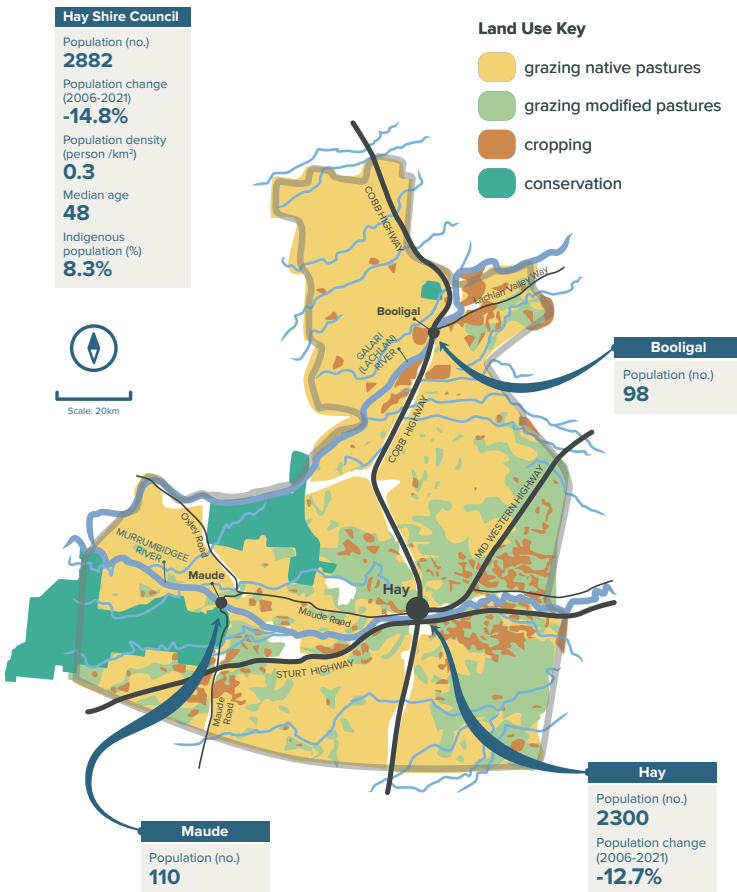


Figure 4. Located on major freight routes in south-west NSW, Hay sits in a transition zone between temperate and desert climates, shaping much of the region's economic activity.



Institutions such as the Shear Outback Museum have created opportunities for visitors to engage with Hay's agricultural background. Image courtesy of Hay Shire Council.

Lifestyle

Life in Hay is shaped by its wide-open landscapes, relative isolation, strong sense of place and identity. It's safe, relaxed and family-friendly with deep intergenerational community ties and high levels of volunteerism.

Sport, community organised events and 'helping out' underpin social wellbeing and resilience.

Despite long hours and seasonal rhythms, residents describe the Hay lifestyle as comfortable, community-oriented and purposeful.

Livelihoods

The local landscape, water availability and agricultural roots drives Hay's economy and wellbeing. A leading sheep producing region, Hay also produces a diverse mix of agricultural industries including cotton, rice, grains, cattle and horticulture, with productivity closely linked to access to water.

Hay is economically self-sufficient: 88.3% of resident workers are employed locally and GRP is \$212m, up 4.5% year-on-year.

Beyond farming, local jobs span construction, retail, health, manufacturing and transport with demand for new skills increasing with the development of renewable energy infrastructure.

Hay sits at the heart of the South-West Renewable Energy Zone, with over \$17b in private investment creating opportunities for local business and workforce development.

Further information can be found in the **Hay Economic Transition Early Insights Paper**. To find out more visit www.hay.nsw.gov.au/Economic-Development

The Hay Economic Transition Roadmap

The future we want for our region is anchored in our long-term vision, aspirations and strategies for resilience, first developed as part of our Regional Resilience Plan². These elements recognise the interconnections between our social, economic and ecological systems and remain vital today - acting as our 'North Star', providing direction, guiding decision making and helping us to stay focused when challenges arise.

The Hay Economic Transition Roadmap builds on the wide-angle view of resilience across the Hay region set out in the Regional Resilience Plan, applying a zoom lens to our economy, a key unit of change.

The Roadmap provides a framework to guide the region through significant economic change in a way that is locally led, inclusive and focused on the future.

Developed by the community and convened by Hay Shire Council with support from The Next Economy, it brings together community, business, industry and governments around a common direction for coordinated action. At its core, the Roadmap asks:

How can we harness our community's strengths and resources to build a future economy that creates local wealth and wellbeing for everyone, while protecting our landscapes, cultures and way of life?

The Roadmap is about actively shaping change and putting Hay in the driver's seat, using energy transition as a real-time case study to learn, adapt and lead. It is a living document intended to be owned and actioned by all.

It will evolve as conditions change, with actions implemented and stewarded through ongoing partnerships between council, community, business, industry and other key stakeholders over the next decade.



Hay's 2035 vision and aspirations provide direction for the Roadmap and Hay's economic future. Image courtesy of Hay Shire Council.

The **Hay Futures Playbook** is a practical companion to the Roadmap.

It provides practical information, local stories and ideas, useful tools and case studies to help the community take action, manage economic change and shape Hay's future with confidence.

² The Next Economy. (2024). Hay and Carrathool Regional Drought Resilience Plan. The Next Economy, Brisbane.

Community leadership and perspectives have been central to the development of the Roadmap and will remain critical to the region's economic transition over time.

Regional stakeholders, industry representatives and state and federal government partners were also engaged to help connect local ideas with external expertise, networks and opportunities.

The Roadmap was shaped through extensive engagement and real time learning with more than 250 residents, landholders, producers, educators, care workers, service providers, small business owners, First Nations people and young people throughout 2024 and 2025. Engagement activities included workshops, interviews, coffee-table discussions, working group meetings and community forums.



A Community Working Group of 10 members provided local governance, advice and feedback across the regional economy and community, supporting stakeholder engagement, project planning, local context development, sense making and analysis. Image courtesy of The Next Economy

Hay's Economic Transition Agenda

Change is possible. The economy is a human-made system – one that can be redesigned.

Through recent engagement, our community and local businesses have shown a willingness to rethink economic priorities and reimagine the kind of economy we want for Hay. This forms the foundation of the economic transition agenda, outlined here.



Our 2035 Vision

In 2035, our communities – including local governments, businesses, industries and households – will have the capacity to adapt to climate, social and economic challenges.

We'll stay healthy and vibrant, with safe places to live, work and raise future generations.



Healthy and connected communities



Prosperous regional economy



Thriving ecosystems



Sustainable development

- **Local businesses** are adapting, thriving and keeping more value circulating locally locally with innovation in agriculture, manufacturing, essential services and other industries encouraged.
- **Agriculture** and production remains at the heart of Hay's economy alongside industries that are sustainable, build on existing skills and local expertise, and support long-term environmental care.
- **Meaningful work** and economic opportunities are available to everyone, so people live, learn and build a future here.
- **Regional centre** that is confident and connected, attracting investment that helps Hay stay connected to regional and global systems while maintaining its distinct rural identity.
- **For people & place** building a resilient regional economy that works for the well-being of everyone now and into the future. It focuses on adapting thoughtfully over time, building on local strengths and creating new opportunities that reflect community values rather than pursuing growth for its own sake.



The future economy we want

Figure 5. Hay's 2035 Vision and Aspirations form our broader resilience framework, developed through the Regional Resilience Plan. The 'Future economy we want', guides the Roadmap's economic transition agenda through specific actions and levers.

Everyone has a role to play

Building regional resilience and managing change through economic transition is a shared responsibility that requires sustained, coordinated action grounded in Hay's local strengths, values and community priorities.

State and national governments hold primary responsibility for regional development and economic transition, with mandates to set strategic direction, provide policy certainty, streamline planning and regulatory frameworks, undertake rigorous and transparent regional planning and direct funding and resources to priority areas and regions³.

Hay Shire Council plays a critical complementary role. Its proximity to the community places Council in a unique position to build trust, facilitate connections, support wellbeing from the ground up and represent local interests in regional, industry and government forums.

Industry, investors, funders, local businesses and regional bodies also have an important role to play. Many will benefit if Hay manages change well and can help enable the region's transition through investment, innovation and partnership.

Importantly, our community, its people, groups and networks are central. Volunteers step up in countless ways, filling service gaps, providing leadership, supporting one another through hardship and strengthening the social fabric that underpins the local economy. Our people have local knowledge essential to guiding future directions in Hay.

Everyone has a role to play in shaping Hay's future.

See **Appendix A – Roles and responsibilities** for a high-level overview of how different stakeholders can support Hay's economic transition over the next 10 years.

³Productivity Commission, 2017. 'Transitioning Regional Economies - Study Report'. Canberra.



The Roadmap has been developed by the community, for the community and local environment - but everyone has a role to play. Image courtesy of The Next Economy

Managing change over time

The Vision sets out the future Hay is working towards and the outcomes the community wants. This section explains how we manage the journey.

Economic change does not happen in a straight line. Some changes are visible now and fast-moving, others unfold slower or in unexpected ways.

Over the next decade, different kinds of work or 'horizons' will overlap:

- Running today's economy – maintaining and improving what works
- Managing and shaping significant change already underway
- Building long-term resilience and capability for an uncertain future
- The future we want – what we're working towards

Together, these ways of working guide priorities, action sequencing and how short-term decisions align with Hay's 2035 vision.

Understanding change over time

The Roadmap uses 'horizons' to describe these different kinds of work. They are not fixed phases but patterns that coexist, each with a distinct purpose and mindset. The balance shifts as conditions change.

Balancing the work

To be effective, the Roadmap emphasises working across all horizons at once - optimising the best of what works in today's economy, experimenting and adapting during transition and building toward a resilient, thriving future. This ensures Hay seizes near-term opportunities like renewable energy, while reducing reliance on one sector, strengthening foundations to cope with future disruptions.

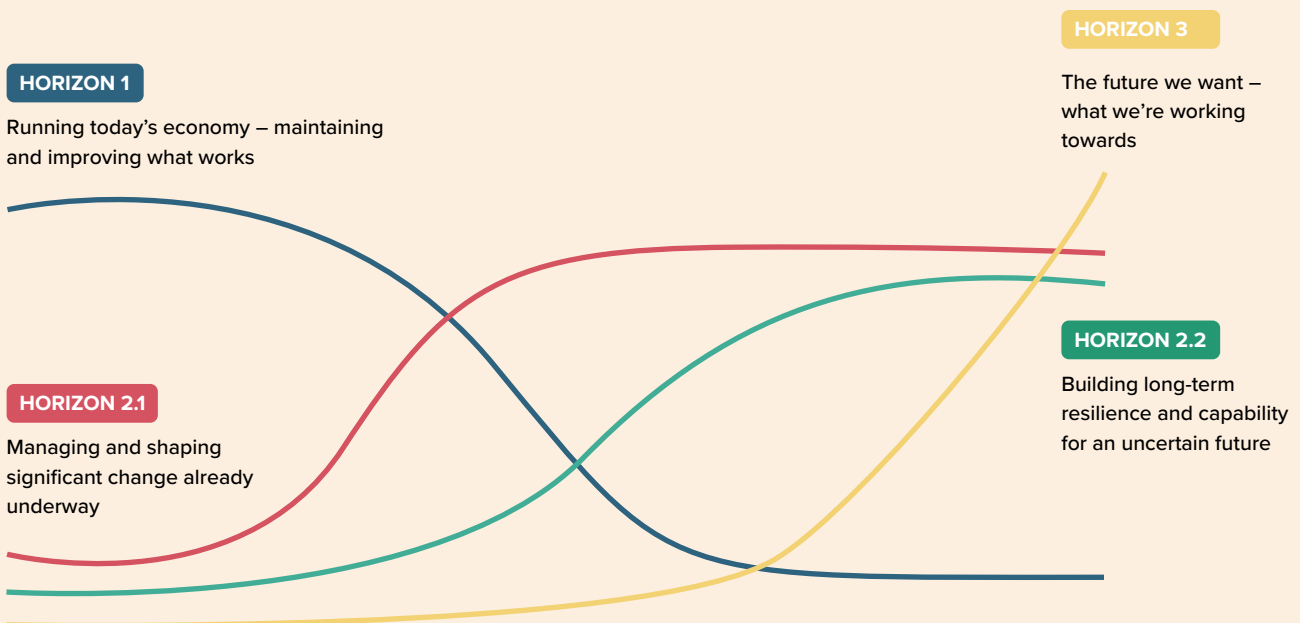


Figure 6. Hay's economic transition requires balancing sustaining current systems, managing emerging opportunities, navigating transition and building long-term resilience - all at the same time to different degrees. Adapted from the Three Horizons Framework (Bill Sharpe and the International Futures Forum).

Horizon 1: Running today's economy – maintaining and improving what works

Horizon 1 focuses on the economy and systems Hay relies on today. It covers existing industries, services, infrastructure, policies and ways of working that support daily life in the community. While many of these remain essential, pressures such as climate change, workforce shortages and changing markets mean some parts are no longer well suited to the future.

Work in this horizon prioritises keeping critical services running, improving efficiency and reliability and making clear choices about what should be maintained, adapted or phased out, supporting today's needs without limiting future options.

Horizon 2: Our region in transition – how we change

Horizon 2 is where new ideas, partnerships and ways of working emerge. Work in this horizon focuses on managing short-term impacts, testing new approaches and navigating uncertainty and competing priorities. It can be complex and sometimes messy, with tension between current practices and future goals. Progress requires both deliberate action and the ability to adapt as opportunities arise, helping move the region toward its long-term vision.

Horizon 2.1: Managing and shaping significant change already underway (2025–2030)

Over the next five years, Hay will experience significant external investment and economic activity, driven largely by renewable energy development. This creates a rare opportunity to deliver lasting local benefits by diversifying the economy and building skills, businesses and infrastructure with long-term value. At the same time, pressures on housing, childcare, services and community cohesion must be carefully managed. The focus during this period is on turning disruption into positive outcomes, investing benefits strategically and minimising negative impacts.

Horizon 2.2: Building long-term resilience and capability for an uncertain future (2030–2035)

Alongside managing the immediate impacts of renewable energy development, this horizon focuses on strengthening Hay's long-term ability to respond to future disruption and uncertainty, including climate impacts, market change, population shifts and policy reform. Work in this horizon prioritises building strong institutions, skills and partnerships and embedding adaptive systems that can respond to change. This helps the community sustain the benefits of transition while building flexible resilience to support new industries and long-term economic stability.

Horizon 3: The future we want – what we're working towards

Horizon 3 highlights new ways of doing things that support resilience, sustainability and community wellbeing. While still emerging, small initiatives already point to what's possible. This horizon sets a clear direction for decisions, investment and partnerships, helping ensure that actions taken today steadily build toward the future Hay wants.



Strategic levers and actions

Left. River at dusk with reflections of surrounding trees. Image courtesy of Hay Shire Council. Photographer: Ron Bonham.

As a community – working alongside Council and other partners – we have many actions we can take to build a strong and diverse local economy. To make the greatest impact, we need to focus our efforts where they matter most, balancing immediate actions to address current challenges with proactive long-term strategies that prepare us for the future.

The Roadmap identifies **seven strategic levers** that focus on critical points within Hay's economy. If pulled intentionally, through targeted actions aligned with broader goals, these levers have the greatest potential to make the most of available resources and shape the economy in a way that establishes a 'new normal' for Hay – one where long-term wellbeing and resilience are at the heart of decision making.

Strategic levers are like a crowbar. Just as a crowbar lets you move a heavy object with the right push, well-timed and targeted actions can shift the whole economic system in the direction we want. **Actions** provide the force needed to move the lever and drive change. For example, if the lever is workforce capability, an **action** could be bringing local employers together to plan workforce development.



The unique characteristics and strengths of the Hay economy can be leveraged to support long-term wellbeing and regional resilience. Image courtesy of The Next Economy

The following section outlines the seven strategic levers, their economic significance, desired outcomes, actions and relevant stakeholders.

Strategic levers

Strategic levers are critical points in Hay's economic system where applying focused action will strengthen the foundations of the region's economy and create significant, lasting impact.

Levers are interconnected; one action will often trigger benefits or impacts across multiple areas. For example, improving digital connectivity doesn't just solve a short-term problem for local businesses – it enables remote work, attracts new enterprises, supports education, builds resilience in disasters and helps keep young people in the region. These secondary effects can reshape the economy and even influence population trends over time.

Actions

Actions are the practical steps we take to make change happen or 'pull the strategic lever'. They aren't levers themselves – they are what activate them.

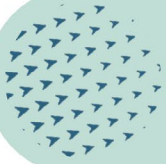
Actions can be fast acting or slow building. Some create shallow leverage, focusing on today's needs - keeping the system running and maintaining pace with change. Others create deeper leverage – managing near-term change, setting up the economy to stay ahead of change or even transform when needed. Understanding this helps explain why actions may be prioritised differently to balance short-term, localised actions with longer-term strategies that build wider community and economic capacity, leading to more significant, lasting transformation.



The region is already home to solar initiatives - utilising Hay's abundant renewable resources. Image courtesy of The Next Economy

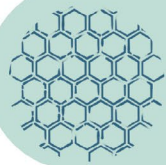


Shaping Hay's Future Strategic levers



Local Leadership

Building strong local leadership, governance and coordination so Hay is in the driver's seat of its own future.



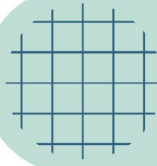
Workforce

Ensuring people have the skills and capabilities they need to fully participate in the region's future economy.



Childcare

Expanding childcare services tailored to Hay's unique context helps more families and skilled workers return to work.



Housing

Increasing the variety and supply of housing, while managing demand peaks, to retain residents, and strengthen the local economy.



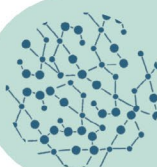
Transport & infrastructure

Securing the reliable, connected and future-ready infrastructure and essential services our region needs to stay productive and resilient.



Land & natural resources

Managing our natural resources and evolving the land-based economy to sustain livelihoods and strengthen long-term regional resilience.



Business & industry

Broadening Hay's economic base, enabling a thriving, connected ecosystem of local businesses, industries and workers.

Figure 7. Seven strategic levers to manage economic change in the region

How to read the Action tables

Initial Leads

Each action identifies an Initial Lead, the organisation or group best placed to take the first steps in coordinating the work. In some cases, this may be Council or the community in a convening or activation role, supported by individuals, organisations and sectors who can contribute resources, expertise and local knowledge in a range of ways - from partnering and co-funding to advocating, piloting ideas, hosting activities or investing.

As actions progress and implementation evolves, leadership and stakeholder roles may expand or shift in response to interest, capability and available resources.

Delivery of the Roadmap is collaborative and adaptive. It is open to anyone with the commitment and capacity to step forward and champion change.

Timeframes

Each action identifies an indicative short (1–3 years), medium (3–5 years) or long-term (5–10 years) timeframe, reflecting the period over which it is expected to be progressed or delivered. These timeframes support sequencing that balance different 'horizons' (see previous section).

Timeframes are indicative and adaptive, recognising that external conditions, investment readiness and community priorities may shift over time.

Accelerator actions:

Building the enabling conditions for change

This Roadmap sets a clear direction for a future economy for Hay - but plans do not deliver change on their own.

Activating the 2035 Vision, by mobilising people and resources to create change over time, requires a range of local enabling conditions. While many of these conditions exist in Hay already, to drive the ambition set out in the Roadmap, they must be intentionally built and supported. Together, these conditions create the foundation for coordinated action and ensure the community not only has a seat at the table but is in the driver's seat – making sure change happens with us, not to us.

The local enabling conditions include:

- **Collective local leadership** to provide stewardship, champion priorities and sustain momentum over time.
- **Backbone coordination** to align stakeholders, reduce duplication and support implementation across sectors and levers.
- **Continuous engagement and communication** to build trust, maintain transparency and ensure diverse voices shape decisions.
- **Collaboration across government, industry and community** to maximise value and avoid fragmented effort.
- **Inclusive**, ensuring First Nations people and other diverse groups have sustained influence in shaping the region's future.
- **A shared agenda**, anchored in this Roadmap and the region's 2035 Vision.
- **Shared measurement and learning** to support collective accountability and adaptive governance.
- **Adequate resourcing**, both financial and non-financial, to move from intent to action.

The accelerator actions identified on the following page are the top 7 actions of several that are designed to mobilise and strengthen these local enabling conditions. They are not simply 'projects', but targeted investments in the region's capacity to lead, coordinate and adapt.

Accelerator actions are a small number of high-leverage priorities that strengthen our collective capacity and build the enabling local conditions required to unlock momentum for the rest of the Roadmap.

For a small but ambitious community like Hay, starting with actions that unlock wider capability is both strategic and necessary. Prioritising actions that strengthen the system - not just individual outcomes — creates a platform for sustained effort and economic transition over time.

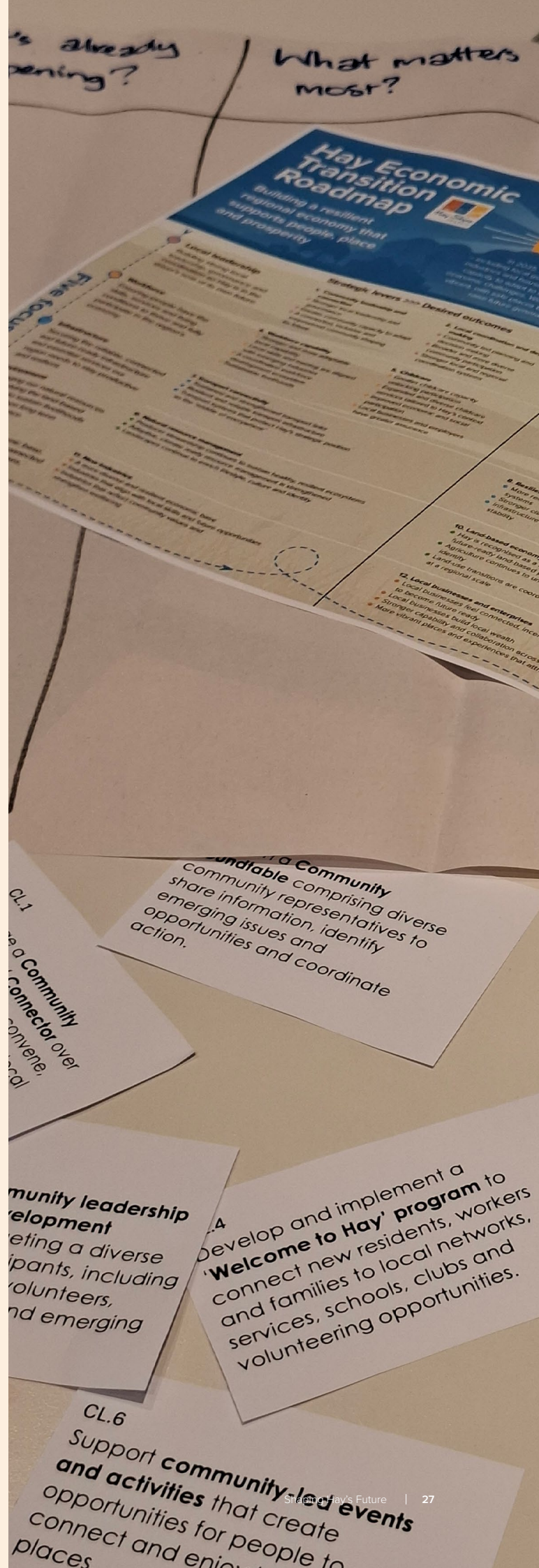
These accelerator actions cannot be delivered on goodwill alone. They depend on committed leadership, dedicated coordination and targeted funding.

Hay is seeking partners - across government, industry and philanthropy - who recognise that investing in enabling conditions multiplies impact. By backing these actions, partners can help unlock broader community effort, attract further investment, strengthen the region's long-term resilience and set the region up for success.

The 7 accelerator actions

LL.1	Community Facilitator / Connector
W.1	Local workforce development taskforce
CC.2	Increase capacity within existing services
H.1	Local housing coordinator
TI.4	Regional transport and logistics value-chain analysis
LN.1	Locally-led primary production innovation network
BI.6	Local business concierge service

* Accelerator actions are also highlighted in the action tables under relevant levers



Right. Many of the Roadmap actions work to build and strengthen the local enabling conditions required to drive change over time. The accelerator actions are targeted places to start.

Image courtesy of The Next Economy

1. Local leadership

Building strong local leadership, governance and coordination so Hay is in the driver's seat of its own future.

Hay's strength has always been its people. The region works because of strong social capital – people who roll up their sleeves, volunteer, share knowledge and support one another. Sporting clubs, churches, cultural groups, community boards and informal networks all contribute to the fabric of local life. Homegrown events, peer-to-peer support and active community participation in decision-making, including the strong engagement in developing this Roadmap, demonstrate a culture of involvement and responsibility.

This collective effort underpins not only community life, but also the local economy.

Hay has a long history of adapting to drought, disaster and disruption. Local businesses are evolving into climate-smart agriculture, energy, manufacturing, construction, transport and professional services. Much of this contribution is informal and relational but it plays a critical role in local prosperity and resilience.

The community is changing. New generations are stepping into farming. New residents and industries are arriving. Dual-income households are more common. People who grew up in Hay are returning, while remote workers and FIFO/DIDO (fly-in/fly-out and drive-in/drive-out) workforces are becoming part of the landscape.

As the economy and demographics evolve, existing networks and volunteer capacity may become stretched.

This lever focuses on strengthening the local conditions needed for community resilience, and bold, forward-looking action that ensures economic change is shaped by the aspirations of its people, on Hay's terms, for Hay's future.

Strengthening governance capability, leadership pathways, local coordination and collaboration:

- Builds the confidence people need to step into leadership roles and participate in processes that create change in the community
- Maintains and renews social connections over time
- Promotes inclusion, social cohesion and adaptation to social changes
- Aligns effort across different parts of the community
- Mobilises local knowledge and networks
- Helps sustain community energy for bold, forward-looking action

Investing in adaptive leaders, connected networks and capable institutions creates the conditions for individuals, groups and institutions to work together effectively to respond to emerging opportunities, navigate change and shape a future that is inclusive, locally-led and grounded in shared values.

The Hay community - meaningful partners to change

The people who live and work in Hay understand its context, challenges and aspirations better than anyone.

Place-based planning and local engagement builds trust, legitimacy and social licence, ensuring development reflects lived experience and local priorities. Broadening participation and drawing in diverse perspectives – including young people, First Nations people, farmers, business owners, families and newer residents – embeds community voices throughout planning and decision-making processes.

When the community is supported to be genuine partners in development, local strengths are mobilised and change happens with the community, not to it.



Local organisations and services such as Hay Aboriginal Community Working Party and Hay Aboriginal Medical Service play a critical role in supporting people to live well and be supported in the region. Image courtesy of The Next Economy.

Objectives – “The work we will do...”

- Strengthen leadership skills, changemaking capability and community-led innovation
- Foster strong networks, inclusive engagement and welcoming spaces
- Develop clear frameworks and processes that support inclusive decision-making, shared understanding and accountability – as well as ensure Hay’s transition is locally led and community-informed
- Enhance collaboration across sectors and strengthen Hay’s ability to shape major developments - including renewable energy and other large investments

Actions

Initial Lead(s)

LL.1*	Engage a Community Facilitator / Connector over multiple years to convene, support and activate local partnerships and networks. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council and community
LL.2	Establish a ‘Hay Futures’ Roundtable comprising diverse community representatives to support local coordination, community engagement and stewardship of the region’s economic transition including sharing information, identify emerging issues and opportunities and coordinating locally led action. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council and community

Actions	Initial Lead(s)
LL.3 Establish a Community Impact Fund to attract, hold and govern other regional investment and funding and grow community capital. (Short - medium term)	'Hay Futures' Roundtable, Hay Shire Council and community
LL.4 Implement the Hay Renewable Energy Community Benefits Framework . (Short term)	Hay Shire Council
LL.5 Establish the Regional Energy Benefit Committee to guide the design, prioritisation and deployment of community benefits. (Short - medium term)	Hay Shire Council
LL.6 Implement a Community Grant Program to allocate Renewable Energy Benefit Funds (and/or Impact Funds) to local organisations and initiatives in line with community priorities. (Medium - long term)	Regional Energy Benefit Committee / Community Impact Fund and Hay Shire Council
LL.7 Deliver community leadership and skills development programs targeting a diverse range of participants, including young people, volunteers, cultural groups and emerging leaders. (Short term)	'Hay Futures' Roundtable, Community Facilitator and Hay Shire Council
LL.8 Develop and implement a 'Welcome to Hay' program to connect new residents, workers and families to local networks, services, schools, clubs and volunteering opportunities. (Short term)	'Hay Futures' Roundtable, Community Facilitator, Regional Development Australia and Hay Shire Council
LL.9 Establish a Youth & Community Hub to provide affordable, accessible spaces and programs that reduce loneliness and increase social connection. (Medium term)	Hay Shire Council and Community Facilitator
LL.10 Support community-led events and activities that create opportunities for people to connect and enjoy local places. (Short - long term)	'Hay Futures' Roundtable, Community Facilitator, community and Hay Shire Council
LL.11 Coordinate strategic initiatives and projects with industry proponents that support long-term regional development. (Short – long term)	'Hay Futures' Roundtable, Community Facilitator and Hay Shire Council
LL.12 Coordinate and deliver community engagement and communications that improve access to information and services and promote participation in community life. (Short – long term)	'Hay Futures' Roundtable, Community Facilitator, community and Hay Shire Council
LL.13 Undertake coordinated communications and information-sharing related to the economic and energy transition in the region. (Short - medium term)	Regional Energy Benefit Committee and Hay Shire Council

* Accelerator action (see page 27)

A future ready local government

Regional local governments are central to Australia's economic transition and critical to ensuring change delivers lasting community benefit. Strengthening Hay Shire Council's capacity to plan, collaborate, adapt to policy and economic shifts and create new opportunities will support transformational change for generations.

Local governments play an important and evolving role in representing and supporting communities. In Australia, they underpin local economies and wellbeing. While their core role is infrastructure and essential services, councils often bring people together, advocate for local priorities and support economic development.

Local governments are on the frontline of increasingly complex and overlapping pressures. More frequent extreme weather events, housing pressures, global market volatility and national industry transitions affect households and businesses locally, with local government often acting as a 'service provider of last resort'⁴. At the same time, outdated funding models and legislative frameworks mean councils are expected to do more with less, requiring new capabilities to manage change, reduce risk to services and respond early to forces shaping local growth and productivity.

Hay Shire Council is already shaping the local economy. Beyond delivering essential services, it informs the community about regional change (including in energy), advocates for local priorities and leads inclusive engagement. This provides a strong foundation to embed future-ready approaches across all Council functions.

Like other small rural councils, Hay Shire Council does not control all decisions or drivers of change, but it plays a vital role alongside other governments, community organisations, volunteers and businesses in shaping a strong and sustainable future.

To meet these challenges, Council will need to strengthen capabilities in strategic foresight, climate readiness, risk management, economic development, evidence-based decision-making and innovation. Smart technologies, new funding models and strategic procurement can help future-proof services. Advocacy, aligned investment and partnerships, and the use of policy and regulation to support a resilient, low-emissions economy will also be critical.

With clear mandates and adequate funding from state and national governments, Hay Shire Council can continue to evolve into a capable, collaborative and future-ready organisation that delivers strong, long-term outcomes for the community. A future-ready local government will:

- Have greater institutional capacity to anticipate, plan for and respond to economic, environmental and social change
- Build resilience to climate pressures, maintain service delivery under stress and proactively pursue transformational opportunities
- Embed evidence-based, locally aligned decision-making, grounded in data, science and community insight to accurately assess risks and opportunities
- Deliver integrated, future-focused programs and services, creating clear pathways for economic and climate transition aligned with regional opportunities
- Foster inclusive and meaningful community engagement, building trust and confidence while enabling informed participation in decisions that affect the community

⁴ Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), 2025. 'Adapting Together: Local Government Leadership in a Changing Climate'.

Objectives – “The work we will do...”

- Build Council capability and align functions to enable consistent, future-ready action across strategic planning, climate adaptation, economic transition, innovation and community engagement
- Work in partnership with local community members and businesses to make decisions and create value
- Embed data, local knowledge and climate risk information into decision-making, planning and service delivery
- Facilitate and attract public and private investment to support local economic and climate transition priorities
- Elevate local insights into decision making and processes at regional, state and national levels

Actions for Hay Shire Council

- LG.1** Establish clear **climate governance frameworks** that embed climate risks and opportunities in decision-making, policies and programs, with consistent and transparent public reporting. (Short term)
- LG.2** Undertake **dedicated climate risk and adaptation planning** informed by government policy and scientific evidence, **integrating** measures across strategies, policies, planning, business processes, infrastructure, asset management and service delivery. (Short – medium term)
- LG.3** Deliver programs and activities that **build professional skills and institutional capability** across Council functions including in areas such as communication, data and AI use, technology and innovation, climate governance and local economic models. (Short term)
- LG.4** Engage **dedicated staff** to integrate economic development and climate transition outcomes across Council functions. (Short – medium term)
- LG.5** Create opportunities for the community, First Nations groups, businesses, industry, government, knowledge institutions and service providers to **develop solutions, support decision making embedded in local knowledge** and catalyse collective action. (Short – long term)
- LG.6** **Collaborate with neighbouring councils and regional bodies** on shared economic development priorities and the coordination of infrastructure, climate adaptation, risk management, regional development and new industry activities. (Short – long term)
- LG.7** Facilitate and accelerate **regional investment and partnerships**. (Medium – long term)
- LG.8** Support and enable **pilot programs to help residents and businesses** adapt to climate risks, drive economic transition and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. (Medium – long term)
- LG.9** Implement a **local communications and engagement strategy** to keep communities and stakeholders informed and support participation, collaboration and positive behavioural change. (Short – long term)
- LG.10** Advocate for and **represent the specific needs and interests of the Hay community** with state and federal governments and private sector investors. (Short – long term)

Actions for other levels of government

LG.11	Improve planning pathways to reduce barriers to development, support mixed uses and provide clear, timely and predictable pathways for new and emerging industries. (Short term)	State Government
LG.12	Clarify and strengthen Council's mandate in climate risk management, net zero transition and economic change, supported by resources and funding to build long-term capability and deliver core services. (Short - medium term)	Australian Government
LG.13	Provide compensation to local government where emissions reduction initiatives and related infrastructure place additional pressure on council capacity, services and assets. (Short - long term)	Industry & State/ Australian Governments



Hay Shire Council has a critical role in enabling economic development across the region that is aligned to community aspirations and responsive to an ever changing global context. Image courtesy of The Next Economy

2. Workforce

Ensuring people have the skills and capabilities they need to fully participate in the region's future economy.

A place-based approach to building local workforce capability – linking education, training, industry and community – supports workforce mobility across industries, strengthens local business resilience and creates meaningful, long-term career opportunities in the region.

As the economy changes, local workforce needs and the dynamics affecting workforce participation such as awareness, capacity and structural challenges are changing too. Young people and families are not always aware of emerging career pathways. Local higher education and training offerings risk becoming misaligned with future industry needs, and competition for workers across new and aligned industries in the region is increasing.

This lever is about building a resilient local workforce that supports long-term local careers, enables movement across industries and drives the next phase of economic prosperity and community wellbeing. It does so by focussing on investing in people, strengthening collaboration between education, business, industry and community and aligning skills development with future industry needs.

Strategic local workforce development is essential to strengthening the pipeline for care, health, education, and community services, while also supporting existing and transitioning industries. It creates opportunities to build on existing strengths and develop transferable, future-focused skills that enable residents and businesses to participate confidently in emerging sectors. These include renewable energy, future of agriculture, clean transport, nature-positive resource management and technology-enabled services. It's also important for attracting new skills and expertise to the region.

Locally delivered flexible training and education, alongside new approaches by local businesses to worker engagement, can support accessible career pathways that meet the needs of both learners and employers. Local industries, businesses, schools and training providers are keen to play a role in building this future-ready workforce. Doing so requires better visibility of upcoming projects, clearer information about future skills needs and early engagement with emerging industries to understand workforce requirements.

Any growth in jobs needs to be addressed in partnership with industry and business – planned alongside investment in housing, childcare and other services that support liveability.

A coordinated local workforce development ecosystem, with education providers, businesses, industry, government and community organisations working together to expand pathways and support meaningful, long-term careers will mean more people are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to participate in the activities required to keep the region functioning - through jobs, volunteering and community leadership.



The co-located TAFE Connected Learning Centre and Country Universities Centre provides an anchor point for strategic workforce partnerships, training and development in the region. Image courtesy of The Next Economy

Objectives – “The work we will do...”

- Inspire and build awareness of local career pathways and opportunities
- Provide accessible, high-quality education and training options locally aligned with the skills, technologies and workforce demands future industry needs
- Enable local businesses and industry to collaborate and act on education, training and workforce development
- Enhance visibility of local industry workforce needs and pipeline of development activities
- Continue investment in lifestyle offerings and liveability conditions to attract and retain skilled workers in the region

Actions	Initial Lead(s)
W.1* Convene a local workforce development taskforce comprising educators, trainers, industry and employers to share insights and actions regarding local workforce trends and needs. (Short term)	TAFE
W.2 Implement programs to inspire and raise awareness in students, learners, parents and educators of the range of local jobs and career opportunities in Hay. (Short - long term)	Hay Shire Council, Department of Education, industry, philanthropy & community
W.3 Deliver industry aligned secondary education curriculum , VET subjects, work experience and school-based training to strengthen pathways into local education, training and employment. (Short - long term)	Department of Education
W.4 Replicate, expand or pilot alternative training models to support life skill development and workforce readiness. (Short - medium term)	Hay Shire Council and community organisations
W.5 Create an integrated future-focused education and training precinct to support a seamless transition from school to VET and tertiary education for students and provide opportunities for lifelong learning. (Short term)	Department of Education
W.6 Develop a regional future workforce needs and opportunities paper to analyse existing workforce capacity, identify emerging skills and provide a shared evidence base for workforce planning and investment. (Short term)	Workforce Development Taskforce and Hay Shire Council
W.7 Develop a local apprentice and traineeship initiative to support local coordination, reduce administrative and capacity barriers and increase opportunities in the region. (Short term)	EnergyCo
W.8 Provide scholarships and financial assistance for students and learners to access training and practical experiences that support career progression and workforce mobility. (Short – long term)	Regional Energy Benefit Committee, local businesses & industry

Actions		Initial Lead(s)
W.9	Deliver a multi-year employer capacity-building program targeted at local businesses and employers. (Short – long term)	NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, industry and local businesses
W.10	Establish a Business-to-Business shared workforce model to enable businesses to share employees across industries and seasons, minimising workforce gaps and improving job security. (Short – medium term)	Industry and local businesses
W.11	Develop local incentives to recognise business leadership in workforce development and employee wellbeing. (Short - long term)	Workforce Development Taskforce and Hay Shire Council
W.12	Create tailored initiatives to engage remote workers and professionals living in the region that foster networking, collaboration and involvement in local issues and activities. (Short - medium term)	Community and local businesses

* Accelerator action (see page 27)

Right. Daily activities along the main street in Hay highlight the diversity of people now working in the region. Image courtesy of The Next Economy.



3. Childcare

Expanding childcare services tailored to Hay's unique context helps more families and skilled workers return to work.

Reliable, flexible and viable childcare underpins household incomes, workforce participation and local economic activity.

Childcare availability directly affects workforce participation, especially for women. In Hay, residents consistently identify childcare as one of the region's most urgent service gaps, alongside health and aged care. Families face long waitlists and some parents struggle to find care when entering or returning to the workforce.

This lever is about ensuring more families and skilled workers have the childcare they need to return to the formal and informal workforce. It focuses on actions that will expand and diversify local childcare services, in a way that is tailored to Hay's context.

Funding, governance structures and the sustainability of services in a small rural community present ongoing tension. Childcare is recognised as one of the region's 'limits to development'. In this sense, childcare is not only a service but a structural enabler of resilience, shaping whether Hay's economy grows or contracts.

Childcare availability sets in motion upward spirals of positive development (families stay, demand grows and services strengthen). It enables parents and carers to return to work, enter work, volunteer, study and take part in community life, unlocking higher household incomes and increasing the size and stability of the local workforce. This gives local businesses and employers confidence to invest in and expand business activities stimulating local economic activity.

Conversely, when childcare is unavailable or lost, then downward spirals can take hold, with families leaving and other services eroding in turn. Childcare is a cornerstone of the broader care economy, which community members see as essential for wellbeing, resilience and long-term economic growth.

While important for social and educational outcomes for young people and their families, this strategic lever is less about education quality (this is a given) and more about having greater capacity in the system to get people back into work.

There are already strong local efforts underway to address childcare capacity in Hay made possible by over a year of quiet groundwork and collaboration. Childcare supports the lifestyle Hay values – freeing up people to work and spend time with family and in the community doing the things they enjoy.



Greater access to childcare has a positive multiplier effect across the community and economy. Image courtesy of Hay Shire Council.

Objectives – “The work we will do...”

- Increase the number of local childcare places
- Enable alternative and flexible childcare models
- Be positioned to capitalise on new childcare opportunities
- Attract, recruit and retain skilled workers and their families

Actions	Initial Lead(s)
CC.1 Establish a Childcare Leadership Working Group involving industry and childcare providers to develop a shared regional strategy and local action plan that proactively responds to emerging childcare needs and opportunities. (Short term)	Childcare Providers
CC.2* Increase capacity within existing services through expanding existing centres and/or co-locating and integrating childcare with existing complementary services. (Short - medium term)	Childcare Providers
CC.3 Explore and pilot alternative models of care and early childhood education suited to Hay’s context and workforce needs including outreach and mobile childcare, cooperative or community-run childcare, family day care, after-school and holiday care, employer-run services and industry-supported or co-funded initiatives. (Short – medium term)	Childcare Providers
CC.4 Provide targeted incentives to attract and retain early childhood educators. For example, improved wages and working conditions, living support and professional development. (Short – long term)	Childcare Providers & State Government
CC.5 Support local training, traineeships and placements in childcare and early education for residents. (Short – medium term)	Childcare Providers & State Government

* Accelerator action (see page 27)

4. Housing

Increasing the variety and supply of housing, while managing demand peaks, to help attract and retain residents, support workforce and business growth and strengthen the local economy.

Limited housing stock acts as a brake on economic activity in Hay when supply does not meet demand. **This lever is aimed at ensuring adequate, appropriate housing for people and families who want to live and build their lives in Hay.** It focuses on increasing the supply of affordable and accessible homes that reflect local needs - designed for different life stages, abilities and lifestyles, and within financial reach. It also supports the development of high-quality, sustainable housing that is energy and water efficient and more affordable to live in. Getting this right means creating connected, vibrant neighbourhoods with well-planned areas, green space and thoughtful development that delivers long-term community benefit.

The region already faces unmet housing need, which is expected to intensify over the next five years as renewable energy and infrastructure projects drive short-term demand, while population growth and industry expansion increase longer-term pressures.

Local landowners and residents are well positioned to play an active role in the housing solution. Innovative development approaches, local ownership models and strategic collaboration can help meet housing needs while generating greater local value. At the same time, a strong and coordinated housing development system, involving developers, builders, investors and the community is essential. Delivering housing that fits Hay's context strengthens the region's ability to attract and retain workers, support population growth and drive investment in public services and community facilities.

Hay Shire Council, in partnership with the community and regional stakeholders, is progressing time-critical work to address these challenges. Council is building the business case for new housing delivery models, leveraging temporary worker accommodation for long-term housing outcomes and strengthening local private sector capacity, drawing on experience with demand peaks such as during the Mad Max production. This positions Hay to engage in shared-value partnerships with energy and infrastructure developers and deliver a more liveable, affordable and resilient housing system aligned with the region's future growth.

Hay's economic transition depends on people being able to learn, work, stay, return or move here and build a life aligned with their values and aspirations.

Managing short-term demand spikes while progressively increasing supply recognises that housing systems take time to adjust. Immediate, targeted actions are needed to respond to peak pressures, alongside longer-term strategies that address structural misalignments and support a healthier, more resilient local economy and community.



Hay is a great place to live and raise a family. Work is already underway to ensure there are affordable dwellings available to suit all life stages and needs. Image courtesy of The Next Economy.

Objectives – “The work we will do...”

- Maintain housing availability and affordability
- Activate and unlock private and community capital for housing delivery
- Increase the supply of targeted housing and accommodation for priority groups
- Improve dwelling quality, efficiency and neighbourhood amenity
- Establish a future-focused housing system that is diverse, adaptable, resilient and locally appropriate

Actions		Initial Lead(s)
H.1	Engage a local housing coordinator to broker, facilitate and accelerate housing initiatives that respond to rising housing demand over the next five years. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council
H.2	Monitor and publish shifts and trends in housing availability and affordability to support timely action, investor confidence and community understanding. (Short - long term)	Hay Shire Council
H.3	Enact timely planning reforms to unlock infill and private-market housing supply including rezoning the main street and selected commercial areas to enable adaptive reuse of vacant shops and shop-top housing. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council
H.4	Allocate a dedicated staff resource within Council to increase efficiency and provide local landholders with pre-lodgement planning support, resources and clear assessment pathways for priority housing projects. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council
H.5	Assess and update existing infrastructure plans and local housing strategies to reflect the changing context. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council
H.6	Explore the potential and feasibility of different rules, regulations and levies to manage short-term rental pressures and support long term housing development. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council
H.7	Deliver a program of targeted engagement and information-sharing initiatives to empower private market development, deployment of local capital to address housing needs and connect local suppliers, builders, trades and industry with information and resources to strengthen local supply chains. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council, private market & community
H.8	Explore and pilot collaborative approaches and alternative development and ownership models to develop new housing and upgrade or retrofit existing homes such as community housing cooperatives, consortium-based procurement of building materials, services and modular housing. (Short - long term)	Private Market

Actions		Lead
H.9	Resource and coordinate a local network of community organisations, housing providers and businesses to deliver wrap-around housing assistance and crisis support. (Short – long term)	Homes NSW
H.10	Develop and implement new approaches and models to expand the supply of temporary worker housing during peak demand periods. (Short - medium term)	Private Market
H.11	Foster and facilitate cross-sector partnerships between community housing providers, developers, not-for-profit groups and landholders to leverage temporary worker accommodation requirements to develop long-term legacy housing for targeted groups. (Short - long term)	Hay Shire Council
H.12	Advocate for sustained investment and long-term housing system reform appropriate for rural contexts, including increased emergency, transitional, social and affordable housing supply and dedicated housing support services. (Short - long term)	Hay Shire Council

* Accelerator action (see page 27)

Right. Artwork in the main street - Mrs McGrath and her sheep. Image courtesy of The Next Economy.



Hay Shire Council

Office Opening Hours
Monday to Friday
9.00am to 4.00pm

Contact Us
mail@hay.nsw.gov.au
www.hay.nsw.gov.au

5. Transport & infrastructure

Securing the reliable, connected and future-ready infrastructure and essential services our region needs to stay productive and resilient.

Infrastructure, and more critically the services it delivers such as clean drinking water, reliable communication, fresh produce and the safe movement of goods, is fundamental to supporting people, communities and businesses to establish lives and livelihoods. As Hay faces more frequent and intense floods, droughts and heatwaves and as technology and systems evolve, local infrastructure will face greater stress or, in some cases, become redundant. Without investment in the critical hardware and systems needed to build resilience, essential services such as water, electricity, telecommunications and transport will be threatened.

Hay is familiar with the impacts of shifting service availability. Water buybacks, frequent floods and the loss of 3G telecommunications have all had tangible consequences for residents and the local economy. In 2022, floods submerged 70 per cent of Hay's road network, disrupting freight routes and access to critical services. The 3G shutdown in 2024 left rural businesses and remote residents disconnected, limiting their ability to work on the move. Combined with Hay's remoteness and exposure, these experiences underscore the importance of fit-for-purpose, resilient infrastructure (locally and across regional and national networks) to maintain services, enable business activity and safeguard community wellbeing.

Strong, future-proof infrastructure and transport systems keep Hay connected, competitive and thriving.

This lever focuses on designing, building, operating and maintaining infrastructure, places and systems with future climate, demographic and economic conditions in mind. It also emphasises strengthening local preparedness and capability to plan, adapt and manage risks while fostering infrastructure partnerships that support coordination and delivery across sectors and scales. This lever aims to ensure that people and businesses in Hay can rely on resilient infrastructure and transport connectivity to support existing activities, seize new opportunities, and maintain confidence in essential services. Investing in resilience now, including preparing for technological shifts such as alternative fuels, is essential to reduce future risks, and help Hay capture long-term economic value.

Investing in resilience now, including preparation for technological shifts such as alternative fuels, is essential to avoid locking in vulnerabilities, reduce future risks and capturing economic value into the future.

Maintaining transport connectivity ensures Hay retains its strategic position on major freight and transport routes, safeguarding local spend.

Located on key east–west corridors and midway between Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne, Hay relies on strong transport links to support its economic vitality. The constant flow of travellers and freight sustains the 'through economy', capturing local spend and driving prosperity.

More than half of all local transactions are generated by people and businesses moving through the area, including tourists, freight operators, logistics networks and business travellers. In 2024/25, visitor expenditure in the local economy exceeded that of residents, highlighting the importance of external flows to local commerce. Commodity exports also remain central, depending on efficient transport systems to reach national and international markets.

This reliance on both commodity exports and visitor spending is a strength but also a vulnerability. When infrastructure is maintained and upgraded, Hay remains well integrated into national supply chains and regional networks. If these connections weaken, the region's competitive advantage is undermined.

Protecting key transport corridors, adapting to changes in national transport systems and maintaining essential traveller services such as accommodation, fuel and food will help sustain this advantage and safeguard critical lifelines for the community.

Early identification of risks and proactive action to address vulnerabilities in infrastructure and technology, such as electricity, telecommunications and water and waste systems, will reduce disruptions to Hay's economy and protect services that support connectivity, productivity and mobility.

These systems underpin daily life and economic activity. Roads connect producers to markets and households to services; telecommunications keep businesses operating and workers safe; electricity powers industry and homes; and water and waste systems sustain households, farms and ecosystems.

Resilient infrastructure planning means preparing for both existing and emerging hazards, maintaining and upgrading assets to withstand disruption and adapting to long-term pressures. In Hay, this includes slow-moving hazards such as climate change, water scarcity and population growth, as well as fast-moving shocks like extreme weather, rapid renewable development, housing shortages and technological change. Adequate funding is critical to ensure assets remain fit for purpose and responsive to future needs.

Locally accessible, low-impact electricity generation can help manufacturers transition from diesel, reduce emissions and operating costs, and attract new industries. Improved communications infrastructure supports business continuity, safety and access to remote work and learning. Reliable, climate-resilient water systems give irrigators confidence to plan, enable township growth and sustain a thriving community.



Decarbonisation of the nation's freight industry is complex and will require new and collaborative approaches to develop refuelling precincts in places like Hay. Image courtesy of The Next Economy.

Objectives – “The work we will do...”

- Embed the importance of freight, transport, connectivity, and future climate, demographic, and economic conditions into planning and decision-making
- Strengthen local preparedness and capability to plan, adapt and manage climate and other risks
- Leverage new funding models and drive innovation to capture greater local value
- Foster infrastructure partnerships that support coordination and delivery across sectors and scales

Actions	Initial Lead(s)
TI.1 Update local land-use plans to protect key freight corridors. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council
TI.2 Collaborate with regional partners to develop a plan for whole of region transport connectivity and resilience . (Short – medium term)	Hay Shire Council
TI.3 Implement an active and community transport system that improves connections to major regional service centres and supports local mobility within Hay. (Short - medium term)	Hay Shire Council and Industry
TI.4* Undertake a regional transport and logistics value chain analysis with regional, state and industry partners to identify system inefficiencies and risks, improve coordination across the freight network and create new in-region opportunities. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council
TI.5 Communicate, promote and advocate for transport connectivity priorities and actions to upgrade primary and secondary routes, attract investment and position Hay as a reliable transport and service hub. (Short - long term)	Hay Shire Council
TI.6 Pilot new solutions to secure alternative fuel supply and access , including electric vehicle charging, battery change infrastructure, hydrogen and bio-fuel production and refuelling facilities. (Short – medium term)	Local businesses and Industry
TI.7 Invest in and coordinate strategic technological, operational and infrastructure improvements and upgrades to transport infrastructure. (Short – long term)	Infrastructure owners and service providers
TI.8 Explore partnerships and initiatives to drive investment in local supply and value chain in setting . (Short – long term)	Industry
TI.9 Engage with diverse stakeholders to identify hazards and infrastructure risks, and inform decision making.	Hay Shire Council
TI.10 Develop an accessible evidence-based tool to plan and develop resilient infrastructure that accounts for risks and vulnerabilities in different future scenarios. (Short term)	State/Australian Government
TI.11 Engage with asset users, community members, First Nations groups, local businesses and emergency services to identify critical infrastructure services and strategies to mitigate or reduce consequences of disruptions. (Short - medium term)	Hay Shire Council

Actions	Initial Lead(s)
TI.12 Develop place-based resilience and infrastructure adaptation strategies that embed consideration of future hazards, resilience and ‘build-back better’ outcomes. (Short – medium term)	Hay Shire Council
TI.13 Collect and share data, evidence and feedback to inform planning and the early and adaptive management of emerging risks. (Short - long term)	Hay Shire Council
TI.14 Develop locally tailored programs to help the community better understand climate and physical risks and how to prepare. (Short – medium term)	Hay Shire Council, State Government, NGO’s and other providers
TI.15 Expand programs and incentives for households, businesses and community groups to invest in climate preparedness, resilient building design, energy efficiency and electrification. (Short – medium term)	State & Australian Governments
TI.16 Work with joint and regional organisations and neighbouring councils to align priorities , speak with a unified voice to state and federal governments, share data on constraints and risks, optimise opportunities and coordinate delivery. (Short – long term)	Hay Shire Council
TI.17 Develop local energy infrastructure initiatives , including renewable energy generation, storage, access and sharing, to improve energy security, electrification and cost reductions for households and businesses. (Short – medium term)	Industry and community
TI.18 Explore ways to improve telecommunications, digital connectivity and data infrastructure so the region can support modern businesses, training, services and innovation. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council and industry
TI.19 Undertake research and develop local resources that explore innovative water security and efficiency measures. (Short - medium term)	Hay Shire Council and industry
TI.20 Carry out waste and water system risk and contingency planning to identify key assets, interdependencies, vulnerabilities and plan backup options. (Short - medium term)	Hay Shire Council
TI.21 Undertake transport network resilience planning for road and transport service continuity during disruptions, improved evacuation and alternative routes and key infrastructure. (Short – medium term)	Hay Shire Council
TI.22 Increase the resilience of physical infrastructure that support industry and economic activity by implementing nature-based solutions . (Short – medium term)	Local Land Services, Hay Shire Council, Landcare and asset owners
TI.23 Pursue co-investment and explore innovative delivery and ownership models with government, industry and community partners including shared infrastructure and funding, service hubs, local energy partnerships, pilots and demonstration projects. (Medium – long term)	Hay Shire Council

* Accelerator action (see page 27)

6. Land and natural resources

Managing our natural resources and evolving the land-based economy to sustain livelihoods and strengthen long-term regional resilience.

Hay's landscapes are the backbone of its economy, identity and way of life. Grasslands, wetlands, and local river systems are living assets that support biodiversity, sustain primary production, provide recreational and cultural value, and shape the community's character and identity. Families value the river for fishing, camping, culture, and connection; the vast plains create a sense of place and belonging; and wetlands hold deep cultural and environmental significance. The prosperity of Hay's agricultural sector, First Nations culture and knowledge, and community wellbeing are inseparable from access to water and healthy ecosystems. As climate variability intensifies and pressures on ecosystem services grow, how land and natural resources are managed will determine Hay's long-term resilience and prosperity.

Shifts in land use can have significant flow-on effects across the region, highlighting the importance of conserving, regenerating, and managing landscapes collaboratively rather than through isolated efforts.

Hay's land-based economy is evolving. Producers, land managers, Traditional Owners, and the broader community already play an active stewardship role, adopting new practices, technologies, and cultural services to care for country while navigating water constraints, soil conditions, market expectations, and a changing climate. Emerging opportunities across renewable energy, agricultural technology, natural capital, tourism, and other diversified land uses are creating new demands on finite resources.

This lever focuses on coordinated action to manage land-use transitions and pressures on the region's natural resources and land-based economy, balancing trade-offs, protecting landscapes, and delivering shared benefits. It

is about addressing challenges that cannot be dealt with at the property scale alone, supporting innovation, collaboration, cultural knowledge, and adaptive management. By strengthening networks between producers, land managers, industry, and regional partners, and through region-wide planning, knowledge sharing, and piloting new land management approaches, Hay can enable land-use decisions that respond to environmental realities, external pressures, and community aspirations - enhancing ecosystem resilience, attracting investment, and safeguarding productivity, cultural values, and community wellbeing across the region.

Objectives – “The work we will do...”

- Support land and water management that leaves the environment in a better state, balancing economic, environmental and social values and managing resources holistically and equitably
- Strengthen the capability of producers and land managers to innovate and adapt in the face of climate variability, market shifts, net-zero transitions and other land-use pressures
- Foster regional coordination, collaboration and landscape-scale approaches to address pressures that cannot be managed at the property level alone, unlocking opportunities for innovation and diversification
- Proactively manage the environmental impacts of new infrastructure and emerging land uses to protect landscapes, ecosystems and community values
- Support a just and well-managed transition of the land and agriculture sector, positioning Hay as a credible, future-ready region for sustainable production, innovation and investment

Actions	Initial Lead(s)
LN.1* Establish a locally-led primary production innovation network to support information sharing, peer learning, strategic partnerships and collaboration across land-based industries. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council and industry
LN.2 Support local producers to explore agricultural innovations outside the region (through conferences, training programs, or field experiences) and share those insights within local networks. (Short - medium term)	Primary Production Innovation Network
LN.3 Develop regional level pilot initiatives to test ideas and practices that amplify outcomes and reduce adoption risk. (Short – medium term)	Primary Production Innovation Network
LN.4 Establish and resource a local role responsible for building partnerships with universities, research centres and regional R&D programs to explore unique challenges and adapt global innovations to the Hay context. (Short term)	Primary Production Innovation Network
LN.5 Support First Nations-led cultural land management programs and land-based enterprises, to support economic sovereignty, sustainable livelihoods and ecological regeneration. (Short - long term)	First Nations groups and individuals
LN.6 Facilitate access to grants, incentives and new loan models to drive better investment and funding into local agriculture and land-based development. (Short term)	Primary Production Innovation Network
LN.7 Convene a local land-based economy forum to bring together producers, investors and supply-chain partners to identify opportunities for value-chain localisation and in-setting and to unlock climate-aligned finance and investment into the region. (Short term)	Primary Production Innovation Network
LN.8 Create and promote a regional brand for Hay that recognises sustainable and climate-aligned land-based products developed in the region. (Medium term)	Primary Production Innovation Network
LN.9 Review and update land use plans and policies that support sustainable development and diversification of land-based economic activities. (Short - medium term)	Hay Shire Council
LN.10 Engage with regional planning groups, production groups, industry bodies and government to advocate and elevate the needs, strengths and opportunities of Hay’s land-based economy. (Short - long term)	Hay Shire Council and industry
LN.11 Develop initiatives that support landholders to adopt and leverage natural resource management activities for income diversification. (Short - medium term)	Primary Production Innovation Network
LN.12 Equip local environmental groups and organisations with the skills and resources they need to deliver local environmental governance and stewardship. (Short – medium term)	Local Land Services

Actions		Initial Lead(s)
LN.13	Work with First Nations people to identify opportunities to respectfully integrate traditional cultural and ecological knowledge and expertise into decision-making and natural resource management practices. (Short - long term)	Landcare
LN.14	Facilitate better support to landholders to map and understand natural capital on their properties and measure, communicate and value landscape improvement outcomes. (Short term)	Local Land Services
LN.15	Develop a regional environmental account and action plan that tracks the condition of the region's natural assets. (Short – medium term)	Hay Shire Council & Local Land Services
LN.16	Undertake coordinated landscape natural resource management initiatives between local government agencies, NRM bodies and private landholders including nature-based solutions and new innovative approaches to support pest control. (Short – long term)	Local Land Services, Landcare, Primary Producers, Industry & Community
LN.17	Establish a regional program that partners producers, researchers and industry to trial place-based water-efficiency technologies and management approaches . (Short – long term)	Primary Production Innovation Network
LN.18	Implement long-term regional water security planning that defines and protects the minimum water required to sustain core agricultural production, maintaining reliable access as markets, climate pressures and competing uses intensify. (Short - medium term)	State & Australian Governments
LN.19	Implement a strategic environmental assessment to assess and manage the cumulative environmental impacts of proposed energy projects and industry development at a region scale over time. (Short – long term)	EnergyCo
LN.20	Develop a program that promotes circular practices in industries across Hay. (Short - medium term)	Hay Shire Council & Industry
LN.21	Ensure regulations are effective in holding industries accountable for their environmental impacts, including industry remediation and rehabilitation responsibilities. (Short term)	NSW Planning Department

* Accelerator action (see page 27)

The role of water in shaping Hay's economic future

In Hay, water largely dictates what producers can farm. Decisions about cropping or grazing hinge on rainfall outlooks, soil moisture and the price and availability of irrigation water. Graziers judge whether native pastures will grow or fail, while irrigators watch allocations and the water market, where dry-year prices can make planting uneconomical. With long-term drying and warming trends, drought has become a normal business condition, pushing producers to adopt new technologies, refine grazing strategies and stretch every litre of water further.

These climatic pressures carry social and economic weight. Declining winter rainfall over the past 30 years has intensified the region's already low-rainfall environment, driving properties to scale up to stay viable and contributing to a thinning population. Residents describe the emotional strain of prolonged dry periods and the stress placed on families, businesses and community life. Irrigation helps buffer low rainfall, but limits on water availability, infrastructure and catchment yields constrain how much land can be irrigated and these constraints are expected to tighten as competition for water grows, increasing pressure on regions to secure reliable access for core agricultural production.

Like many other regional economies around Australia, Hay's land-based economy and the region's broader resilience depends on reliable access to water.

National, state, and catchment-level frameworks and policies shape how water is valued, allocated, and managed, creating a competitive landscape for water resources locally – with real implications for the future of the local economy. Producers continue to improve on-farm water efficiency, however the challenge to 'do more with less' is intensifying. It will grow as new industries and other high-value agricultural uses gain greater capacity to outbid more traditional users.

Across the region, water is recognised not only as a vital environmental asset but as essential to land-based economic activities. At the farm scale, water is a core production input and its use is ultimately a market based decision. If costs become too high and prohibitive, production can contract or cease, triggering immediate upstream and downstream impacts across supply chains and creating broader regional economic vulnerability if not carefully managed.

In a future where water is scarcer, more valuable and increasingly contested, **clearer regional strategies to secure productive water will be critical**. This will ensure regions like Hay can adapt, remain a cornerstone of the regional economy and continue producing food, fibre and fuel for Australia and global markets.



The Hay Weir. Image courtesy of Hay Shire Council.
Photographer: Ron Bonham.

7. Business and industry

Broadening Hay's economic base, enabling a thriving, connected ecosystem of local businesses, industries and workers.

Hay's strategic position on key transport routes connects local producers to multiple markets and supports a steady flow of people, goods and services. This movement underpins a diverse mix of retail, trades and services, with strong links between land-based and town-based businesses.

Local businesses and industries create jobs, attract investment and generate local wealth.

As economic conditions change, diversification becomes increasingly essential for Hay's long-term resilience. **This lever is about strengthening existing businesses, supporting local entrepreneurship and fostering new industries aligned with the region's unique advantages, complementing, rather than competing with agriculture and established strengths.**

Hay's economy is being reshaped by national policy shifts, population and demographic trends, global market pressures, investment and technological innovation. These forces are driving new opportunities in renewable energy, advanced agriculture, manufacturing and services, while increasing demand for skilled, technology-capable workers. At the same time, volatility in trade, rising input costs and extreme weather events are creating uncertainty, particularly for land-based industries. Together, these pressures create both challenges and opportunities for Hay.

Establishment of new and aligned industries reduces reliance on any single sector, lowers exposure to climate, policy and market shocks or economic downturns, creates new value chains and local investment opportunities. Strengthening local business ownership keeps more wealth circulating locally, amplifying local benefits and supporting sustainable, long-term prosperity. A more diverse economy supports transferable job pathways, a broader skills base, innovation and regional specialisation.

Over the last decade, Hay has seen growth in construction, transport, health and professional services, contributing to an increasingly diverse economic base. With the right tools, capabilities and partnerships, Hay's local businesses and emerging industries are well positioned to thrive.

Ensuring opportunities work for the future Hay wants

Prioritising new industries and businesses that align with community values and build on existing strengths will create a strong foundation for sustainable livelihoods and a future economy consistent with Hay's vision.

To assess how new opportunities align with community priorities, and to balance potential benefits, trade-offs and impacts, refer to the tools and guidance provided in the **Roadmap Playbook**.

New industries built around Hay's strengths can drive local innovation and help the economy adapt through change.

Several future-focused, aligned industry opportunities could position Hay as a hub for innovation and sustainability. These leverage Hay's strategic assets: agricultural strength, proximity to the South West REZ, excellent renewable energy potential, location along major transport routes, available water, inexpensive land and a collaborative and aspirational community. Opportunities include:

- Green hydrogen production for fertiliser and clean transport
- Operations and maintenance hub for the South-West REZ
- Circular biorefinery using agricultural waste
- Wind turbine componentry refurbishment facility
- Value added and/or circular supply chain services
- Low-emission building material and product manufacturing

While not all of these may be viable long-term, focusing on industries that build on Hay's existing strengths and align with local values and aspirations will create a stronger foundation for sustainable livelihoods and ensure families and businesses thrive through change.

Stronger, more diverse local businesses

keep wealth circulating in Hay.

While large industries play an important role, small and medium local businesses do much of the heavy lifting in Hay, underpinning jobs, services and community life. They are more likely to hire and retain local workers, supply goods and services to other businesses and households, invest locally and contribute to community resilience.

Local businesses are Hay's largest employers. The concentration of activity in similar industries can reduce costs, improve access to skills and create efficiencies, including opportunities for more effective resource use. Many business owners are actively seeking to grow, manage change, maintain continuity during disruptions and capitalise on emerging opportunities.

As conditions evolve, access to timely, locally relevant information and targeted capability-building will help businesses manage risk, prepare for disruption and make confident decisions. Stronger coordination across local supply chains can also unlock growth, innovation and new opportunities. Growing the number and diversity of enterprises can enhance liveability, attract people to town, increase local spending and retain more economic value within the region. This includes visitor-focused offerings like cafés, cultural hubs, farm tours, Indigenous experiences, festivals and play spaces, as well as essential services including gyms, physiotherapy, courier services and swim lessons.

Investing in local business capability and collaboration will capture more value within the region and create a thriving environment where enterprises and the community flourish together.



Local initiatives like this bookstore create value for local community organisations and activate the main street. Image courtesy of Hay Shire Council.

Objectives – “The work we will do...”

- Create the local conditions needed to attract aligned industries and climate-related investment
- Proactively engage priority sectors and foster strategic partnerships to align new and existing investments with Hay’s 2035 vision and community aspirations
- Facilitate coordinated, well-sequenced investment into developments that maximise local economic benefits and generate flow-on opportunities
- Grow, diversify and strengthen the capacity of Hay’s local businesses and anchor institutions in expanding market share, adapting to change and retaining lifestyle and supply chain spending

Actions		Initial Lead(s)
BI.1	Create local policies, plans and targets to provide certainty and signal the region is ‘open for business’. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council
BI.2	Use land-use planning mechanisms to identify suitable commercial and industrial land and enable climate-resilient industrial locations. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council
BI.3	Advocate and inform State and Commonwealth governments about on-the-ground needs and opportunities for new industry development in alignment with Hay’s strategic goals. (Short - long term)	Hay Shire Council and local businesses
BI.4	Carry out research and a pre-feasibility exploration to identify potential market opportunities and new targeted operations. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council
BI.5	Develop and resource an ‘investor front/open door’ initiative to facilitate opportunities for new aligned industry development and investment. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council
BI.6*	Establish a local business concierge service that acts as a business liaison between new industries and local businesses - delivering programs, activities and resources to support local business development, facilitate external agency support and access to funding and business opportunities. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council, EnergyCo and State Government
BI.7	Develop connections with research and development (R&D) institutions and coordinate support for research, development, demonstration and deployment of new technologies and emerging markets. (Short - medium term)	Hay Shire Council, local businesses and research institutions
BI.8	Establish strategic partnerships to access federal funding, loans or finance that support local innovation, diversification and new industry establishment. (Short term)	Industry
BI.9	Deliver local communications, information sharing and engagement activities that ensure development is aligned with local aspirations and has local support. (Short - long term)	Hay Shire Council and industry
BI.10	Develop an investment attraction prospectus / statement to support place-marketing, signal market direction and showcase the region’s infrastructure, community sentiment, skills and assets to attract investors. (Short - medium term)	Hay Shire Council

Actions	Initial Lead(s)
BI.11 Involve local businesses in planning and progress updates regarding economic transition in the region so they are well informed and can best adapt, prepare and position business operations. (Short – long term)	Hay Shire Council
BI.12 Develop and provide access to localised data regarding trends and changes occurring across the region that may inform business decisions and preparedness. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council
BI.13 Deliver a multi-year capacity-building program that supports homegrown innovation and entrepreneurship, driving local wealth creation and a strong, diverse business ecosystem.(Short - medium term)	NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
BI.14 Convene regular targeted forums to identify local business needs, explore emerging supply chain opportunities and co-develop solutions that retain economic activity within the region. (Short - medium term)	Industry and local businesses
BI.15 Strengthen the role of anchor institutions in creating local value wealth. (Short term)	Industry and service providers
BI.16 Undertake a local multi-stakeholder mapping exercise to identify potential economic opportunities from renewable energy projects and explore links with economic transition priorities. (Short term)	EnergyCo
BI.17 Promote platforms to connect local businesses with local needs such as online listings, marketplaces, offering boards, local business expos and marketing initiatives. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council and local businesses
BI.18 Deliver local initiatives and events to create more opportunities for local people and visitors to connect, enjoy local places and spend money locally. (Short – long term)	Hay Shire Council and local businesses
BI.19 Review Destination Management Plan to expand the local tourism economy and ensure the natural, lifestyle and historical assets of the region are enhanced. (Short term)	Hay Shire Council
BI.20 Develop local initiatives that capture more spend from the through-economy such as bundled accommodation packages, shuttle services, local experiences, meals or breakfast packs. (Short - medium term)	Industry and local businesses
BI.21 Explore opportunities to offer a business or industrial precinct that provides a supportive environment for small businesses and remote workers, while reducing the initial costs of starting a local business. (Short – medium term)	Hay Shire Council, industry and local businesses
BI.22 Implement financial incentives such as grants, rate rebates, land leases, co-funded pilots and revolving funds to activate the main street, help local businesses adopt climate-resilient technologies, reduce emissions and establish new green practices. (Short term)	State Government

* Accelerator action (see page 27)

A landscape photograph showing a field of tall green grass on the left and a field of white wildflowers on the right, separated by a fence with a single strand of barbed wire. The sky is a deep blue with scattered white clouds. The text 'Where to from here' is overlaid in white on the grass.

Where to from here

Wild paper daisies blooming across the Hay Plains. Image courtesy of Hay Shire Council. Photographer: Claire Stribbles.

Hay is ready to be in the driver's seat of its future.

Global, national and local pressures are reshaping industries, supply chains and regional economies, but Hay has the ideas, skills, assets and community strength to act.

Hay Shire Council, local businesses and the community are already showing how long-term planning and strong local leadership deliver results - from renewable energy and emerging industries to housing, childcare and local business growth. Hay is creating and seizing opportunities to realise its 2035 vision and aspirations, demonstrating what is possible when we plan, collaborate and lead locally.

Building *the future economy we want* will take time and effort. It requires new skills and capacities, a mix of approaches and coordinated action that leverages the region's unique comparative advantages and has Hay's 2035 vision and aspirations at the centre of all decisions. This is a shared responsibility: industry, businesses, investors, governments at all levels and the community all have important roles to play.

The Roadmap provides a clear framework to guide

action, connect partners and focus effort where it will have the greatest impact. Now is the moment to harness local strengths, embrace opportunities and ensure the benefits of change stay in Hay - supporting the health and wellbeing of our people, community and environment for generations to come.

“
Hay's economy isn't just about dollars and transactions. It's about people, relationships, and a shared determination to make things work — now and for the generations that follow. That strength is what will carry our region into the future.”



Just like shearing, building the future economy we want will take time and effort. Image courtesy of Hay Shire Council.

Appendix A - Roles and Responsibilities

Below is a high-level summary of how different stakeholders can support Hay's economic transition over the next 10 years. It is not exhaustive but illustrative of the point that 'everyone has a role to play'.

National Government

- Set clear national plans, targets and regulatory frameworks that provide long-term policy certainty, de-risk private investment and enable coordinated action.
- Provide large-scale funding, incentives and structural adjustment programs to support enabling infrastructure, regional service delivery and economic transition activities.
- Align national programs and policy planning so they respond to regional needs and locally identified transition priorities.
- Facilitate investment aligned with Australia's national interests and connect regions to national markets and supply chains.

New South Wales Government

- Translate national goals into clear state and regional transition strategies and lead integrated planning for land use, energy, freight, water, industry and environmental protection.
- Establish frameworks and standards that attract investment, strengthen community engagement and support workforce development, benefit sharing and industry transitions.
- Coordinate across government departments, align policies and investments and invest in regional transition bodies to manage cumulative impacts, deliver infrastructure and programs.
- Fund and coordinate initiatives that address barriers, support economic diversification and workforce participation and enable long-term adaptation to climate and market change.
- Provide the capability, resources and support needed by local government to deliver community engagement, planning, approvals and partnership brokering.

Hay Shire Council

- Deliver core services and statutory responsibilities and manage facilities, buildings, assets and open spaces.
- Partner with the community to identify local priorities, give voice to local issues and support residents to understand and respond to economic, climate and infrastructure change.
- Lead by example through strong climate governance, local procurement, emissions reduction and climate adaptation.
- Convene and facilitate collaboration between stakeholders to build partnerships, co-design solutions and align action with community needs.
- Develop policies, plans and regulatory frameworks that create an enabling environment for investment, economic development and diversification aligned with regional priorities.

Finance, philanthropy and investors

- Allocate capital to support long-term economic, social and environmental outcomes and address system-level risks and opportunities.
- Use patient and blended finance to reduce risk and fund new industries, infrastructure and enterprises, including early-stage and place-based investments.

Education, training and research organisations

- Deliver education and training that responds to existing and emerging local skills needs and supports employment in future industries.
- Support research, development, innovation and data analysis relevant to regional transitions.
- Partner with industry, government, businesses and community to co-design and secure funding for workforce and skills initiatives.

Local small/medium businesses and anchor institutions

- Create local employment and provide essential goods and services.
- Support local education, training and workforce development.
- Invest in 'workforce enabling' infrastructure and services such as childcare and housing where possible.
- Adopt different business and ownership models that retains local wealth.
- Collaborate and participate in diversification and value-adding opportunities.

