

Harwood Community Economic Development Plan (Final)

November 2019



Harwood Community Economic Development Plan (Draft)

October 2019

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1 Background

1.1 Pacific Highway Upgrade and New Harwood Bridge

The Woolgoolga to Ballina project will upgrade 155km of Pacific Highway. The project starts about six kilometres north of Woolgoolga (north of Coffs Harbour) and ends approximately six kilometres south of Ballina. As part of this upgrade, a new bridge has been constructed across the Clarence River at Harwood.

A number of community groups and individuals have made representations to Council for funding of various community projects. The Biirinda and Harwood Island Community Committee submitted a petition requesting Council explore the option of acquiring land under the new bridge for a car park. The Harwood Public Hall Committee has requested that Council construct public toilet facilities on this same land, as current facilities at the community hall are inadequate.

1.2 Objectives of this Plan

Council resolved (6b.19.004) to work with the Harwood community to develop a Community Economic Development (CED) plan. The Harwood CED plan has been formulated to address community aspirations and objectives. These objectives have also been articulated in the Biirinda and Harwood Island Community Committee Inc. vision for a Riverside Precinct and Community Centre (Appendix C).

The Harwood CED program aim is to harness local skills and resources to plan together to implement practical, achievable community and business projects. Benefits of creating a Plan include; cohesive strategic planning on issues that affect the community, wider networking opportunities, greater impact and value for businesses and community, and added value to council.

The role of this Plan is to:

- act as a framework to direct activities identified by the community (Harwood Island, the surrounding islands, mainlands, and waterways)
- document the outcomes of the community planning workshops
- facilitate cooperative relationships between the community and external partners; and
- formalise the goals and objectives of the community to prioritised issues and project activity.

1.3 Strategic Imperative

In developing the Harwood CED Plan it is essential it aligns with local, NSW and Australian Government strategies, especially if resources or grant funds are required. Appendix A gives an overview of how the CED Plan might align with some of these strategic actions identified by government.

1.4 Plan Methodology

The program commenced with a Community Conversation workshop in Harwood. The aim of the workshops was to better understand the needs and priorities of the

community; the first encouraged a community conversation as to what Harwood should look like in the future. The second follow up meeting was held to identify community champions to drive this vision.

The draft Plan was distributed at the action planning meeting and placed on Public Exhibition for further feedback from the Harwood community.

- ✓ Community Conversation – 27 August 2019
- ✓ Draft Plan distributed to the Harwood community for comment – 30 September
- ✓ Action Planning workshop to review the Plan and identify community project leaders – 30 September 2019
- ✓ Finalisation of draft Plan and adoption by Council – December 2019

2 About Harwood

2.1 Aboriginal Harwood

Approved wording from Yaegl will displayed here.

2.2 European Settlement History

European settlement dates from 1838. Some early settlers came in pursuit of timber. Timber getting reached its peak in the area during the 1840s although there was no significant European population in the Lower Clarence before the 1860s.

The fertile land had instant appeal to the many early settlers, mainly from Scotland and Ireland also England and Germany. The area in particular celebrates a strong Scottish culture and association. Their success in farming crops such as maize and sugar soon displaced the original owners who had been hunters and gatherers, not agriculturalists.

The area developed as a rural farming community becoming heavily reliant on the sugar cane industry, however, dairying and commercial fishing were also prime industries. By the 1870s a sawmill and four small sugar mills had been established, however, it wasn't until CSR Co bought land from an early land owner, Sam McNaughton and built their mill in 1872 that the population and industry started to really expand. The smaller mills soon closed as CSR shifted their resources to Harwood and became major employer in the area.

Harwood is the oldest operating sugar mill in Australia that has benefited by the river waterway. Harwood Island was named by WAB Greaves who was the surveyor of Maclean and Lawrence townships. Harwood appears to have been derived from the town or suburban district of Greater Harwood which was close to his home town. It was initially serviced by river boats and from 1885 by ferries and later steam punts. The ferries continued until the Harwood Bridge was opened in 1966 which eliminated the reliance on water traffic.

(McSwan EH (Lin) & Switzer M, A Thematic History of the Maclean Shire (former) Community Based Heritage Study. Volume 2 (March 2006), p. 5, 8, 17 & 25.)

2.3 Demographic Information

Harwood summary profile, 2016

Place of usual residence	Number	%	CV Council area %
Population Summary	--	--	--
Total population	292	100.0	100.0
Males	152	52.1	49.6
Females	140	47.9	50.4
Total dwellings	148	100.0	100.0
Indigenous population	14	4.8	6.3
Australian citizens	270	92.5	89.9
Eligible voters (citizens 18+)	218	74.7	71.1
Australian-born	258	88.4	83.7
Speaks language other than English at home	6	2.1	2.1
Overseas-born	8	2.7	7.5
Needs assistance due to age or disability	17	5.8	8.4
Age Structure	--	--	--
Babies and pre-schoolers (0 to 4)	11	3.8	4.9
Primary schoolers (5 to 11)	23	7.9	8.3
Secondary schoolers (12 to 17)	19	6.5	7.1
Tertiary education/independence (18 to 24)	22	7.5	6.1
Young workforce (25 to 34)	32	11.0	8.2
Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49)	38	13.0	16.2
Older workers & pre-retirees (50 to 59)	53	18.2	15.4
Empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69)	44	15.1	16.5
Seniors (70 to 84)	43	14.7	14.3
Frail aged (85 and over)	4	1.4	3.2
Household Types	--	--	--
Couples with children	25	18.4	19.7
Couples without children	31	22.8	29.4
One parent families	20	14.7	10.8
Lone person households	41	30.1	26.3
Group households	13	9.6	2.8
Education	--	--	--
Attending pre-school or primary school	28	9.6	9.0
Attending secondary school	9	3.1	5.7
Attending university or TAFE institution	15	5.1	3.4
Labour Force	--	--	--
Employed	111	88.8	91.0
Unemployed	14	11.2	9.0
Total labour force	125	50.4	45.5
Not in the labour force	94	37.9	47.0
Dwelling Summary	--	--	--
Separate houses	149	96.8	81.5
Medium and high density	5	3.2	12.1
Other dwellings (inc. Caravans, houseboats)	0	--	5.7
Occupied private dwellings	132	89.2	87.3
Unoccupied dwellings	16	10.8	12.3
Non private dwellings	0	--	0.3

Housing Tenure	--	--	--
Owned	50	38.8	42.0
Purchasing	42	32.6	24.4
Renting	23	17.8	24.0
Household Income	--	--	--
Less than \$650 (low)	43	32.6	26.9
\$650 to \$1,449 (lower middle)	49	37.1	38.4
\$1,449 to \$2,499 (upper middle)	22	16.7	15.8
\$2,500 or more (high)	11	8.3	8.2
Incomes not stated	7	5.3	10.7
Internet Connection	--	--	--
Internet connection	88	64.7	69.1
No internet connection	34	25.0	21.9
Not stated	11	8.1	8.9

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing 2016*. Compiled and presented in profile.id by [.id](#), the population experts.

3 SWOT

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning technique used to help identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. A SWOT helps to focus on strengths, minimise threats and take the greatest advantage of opportunities.

Some of the issues, concerns, strengths, and opportunities that were raised in the first community conversation were used to develop the following SWOT analysis.

Strengths

- Clarence riverside aspect is appealing to visitors and residents
- Convenient location on the edge of the M1 with access via road and river
- Passionate community with a strong sense of local pride
- Local Public School appeals to young families
- Already home to a number of visitor attractors including hospitality, accommodation, attraction and retail businesses

Weaknesses

- Lack of interpretive signage and no village heritage trail
- Prone to flooding
- Lack of shops and businesses that service local needs
- Need to travel to other towns for health and medical services

Opportunities

- Riverine location and heritage
- Convenient location on the edge of the M1 and close to Yamba and Maclean
- Potential to attract Recreational Vehicle (RV) visitors
- Harwood business networks encouraging collaboration, training and collaborative marketing
- Potential to promote Harwood's heritage and water based attractions
- Potential to encourage bicycle touring

- Potential to Improve infrastructure; redevelopment of parks, river front and toilet facilities
- Ferry and water based business potential
- Community Hall for functions
- Creation of Harwood Riverside Precinct Plan as identified in Clarence River Way Masterplan
- Tell Harwood's story - interpretive signage celebrating Aboriginal, built and riverine heritage
- Leverage off the opportunity for tourists to get off the M1
- Upgrade of Harwood wharf facilities to encourage more water based visitors and tourism
- Potential to develop a viewing platform for new Harwood Bridge with brown tourism signposts from the M1
- Attract day trippers from other Clarence Valley towns

Threats

- Lack of an overarching plan means funding for 'shovel ready' projects is missed
- Ad hoc design (no planning or plan)
- Apathy, doing nothing
- Lack of promotion
- Fragmentation of community

4 Community Engagement

Harwood residents demonstrated pride in their community and the desire for the village to be sustainable into the future.

Rather than focus on the negatives, this can-do community understood that opportunities for the development of Harwood by increasing business and for growing as a tourist destination within the Clarence Valley.

4.1 Community Priorities

The Harwood community developed a list of actions and projects which they felt would drive Harwood to achieving their vision.

The actions were then divided into areas of similar areas of interest or themes. These were:

- Business Development
- Promotion and Marketing
- Infrastructure
- Events

The community then 'voted' on the actions they determined to be their highest priorities.*

Actions	Category	Priority	Votes
Cultural Centre from First Peoples to present day (in old RMS building?)	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	18
Loo with a view / Toilet Facilities	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	12
Viewing Platform of new bridge (brown tourism signage)	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	8
Art and Sculpture Festival	Events	Quick Wins	7
Aboriginal Interpretive Garden	Infrastructure	Quick Wins	6
Better Facilities at Community Hall (septic/waste facilities)	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	6
Concerts with local Musicians	Events	Quick Wins	4
Harmony Day	Events	Quick Wins	4
Movie Nights at Harwood Hall	Events	Quick Wins	4
Op Shop – Upcycle	Business Dev	Quick Wins	4
Parklands showcasing flora and fauna	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	4
Aboriginal Interpretive Signage	Infrastructure	Quick Wins	3
RV camping	Marketing and Promotions	Quick Wins	3
Aboriginal Tourism Businesses	Business Dev	Business Dev	3
Cycleway from Maclean to Harwood	Infrastructure	Someday maybe	3
Beautification of Riverside and waterfront area, walking tracks and footpaths (Village Precinct)	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	3
Pony Rides	Events	Quick wins	2
Cultural Walks along the river	Events	Quick wins	2
Harwood – Develop a brand, online presence	Marketing and Promotions	Things with barriers	2
Community garden & bush tucker	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	2
Restore and repair wharves and ramps	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	2
Cane cutters history celebrated through interpretive signage	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	2
Sculpture Park	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	2
Mill Heritage Museum	Infrastructure	Someday maybe	2
Car Parking under the bridge (inc. Overnight truck parking)	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	2
Garage Sales	Events	Quick Wins	1
Annual Harwood Sugar Festival	Events	Quick Wins	1
Local Art Exhibitions and workshops	Events	Quick Wins	1
Waterpark	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	1
Tourist Drive and interpretive signage	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	1
Encourage linkages between Harwood and Chatsworth	Business Development	Quick wins	1
Phone App	Marketing and	Things with barriers	1

	Promotions		
Covered Picnic Areas and BBQs along the river	infrastructure	Things with barriers	1
Cricket oval for juniors and lower grades	Infrastructure	Someday maybe	1
Playground	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	1
Pizza Shop	Business Dev	Things with barriers	1
River baths	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	1
Preserve village history and create heritage trail	Marketing and promotions	Quick wins	1

*Note: there are additional Actions. The Actions above are the ones that received votes.

5 Objectives and Actions

All of the actions are divided into similar areas of interest or themes.

The workshop attendees also prioritised these into; instant wins, things with barriers and someday maybe.

5.1 Business Development

Objective: To provide business support that directly contributes to business growth and collaboration.

Actions	Category	Priority	Votes
Op Shop Recycle/Upcycle	Business Dev	Quick Wins	4
Aboriginal Tourism Businesses	Business Dev	Quick Wins	3
Encourage linkages between Harwood and Chatswood	Business Dev	Quick Wins	1
Pizza Shop	Business Dev	Things with barriers	1
Bridge Walk	Business Dev	Someday maybe	
Environment version of Questicon for Agri, Science, Ecology	Business Dev	Someday maybe	
Aged Care Facility	Business Dev	Someday maybe	
More Antiques	Business Dev	Quick Wins	

5.2 Marketing & Promotion

Objective: To raise awareness of the village of Harwood and all its offerings including attractions both natural and built.

Actions	Category	Priority	Votes
RV camping	Marketing and Promotions	Quick Wins	3
Harwood – Develop a brand, online presence	Marketing and Promotions	Things with barriers	2
Preserve village history and create heritage trail	Marketing and promotions	Quick wins	1
Phone App	Marketing and Promotions	Things with barriers	1

5.3 Events

Objective: to encourage more community led events to drive visitation.

Actions	Category	Priority	Votes
Art and Sculpture Festival	Events	Quick Wins	7
Concerts with local Musicians	Events	Quick Wins	4
Harmony Day	Events	Quick Wins	4
Movie Nights at Harwood Hall	Events	Quick Wins	4
Pony Rides	Events	Quick Wins	2
Cultural Walks along the river	Events	Quick Wins	2
Garage Sales	Events	Quick Wins	1
Annual Harwood Sugar Festival	Events	Quick Wins	1
Local Art Exhibitions and workshops	Events	Quick Wins	1
Cook the Clarence Event (local produce, foraging, Recipe Books)	Events	Quick Wins	
4WD Club Events	Events	Quick Wins	
Mill & Refinery Tours	Events	Things with barriers	
Dragon Boat Festival	Events	Things with barriers	
Local Farmers Markets	Events	Quick Wins	
Irish Festival	Events	Quick Wins	
Annual Fishing Competition	Events	Quick Wins	
Seafood or River Festival	Events	Quick Wins	
Speedboat Racing	Events	Things with Barriers	

5.4 Infrastructure

Objective: Improvements to the built environment.

Actions	Category	Priority	Votes
Cultural Centre from First Peoples to present day (in old RMS building?)	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	18
Loo with a view / Toilet Facilities	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	12
Viewing Platform of new bridge (brown tourism signage)	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	8
Aboriginal Interpretive Garden	Infrastructure	Quick Wins	6
Better Facilities at Community Hall (septic/waste facilities)	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	6
Parklands showcasing flora and fauna	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	4
Aboriginal Interpretive Signage	Infrastructure	Quick Wins	3
Cycleway from Maclean to Harwood	Infrastructure	Someday maybe	3
Beautification of Riverside and waterfront area, walking tracks and footpaths (Village Precinct)	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	3
Community garden & bush tucker	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	2
Restore and repair wharves and ramps	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	2

Cane cutters history celebrated through interpretive signage	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	2
Sculpture Park	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	2
Mill Heritage Museum	Infrastructure	Someday maybe	2
Car Parking under the bridge (inc. Overnight truck parking)	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	2
Waterpark	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	1
Tourist Drive and interpretive signage	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	1
Covered Picnic Areas and BBQs along the river	infrastructure	Things with barriers	1
Cricket oval for juniors and lower grades	Infrastructure	Someday maybe	1
Playground	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	1
River baths	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	1
Boat Ramps and Jetties	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	
Child Care Centre	Infrastructure	Quick Wins	
Road Infrastructure upgrade	Infrastructure	Quick Wins	
Medical Facilities / Defibrillators	Infrastructure	Quick Wins	
Streamlined DA	Infrastructure	Quick Wins	
Replant Native Trees around Ferret Park and walkway	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	
Art Gallery for local artists	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	
Improved maintenance and roof on Fish table and pontoon	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	
Improved Accessibility	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	
Riverbank Maintenance – Remove noxious weeds	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	
Pedestrian Crossing	Infrastructure	Things with barriers	

6 The next step

A more detailed action plan will be developed with responsible champions, timeframes, priorities, operational actions (to breakdown those action in sub actions).

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix A – Alignment with Local, NSW & Australian Government Strategies

In developing the Harwood CED Plan it is essential it aligns with local, NSW and Australian Government strategies, especially when leveraging resources or grant funds. Below is an overview of how the CED Plan might align with some of the strategic actions identified by government.

Clarence 2027 Community Strategic Plan:

- Encourage vibrant and welcoming towns and villages

- To have an attractive and diverse environment for business, tourism and industry

North Coast Regional Plan 2036

- Historic Heritage is a major contributor to the region's identity and character. It also has the capacity to generate economic value, particularly through tourism

Clarence River Way Masterplan

- Develop opportunities to interpret and tell the sugar cane story
- Improve water front parkland
- Bring visitors off the main north/south highways into the Clarence Valley
- Develop pedestrian linkages and access to the water
- Encourage use and appreciation of the river
- Develop Indigenous cultural tourism as a continuous culture related to the river
- Develop integrated river hub stops
- Improve the visual connection to the river
- Greatly extend the range of river access points along the river.

Clarence Valley Tourism Industry Development and Marketing Plan

- Unify, train and enable the local tourism industry
- Develop experiences delivering the happiness and shared memories ethos
- Leverage infrastructure projects for tourism and relocation growth
- Assis the local tourism industry reach the regional average occupancy rate

NSW Tweed Clarence Regional Boating Plan

Access

- Work with councils to ensure appropriate infrastructure, facilities and amenities are provided at regionally significant locations to meet local demand and encourage visiting/transient boaters.
- Identify appropriate locations for specific waterway user groups and provide suitable infrastructure at these strategic locations to help spread waterway usage and minimise multi-user conflict.
- Provide courtesy moorings at popular boating locations.

Storage

- Optimise configurations of existing mooring fields to improve access and navigation and enable future growth as require

NSW Visitor Economy Action Plan

- Increase visitation
- Grow physical capacity
- Renew and revitalise NSW destinations
- Improve the visitor experience
- Increase the visitor spend

- Make NSW more competitive

7.2 Appendix B – Harwood Community Profile

Harwood village is an ideal place for drivers to stop and take photos of the new structure. Drivers along the new highway from the south first encounter the Clarence River travelling from Tyndale to Maclean interchange. From the North, tourists cross the islands heading to the major river crossing at Harwood.

7.3 Appendix C - Biirrinda and Harwood Island Community Committee Inc. vision for a Riverside Precinct and Community Centre

A vision of Harwood written by James Moloney (1 March 2018) covering the Riverside Precinct and proposed Community Centre is attached.