

Barraba

Community Development Plan



January 2021

Foreword

Barraba is known as a bird-watcher's paradise and is currently developing into an art and culture hub thanks to world-renowned silo art "The Water Diviner" painter by Fintan Magee.

What makes this charismatic rural town is the people. The community band together through fires, floods, catastrophic droughts and more recently a global pandemic and make this community a home for many families. It becomes a place of comfort for many people that have lived here often sharing fond memories of childhoods spent growing up or visiting family members, and you can guarantee no matter where you travel in the world you will meet someone with a Barraba connection or story to tell.

The Barraba community are extremely grateful to be given this opportunity from Rural Aid and its hardworking team and volunteers and appreciate Peter Kenyon's invaluable expertise establishing the Barraba Community development plan. This plan was put together with expansive knowledge of many members of the Barraba community who came together in a challenging time to share experiences, history and ideas to help Barraba thrive into the future.

Lisa Hannaford

Place Manager North

Tamworth Regional Council

Acknowledgements



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 HOLDMARK

The formulation of this Community Development Plan was initiated and funded by Rural Aid as part of their 'Ten Towns' Makeover Initiative, of which Barraba was a winner. Facilitation of the community engagement process and preparation of the Plan was undertaken by Peter Kenyon from the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. and assisted by Jen Curnow-Trotter from Rural Aid and coordinated by Lisa Hannaford, Place Manager North, Tamworth Regional Council. Special thanks to so many passionate Barraba community members and staff of the Tamworth Regional Council, who gave so generously of their time, knowledge and experiences.

Finally, this Action Plan acknowledges the traditional custodians of country incorporating Barraba - the Kamilaroi People and their significant contribution to our community past, present and future.

Our Story



Barraba is an attractive rural service centre that lies on the Manilla River within the New England Region of NSW, 480km north west of Sydney. It is a one hour drive north of Tamworth. The appealing Nandewar Ranges lie to the west, the Horton Valley to the north-west, and undulating slopes and tablelands to the south-east and north.

The original inhabitants were the Kamilaroi People who formed one of the four largest Indigenous nations in Australia. Squatters began arriving in the late 1830's. Barraba was established as a town in the mid to late 1800's on the back of grazing and the 1850's gold rushes. The townsite was surveyed in 1852, town proclamation occurred in 1885 and the Barraba Municipality created in 1906.

Barraba functioned as the centre of the Barraba Shire Council till forced amalgamations in 2004 when the community was absorbed into the Tamworth Regional Council.

Though the Barraba district was developed for its wool and wheat potential, it has developed a national reputation for its productive beef grazing country. The district supports about 400 rural properties. Its strong tourism appeal lies in its long history as a mining town, its surrounding beautiful and dramatic national parks (Mount Kaputar National Park with its renowned Sawn Rocks and Waa Gorge, Horton Falls National Park, Glenriddle Reserve, Split Rock Dam and Rocky Creek Glacial Area) and its reputation as an arts and culture hub.



Our Vision

Retention of our small town country charm and pride through strong community engagement, preservation of our unique assets and the attraction of new residents, visitors and business opportunities

Our Goals

Community Goals are broad statements of intent that direct our efforts towards accomplishing our vision in line with our guiding principles.

- To build the population base with people with community spirit and energy.
- To maintain and continually expand our lifestyle and employment options and opportunities.
- To actively pursue new economic and entrepreneurial opportunities that strengthens and diversifies our local economy and business life.
- To develop and promote our community as a desirable place to stop, stay, experience and reside.
- To create the environment where our young people feel involved, supported and empowered, and will consider returning to our community for work, enterprise development, family and lifestyle opportunities.
- To preserve, maintain and strengthen our significant heritage and cultural assets.



Our Guiding Principles

The following eight guiding values provide the context for our community's identified actions and initiatives, namely:

- **Sense of community** – ensuring all our community members experience a deep sense of connection, inclusion, and contribution
- **Embracing new opportunities** – building upon local assets, capacities and creativity; and facilitating opportunities and experiences that enable all our residents to see and experience their community as a place of opportunity
- **Collaboration** – committing to a high level of community and stakeholder involvement, cooperation, partnership, and networking
- **Safety** – maintaining our high levels of community safety and wellbeing
- **Pride** – encouraging pride and times of celebration relating to our heritage, uniqueness, and achievements
- **Respect for environment** – valuing and protecting our beautiful natural environment and its diverse and prolific wildlife
- **Respect for heritage** – appreciating our unique heritage, stories and traditions and their importance in community and economic development
- **Rural village lifestyle** – retaining our unique sense of country way of life, local connections and rural landscapes

Our Challenges

Like many small inland rural communities, our community faces and needs to respond creatively to a series of demographic, social, economic and environmental challenges, including:

- Ageing and declining population
- Decline in school numbers
- Prolonged drought period
- Volunteer fatigue and declining numbers
- Tired Mainstreet appearance
- Tamworth centric nature of the Regio.
- Belief that 'Everything is cheaper in Tamworth
- Limited youth recreational options
- Drive through nature of tourism rather than being perceived as a destination
- Business loss and gaps
- Lack of local employment opportunities
- Deteriorating state of several key heritage buildings
- Online shopping and lack of support for local businesses
- Lack of key sports- basketball, netball, soccer, hockey and junior cricket- the need for families to drive to Tamworth
- Limited dining out experiences
- Lack of adequate child care
- High club and event insurance issues
- Minimum lot zoning issues
- Swimming pool hours and pricing
- Corporatisation of agriculture and loss of farming families



“On the cool spring mornings I awake to the sweet fragrance
of the citrus blossom
Summer brings the heat and thunder and rains
to regenerate my soils and my life in all its forms
The Autumn is busied with the harvest of the bounty of my lands, and
The cold Winter brings rest during long dark nights in readiness to
repeat all of the happenings of my rich and proud past.



Our Assets

Social Networks

About Barraba Inc

Sporting life- bowling, tennis, rugby (union and league), golf, touch football, swimming, pony and jockey clubs

Churches- Anglican, Catholic, Uniting

Service clubs- Rotary, Lions, Men's Shed, RSL

Dedicated Barraba pages in 'Manilla Express' Newspaper and Barraba Community News published by the Northern Inland Community College

Youth Group

Nandewar Historical Society

Frost Over Barraba, Barraba Public Art Group, Barraba Shutterbugs and Barraba Potters and Craft Guild

People

Rural village lifestyle

1400 residents

People care and give generously

Friendly welcoming community

Low level of crime

Strong arts community

Great 'party town'

Strong family connection

'Friends on Friday' at Richardson House

Physical

Location - on an inland Sydney-Brisbane route

- proximity to a number of important town centres
- sited on Manilla River
- proximity to Tamworth Regional Airport with flights to Sydney

Attractive tree-lined streetscapes

Reliable water supply

Sports grounds, Show facilities, Bicentennial Hall

Part of the Bundarra -Barraba Bird Area- 14 bird well-signposted watching routes and 200 species

Part of 'Fossickers Way' tourist route

Horton Falls National Park

Mount Kaputar National Park (includes Sawn Rocks and Waa Gorge)

Glenriddle Reserve

Rocky Creek Glacial Area - 290 million year history

Local parks - Lions, Rotary, O'Meara, Cherry Street

Split Rock Dam

Nandewar Ranges

Adam's lookout

Fishing - Murray Cod, Golden and Silver Perch.

Airport

Golf Course with a reputation of one of the best 'sand green' courses in NSW

Barraba War Memorial Swimming Centre with waterslide and hydrotherapy pool

Hall/pavilion facilities- RSL, tennis clubhouse, Anglican Church family and Children's Centre, Showground facilities

Our Assets

Institutions

Tamworth Regional Council Barraba Office and Works Depot

Richardson House Retirement Home

Police

Emergency Services - Ambulance, Fire

Barraba Multi-Purpose Health Service

Central Primary & Secondary School

St Joseph's Primary School

Community run Pre School

Northern Inland Community College - with central office in Barraba and Registered Training Organisation

Visiting social service agencies

Economic

Local business association -

About Barraba Inc

Diversity of retail businesses- grocery, greengrocery, bakery, pharmacy, butcher, hardware, flowers, boutique shopping, gift shops, news agency,

Diversity of service businesses- doctor, farrier, banks, gym, accountant, solicitor

Diversity of accommodation businesses - hotel, motel, B & Bs, caravan park

Strong agricultural sector- world recognised beef production with some sheep and cropping

Culture, Stories & Sources of Pride

Reputation as a cultural hub

Connection to the Kamilaroi People and their 40,000-year heritage

'The Water Diviner' Silo art project - painted by internationally recognised artist Finton Magee- part of the National Silo Art Trail.

'Frost Over Barraba' Arts Festival

Car and motor bike shows

Barraba Show, Campdraft and Rodeo

Lions Christmas Tree event

Heritage building infrastructure - Victorian, Edwardian and Art Deco including three heritage hotels and clock tower.

Queens Street - great example of a 'Veranda Town'

Heritage - rail, agriculture, mining

Barraba Race Day

Playhouse Hotel with a 80 seat theatre

RSL Hall with stage

Nandewar Historical Society Museum

Connection to Allan Cunningham, the explorer

Shed of Knowledge Museum

Barraba historic YouTube collection

New library

Our Strategies & Actions

Theme One

Main Street Appeal Enhancements

ACTIONS

1

1. Develop and implement a 'Mainstreet Development Plan' which includes -

- Rejuvenating garden beds, nature strips, picnic tables and planter boxes.
- Utilising window frontage of empty shops.
- Refreshing signage.
- Renewing existing and creating more seating.
- Encouraging heritage restoration.
- Introducing Main Street Wi-fi.
- Instigating attractive solar evening lighting.
- Developing effective street cleaning processes.
- Promoting services.
- Implementing an agreed tree strategy.
- Motivating the visitors that stop at the Mural to drive into Main Street.
- Improving the Mall area.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

2. Identify and support strategic tasks to be undertaken by the Rural Aid Volunteer team in terms of Main Street beautification and enhancement.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

3. Develop a new 'Walking Tour' Flyer focused on the CBD area.

Timeframe: Immediate

4. Wi-fi main street.

Timeframe: Short term

5. Foster greater 'streetlife feel' through -

- Urging more business activity on pavements.
- Introducing more mainstreet community events.
- Fostering more alfresco dining.
- Encouraging coffee and food shops to stay open longer.

Timeframe: Immediate

LEAD GROUP

**About Barraba Inc
Tamworth Regional Council**

OTHER PARTNERS

**About Barraba Inc,
Rural Aid,
Business community,
Barraba Public Art,
Nandewar Historical Society,
Men's Shed**

Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Two

Tourism Expansion

ACTIONS



1. Formulate a comprehensive 'Tourism Action Plan' focused on becoming a weekend destination tourism location and incorporating the following elements -

- Auditing existing tourism product.
- Identifying and developing new tourism ideas and product including initiatives related to-
 - mining and cattle heritage.
 - Indigenous tourism.
 - nature-based initiatives including new bird viewing trails and bush walking.
 - Wellness activities.
 - Regional conference/workshop destination.
 - hunting properties.
 - horsing events at Showgrounds
 - Mountain biking in the Commons
- Enhancing marketing, customer service, town storytelling and operator networking.

Timeframe: Immediate to medium term

2. Create physical infrastructure that enhances local and visitor appeal including -

- Developing the riverbank park land with walking trail, seating and interpretation.
- Creating 'Selfie Spots' including main street and main lookouts.
- Bird watching support infrastructure.
- Erecting bird and wildlife interpretative signage.
- Locating a tourism flyer stand in every business.
- Establishing a caravan/RV dump point.

Timeframe: Immediate to medium term

3. Create a Task team to explore opportunities for Rail Trails and the promotion of cycling tourism.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

LEAD GROUP

**About Barraba Inc,
Tamworth Regional Council**

OTHER PARTNERS

**Regional Development Australia,
Historical Society, Men's Shed,
Rotary Club, Lions Club**



Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Three

Heritage Building Retention & Restoration

ACTIONS



- 1. Revitalise the RSL building as a major community centre through -**
 - Forming a community Task Team to oversee upgrade.
 - Undertaking a Works Plan to assess and cost necessary physical improvements, especially in relation to kitchen area, entrance, bathrooms and lighting.
 - Utilising the Rural Aid Volunteer team to undertake initial physical improvements.
 - Identifying other funding sources to enable completion of the upgrade.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

- 2. Identify and mobilise community members interested in forming Task Teams to explore the following potential developments -**

- Courthouse restoration and reuse.
- Victoria Hall restoration and reuse.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

- 3. Upgrade Showground facilities (including new indoor arena) to attract more state and regional events including camp drafts, dog trails, weddings.**

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

LEAD GROUP

Barraba RSL Sub Branch, Frost Over Barraba, Barraba Showground Management Committee, Tamworth Regional Council

OTHER PARTNERS

Rural Aid, Rotary Club, Lions Club, About Barraba Inc, Regional Development Australia, Men's Shed, Barraba Pony Club, Barraba Jockey Club, Barraba P.A & H Association

Theme Four

Youth Retention & Attraction

ACTIONS



- 1. Formulate a 'Youth Retention & Attraction Plan' that focusses on -**
 - Enhancing meaningful child and youth civic engagement.
 - Increasing youth recreation options especially non-sporting options and afterschool activities.
 - Identifying local youth training and jobs options including possible traineeships.
 - Identifying youth leadership opportunities and providing them with a voice.
 - Maintaining regular contact with young people after they leave the community.
 - Implementing a campaign to target the return of the 25-40-year-old cohort.

Timeframe: Immediate

Theme Four

Youth Retention & Attraction

ACTIONS



2. Introduce activities through the schools that build active citizenship and opportunities for Barraba young people to identify and implement what they care about, drawing upon programs that have been utilised in other small towns; namely -

- 'RuMAD?' - Are You Making a Difference? (Bank of I.D.E.A.S.)
- 'Community Minded Kids' (Community Minds)
- 'Dream Seeds' (Youthrive)

Timeframe: Short term

3. Investigate and instigate other youth recreation options especially related to greater use of the pool, parks, skate park and the Bicentennial Hall.

Timeframe: Immediate

4. Support the Tennis Club to revitalise facilities and activities to stimulate youth interest and participation, including venue for discos and a school-based coaching initiatives.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

LEAD GROUP

Barraba Central School, St Joseph's Primary School, Barraba Pre-School, Tamworth Regional Council

OTHER PARTNERS

Barraba Town and District Tennis Club, FRRR, Rotary Club, Lions Club, Men's Shed, Rural Aid

Theme Five

Business Retention & Expansion

ACTIONS



1. Evolve a local entrepreneurial development support eco-system that can facilitate and assist local enterprise ideas and opportunities become reality through connection to mentoring, workspace, information, networks and finance.

Timeframe: Short to medium term

2. Instigate a 'Buy-local Campaign'.

Timeframe: Immediate

3. Develop a local customer service program for local business employees that incorporates a 'Ask Me, I am A Local'.

Timeframe: Short term

4. Assist local businesses to develop stronger and more effective on-line presence.

Timeframe: Short term

5. Promotion of the uniqueness of many of the local businesses.

Timeframe: Short term

6. Form a task Team of interested community residents and professionals to explore job and business creation within the 'Home and Community Care Sector' given the significant district ageing population.

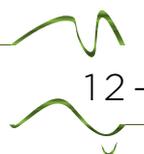
Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

LEAD GROUP

About Barraba Inc; Tamworth Regional Council

OTHER PARTNERS

Barraba Multi-Purpose Health Service, Richardson House Retirement Home, RDA



Theme Six

Arts & Culture Development

ACTIONS



1. Actively plan and promote strong community support and volunteering to enable the functioning of all key arts festivals in the post COVID-19 period.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

2. Establish a Task Team to develop ideas for Barraba to evolve as a 'Regional Arts Hub' including the funding of a fulltime Coordinator.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

3. Form a Task Team to build upon the success of the 'Water Diviner' Silo Art Project by developing a Mural Trail and the instigation of other public art.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

4. Formation of a community enterprise to ensure the continuation of the Playhouse Hotel Theatre and its programs, restructured as a public theatre.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

5. Encourage all businesses to see ways to partner/support with artists and display/market their art.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

6. Create an arts pop-up arts market in unused space.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

7. Explore opportunities for introducing more music lessons for young people.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

LEAD GROUP

Barraba Public Art, Frost Over Barraba, Barraba Potters and Craft Guild, Tamworth Regional Council

OTHER PARTNERS

Tamworth Regional Gallery, Rotary Club, Lions Club, local businesses, Men's Shed

Theme Seven

Community Development Initiatives

ACTIONS



1. Instigate regular initiatives that develop and recognise local leadership and increased volunteerism and active citizenship.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

2. Continually upgrade local parks as key green spaces for the community to gather and enjoy, and add to the visitor appeal of the town- equipment, trails, seating, yarning spaces, outdoor gym, coffee van, child safety fencing, community gardening...

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

Theme Seven

Community Development Initiatives

ACTIONS



3. Develop a 'Lifestyle Promotional Campaign' to attract new residents including-
 - Initiating an internet and print media campaign.
 - Creating a 'Welcoming' committee and kit.
 - Instigating a calendar of 'Back to Barraba' and school reunion events.
 - Promote 'lifestyle housing' lots.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

4. Undertake a 'Community Skill and Passion' Audit'.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

5. Support the growth of the 'Community Newsletter' as a key community enterprise.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

LEAD GROUP

About Barraba Inc, Northern Inland Community College, Tamworth Regional Council

OTHER PARTNERS

Rotary Club, Lions Club, Men's Shed

Theme Eight

Swimming Pool Developments

ACTIONS



1. Enhance the Pool complex as a key community 'hub gathering space' through the following pool improvements-
 - Exploring the heating of the Pool for all year use.
 - Introducing non water based equipment and activities- gym facilities, jumping pillow, trampoline.
 - Improving the Pre School area including splash pool.
 - Holding more events at the Pool -
 - Running outdoor films.
 - Introducing sporting activities at the pool like beach volleyball.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

2. Address pricing and opening hours.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

LEAD GROUP

About Barraba Inc

OTHER PARTNERS

Tamworth Regional Council





Barraboa

NEW SOUTH WALES



PHOTO CREDITS :

Cover: Martin Buckingham
P3: Barraba Silo Art
P4: Antony Hands

P6: Antony Hands; (top) Peter Dwyer (centre)
P8-9: Peter Dwyer (background)
Back Cover: Antony Hands

