

## Regional Infrastructure - Priorities to grow Armidale Region to 60K Population



*Unleash the opportunities*

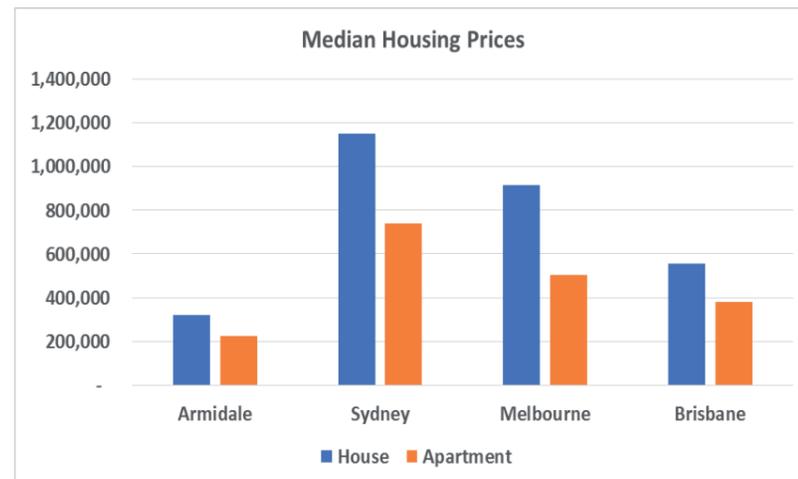
[www.armidaleregional.nsw.gov.au](http://www.armidaleregional.nsw.gov.au)

## Armidale Regional Council

### At a Glance

Armidale is Australia's highest city has a lot to offer everyone; a renowned education base that inspires innovation, a collaborative culture, a vibrant digital economy fully-fibred to the National Broadband Network, a full suite of community services, a myriad of recreational parks and sporting facilities and all this amidst the beauty which is New England High Country.

Investing or living in the Armidale Region is easy to imagine. Imagine the beautiful home that you would buy for a fraction of the cost of a home in Sydney. Imagine getting to work in 5 minutes, with no traffic jams to contend with. Think about your children walking to school just around the corner from your home and not feeling worried. Imagine not having to worry about water restrictions and think how your garden will blossom. Living in the Armidale Region is not a figment of your imagination it is an everyday reality for thousands of people.



The city of Armidale differs from most inland regional centres because it has a long established university, transforming it from a rural town to a sophisticated and cosmopolitan city. Through the University, TAFE, fine independent and public schools the city has become a significant education centre, creating a wider range of jobs and business opportunities than usually found in the country.

To the north of the Armidale, Guyra is a vibrant community centred amidst wild and wonderful natural attractions with a friendly, village atmosphere. A town of 2,200 people, Guyra is located in the heart of the New England High Country. The Guyra District is unique because it is situated on the uppermost plateau of the Great Dividing Range; from which land falls away to both east and west.

In the Guyra District you will find a diverse blend of recreational activities and facilities from trout fishing, farm stays, bird watching, fossicking, bush walking, national parks, waterfalls and scenic picnic areas.

### Education:

*More than 75 different nationalities study on campus at the University of New England establishing a significant multicultural community unparalleled in regional Australia.*

Our educational strength and breadth can be seen in the following list of educational institutions and services.

- University of New England (UNE)
- TAFE New England & TAFE Digital
- Three independent day and boarding schools
- Eight public primary schools
- Three public high schools
- Catholic primary and high school
- Rudolf Steiner School
- Montessori School
- Met School
- Minimbah Aboriginal School
- University of the Third Age
- New England Conservatorium of Music (NECOM)
- Armidale Film & Television School
- Preschools
- Various Community Education Programs & Centres

### Arts & Culture:

Armidale has one of the best regional art galleries in NSW, with major collections (such as the Howard Hinton and Chandler Coventry collections) valued at over \$40 million. The city has a twin cinema which shows mainstream and art house movies. There is an Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Art Gallery. There is the New England Conservatorium of Music, a Symphony Orchestra, a Youth Orchestra, a biennial Bach Festival and several choral groups. The Armidale Playhouse Theatre, Armidale Musical Society, Stage One Theatre for Children and the University of New England Department of Theatre Studies perform regularly during the year.

## National Parks:

One of Armidale’s best kept secrets is that there are four national parks, each with extraordinary natural attractions, and all within an hour’s drive from the city centre. There’s a monumental tumble of giant granite boulders to climb in the Cathedral Rock National Park. And, along the aptly named Waterfall Way, Ebor Falls in the Guy Fawkes River National Park is one of several majestic waterfalls to admire. Much of the extensive wilderness in the New England and Oxley Wild Rivers National Parks is **World Heritage listed**.

*When you spy the views from Point Lookout in the New England National Park and walk along the trails that wind through temperate rainforest there, or, hike through the spectacular gorges and encounter dramatic waterfalls and hundreds of kilometres of pristine waterways in the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park, you’ll see why.*

## Sport and Recreation:

Sport is an integral part of life in Armidale Region. From rugby matches, mountain biking and all sorts of competitive and adventurous pursuits to leisurely games of golf and tennis, there’s something for everyone.



*The sport of Mountain Biking has gone from strength to strength in the New England Region with the area producing some of the best riders in the country and also boasting some of the best riding tracks. This is why Mountain Biking Australia (MTBA) has chosen Armidale as one of the locations for rounds of the XCO National Series for three years, 2017 – 2019 at the SportUNE trails. Bringing this event to Armidale was the result of collaboration between the New England Mountain Bike (NEMTB), University of New England (UNE) and the Armidale Regional Council.*

For a Local Government Area with a population of approximately 30,000 the list of facilities is particularly impressive. Eight turf cricket ovals, a state of the art indoor arena, twenty plus outdoor bitumen and grass netball courts, thirty all weather tennis courts, indoor and outdoor basketball courts, a 50 metre Olympic pool, a warm down 50 metre pool (and in Guyra a 25 metre solar heated pool) an equestrian complex, mountain bike tracks, hectares of playing fields and a state of the art indoor gymnastics centre.

The local schools in particular The Armidale School, Presbyterian Ladies College, the New England Girls School and the University of New England also have some outstanding facilities, generously made available to the wider community.

As a result of these facilities Armidale is regularly chosen to host regional, state and national sporting events which inject over \$15 million into the local economy.

*The University of New England (UNE) is home to one of the finest university sporting precincts in Australia, playing an important role in the social and cultural life of UNE, Armidale and the New England Region.*

SportUNE has an extensive range of first-rate facilities, including fifteen hectares of playing fields close to amenities, two multipurpose halls, a state-of-the-art weight and cardio gym, an indoor 25-metre heated pool, a climbing wall, squash, badminton and tennis courts.

SportUNE is also the home of the Hockey New England complex, which includes two synthetic hockey fields. SportUNE offers a wide range of services which include group fitness classes, health and wellbeing programs, a healthy eating cafe, a crèche, personal trainers, on-site accommodation (for events) and access to more than twenty sporting clubs from a variety of different sports.

Out in the gorges and national parks, hiking, rock climbing and abseiling expeditions range from easy to difficult, and kayaking down the rivers can be a wild ride, particularly after heavy rains. If calmer waters are more your thing, then you’ll find Dumaresq Dam is a peaceful spot to paddle, or head to Malpas Dam, home to the New England Sailing Club and where locals race sailboats on Sundays during summer.

## Transport:

Armidale is located roughly midway between Sydney and Brisbane on the Great Dividing Range - about a one hour flight to either from Armidale. The coast is only two hours away along one of the most beautiful scenic drives in Australia, the Waterfall Way. Armidale also has a daily train service to and from Sydney.

*There are almost 100 direct flights between Armidale and Sydney each week and 12 between Armidale and Brisbane.*



*567 kilometers from Sydney, 467 kilometers from Brisbane, 191 kilometers from Coffs Harbour*

## The full picture – websites of interest

A Council perspective [www.armidaleregional.nsw.gov.au](http://www.armidaleregional.nsw.gov.au)

A tourism perspective: [www.armidaletourism.com.au](http://www.armidaletourism.com.au)

[www.newenglandhighcountry.com.au](http://www.newenglandhighcountry.com.au)

A demographic perspective: [www.profile.id.com.au/armidale](http://www.profile.id.com.au/armidale)

## Fun facts – Armidale and region:

Land area of Armidale Regional Council local government area:	<b>8,630 (sq. km)</b>
Population (estimated resident population)	<b>30,311</b>
Gross Regional Product (0.3% of Gross State Product)	<b>\$1.41 Billion</b>
Local Jobs	<b>13,236</b>
Local Businesses	<b>2,929</b>
Average weekly rent (3 bedroom home)	<b>\$340.00</b>
Median house price (3 bedroom home)	<b>\$360,000</b>
Persons per hectare – Population density	<b>0.04</b>
Students enrolled at UNE (on and off campus)	<b>21,000</b>
Number of sporting events (Armidale)	<b>14,975 annually</b>
Weight of tomatoes grown yearly (Costa Tomatoes Guyra)	<b>14 million kgs</b>

## Major industries:

- Education and Training
- Agriculture
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Retail trade
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

## Recent and current projects - Armidale Region:

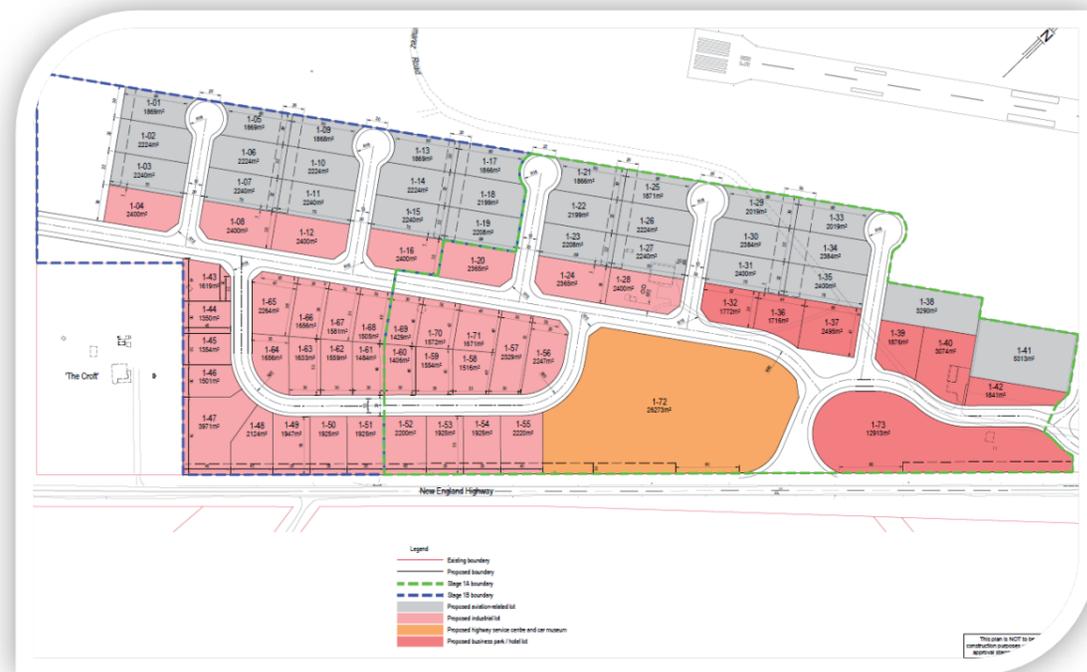
- Water Security for Guyra - Malpas Dam Pipeline - \$12.37m –Tenders being called
- Saumarez Homestead Development (\$2.7m)
- Costa Tomatoes Glasshouse expansion (\$65m+). One of Australia's and the Southern Hemisphere's largest and most advanced glasshouse facilities producing 14 million kilograms of tomatoes per year.
- Armidale Regional Airport terminal upgrade and expansion (\$9m+)
- Airport apron expansion and upgrade (\$3m+)
- New Aged Care Facility, (Kolora) Guyra (\$7m+)
- Armidale is fully fibred to the premises – the only city to have FIBRE to the PREMISE
- Development of Armidale Hospital (\$60m+)
- Tablelands Clinical Education Centre (\$10m+) a teaching facility providing closer ties between the medical profession and future health professionals
- New College at the University of New England (\$20m)
- TAFE Digital Headquarters ( \$6m) - opened March 2018
- UNE Kirby Farm – SMART Farm Innovation Centre (\$2m)
- Australian Pesticides & Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) moves to Armidale
- New state of the art 1500 student Future School to be built in Armidale-2019 (\$65m)

## Proposed Infrastructure Projects – Armidale Region

### Priority 1

#### Armidale Regional Airport Business Park - \$7m+

In response to an identified existing shortage of adequate industrial land to meet demand from new and existing businesses, ARC identified council owned land adjacent to the Armidale Regional Airport as ideal to meet this demand and facilitate employment opportunities and growth. The Armidale Industrial Land Study 2013 proposed a business development to support business and jobs growth taking advantage of the proximity to the New England Highway and the Airport. This was later incorporated in to the Airport Master Plan and adopted by council in 2016.



Armidale Regional Airport Industrial Precinct - lot layout

### Priority 2

#### Airport Development - \$30m+

- **New runway and Instrument Landing System (ILS) - \$30 - \$40m**  
Future proofing Armidale Regional Airport
- **Airport Security Scanning (\$1m)**

The current runway at Armidale Airport is at the end of its useable life and it is understood that QANTAS are soon to introduce Q400 Series to the Armidale – Sydney route.

Options include:

- Resurfacing of the existing runway
  - o Will necessitate a 3-4 month closure of airport
  - o Note: Current runway too short to operate fully loaded Q400 during summer
- Upgrade of existing runway incl. lengthening to take fully loaded Q400 Series turbo prop will necessitate runway closure as above and cost \$10M+
- A new runway will be designed and constructed to cater for larger jets (will enable export opportunities to Asia and interstate) and can be constructed without need to close airport – ILS will eliminate delays and aircraft redirections
- Introduction of Q400 triggers need to screen passengers. Cost of equipment \$1M

A new runway, ILS & security scanning will support:

- growth of population (to 2050) and increased tourism and visitor numbers
- decentralisation policy
- safety policy
- establishment of new industries and businesses – eg. food/freight to Asia
- more flights more often – inc. direct flights to Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Brisbane



### Priority 3

#### Armidale CBD Precinct Development

- Central Mall (\$4 - \$5M)
- East Mall (\$3 - \$5M)
- West Mall (\$3 - \$5M)

Armidale Regional Council has prepared a “Mall Vibrancy Plan” to upgrade the central CBD Mall precinct. The plan highlights a vision to create a retail entertainment and dining precinct in the central mall and a residential and commercial development precinct in the eastern mall. Plans are being worked on in conjunction with the community with the establishment of a Mall Advisory group, made up of key stakeholders who operate or use the mall. Once the design works and studies have been complete, further major funding will be required.



Beardy Street Mall

### Priority 4

#### Bellevue Stadium Upgrade - \$10m+

Upgrade of existing sports stadium (UNE) to cater for the needs of the broader Armidale and New England region community.

Upgrade/expansion of the stadium to increase seating capacity from 406 to 1000 and crowd capacity from 5,000 to 10,000 and provide x4 change rooms + facilities.

Lighting upgrades have recently been approved and are being implemented.

The upgrade to the stadium will bring the sporting facilities up to “A grade” standard allowing for state, national and potentially international sporting events (predominantly Rugby Union and League) to be held in Armidale thus increasing tourism and visitor numbers as well as providing the community with world class sporting facilities.



Bellevue Sports Complex

## Priority 5

### Dumaresq Dam Recreation Development

**The Vision is to create an environmentally friendly regional nature park and wildlife sanctuary offering a place where the community and visitors alike can reconnect with the natural environment and participate in both active and passive recreational, sporting and educational activities.**

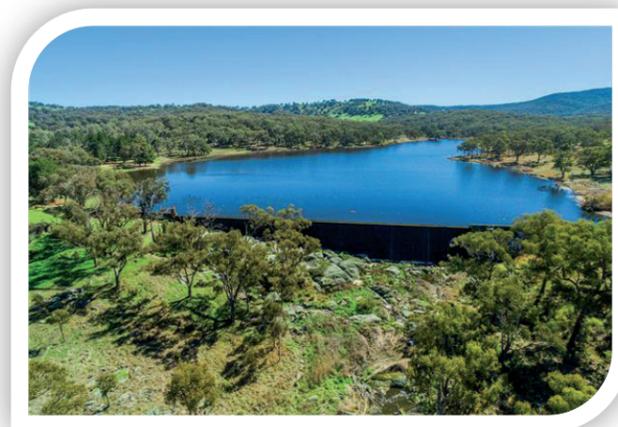
Dumaresq Dam Regional Nature Park will offer a viewing platform for observing water birds, a playground, a pier for fishing annual released trout, a choice of walking trails with interpretive signage and a range of exercise options including mountain biking to and beyond the boundary. The dam can be explored by canoe, kayak or rowing boat. A natural amphitheatre will offer a venue for informal gatherings, events and entertainment. A small café and floating jetty will provide hire facilities and refreshments for visitors and campers.

The reserve will have upgraded facilities for overnight camping and the option of cabins for longer stays for families, school groups or business team building groups.

Dumaresq Dam has long been the recreational location of choice for the weekend picnic or BBQ for Armidale residents. The large water body was the town water supply until 1972 and has always been popular with rowers and canoeists. The popularity of the facility for visitors and tourists has substantially increased in recent years, particularly for motor home tourists and campers. The facilities are showing their age and cannot cope with increased visitation, however the potential to make this a nature park of regional significance is huge.

The facilities that we wish to construct and develop are: *(see attached Master Plan for details and locations)*

- Entry gate and park signage
- Defined camp site and toilet facilities with on-site waste treatment
- Car park areas for camping area and boat ramp area
- Sealed internal road circle
- BBQs, covered area with tables and seating
- New playground/exercise equipment
- Wildlife viewing platform
- Jetty café and canoe hire shop
- Upgrade Mountain bike and walking tracks with interpretive signage
- Holiday cabins x5 and landscaping



*Dumaresq Dam wall and the picturesque natural beauty of the recreation area*

**\$3M total cost**

## Priority 6

### New England Rail Trail

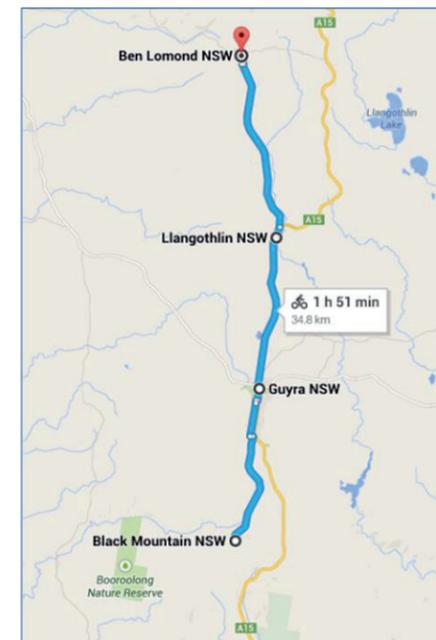
**Stage 1 (of 5 stages) – Black Mountain to Ben Lomond – Signature tourism development project:**

This project covers the development and construction of a Rail Trail on part of the unused Great Northern Railway corridor between the Black Mountain Railway Station and Ben Lomond Railway Station in the New England region of NSW (see map) passing through the township of Guyra.

- This project lies wholly within the Local Government Area of Armidale Regional Council.
- This project is dependent upon the imminent closure of the Armidale – Wallangarra rail corridor by the necessary proposed NSW Act of Parliament.

#### Details of Proposal

The proposed Rail Trail is a total of 34kms in length and is potentially the **first stage of a larger five stage project** which could see a 210km Rail Trail from Armidale to Wallangarra.



- The Trail will traverse some of the most picturesque countryside in the New England High Country and will quickly become a major tourist attraction and a significant piece of regional recreation infrastructure used for cycling, walking, jogging and horse riding.

- The project will involve the installation of 2.8 – 3.5 metre wide gravel and sealed (asphalt) trail along the existing rail corridor and will be managed by Armidale Regional Council in partnership with New England Rail Trail Inc.

- A variety of local community groups and individuals along the corridor will take ownership of day to day maintenance, weed control, fire avoidance, beautification, ecological and environmental preservation activities.

- Consultants have been engaged to develop a full business case.

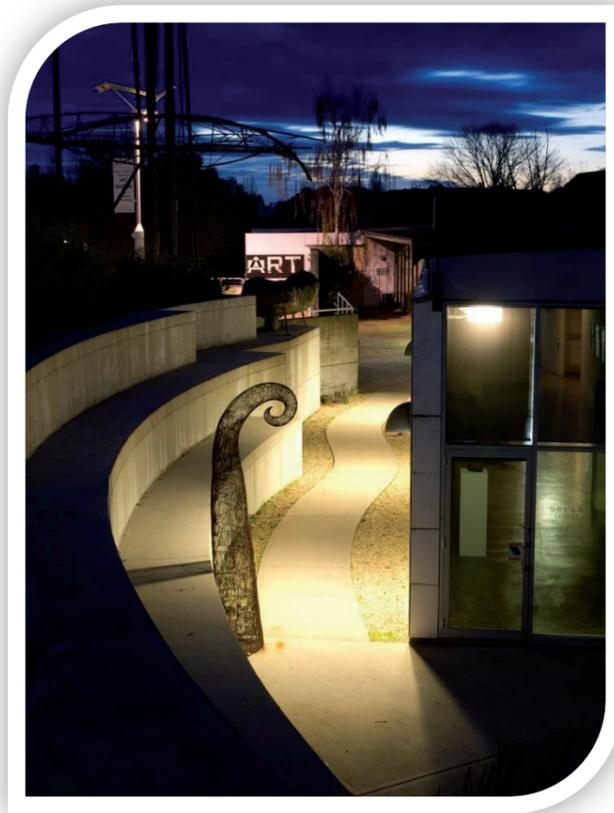
*The aim of the project is to showcase the preserved history of the railway whilst providing a quality shared pathway and support facilities so that users may sample the agricultural excellence and natural beauty which is New England High Country.*

**\$4.08M total cost**

## Priority 7

### NERAM Extension

This project would involve a significant upgrade and extension to the New England Regional Art Gallery; to allow for the exhibition of the Howard Hinton Art Collection and cater for the growing needs of the education sector. Infrastructure developments include the building of a new wing to the gallery that will include a 200-seat education or learning centre, and more exhibition space. The expansion will set up NERAM to be self-sufficient moving forward.



*New England Regional Art Museum*

**\$4.7M total cost**

## Priority 8

### Old Courthouse Creative Arts Industry Development

**To re-purpose Armidale’s Old Courthouse building which has been unoccupied since January 2014 when the new courthouse in Moore Street was opened.**

Strategically located in the Central Mall it is proposed to establish a space for those involved in the local creative industries, a place where like minded individuals come together to create, gain exposure, promote and sell their work. The building is ideally situated with its own courtyard to incorporate a café / restaurant which would act as an anchor attraction for both visitors and locals.

The “hub” is seen as an important part of the Armidale Mall Revitalisation Plan recently adopted by Council following extensive public engagement. The creative industries hub will act as a drawcard for visitors to the Mall, complement the existing traders and further support the Armidale Regional Council initiative to introduce al fresco dining.

The Court House is the oldest surviving public building in Armidale and the New England region. It was built in 1860 with major alterations in 1870 and 1897. The Court House, former sheriff’s office, (corner Faulkner and Moore Streets) the monument and tree (corner Faulkner and Beardy Streets) are listed local heritage items and included in the heritage conservation area under the Armidale Dumaresq Local Environmental Plan 2012. The building is not State Heritage listed. The then owner, The Department of Attorney General and Justice, advised in 2014 it considered the building as having only local heritage significance.

Further development of the Court House would be subject to the relevant provisions in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, Heritage Act 1977 and LEP 2012. Assessment of a development application would also take into consideration the heritage guidelines in Armidale Dumaresq Development Control Plan 2012: chapter 2.3 European Heritage.



*The Old Courthouse*

**\$1M total cost**

## Priority 9

### Upgrade/Replacement of 32 Timber Bridges - \$5.8m

32 timber bridges across the Armidale Region have been identified for upgrade or replacement. The bridges upgrade and replacement program will:

- remove all asset backlog for bridges
- improve the condition state of 20 of Council's bridges from condition state 4 or 5 to a condition state of 1
- extend the usable life of the bridges by 80 years
- Improve the capacity of bridges to achieve a 44T load limit
- provide better, safer and more efficient roads for the community, visitors, tourists and freight operators

\$5.8M

- \$2.9M funded through NSW Govt. Stronger Regions Fund
- \$2.9M Aust. Govt. Bridges Renewal Programme

(Application submitted, awaiting notification)



Upgrade of Toms Gully Bridge 2015 - 2016

## Priority 10

### Dumaresq Dam Safety Project (\$3 - \$5m)

Dumaresq Dam is a small water storage completed in 1896 and used as a water supply for Armidale, 10 km to the southeast, until approximately 1968. The dam is 'prescribed' under the NSW Dam Safety Act 1978 and its safety regulated by the NSW Dam Safety Committee.

The original concrete gravity dam wall no longer meets modern safety criteria and there is a risk that the dam could fail during a severe flood due to the dam's inadequate spillway capacity.

In 2013, Council engaged Arup Group to assess the dam and to propose options for upgrading the wall. Following extensive community and stakeholder consultation, Council determined to use concrete buttressing on the downstream side of the dam to strengthen the wall and modify the spillway, parapet wall and abutments. The proposed works are estimated to cost \$3.4 - \$4.4m and are expected to take 6 months. The proposed upgrade works involve:

- Construction of a mass concrete buttress against the downstream side of the dam, ranging from 1.0 m thick to 2.7 m thick at the base.
- Increasing the spillway capacity by removing 40 m of the parapet wall on the left side of the dam (left is as viewed when facing downstream) to make the spillway wider.
- Shaping the dam crest to an 'ogee' (curved) spillway to increase spillway capacity.
- Modification to the scour pipe outlet and delivery pipe outlet including replacement of the trunnion mechanism.
- Raising the parapet wall on the right abutment of the dam (right is as viewed when facing downstream), extending the abutment and constructing a wave wall on the abutment (upstream side) to prevent erosion in an extreme flood.

Original dam construction in 1897 photo courtesy of Ian Forrester grandson of one of the construction workers



## Priority 11

### Hydrotherapy Pool (\$1.46m)

The Armidale Hydrotherapy Pool Project will provide much needed therapeutic and life-fitness facilities, targeting a potential market of more than 50,000 users (including 29,000 residents and 21,000 visitors per annum). The new facility will provide capacity for 26,000 additional customer and patient visits and benefit approximately 3,000 individual customers per annum.

Aquatic hydrotherapy has proven health-remediation, fitness and well-being benefits across all age and ability groups. These include therapeutic treatments for:

- sports injuries, post-operative and orthopedic conditions
- spinal pain, chronic pain, muscular-skeletal conditions
- neurological conditions
- cardio-respiratory problems
- balance dysfunction
- women's health complaints
- arthritis and aged care
- mental health conditions.

In addition to these treatments, the Armidale Hydrotherapy facility will provide water safety and fitness programmes for a range of users, including approximately 2,000 CALD and new Australian residents; 10,000 elderly; 5,000 with disabilities; and 4,000 pre-school and primary school aged children.

## Priority 12

### Super Playground (\$999k)

The Armidale Regional Adventure Playground will be a significant investment providing residents and visitors with a state-of-the-art outdoor play space and recreational facility for families and visitors. Located South of Dumaresq Creek in Curtis Park, near the Visitor Information Centre, the playground is specifically designed to provide recreational activities for both able bodied persons, and also for those with a disability.

The Armidale Regional Adventure playground will become a destination for young people as well as their parents and carers. It will be synonymous with fun and enjoyment. The playground will contribute greatly towards the liveability factors that improve a community's quality of life, including health and wellbeing, the built and natural environments of the CBD, economic prosperity through visitor attraction, social equity for our diverse population, and entertainment and recreation possibilities.

Incorporating fencing, lighting, security (CCTV), connection to services and a new bridge across Dumaresq Creek, the Adventure Playground will contain a wide range of play equipment and landscape structures that are intended to stimulate the imagination of children whilst they play.



## Priority 13

### Mother of Ducks Lagoon (\$496k)

The Mother of Ducks Lagoon and Nature Reserve Visitors Upgrade will refurbish and improve existing day and overnight visitor facilities located on the shores of this popular attraction in Guyra. Improvements to the recreational amenity will include upgraded toilets, electric BBQs, all-weather picnic facilities and signage. The walking tracks and drainage around the lagoon will also be upgraded to facilitate access. This will boost visitation to the reserve, and stopovers and expenditure in the township of Guyra. A 2% increase in visitation to the region would result in 12,000 more visitors, and additional expenditure into the economy of approximately \$2.75M (Tourism Research Australia).



## Priority 14

### Tingha Skate Park upgrade (\$107k)

Tingha is a small community of approximately 1200 residents, with a large Indigenous population of around 20% of residents. Around a third of residents are aged between 5 and 17. The Tingha Community Skate Park is a popular meeting place and recreational facility for the more than 400 young people who call Tingha home. To improve the amenity and usability of the Skate Park, the community have advocated for the installation of shaded amenities to provide much-needed year-round protection from the sun. Given the popularity and importance of the Skate Park to young people, as well as their parents and carers, the benefits of the project are far-reaching.

## Other Opportunities / Needs

### Airport Parking

Parking is an issue for council, the intent being to triple the current available parking area. Council is considering a number of options including paid parking.



Proposed carpark expansion – Armidale Regional Airport

## Armidale Showground

The space is in a state of dis-repair and reflects poorly on Armidale as a “Centre of Agricultural Excellence”. Academics at UNE Smart Farm have raised this mismatch.

The Showground should be a local centerpiece reflecting all things ‘Agricultural’ which showcase Armidale Region and our emerging Ag Tech expertise to the world.

## NBN – Fibre to Acacia Business Park

In 2012 it was identified that Acacia Business Park was not in the Fibre footprint under the National Broadband Network rollout. Many stakeholders and interested parties were drawn together to canvas Government to correct this oversight. Acacia Business Park accounts for approximately twelve percent of the business activity in Armidale and as such should never have been omitted from the original plans.

In a media release dated 14 May 2013

### **\$220,000 for Armidale’s Acacia Park to get fibre NBN**

*Following a well-founded and argued case by the businesses in the Acacia Business Park Industrial Estate that they should be connected to the Fibre National Broadband Network, the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor is pleased to see that \$220,000 is part of the Federal Budget to make it happen.*

*Mr Windsor said that the Acacia Park businesses sought quotes from NBN Co Ltd to have the fibre extended to cover them which then formed the basis of the request to the Federal Government.....*

After many months of lobbying it was announced that funds (\$220k) would be made available and stakeholders were advised that the funds would be held in safe keeping during the election and would be released after the election. Advice was received that \$220,000 was being held by AusIndustry – awaiting the minister’s signature for release of the funds. NBN Co. acknowledged and confirmed this in their correspondence and that they were ready to commence work once the funds were released.

In January 2014 The Hon Malcolm Turnbull (Minister for Communications) advised The Hon Barnaby Joyce that the pre-election commitment was likely to be broken. In April 2014 The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP advised Council that the funds had been returned to Budget.

The Acacia Business Park Industrial Estate is of great importance for decentralisation opportunities. It provides a wonderful venue for attracting high-tech and new-age businesses but lacks the connectivity required.

*Providing full service Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) at Acacia Business Park Industrial Estate is a priority of Council and grant opportunities will be sought for this venture.*



## Glasshouses or Controlled Environment Horticulture (CEH)

There is a growing trend in the agricultural industry towards construction of large-scale, technologically complex, high-yielding and resource-efficient greenhouses.

These developments offer possibilities for meeting future demand for mainly vegetables and berry fruits domestically and internationally. This can be done in a relatively sustainable way and can create employment opportunities in regional area. CEH is a significant growth industry in its own right.

The Costa Group under the banner of ‘Blush’ tomatoes has constructed three 10 hectare Glasshouses in the Guyra district and are successfully producing in excess of 14 million kilograms of tomatoes each year. They have a forth 10 hectare site ready for development.

Four main success factors

- Water
- Sunlight
- Transport links
- Labour

The New England High Country has the advantage of altitude which means that it rarely experiences summer days with temperatures in excess of 30°C – which can inhibit productivity – and relatively high levels of solar radiation. Water is abundant and through the pipeline from Malpas Dam to Guyra, future water needs can be met. The New England Highway enables road transportation north and South for prospective horticulture producers and labour needs can be met by University students looking to support themselves through their studies and helps to solve the challenges presented by high levels of youth unemployment locally. There is potential to attract new players producing a variety of CEH viable crops such as tomato, capsicum, lettuce and other leafy greens, cucumbers, eggplant, herbs, and some types of cut flowers.

The vision of a new larger runway at the Armidale Regional Airport significantly changes the business case for such products grown locally to potentially be exported directly into Asian markets.

*Costa’s Glasshouse No. 3 just north of Guyra*



*Intentionally Blank*