

CLAUSE CL03**TITLE** Griffith Economic Development Strategy**FROM** Oumi Karenga-Hewitt, Economic Development Coordinator**TRIM REF** 20/50445

RECOMMENDATION

The committee note the report

REPORT

Earlier this year, Griffith City Council commissioned consultants SC Lennon & Associates to prepare the Griffith Economic Development Strategy 2020-2025, to provide Council with strategic direction to support the sustainable development of the local economy. The consultants engaged with members of the Griffith business community, key government agencies and institutions to help inform the development of a visionary yet practical strategy that will focus Council's activities as a supporter, enabler and promoter of economic development for the next five years.

A diversity of opportunities have been identified for potential inclusion in the strategy across a number of related themes including: promoting Griffith as a location of choice for business investment, employment, learning and living; using place-based projects and programs to enhance Griffith's role as the regional service centre of the Western Riverina; supporting economic development by addressing Griffith's land, housing and essential infrastructure priorities; supporting the development of a skilled workforce and dynamic local business sector; promoting Griffith's industry drivers including its innovative agricultural sector and its dynamic manufacturing industry; and supporting the emergence and development of a vibrant regional visitor economy.

The findings from the consultants' research, stakeholder consultation and analysis informed the preparation of the Draft Economic Development Strategy, which will be presented to Council before being placed on public exhibition.

As per our request for quotation The Griffith Economic Development Strategy should address:

- Short-term and long-term goals for economic development in the Griffith LGA;
- Strategies, aspirations, current and future projects for Council and stakeholders;
- Plans for Council to reach and how goals will be monitored;
- Assessment of current workforce and opportunities to attract skilled labour;
- Analysis of economic drivers in the Griffith LGA;
- How current infrastructure supports objectives as well as future infrastructure requirements; and
- Key industry analysis.

Successful economic development planning will require Griffith City Council to:

- Establish a narrative about the City, its strengths, challenges and opportunities for economic development.
- Articulate the vision for economic development.
- Have a strategic, informed and targeted plan of action to address priorities for implementation.
- Define and communicate its ED roles and functions.
- Appropriately resource its ED program.
- Integrate its ED activities across the organisation.
- Be pro-active in building partnerships with other agencies.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This item links to Council's Strategic Plan item 6.1 Encourage and support the establishment of new diversified industries and businesses.

ATTACHMENTS

(a)	Draft Updates - Griffith Economic Development Strategy ↓	22
(b)	Griffith Economic Development Strategy - Draft, Version 2 ↓	23
(c)	Ratings Matrix - Griffith Economic Development Strategy ↓	77

DRAFT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY – NOTES FOR CHANGE/UPDATE, NOVEMBER 2020

Section	Comment
Front and Back Cover	To be designed to match Business Prospectus
Title	Change from Growing Griffith to 'Evolve Griffith: An Economic Development Strategy for Promoting Prosperity, 2020 – 2025'
Throughout	Update photos
Relating to COVID-19 Impact	Include information on Griffith's resilience (reference report released this year on most resilient towns/cities)
Executive Summary (and throughout)	Make explicit reference to the Western Riverina Regional Economic Development Strategy and the Riverina Murray Regional Plan
Throughout	Update tables with completed projects/funding acquisitions (health, housing, business etc.)
Page 24 – Lifestyle and Liveability	In reference to the Base Hospital Funding – wording to be updated (on this page and throughout) to reflect active process, committed fund EAs, and on-the-ground results
Pages 33 – 41 – Opportunities for Action	<p>We need to use an assessment matrix for the suggested 45 actions. This matrix will focus on benefits, resources and capacity, they should also be time-based in some way. SC Consultants to provide matrix samples.</p> <p>General considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove any actions which are irrelevant, inappropriate or unfeasible for Council. - Reword actions to appropriately reflect Council's role in implementing the actions



Evolve Griffith: An Economic Development Strategy for Promoting Prosperity, 2020-2025 has been prepared by:



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Executive Summary

A Framework for Promoting Prosperity

Evolve Griffith is Council's five-year plan to support the vibrancy, diversity and sustainability of the City of Griffith, to 2025 and beyond.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting cities and regions throughout Australia and around the world, the need to understand the local impacts on business and industry and to develop appropriate responses to help promote and support economic development is perhaps more important than ever before.

Informed by a well-developed understanding of the City's (and wider Western Riverina region's) economic development structure, dynamics and potential, *Evolve Griffith* presents a plan of action to facilitate and support local economic activity now and into the future.

Built on partnerships and alliances between Griffith City Council, State and Federal government agencies, regional development bodies, local businesses and the community, *Evolve Griffith* delivers a clear, actionable and achievable road map for economic development focussed on the growth and retention of existing businesses and residents; new industry development; the attraction of visitors; and increased employment.

In preparing this strategy, Council engaged with a diversity of government, industry and community stakeholders via a series of targeted stakeholder consultations. The strategy consultations have been instrumental in helping to establish a vision for the economy of the future and to guide Council's efforts in promoting and facilitating economic development.

Designed to effect positive change, the opportunities for action presented in this economic development strategy, when implemented, will help facilitate the resilience, competitiveness and success of local businesses and the capacity of the Griffith community to attract investment, diversify the local economy and provide the foundations for the jobs of the future.

Strategic, informed and targeted, the economic development strategy themes and actions have been framed to help realise Council's and the community's economic development objective as articulated in the City's Community Strategy Plan *Guiding Griffith 2040*, to provide and manage assets, services and facilities which enable economic activity to occur, to support the development of a skilled workforce with opportunities for employment and to encourage the City's economy to grow sustainably into the future.

Griffith City Council's Economic Development Objective

Broadly speaking, 'economic development' refers to the continuous process of Evolve an area's level of income and capital (wealth) and distributing that wealth (through local expenditure and jobs) to the community.

Typically measured in terms of income and employment, economic development is also measured by improvements in education, skills, health, culture, community wellbeing, a sense of place and the environment.

Ultimately, economic development is about improving quality of life or, to capture the concept in a single word, it is about 'prosperity'.

For Griffith City Council, which has a role to play in promoting, encouraging and enabling economic activity, supporting economic development requires a strategic, informed and targeted approach. To this end, *Evolve Griffith*:

- Establishes a detailed understanding of the economic structure and dynamics of the Griffith local government area (LGA) and relevant regional policy settings which influence and inform a framework for prosperity;
- Articulates economic development issues, challenges and opportunities for Griffith City Council to consider in its role as a facilitator and promoter of economic development;

EVOLVE GRIFFITH: AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING PROSPERITY, 2020-2025 / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Identifies collaborative partnerships, where Council can engage with other stakeholders on matters concerning local and regional economic development; and
- Provides Griffith City Council with an informed, actionable and achievable 'roadmap' for economic development to 2025.

Griffith City Council recognises that it has a vital role to play in the leadership, organisation, delivery and promotion of local economic development. Guided by this strategy, Council is committed to creating the conditions for more effective economic partnerships and enabling innovation and entrepreneurship.

Economic development is about capitalising on comparative and competitive advantage. Griffith's future prosperity will be underpinned by innovation and value-creation in the area's traditional economic mainstays of manufacturing and agriculture; related opportunities in the transport and logistics sector; new investments in industries such as health care, research and education; tourism and related industries including sport and recreation, retail and the accommodation and food services sector; and opportunities to attract and grow knowledge-intensive activity in the professional, scientific, technical and creative services sectors.

Griffith's Economic Drivers



A Strategic Focus on the Enablers of Prosperity

The themes and actions presented in this strategy guide Griffith City Council's efforts on its role as an 'enabler' of economic development.

The opportunities for action focus on the ways in which Council can use its planning and regulatory functions, its resources and its collaborative relationships with other organisations to help stimulate investment, attract new residents, support the growth of existing businesses and grow the local visitor economy through effective promotion and destination management.

Evolve Griffith focuses on the enablers of economic development. These refer to the services, infrastructure and support mechanisms required to facilitate positive change. At the local government level, they include:

- Local roads.
- Developable residential, commercial and industrial land.
- The form and function of the Griffith city centre and other settlements.
- Community services and facilities including sporting, cultural and recreational facilities.

At the wider regional level and beyond, the enablers of economic development include those attributes which Griffith City Council is not directly responsible for, but which it can help influence through its regional economic partnerships and advocacy efforts including, for example:

- Regional transport and communications infrastructure.
- Power and water.
- Health care and social assistance services.
- Education infrastructure and workforce skills.

Collectively, these enablers of economic activity help define Griffith's (and the Western Riverina region's) economic development potential and its appeal as a place to visit, work, live and invest in. A focus on how Council can effectively influence the enablers of economic development - either as a lead agent of change or in support of others - underpins *Evolve Griffith* as a visionary, yet practical and outcomes-oriented economic development strategy.

Regional in scope with a global frame of reference, *Evolve Griffith* articulates and promotes a partnership approach between Council and other stakeholders in government, the non-government sector, the community and industry.

Having regard for the City's and region's broader policy and planning framework, Council recognises and promotes its role in economic development as being one in which it pro-actively and constructively works with the other stakeholders to promote Griffith as the regional service centre of the Western Riverina and as an attractive destination for people to live, work and play.

This is reflected in the economic development vision and Council's charter to promote and support economic development.

A Vision and Charter for Griffith's Economic Development

Evolve Griffith is informed by socio-economic research and analysis and targeted stakeholder consultation. The economic development strategy themes and actions reflect stakeholder views regarding Griffith's key issues, challenges and opportunities, which combined, inform the vision for economic development.

The economic development vision is supported by Griffith City Council's economic development charter. This articulates Council's commitment to promoting, facilitating and co-ordinating local economic development activities.

Economic Development Vision for The City of Griffith

Building on its strategic location, its industry strengths and capabilities and its role as the service centre to the Western Riverina, by 2040, Griffith will be widely known for its vibrant and connected communities and as a location of choice in which to live, work, visit and invest.

Griffith City Council's Economic Development Charter

Griffith City Council supports economic development through strategic planning, information-sharing, advocacy, infrastructure provision and service delivery, to help encourage businesses to establish and grow, and to cultivate Griffith's appeal as a place to live, learn and prosper.

Guided by its economic development charter and the action plan presented in this strategy, Griffith City Council continuously strives to provide the enabling environment to help facilitate the competitiveness

and success of businesses across all sectors of the local economy. To focus Council's efforts in this regard, opportunities for action have been identified across three strategic themes.

Economic Development Strategy Themes

Evolve Griffith documents opportunities for Griffith City Council and its partners in government, the non-government sector, industry and the community to address collaboratively, to help facilitate change towards a prosperous future. To this end, it contains three strategy themes. Opportunities for action have been identified and categorised under the three strategic themes.

These are opportunities that Council and its partners can focus on to help activate and grow the local economy. The opportunities for action are informed by the economic development vision and Council's charter. Prioritising where Council's resources can best be directed for the purpose of facilitating and promoting economic development is a key consideration of *Evolve Griffith*.

Evolve Griffith: Economic Development Strategy Themes



Priority Opportunities for Action

Priority projects and activities for implementation are to be determined by Griffith City Council and reviewed annually. Priorities are informed by the application of a broad set of assessment criteria which consider both the anticipated benefits and Griffith City Council's capacity to implement the opportunity in question, either as the lead, or in a support role in partnership with other stakeholders.

Some opportunities are focused on catalyst project planning and development initiatives which require action combined with a well-planned course of

project implementation for the desired outcomes to be realised over time.

Other opportunities for action are focussed on strategic program implementation and are initiatives that can be addressed as part of Griffith City Council's day-to-day economic development planning and facilitation functions.

In a number of cases, these actions seek to build on or continue initiatives already in place.

The Immediate Challenge of COVID-19: An Economic Recovery Plan

In delivering this economic development strategy, Griffith City Council is focussed first and foremost on immediate-term initiatives to help address the impacts of COVID-19 on local businesses and the community, and with a longer-term view to strategies and actions that will help to enable and facilitate Griffith's economic development in a post-pandemic world. The immediate-term initiatives, which are designed to assist economic recovery, include:

- Providing local businesses with information on and access to services offering support for planning through adversity - including financial counselling, business continuity management, human resource management, taxation support, mental health support, etc. This includes support available through, for example, the networking and referral services offered by RDA Riverina, Business NSW, BEC Business Advice and the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO).

- Supporting local businesses by investigating and promoting local procurement options.
- Supporting local business start-ups and expansions by continuing to work to ensure (and promote) a supportive and enabling regulatory environment.
- Through its role as a local leader, restoring business confidence (and community confidence) by broadcasting positive messages about Griffith's economic recovery and local initiatives that are designed to support the recovery effort.

Led by its Economic Development Unit, these initiatives are being delivered by Griffith City Council and its partners in the context of a longer-term strategic framework for economic development promotion and facilitation.

Cultivating Collaborative Partnerships for Effective Strategy Implementation

Evolve Griffith will be implemented by Council, led by its Economic Development Unit, in partnership with the NSW and Australian Governments, regional development bodies, peak industry bodies, the City's and wider region's education and training providers and other supporting partners across the Western Riverina region.

The City's businesses and residents will continue to be engaged at a partnership level to ensure effective communication on the progress of strategy implementation and commitment to realising Council's and the community's economic development agenda.

1. Introduction

1.1 Strategy Purpose and Objectives

Evolve Griffith is Council's five-year plan to support the vibrancy, diversity and sustainability of the City of Griffith, to 2025 and beyond.

Griffith, located in the heart of the Western Riverina region and with a population of around 27,000, offers an attractive regional city lifestyle underpinned by its strong agricultural heritage and manufacturing prowess, its demographic diversity, its recreation, arts and cultural heritage assets and the strength and depth of its retail and hospitality services. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting cities and regions throughout Australia, the need to understand the local impacts on business and industry and to develop appropriate responses to help promote and support economic development is perhaps more important than ever before.

Informed by a well-developed understanding of the City's (and Western Riverina region's) economic development structure, dynamics and potential, *Evolve Griffith* presents a plan of action to facilitate and support local economic activity now and into the future.

Broadly speaking, 'economic development' refers to the continuous process of Evolve an area's level of income and capital (wealth) and distributing that wealth (through local expenditure and jobs) to the community. Typically measured in terms of income and employment, economic development is also measured by improvements in education, skills, health, culture, community wellbeing, a sense of place and the environment. Ultimately, it is about improving quality of life or, to capture the concept in a single word, it is about 'prosperity'.

For Griffith City Council, which has a role to play in promoting, encouraging and enabling economic activity, supporting economic development requires a strategic, informed and targeted approach. To this end, *Evolve Griffith*:

- Establishes a detailed understanding of the economic structure and dynamics of the Griffith local government area (LGA) and relevant

regional policy settings which influence and inform a framework for prosperity;

- Articulates economic development issues, challenges and opportunities for Griffith City Council to consider in its role as a facilitator and promoter of economic development;
- Identifies collaborative partnerships, where Council can engage with other stakeholders on matters concerning local and regional economic development; and
- Provides Griffith City Council with an informed, actionable and achievable 'roadmap' for economic development to 2025.

Built on partnerships and alliances between Griffith City Council, State and Federal government agencies, regional development bodies, local businesses and the community, *Evolve Griffith* delivers a clear, actionable and achievable road map for economic development focussed on the growth and retention of existing businesses and residents; new industry development; the attraction of visitors; and increased employment.

Designed to effect positive change, the opportunities for action presented in this economic development strategy, when implemented, will help facilitate the resilience, competitiveness and success of local businesses and the capacity of the Griffith community to attract investment, diversify the local economy and provide the foundations for the jobs of the future.

Strategic, informed and targeted, the strategy themes and actions have been framed to help realise Council's and the community's economic development objective as articulated in the City's Community Strategy Plan *Guiding Griffith 2040*, to provide and manage assets, services and facilities which enable economic activity to occur, to support the development of a skilled workforce with opportunities for employment and to encourage the City's economy to grow sustainably into the future.

1.2 Leveraging Collaborative Pathways to Prosperity

In preparing this strategy, Council engaged with a diversity of government, industry and community stakeholders via a series of targeted stakeholder consultations. The consultations have been instrumental in helping to establish a vision for the economy of the future and to guide Council's efforts in promoting and facilitating economic development.

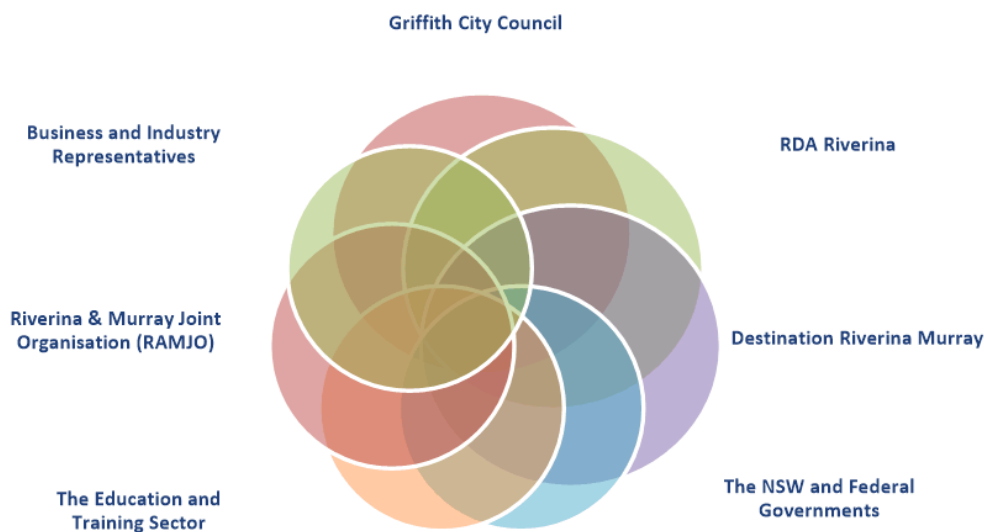
Regional in scope and with a global frame of reference, *Evolve Griffith* articulates and promotes a partnership approach between Griffith City Council and other stakeholders in government, the non-government sector, the community and industry.

Evolve Griffith acknowledges and embraces the City's and region's broader policy and planning framework and regional development priorities as articulated in

key policy and planning documents. It also responds to the many issues, challenges and opportunities raised by the City's residents and business communities, captured through the *Guiding Griffith 2040* Community Strategic Planning process.

Griffith City Council recognises and promotes its role in economic development as being one in which it pro-actively and constructively works with the other tiers of government, non-government bodies, industry stakeholders and the community to help promote Griffith and the Western Riverina region as a location of choice for people to live, work and play. The themes and opportunities for action presented in this strategy reflect Council's important role as a promoter, supporter and enabler of economic development.

Figure 1. Griffith City Council's Economic Development Partners



1.3 A Focus on the Enablers of Economic Development

While business and industry drives economic growth and development, State and Federal Government-sponsored regional development agencies and local government authorities directly influence the enabling environment for prosperity. The enablers of economic development refer to the services, infrastructure and support mechanisms required to facilitate positive change. At the local government level, they include:

- Local roads.
- Developable residential, commercial and industrial land.
- The form and function of the Griffith city centre and other settlements.
- Community services and facilities including sporting, cultural and recreational facilities.

At the wider regional level and beyond, the enablers of economic development include those attributes

which Council is not directly responsible for, but which it can help influence through its regional economic partnerships including, for example:

- Regional transport and communications infrastructure.
- Power and water.
- Health care and social assistance services.
- Education infrastructure and workforce skills.

Collectively, these enablers of economic activity help define Griffith's (and the wider Western Riverina region's) economic development potential and its appeal as a place to visit, work, live and invest in. A focus on how Council can effectively influence the enablers of economic development - either as a lead agent of change or in support of others - underpins *Evolve Griffith* as a visionary, yet practical and outcomes-oriented economic development strategy.

1.4 Griffith City Council's Economic Development Roles and Functions

Having regard for the enablers of economic development, there are six 'core' areas of economic development activity which underpin Council's role in the implementation of this strategy. These are:

- **Research and Information Brokerage** – Griffith City Council has a vital role to play in supporting local business and industry through the organisation, delivery and promotion of economic development. Council will continue to take the initiative in establishing and nurturing effective economic partnerships and enabling industry innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly through networking, facilitation and information sharing on a diversity of matters, effectively working as a local 'solutions broker'.
- **Strategic Planning and Place Management** – Griffith City Council will continue to work to promote and deliver a regulatory and land use planning environment that is open, engaging and supportive of local business opportunity. As well as ensuring that adequate land and floorspace is available for commercial and industrial

development and for other economic activity, through its local regulatory and land use planning regime, Council will work to support existing and emerging industry clusters by providing signals relevant to the performance and locational requirements of industry. Council will also continue to promote the City's strong sense of place and the functioning of its centres through master planning, development control, place activation and improvement programs.

- **Investment in Local Infrastructure and Services** - Council is committed to nurturing the foundations for prosperity – strategic infrastructure, community services and facilities, services and facilities for visitors, access to employment and places where industry can invest and do business. In its role as a facilitator of business activity, Griffith City Council will continue to plan for and provide those critical infrastructure items that fall under its remit and advocate for those items that fall outside of Council's direct control.

Figure 2. Griffith City Council's 'Core' Economic Development Activities



o **Local Business Support** - Local enterprise presents huge potential to take advantage of new investment opportunities and Council understands that economic development requires the support of local businesses to encourage continued investment and employment creation from business and industry already located in Griffith and surrounding areas. To succeed, local businesses need access to workers with appropriate skills. Council will continue to liaise with business and industry, representative organisations, peak industry bodies and education and training providers to network ideas and articulate workforce planning priorities that need to be addressed.

o **Tourism Promotion and Investment Attraction** - Investment is fundamental to economic development, and access to international, national and regional markets, including visitor markets, is a key determinant of sustainable economic growth. Council will continue to help facilitate private sector investment by promoting what the City has to offer prospective investors, including potential new residents. It will also proactively promote Griffith and the Western Riverina region as a key visitor destination. Importantly, Council will continue to work hard to attract government investment in the region's

critical strategic infrastructure needs, by identifying priorities and preparing business cases to inform both Council and other government funding support for key projects.

o **Economic Development Advocacy and Partnerships** - Griffith City Council will continue to work hard in providing a unifying voice for local communities and for local businesses across all sectors of the economy when lobbying State and Federal Governments on key industry or infrastructure issues. Nurturing and promoting positive collaborative partnerships will form an essential ingredient of Griffith's economic success.

The six core areas of economic development activity described above are interrelated and the initiatives of Griffith City Council and its partners will often cut across more than one. The strategic themes and opportunities for action presented in this strategy reflect these key roles and functions in the context of identified challenges and opportunities for economic development, and Council's collaborative partnerships with other stakeholders in addressing positive economic change with an outlook to 2025 and beyond.

2. The Immediate Challenge: COVID-19

2.1 The COVID Challenge

According to the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA), the current outlook for the Australian and global economies is being driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. The necessary social distancing restrictions and other containment measures that has been put in place to control the virus in Australia's cities and regions, has resulted in a significant contraction in economic activity.

At a local level, these unprecedented social and economic impacts mean the need to articulate and guide Griffith City Council's role in supporting, promoting and facilitating economic development is perhaps more important than ever before.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2, 2020) reported that Australia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell 7.0 per cent in the June quarter 2020, the largest quarterly fall on record. According to the RBA, in line with the economic contraction, total hours worked are expected to decline by around 20 per cent and the unemployment rate is forecast to rise to around 10 per cent in the June quarter.

At the time of writing, the latest available unemployment figures from the Australian Labour Force Survey (March quarter 2020) had not been impacted by COVID-19. There will no doubt be a commensurate increase in unemployment across Australia's regions and locales, including Griffith.

The economic outlook beyond the June quarter 2020 will be shaped by the extent to which activity and the labour market continues to be affected by social distancing and other containment restrictions, which in turn will be determined by what is necessary to manage the health aspects of the current crisis. Other factors that will be important are the responses of households and businesses to changes in the economic environment, and the effectiveness of policy support, including at the local government level.

COVID-19 has negatively affected the Australian economy by disrupting consumer demand and business supply. Consumer sentiment has deteriorated significantly, weakening demand across most industries. Households have scaled back discretionary spending due to fears relating to rising unemployment and economic uncertainty.

According to IBISWorld (July 2020), while Australia has been relatively successful in containing COVID-19, supply chain disruptions, and ongoing travel and tourism restrictions continue to hinder economic activity. Those industries that are expected to be most adversely affected by the aftermath of COVID-19 include manufacturing, mining, agriculture, some store-based retailing and the accommodation and food services sector (including tourism operators).

Despite the adverse economic impacts, some sectors are expected to outperform during the COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing has pushed many consumers to online channels for shopping, communication, food purchases and working arrangements. This trend has driven a surge in sectors such as online shopping, postal services, and data storage services. Other industries have suffered direct negative effects, but have also seen positive factors, such as rising demand for repairs and maintenance services replacing new purchases.

It is plausible that the current economic disruption will have some long-lasting effects, not only because it will take some time to restore workforces and re-establish businesses but also because it could also affect mindsets and the behaviours of consumers and businesses. This could result in structural change in the economy. Changes in the financial position of households and businesses could also have long-lasting effects.

2.2 An Economic Recovery Plan

In delivering this strategy, Griffith City Council is focussed first and foremost on immediate-term initiatives to help address the impacts of COVID-19 on local businesses and the community, and with a longer-term view to strategies and actions that will help to enable and facilitate Griffith's economic development in a post-pandemic world.

These immediate-term initiatives, which are designed to assist economic recovery, include:

- Providing local businesses with information on and access to services offering support for planning through adversity - including financial counselling, business continuity management, human resource management, taxation support, mental health support, etc. This includes support available through, for example, the networking and referral services offered by RDA Riverina, Business NSW, BEC Business Advice and the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO).

- Supporting local businesses by investigating and promoting local procurement options.
- Supporting local business start-ups and expansions by continuing to work to ensure (and promote) a supportive and enabling regulatory environment.
- Through its role as a local leader, restoring business confidence (and community confidence) by broadcasting positive messages about Griffith's economic recovery and local initiatives that are designed to support the recovery effort.

These initiatives are being delivered by Council and its partners in the context of a longer-term strategic framework for economic development promotion and facilitation. As part of its efforts to assist local business and industry through the post-pandemic recovery effort, Griffith City Council will also look to leverage off the NSW Government's COVID-19 Recovery Plan.



Image: Griffith town centre (source: Destination NSW)

3. Informing a Framework for Prosperity

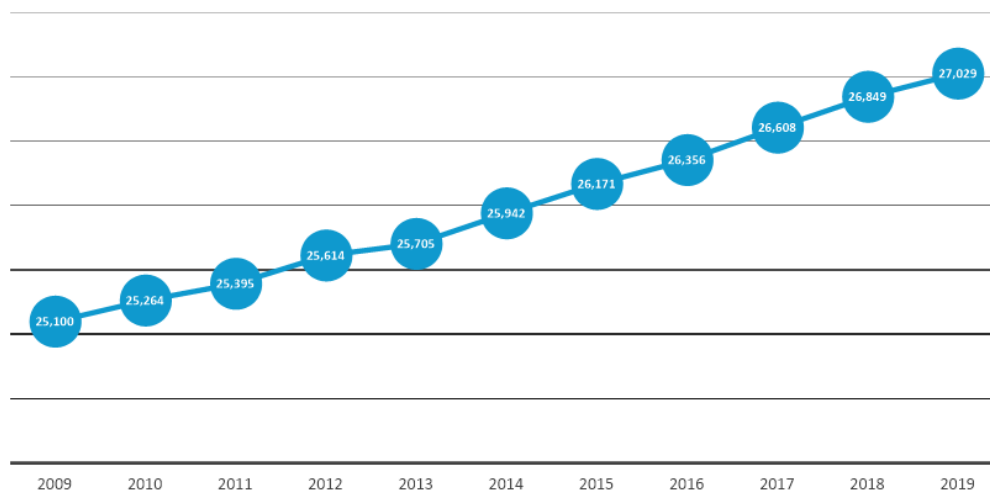
3.1 Population

Located 573 kilometres west of Sydney, 463 kilometres north of Melbourne and 358 kilometres north-west of Canberra, Griffith, a progressive city offering excellent cultural and recreational facilities, vibrant retail, food and wine experiences, essential services and infrastructure, has a population of approximately 27,000 (ABS Population Estimates, 2019) and services a regional catchment of almost 55,000 people.

With a gross regional product (GRP) of \$1.61 billion, Griffith is home to 3,300 businesses and around 13,985 jobs (<https://economy.id.com.au/griffith>).

Data from the National Skills Commission (March 2020) reveals that Griffith City has an unemployment rate of just 3.5% compared to the regional NSW average of 4.8% and the NSW average of 4.6%.¹

Figure 3. Population, Griffith City, 2009 - 2019



Source: http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=ABS_ERP_LGA2019 with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates

The median age of the Griffith LGA's population is 37 compared to 38 for both NSW and Australia.

Griffith has an ethnically-diverse population and according to the last Census (2016), the three largest ancestries in Griffith City were Australian, English and Italian.

Griffith's population has increased steadily over the past decade at just under 1% per annum. By comparison, the population of NSW increased on average by 1.4% per annum over the same ten-year period. Griffith City's population is forecast to continue to grow at its current rate, to approximately 30,500 by 2036.

¹ The COVID-19 pandemic began to have a significant impact on the Australian labour market from mid-March 2020, when non-essential services were shut down and trading restrictions were implemented. The reference week for the March 2020 ABS Labour

Force Survey, however, was in the first two weeks of March. Accordingly, COVID-19 did not have a significant impact on the unemployment estimates for the March quarter 2020

3.2 Labour Force and Skills Profile

Education Qualifications

According to the 2016 ABS Census of Population and Housing, one-fifth (21%) of people aged 15 years and over in the Griffith local government area (LGA) had a vocational educational qualification, which was lower than that for Regional NSW (24%) and higher than that for the State as a whole (18%).

More people aged 15 years and over in Griffith reported 'no qualification' (48%) compared to Regional NSW (42%) and NSW (39%).

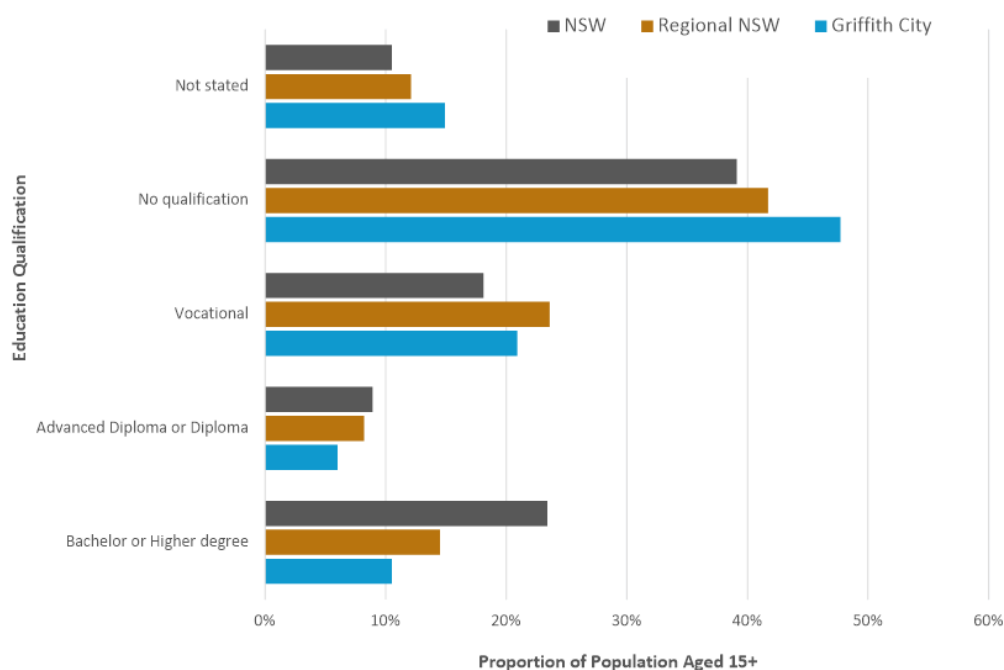
Only 11% of the Griffith City population aged 15 years and over had a Bachelor's Degree or higher compared to 15% across Regional NSW and 23% for the State as a whole.

Occupational Profile

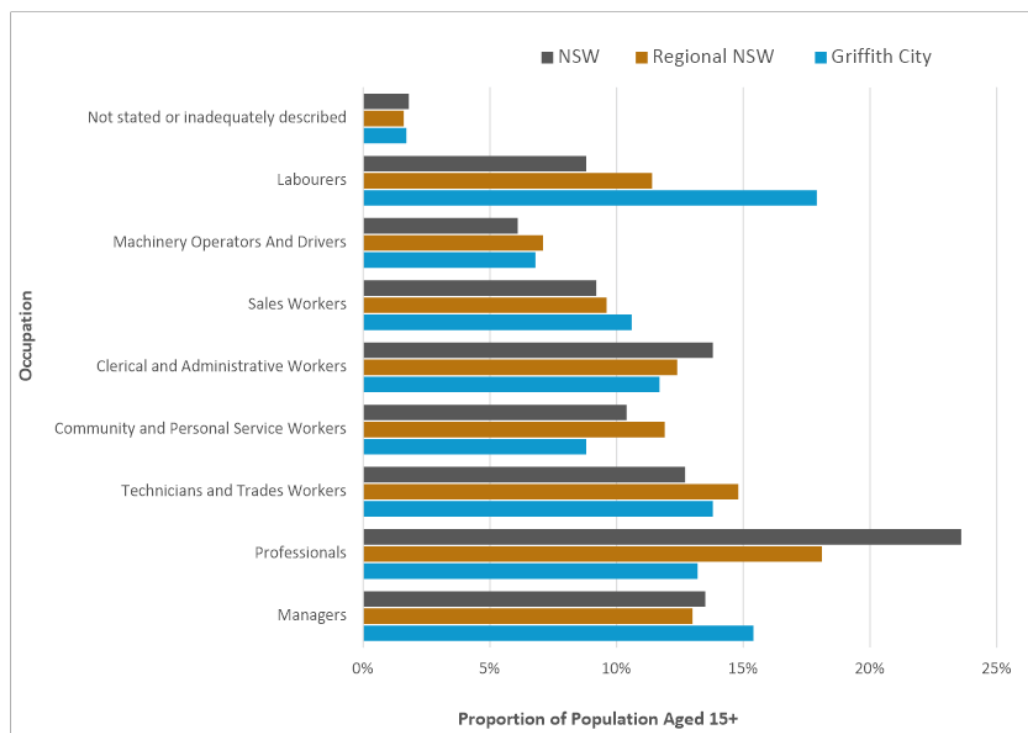
Griffith City has a proportionally higher 'blue collar' working population than the Regional NSW and NSW average, with more labourers than any other occupation. Griffith's comparatively higher number of sales workers is a reflection of the City's role as a regional service centre and the importance of retail as a local employer.

Griffith also has a high proportion of working residents who are managers (which includes farmers), who account for 15% of the City's working population compared to 13% for Regional NSW and 13.5% for the State as a whole. A much lower share of Griffith's working residents are 'professionals', suggesting there is an opportunity to explore and address this local skills gap.

Figure 4. Education Qualifications, Griffith City, Regional NSW and NSW, 2016



Source: economy.id with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates

Figure 5. Occupational Profile, Griffith City, Regional NSW and NSW, 2016

Source: economy.id with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates

3.3 Industry and Employment Profile

Local Jobs Profile

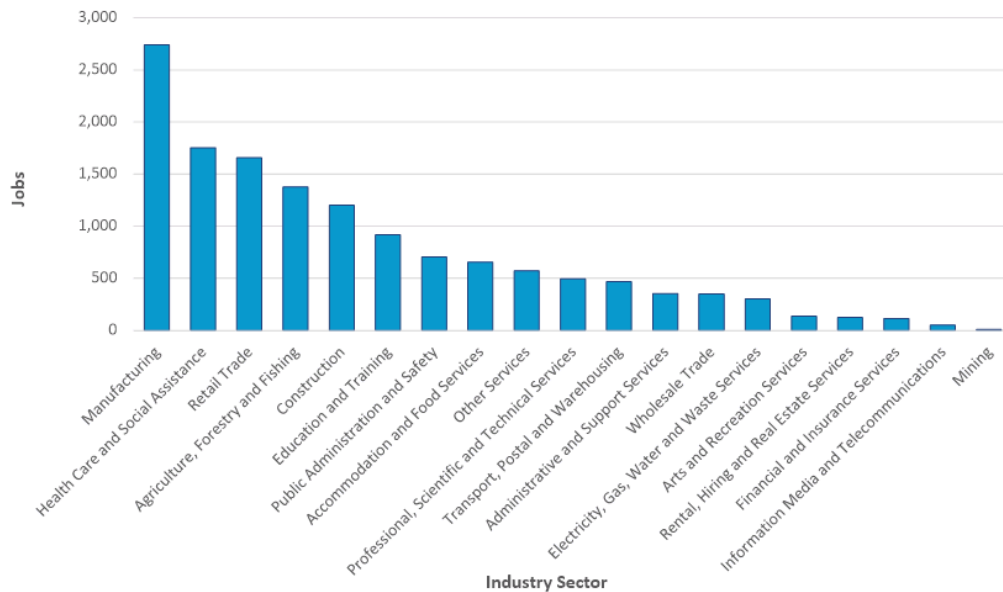
There are 13,985 jobs located in the Griffith LGA. Manufacturing accounts for the largest share of local jobs (2,742 jobs or 20% of the total) followed by Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Agriculture and Construction.

Griffith's health care and social assistance sector accounts for 12.5% of local jobs.

The largest manufacturing sub-sectors include food and beverage product manufacturing. Other local manufacturing industries include metal product manufacturing activities and machinery and equipment manufacturing.

The significance of Griffith's manufacturing industry as a provider of local jobs is clearly illustrated in the comparative representation of employment by industry against the NSW average. Manufacturing accounts for 20% of jobs in the Griffith LGA compared to a State-wide average of 7%.

The role of Griffith's agricultural sector as a local employer is also evident in the data, with the industry accounting for 10% of local jobs compared to the NSW average of just 2%.

Figure 6. Employment by Industry (Jobs by Location), Griffith City, 2018/19

Source: economy.id with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates

Figure 7. Employment by Industry (%), Griffith City and NSW, 2018/19

Source: economy.id with interpretations by SC Lennon & Associates