

Sport, Recreation, Leisure & Entertainment and The Arts

- While Griffith has an appealing regional city lifestyle, it is considered by some that there is “not enough to do” during down time. Council recognises the need to continually explore and expand options for recreation, leisure and entertainment in Griffith. The latest grant funding rounds have specifically concentrated on facilities for the community, especially youth.
- Griffith City Council is spending over \$26 million on new basketball and netball courts, new synthetic athletics and hockey fields, a 50-metre swimming pool and upgraded change rooms.
- The development of regional sporting infrastructure (a multi-sports precinct) presents an opportunity to serve a Evolve population, and to host major sporting events to help attract people to Griffith.
- Lake Wyangan, which was once a popular recreational fishing area, is not currently being used as a result of blue-green algae. Council is investing \$2 million in the Lake Wyangan Filtration and Wetlands Project to improve the quality of water entering the lake.
- Although only a very small sector of employment, the arts and creative industries have been Evolve in Griffith. The creative services industries provide inputs to many other sectors while the arts support the City’s appeal as a place to live and enjoy.

Start-up / Micro Business Support

- There are a number of start-ups in the Griffith area, yet the consultations suggest there is limited understanding / knowledge of the local ‘business start-up ecosystem’ supporting fledgling businesses, including support infrastructure, facilities, information, approvals processes, processes, business advice, etc.).
- Both Griffith City Council and other agencies provide access to advice and a range of services designed to support local business start-ups and development. For example, Griffith City Council is a partner in Service NSW’s Easy to do Business

program. This is a free business concierge service for start-up businesses that streamlines the registration, license, development and paperwork process giving the business one point of contact for the entire support process.

- Griffith Women in Business runs events and workshops on a bi-monthly basis to inspire, connect and educate local professionals to grow their business. Council’s Economic Development Coordinator is secretary on this committee and regularly assists with events organisation and promotion.
- Griffith City Council is planning the development of a new information service / newsletter to newly-registered ABN holders, which would act as a ‘welcome pack’ including information, advice and contact details directing them where to start with their business assistance or information enquiries.
- Griffith City Council can also continue to support prospective businesses / start-ups by pro-actively promoting business support and advisory services offered by agencies such as Business NSW, AusIndustry and BEC Business Advice.

Targeted Investment Attraction

- To help address Griffith specialist health practitioner shortfalls, a targeted investment attraction strategy, directed at health industry professionals, could be pursued.
- Investment attraction efforts could also target food producers from other regions.
- There is an opportunity to explore the establishment and promotion of a Griffith food product brand to assist the efforts of local producers to develop the region’s profile as a high-quality, clean and green premium food producing district.

Digital Infrastructure

- There is a perception held by some that parts of Griffith suffer from digital infrastructure shortfalls (Internet connectivity) and there are low levels of ‘digital inclusion’ amongst some segments of the community.

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Industrial Land Capabilities

- Griffith has some perceived and potential land use conflicts with some industrial / commercial uses, including wineries, in close proximity to residential areas.
- There is a need to ensure that Griffith has sufficient and well-located serviced industrial land to accommodate future growth.

Water and Power

- Water is essential to economic activity in the Griffith area. To grow and prosper, the horticultural sector - and industry in Griffith more generally - requires improved water security.
- Council has a role to play in engaging with the State and Federal Governments to lobby for fair and affordable water allocations which serve the region's role and potential as the Food Bowl of Australia.

- The cost of electricity is a constraint on the capacity of the local manufacturing sector to remain competitive.

Transport

- Public transport services are considered by some to be lacking in parts of Griffith. It is understood that the State Government, through Transport for NSW, is reviewing and improving regional bus services in Griffith.
- Council should continue to engage with infrastructure agencies and service providers to ensure Griffith is well-served with reliable and cost-effective road, rail and air transport.
- Griffith Airport is a vibrant air transport hub and key asset for the city and the region. Griffith's export-orientation and the large number of fly-in fly-out workers means the airport is critical to future economic development.



Image: Griffith City Council provides information on and access to a range of retail and small business support services (source: Unsplash)

5. A Roadmap to Prosperity

5.1 The Economic Development Vision and Charter

The economic development strategy themes and actions presented herein reflect stakeholder views regarding Griffith's key attributes, issues, challenges and opportunities for growth, 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. Through its role as an information-broker, promoter, facilitator and coordinator of activities to support economic development, Griffith City Council:

- Prioritises opportunities that build on Griffith's attributes, capabilities and opportunities in **farming and food production, manufacturing, transport and logistics, health & wellbeing, agribusiness and other service industries.**
- Prioritises initiatives that support **investment in 'knowledge-based' economic activities** including research, education, and the professional, scientific, technical and creative services.

- Engages with local **home-based, micro and small-to-medium businesses** to address shared challenges and opportunities for capacity-building, innovation and investment.
- Undertakes **a partnership approach to tourism promotion and development**, working in collaboration with tourism agencies and the industry to enhance branding, marketing, product development, visitor servicing and support infrastructure.
- Plans, prioritises and advocates for **strategic infrastructure** which enables Griffith's businesses and the community to prosper.

Guided by its economic development charter and the action plan presented in this strategy, Griffith City Council provides the enabling environment to help facilitate the competitiveness and success of businesses across all sectors of the local economy.

5.2 *Evolve Griffith*: Economic Development Strategy Themes

The preceding sections of this strategy articulate Griffith's economic development strengths and attributes as well as key challenges and opportunities for 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.

The opportunities for action presented herein, are informed by the findings of the research, targeted consultation and analysis together with the vision for prosperity and Griffith City Council's economic development 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*, which contains three themes as illustrated below.

Figure 17. *Evolve Griffith*: Economic Development 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. Each theme includes:

- **Strategic Objective** – this is a statement setting out what the target outcome is for that theme.
- **Rationale** – this is a statement providing a set of reasons and a logical basis for opportunities identified.
- **Opportunities for Action** – these are the actions to be pursued in order to realise the stated objective.

Some opportunities for action 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. Others are focussed on strategic program implementation. These are initiatives that can be addressed as part of Griffith City Council's day-to-day economic development planning and facilitation functions in a strategic and informed manner. In a number of cases, these actions seek to build on or continue initiatives already in place.

The majority of the opportunities for action will be Council-led' in that they involve specific tasks for Council and an allocation of human, physical and financial resources. Others refer to 'Council-supported' activities and these are advocacy or support initiatives where the implementation of the actions is to be led by agencies other than Council.

Each strategy theme is addressed in turn as follows.

5.3 Economic Development Strategy Action Plan

Theme 1: A Location of Choice for Innovative Agriculture and Dynamic Manufacturing

Strategic Objective

Promote Griffith's and the Western Riverina's sustainable economic development through initiatives that support and promote manufacturing and agriculture as the City's economic foundations and the pillars of future prosperity.

Rationale

Agriculture, which is Griffith's traditional economic mainstay, is a driver of local economic activity. As well as being the area's second-largest largest provider of jobs behind manufacturing, Griffith's agricultural sector accounts for around \$170 million in industry value-added. The significance 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%.

Griffith was initially known for dryland cropping and livestock production, with the Western Riverina region prominent in rice, cereals, citrus, grapes and fruit production. More recently, local producers have adopted more sustainable farming practices and further diversified into high value, long yield crops such as nuts, cotton, olives and vegetables. The emergence and growth in poultry production has also been significant. Wine production, ranging from boutique wineries to some of the largest in the world, also plays a big part in Griffith's economic development.

The horticultural sector is a rapidly-Evolve industry and is Australia's third-largest agricultural sector after livestock and broad acre farming. Griffith's long-standing agricultural capabilities provides good scope for greater diversification of horticultural production, particularly in high-value crops and packaged produce targeting export markets. In response to changing horticultural practices, there is an opportunity for Griffith to pro-actively attract and support the growth of controlled environment horticulture.

Griffith has strong food product supply chains connecting it to the wider Western Riverina region.

Supporting the area's agricultural industry, Griffith is home to a wealth of professional service providers in agribusiness, agricultural engineering, finance and insurance and other agricultural industry support services.

Griffith's largest industry is its manufacturing sector, employing over 2,700 people and contributing \$270 million or one-fifth of the City's total industry value-added. Manufacturing is intrinsically linked to Griffith's (and the Western Riverina's) agricultural industry, and a key feature of the region is the scale of its operations and the intensity of investment in agribusiness and the food and beverage product manufacturing sectors.

Griffith is also a leader in metal product manufacturing and machinery and equipment manufacturing, which makes a significant contribution to local economic activity and employment.

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%.

Griffith's industry pillars of manufacturing and agriculture are supported in their development by quality transport connections. Two major highways, The Kidman and Burley Griffin Way, connect the region to Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra and Adelaide, providing B-Doubles and road trains with access to major markets, distribution and warehousing.

The region's transport and logistics sector is on the cusp of realising significant economic opportunity and the planned development of the Riverina Intermodal Freight & Logistics Hub will help improve accessibility to domestic markets as well as increase freight options for exports and imports. In time, the development of this critical enabling infrastructure will see other support sectors, including transport

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and logistics and the construction industry, benefit from the continued growth and development of Griffith's economic drivers in manufacturing and agriculture.

Fundamental to the success of Griffith's and the region's agricultural sector is the availability of reliable energy and irrigation water. The effects of the drought have contributed to a decline in agricultural industry output over the past five years highlighting the need to address both energy and water security issues.

Agriculture is transitioning towards the production of high-value commodities using new technologies, underpinned by research and development into new ways of producing to enable farmers to be more efficient, less wasteful, more productive and more profitable.

Griffith's agricultural capabilities make it well-placed to develop an 'ag-tech eco-system' which invests in R&D, new technologies and new start-ups to grow value in the region's agricultural economy. Investment in new agricultural technologies and ways of producing also requires a commensurate

investment in skills and workforce planning to meet changing industry needs. Businesses need access to workers with appropriate skills, and human capital is one of the most important inputs to economic activity. As a supporter and promoter of Griffith's 'engines of growth' in manufacturing and agriculture, Griffith City Council advocates for workforce planning and development programs and education and training initiatives which will build workforce capacity by addressing the skills needed to equip the workforce of the future.

Griffith City Council promotes the role of innovation and diversification in driving productivity and future prosperity. A key feature of the region's future agricultural activity will be the emergence of new technological innovations, otherwise known as 'ag-tech', as a key production input.

The application of new knowledge, coupled with leading edge ag-tech innovations to support innovative farming and processing practices, will require a shared vision for the future and a collaborative approach, something Griffith City Council is wholly supportive of.



Image: Griffith's agricultural capabilities are a pillar of the region's economic prosperity (source: Destination NSW)

Opportunities for Action

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| <p>1.1 Continue to contribute to the rail freight interchange improvement project plan, collaborating with project partners to provide support for the preparation of a full business case. Continue to work with LINX Logistics to support the organisation in transferring its operations from the Griffith CBD to the WR Connect site.</p> <p>1.2 Investigate alternative land uses for the existing freight interchange in the Griffith CBD, with a focus on urban revitalisation (housing, retail, commercial and entertainment uses) in the heart of the city.</p> <p>1.3 Continue to engage with the State and Federal Governments to advocate for reliable and cost-effective means of transport that is accessible to all industries in Griffith, including import and export via air, rail and road.</p> <p>1.4 Collaborate with industry, government agency and education and training partners to commission a <i>Western Riverina Future of Agriculture Employment Study</i>. The study would research and identify industry trends and the future of work in the food and agribusiness sector, current and emerging industry skills gaps, the estimated demand for the 'jobs of the future' and the region's likely workforce needs and training priorities.</p> <p>1.5 Building on the <i>Grow Our Own</i> initiative, coordinate a proposal to partner with TAFE NSW Griffith, Charles Sturt University, Western Riverina Community College, local industry stakeholders and Murrumbidgee Regional High School, to design an integrated training pathway for the local school-leavers looking to establish a career in food and agribusiness.</p> <p>1.6 Commission a <i>Griffith Rural Lands Study</i> to identify an appropriate balance of zoning to accommodate the needs of key rural land uses including agriculture, industry, biodiversity, tourism, recreation and rural residential,</p> | <p>whilst allowing for flexibility and innovation to ensure the potential for future land use conflicts is reduced and to avoid fragmentation of productive farming land.</p> <p>1.7 Commission the preparation of a <i>Griffith Employment Lands Strategy</i> to plan for and deliver serviced commercial / industrial land in Griffith in line with anticipated industry requirements.</p> <p>1.8 Hold a <i>Western Riverina Water Security Summit</i> to bring together key agricultural industry stakeholders (farmers, processors, other businesses, irrigation network providers, government agencies and others) as well as invited experts in water security and water management, to articulate a shared understanding of critical water security issues. Use the summit as a starting point for the identification of potential water security solutions in support of an environmental, social and economically sustainable future for the local agricultural sector.</p> <p>1.9 Engage with energy suppliers to determine priority energy infrastructure requirements and costs to supply reliable and affordable energy, including renewables.</p> <p>1.10 Support opportunities for establishing a recognised Griffith / Western Riverina food product brand to assist the efforts of local producers to develop the area's profile as a high-quality, fresh, clean and green premium food and fibre producing area.</p> <p>1.11 Work with the Federal and State Governments to promote and deliver small business support programs applicable to newly-established and emerging agribusiness operators in the Griffith area.</p> <p>1.12 Facilitate links between newly-established and emerging agribusiness operators in the Griffith area and the Agribusiness SkillsPoint at TAFE NSW Griffith.</p> |
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Theme 2: A Location of Choice for Business Investment, Learning and Living**Strategic Objective**

Consolidate Griffith's appeal as a location of choice for businesses and for residents who value its regional city lifestyle underpinned by a vibrant retail sector, arts and culture, sport and recreation, health care and education and access to quality employment and a diversity of housing.

Rationale

A region's population is one of its most important resources and population change is a significant factor underpinning Griffith's economic prosperity.

Griffith City Council will continue to promote what Griffith and the Western Riverina has to offer as a lifestyle location and, importantly, it will back this up with investment in projects and programs which help to deliver quality infrastructure and support services to local businesses and residents.

Council promotes a 'can-do' attitude to support local business and industry, consistent with the community's values and a collective desire for balanced and sustainable development. As an information-broker and facilitator, Council is well-positioned to facilitate new business investment with readily-available information on the status of the local economy, industry trends and prospects and locations for investment, including the availability of commercial and industrial land to assist with the crucial decision of site selection.

Council is also well-positioned to facilitate the development of business start-ups and small to medium-sized businesses by identifying and keeping abreast of business assistance programs on offer from State and Federal Government agencies.

Central to the needs of business is a skilled and adaptable workforce. Access to skilled labour is influenced by the availability of education and training, levels of workforce participation and the mobility and flexibility of labour. Griffith's youth needs access to education and training services and facilities with the programs and the infrastructure in

place to support their employment aspirations and the requirements of local business and industry.

Infrastructure underpins economic activity and is fundamental to a prosperous community. It includes transport infrastructure, power and water, serviced industrial land and communications. Digital communications is a fundamental enabler of business innovation, and the emergence of the digital economy has increased the propensity for individuals and businesses to interact and trade with suppliers, partners and customers from anywhere in the world. As a regional 'lifestyle location', Griffith is well placed to take advantage of this.

Together with quality physical infrastructure and good digital connectivity, community infrastructure is another fundamental enabler of economic development for the role it plays in facilitating social and economic interaction and exchange. This includes cultural, recreational, leisure and entertainment facilities and services including, for example, libraries, galleries, parks and gardens.

Griffith City Council is committed to maintaining a standard of infrastructure and services that supports and enhances the liveability of City and region. This includes its recreation, leisure and entertainment facilities, its cultural facilities, the quality of its parks and streetscapes and its community services and facilities. Investment in and promotion of these assets is central to supporting the development of Griffith as a location of choice in which to live, work and play.

Investment attraction requires a strategic and targeted approach to attract business owners and, perhaps more importantly, their families to want to live and work in the region. Housing diversity and affordability are crucial elements in regional migration decisions, especially for family migration but also for all household types. Griffith City Council's Housing Strategy is designed to facilitate housing choice and affordability as a key attribute that can be promoted as a crucial component of the City's lifestyle offer.

Opportunities for Action**Micro and Small Business Support:**

- 2.1 Working in collaboration with the Griffith Business Chamber, RDA Riverina and Business NSW, establish a quarterly *Griffith Business Breakfast Forum* with a program of guest speakers on subjects designed to address topical business interests and local priorities.
- 2.2 Collaborate with BEC Business Advice South & West NSW to facilitate information on and access to State and Federal Government programs which are designed to grow the capacity of new and developing micro and small businesses. Provide information and referrals to business development and mentoring services that are available.
- 2.3 Working with NSW Trade & Investment and AusIndustry, promote and facilitate local business access to State and Federal Government export market development programs.
- 2.4 Undertake a market assessment and business case for a *Griffith Business Start-up Program and Workspace* to support emerging entrepreneurs to establish and grow their business ideas. As part of the business case, identify potential CBD workspace locations and program funding sources.
- 2.5 Support Griffith's Indigenous businesses by promoting government programs designed to enhance business capacity and skills.
- 2.6 Review Council's land use planning and regulatory processes to facilitate an enabling environment for business growth and development in Griffith.
- 2.7 Continue to work with Service NSW to scope opportunities to promote the *Easy to do Business Program* in Griffith to help address potential red tape in the form of time delays, regulations complexities and duplication issues that business owners face when starting or Evolve a business.

Skills and Investment Attraction:

- 2.8 Continue to support efforts to match skilled labour with local business and industry needs through the *Griffith Now Hiring* program our *Grow Our Own* campaign.
- 2.9 Continue to design and implement media and marketing strategies to enhance the appeal of Griffith as a destination to invest, live and work in, focussed on Griffith's regional city lifestyle underpinned by local employment opportunities and options for education and training, health and housing.
- 2.10 Engage with RDA Riverina and neighbouring Councils to explore the concept of a region-wide skilled migrant settlement strategy.
- 2.11 Continue to produce and promote a regularly updated *Invest Griffith* prospectus and promote in key markets.
- 2.12 Building on recent successes including the re-location of 30 Murray Darling Basin Authority staff to Griffith and TAFE NSW Griffith's addition of 60 new staff, work with and lobby the NSW Government to establish a State Government departmental location in Griffith.
- 2.13 Continue to support and promote the Country Universities Centre Western Riverina in delivering distance tertiary education opportunities to students in Griffith and the surrounding region.

Infrastructure and Services:

- 2.14 Undertake a survey to identify and prioritise Council-controlled roads requiring upgrades on the basis of safety, conflicting uses (e.g. trucks vs. residents and tourists) and efficiency. Prioritise road upgrades to improve efficiency, reduce the impacts of heavy vehicles and to improve travel times.

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- 2.15 Prepare a 'State of the State Roads in Griffith' report and update annually, to support lobbying for improvements in the network and to inform grant funding applications.
- 2.16 Promote Griffith Airport as a key asset for attracting visitors and investment to the Western Riverina; explore opportunities for additional flights to Griffith.
- 2.17 Investigate and document mobile phone and Wi-Fi blackspot areas in the Griffith LGA and advocate for staged improvements.
- 2.18 Continually liaise with State and Federal Government funding agencies and monitor grants programs to ensure that business cases for priority projects are at the ready when project funding opportunities arise.
- 2.19 Continue to support the development of the Griffith Base Hospital as a state-of-the-art regional medical and health facility.

Lifestyle and Liveability:

- 2.20 Continue to implement the *Griffith Housing Strategy* in line with identified priorities.
- 2.21 Develop partnerships with local communities to facilitate sustainable town centre place activation; identify key project opportunities that could form the catalyst for local community-Council partnerships.
- 2.22 Consider in Council's capital works program, streetscape improvements to enhance the visual appeal of Griffith's retail / commercial precincts.
- 2.23 Investigate interest from CBD retail traders to participate in facilitated 'retail inspiration' workshops and similar events with leading experts / guest speakers to promote best-practice visual merchandising, branding and customer service to support the vitality and growth of Griffith's retail core.



Images: Providing access to business support services is one of Council's core economic development functions (source: Shutterstock)

Theme 3: A Destination of Choice for Regional Tourism**Strategic Objective**

Position Griffith as a vibrant destination for visitors offering a diversity of cultural, natural, leisure based and sporting experiences with new investment creating quality jobs and visitation growth equivalent to at least the State average.

Rationale

Australia's tourism sector has been Evolve strongly in recent years, and while the COVID-19 pandemic will impact on tourism movements to and within Australia in the short-term, over the medium to longer-term, growth prospects remain positive. Industry research body IBISWorld reports that domestic tourism is already beginning to slowly start back up, with tourism businesses expected to rely heavily on domestic leisure travellers in 2020-21.

According to Destination NSW, the tourism and events sector is vital to the State's economy, contributing billions in revenue and supporting tens of thousands of jobs. Tourism employment accounts for approximately one in every 15 jobs in NSW.

Griffith's tourism sector is an emerging driver of economic activity and employment. By undertaking a strategic, informed and targeted approach to promotion and destination management, tourism has the potential to be a pillar of the City's future prosperity.

Griffith's tourism and hospitality sector accounts for only 4% of total employment compared to 7% across NSW. The tourism and hospitality sector also falls short compared to the NSW average in its contribution to output and industry value-added. This suggests there is scope to enhance the contribution of tourism to economic development in Griffith. Specifically, there is an opportunity to explore ways to tap into and grow existing visitor markets including the VFR (visiting friends and relatives) market, grey nomads and the corporate traveller market. This will require a continued focus on the 'enablers of a vibrant visitor economy', which

includes a conducive natural, built and social/cultural environment; quality infrastructure; effective marketing and information management; and purposeful and collaborative regional governance.

Griffith has a strong 'brand' and is a popular stop-over for grey nomad travellers and the city has a strong calendar of major events delivered under its 'Visit Griffith' banner. Evolve Griffith's visitor economy will however require further investment in the necessary support infrastructure, including a choice of short-stay accommodation.

The Griffith and Western Riverina Accommodation Investment Prospectus, which was prepared in November 2019 by Destination Riverina Murray, revealed that the existing supply of visitor accommodation in the area is inadequate to meet changing consumer desires for quality, contemporary and experiential accommodation. It was suggested that significant investment is needed to improve and expand the region's accommodation supply to match the high-quality regional tourism offering.

The consultations undertaken to inform this strategy confirmed there is a lack of diversity in visitor accommodation in Griffith, particularly 3 and 4-star motels/hotels. There is also a lack of caravan park capacity to accommodate the grey nomad market. Opportunities to explore include RV campsites, as well as eco-lodges, bed and breakfasts or glamping facilities targeting high-end, high-value tourists.

While corporate travellers account for a large share of visitors to Griffith, there is not enough space to accommodate business conferences and events. The potential for this market could be further explored

While Griffith and the wider region has a rich agricultural heritage, agri-tourism and food and beverage tourism (including wine) is under-developed, with only a couple of good cellar door wine experiences of note. New investments in cellar door experiences could attract more visitors to the

area. There are potential links between the region's agricultural sector and tourism, by capitalising on local historical agricultural strengths and capabilities and emerging opportunities in nature-based tourism, as well as food and wine (and craft beer) tourism.

In order to capture new markets and develop the local tourism sector in a balanced and sustainable manner, a co-ordinated approach to destination management is required. A destination management plan (DMP) would deliver a plan of action to promote, support and manage a sustainable approach to tourism development in Griffith and the surrounding region.

A DMP should address matters concerning critical visitor economy infrastructure (e.g. signage, roads, telecommunications, visitor accommodation), information and marketing, the (built and natural) environment and governance / regional tourism partnerships.

Griffith City Council can take a pro-active role in efforts to consolidate and co-ordinate regional tourism branding in partnership with the Western Riverina region's other tourism stakeholders.

Opportunities for Action

- 3.1 Commission the preparation of a *Griffith Tourism Strategy & Destination Management Plan* to address matters concerning critical visitor economy infrastructure such as signage, roads, telecommunications, visitor accommodation, information and marketing, the (built and natural) environment and governance / regional tourism partnerships.
- 3.2 Explore opportunities to enhance the visitor accommodation offer in Griffith by confirming visitor segment needs and expectations, undertaking market assessments and preparing business cases.
- 3.3 Review existing festivals and events (including sporting, music and cultural festivals) and identify opportunities for existing and emerging events throughout Griffith and the

Western Riverina region to become part of a wider, coordinated calendar of events.

- 3.4 In collaboration with Destination Riverina Murray, local producers, accommodation providers and others working in the tourism space, explore the concept of a Western Riverina farm gate food trail.
- 3.5 Develop a guideline for Griffith's hospitality businesses to improve levels of service addressing issues such as shopfront presentation, visual merchandising, customer service training for staff and hours of operation.
- 3.6 Develop and promote a customer service strategy / campaign for Griffith's retail, food and hospitality businesses, targeting both traditional and non-traditional tourism businesses, to facilitate a consistent, quality visitor experience.
- 3.7 Investigate the means by which Griffith City Council can facilitate access to business support and training resources in the tourism sector, leveraging State and Federal Government programs where available.
- 3.8 Formalise working relationships with neighbouring Councils, RDA Riverina, Destination Riverina Murray and local tourism operators to explore and agree on a shared, consistent regional destination brand for the Western Riverina.
- 3.9 Design and implement a Griffith / Western Riverina post-experience visitor survey program to improve awareness and understanding of visitor experiences and needs and to better target marketing resources.
- 3.10 Liaise on an ongoing basis with State and Federal funding agencies and monitor tourism industry grants programs. Ensure that business cases for priority tourism projects are at the ready.

6. Strategy Implementation Framework

6.1 Informing Prioritisation of Opportunities for Action

Effective strategy implementation must be cognisant of available resources and the capabilities of Griffith City Council to progress the opportunities identified. To allow for effective implementation over time, the opportunities presented in this strategy are to be prioritised by Council and reviewed annually.

The prioritisation of actions to support Griffith's economic development is guided by two broad sets of assessment criteria – **benefits realisation** and **capacity to implement**. Each is explained in turn.

Benefits Realisation:

- What **benefits** will the opportunity deliver to Griffith's residents and businesses if realised?
 - Will it bring more business investment to Griffith and the surrounding region, and is it the sort of investment we want?
 - Does it build on Griffith's and the Western Riverina's existing industry profile, capabilities and competitive advantages?
 - Will it help to create more jobs in key and emerging industry sectors such as food and food products, transport and logistics, health, education and the visitor economy?
 - Will it help to reduce leakages and retain and re-circulate more income in the local economy?
 - Are there other potential impacts (e.g. social, environmental, cultural) to consider?

Capacity to Implement:

- What is Griffith City Council's **capacity to implement** the project or activity?
 - Is it consistent with the community's vision and values as articulated in the Community Strategic Plan, *Guiding Griffith 2040*?
 - Is it consistent with Council's land use planning and policy objectives?
 - Does Council have the organisational capacity to implement the project?

- Does Griffith City Council have the financial resources and the human resources?
- Is the necessary support infrastructure available (or can it be realistically built/accessed?)
- Implementation - who is best placed to drive the opportunity? Is it Council as the lead, as a partner or is it the responsibility of other organisations with support from Council?

Figure 18. Economic Opportunity Assessment Matrix



Source: SC Lennon & Associates

Strategy implementation priorities are identified through the application of these broad set of assessment criteria, determining to what extent the opportunity in question concerned is a higher, medium or lower priority.

Applying the assessment criteria and effectively 'rating' and 'ranking' each action determines those that are considered the highest priority and which, as a result, are short-term actions.

6.2 The Immediate Priority: COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan

Priority projects and activities for implementation are identified based on the application of the broad set of assessment criteria described above.

In delivering *Evolve Griffith*, 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, including:

- 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.

6.3 Cultivating Collaborative Partnerships for Effective 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.

6.4 Monitoring Economic Development Strategy Progress

Evolve Griffith has been prepared in the context of the role of economic development in Council's broader program of work and strategic objectives, and wider regional priorities. Initiatives set out in this strategy will be monitored through the following methods and sources:

- Regular (annual) business confidence surveys;
- Customer / visitor satisfaction surveys;
- Subscription to regularly updated and tailored socio-demographic and economic data sources such as profile.id and economy.id;
- National Skills Commission data on unemployment and labour force trends; and
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data.

The set performance measures will be reported annually.

Evolve Griffith: An Economic Development Strategy for Promoting Prosperity, 2020-25 will be reviewed annually with an update anticipated in five years.

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