

Stroud

Community Development Action Plan



2025 - 2028
(Prepared November 2025)

Foreword



It is with great pride that we share the Community Development Action Plan for Stroud, New South Wales. This Plan represents more than a set of ideas or actions - it reflects the collective aspirations, priorities, and shared vision of our community.

Shaped by the voices, experiences, and passion of residents, local organisations, and stakeholders, this Plan outlines our commitment to sustainable development, the care of our natural environment, the preservation of our history and the wellbeing of everyone who calls Stroud home. Every contribution has helped define a clear and meaningful path forward.

This document is an invitation to participate. If any of the ideas resonate with you; as an individual, group, or organisation, we encourage you to take action, knowing you have the support of the wider community behind you. Achieving these goals will rely on collaboration, whether through volunteering, advocacy, or simply engaging in conversations about Stroud's future.

We sincerely thank everyone who contributed to the development of this Plan. Your dedication and enthusiasm are the foundation of its strength. Together, we can bring this vision to life and continue building a welcoming, connected, and empowered Stroud.

“
*I wouldn't live
anywhere else.
We love our
little town.*

Michaela

”



Our Story

Our village of Stroud is located in the Mid Coast of NSW. It is a town rich in history, heritage, natural beauty and community passion. Nestled in the Karuah River Valley and surrounded by stunning landscapes, Stroud is known for its well-preserved colonial architecture and strong agricultural traditions.

Like many Australian towns, Stroud has a rich and layered history. Stroud lies on Worimi Country, where Aboriginal people have lived for tens of thousands of years. The Worimi People, speakers of the Gathang language, maintain a deep and enduring connection to the land, waterways and stories of this region. The Karuah River, named from the Gathang word Garuwa meaning native plum, and the surrounding landscapes hold profound cultural, spiritual and physical significance, with custodianship continuing today.

The colonial settlement of Stroud, officially surveyed in 1827, was driven by the Australian Agricultural Company (AACo), who established the town as the headquarters of an ambitious farming and settlement project in 1826, making it one of the oldest planned communities in Australia. Incorporated in London in 1824, the AACo represents the first major influx of private capital into Australia. The company received a grant of one million pounds and 1,000,000 acres (400,000 ha) of land between Port Stephens and the Manning River, to grow wheat and sheep to send back to England. Convicts were also used as labour, with many of the original buildings being constructed from convict handmade clay bricks. Stroud was a gated township and often referred to as 'a colony within a colony'.

Many of the town's heritage-listed buildings, such as the Stroud House (built in 1827), the St. John's Anglican Church (completed in 1833), and Quambi House (constructed in the 1830s), reflect this early colonial era. By the early 20th century, with the AACo transferring much of its holdings to other parts of the country, Stroud transitioned from being primarily a company town to a more diverse and privately-owned community.

The arrival of the Great Northern Railway in 1913 improved access to markets and facilitated the town's economic growth. Stroud's early industries included timber milling, beef and dairy farming, with chicken/egg farming and coal mining coming later, with some of these activities continuing to this day. Stroud Show, which began in 1923, remains a significant annual event celebrating the town's agricultural achievements.

Stroud is also known for its unique connection to England, as it was named after Stroud in the Cotswolds, Gloucestershire. As one of four 'Stroud's in the world, this link is celebrated through the annual Stroud International Brick and Rolling Pin Throwing Competition, which began in 1961 and attracts visitors from across Australia and beyond.

Today, Stroud remains a proud and close knit community with a growing tourism sector driven by its heritage sites, natural attractions, local events and commitment to innovative and regenerative land use. Future development priorities include preserving the town's historical character, supporting local businesses, and promoting sustainable agriculture and tourism.

Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the Worimi People as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which Stroud stands. We pay deep respect to their Elders past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across Australia.

Today's residents of Stroud are proud to live alongside the oldest living culture in the world. We honour the enduring connection the Worimi People have to this land – its hills, forests, and the waterways that flow through our town. These creeks and rivers are not only part of the landscape, but living links to culture, knowledge, and story.

We also pay respect to all Aboriginal people who live in Stroud and the surrounding areas and recognise their ongoing contributions to our community.

As we plan for the future, we do so with gratitude and respect, walking gently on Worimi Country.

“

***There's a lot of goodwill in our community.
It's just a matter of harnessing that.***

Val

”

Acknowledgements



The formulation of this Community Development Action Plan was initiated and coordinated by the Stroud Community Builders Team: Kylie Gorton, Rachel & Matthew Barry, Emma Mellows, Patrick Jackson, Mark Seeto and Deborah Dunkerton. It was made possible by Rural Aid as part of their commitment to supporting Australia's small rural towns.

The formulation of the Plan was undertaken by Peter Kenyon from the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. assisted by Steph Walsh (Rural Aid) and Jim Doyle (Rural Aid – Community Connector).

Many thanks to so many passionate community members who gave so generously of their time, wisdom and experiences. A special thank-you to Nyomi Aubrey for providing many of the images included in this document.

Our Vision

The statement below is our intended outcome:

We seek to connect community, nature, heritage and spirit, retaining our friendly village feel and being a place for all peoples and generations to live, create, work, play and age well.

Our Guiding Values

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

Our Village Lifestyle and Charm:

Retaining our unique small-town country feel and camaraderie, neighbourly connections, agricultural industries and rural landscapes.

Our Sense of Community:

Ensuring all community members experience a deep sense of belonging, connection, inclusion and involvement.

Respect for Our Heritage:

Valuing our Indigenous and colonial heritage, culture, stories and traditions, and their importance in community and economic development.

Respect for Environment:

Appreciating and protecting our unique natural environment, waterways and diverse and abundant wildlife.

Our Intergenerational Connections: Creating opportunities for all ages in our community to share, support and learn from each other.



Our Goals

Below are the nine community goals which guide our community aspirations, namely:

- Foster a safe, connected, and inclusive community for all
- Celebrate and strengthen active participation, volunteerism, and shared experiences
- Preserve and promote our rich Indigenous and colonial heritage and culture
- Create opportunities that build on our unique assets and community creativity
- Grow, support and enhance our calendar of special events
- Empower young people to engage, contribute, and envision a future within the community
- Expand support systems to help ageing residents remain active and connected in Stroud
- Support and develop our emergency services
- Support sustainable practices and position Stroud as a hub for permaculture, regenerative agriculture, and land/water stewardship



Our Challenges

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

- Volunteer fatigue and declining volunteer numbers
- Large size of local government area and challenges having voice heard
- Lack of rental accommodation
- Lack of public transport
- An ageing population
- Tourism challenges including minimal tourist experiences, visitor parking and accommodation
- Tired signage
- Need to strengthen community group collaboration
- Entry barriers to farming including cost of land
- Cost of living challenges
- Lack of recognition of Indigenous heritage and culture
- Need to create more awareness for visitors of resources available about the town
- Young people have to travel for educational and recreational options
- Decline in the dairy, timber and poultry industries
- Lack of after-hours fuel
- Limited:
 - After-school teenager recreational activities and youth engagement in community
 - Local employment opportunities
 - Retail business base/space
 - Nightlife
 - Police presence

Our Assets

Institutions

- **Government & Public Services:** Mid Coast Council office and works yard, mobile Service NSW, Post Office, limited public bus service
- **Emergency Services:** Police, NSW Ambulance, Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service
- **Health Services:** Medical centre, pathology, allied health
- **Education:** Public schools, community preschool, out of school-hours care, family daycares, homeschool families
- **Community Care:** Stroud Lodge, aged care services, community pantry
- **Faith-Based Institutions:** Baptist, Anglican, Uniting, Catholic churches

Culture, Stories & Sources of Pride

- **Heritage:** AACo history, dairy & timber industries, rail history, family histories, local publications, Quambi House, Stroud Court House, Silo Hill (underground silos, cannons), historic homes, churches, monastery, community halls, stories around Thunderbolt (bushranger) & unsolved murders
- **Community Events:** Stroud Show, Rodeo & Campdraft, Brick & Rolling Pin Throwing, Road Bash & Bang, Stockman's Challenge, Christmas on Cowper, Boots & Buckles Bash, B&S Ball
- Indigenous Worimi culture, knowledge and stories

Economic

- **Agriculture:** Poultry, egg, beef, dairy farms, vineyards, permaculture
- **Retail & Services:** Grocer, bottle shop, butcher, rural ag supplies, laundromat, antiques/craft store, pottery, mobile coffee/cake van, op shop, real estate, petrol stations, sign shop, garage/auto-mechanic, electricians, builders/carpenters, tree service, cleaners, handyman
- **Hospitality:** Distillery, restaurants, hotel/pub, country club, cafés, catering services
- **Health, Wellbeing & Beauty Services:** Medical centre, pathology, allied health, masseuse, hairdressers, beauticians, yoga, Pilates, sauna, ice baths
- **Tourism & Accommodation:** Airbnb's, unique accommodation, Showground camping, Heritage Trail & app, agritourism, on-farm experiences, mobile observatory & stargazing, museums



Our Assets

Physical

- **Natural Features:** Karuah River, Stroud Common, State Forest, dark skies, native wildlife (for example platypus and koalas)
- **Recreational Facilities:** Tennis courts, swimming pool, cricket nets, playground, skatepark, basketball half court, rodeo arena, golf course & club, horse arena, campdraft arena, Showground facilities, mobile observatory
- **Community Buildings:** School of Arts, Stroud Road Hall, Booral Hall, Showground Pavilion, Library
- **Churches:** Baptist, Anglican, Uniting, Catholic
- **Historic Sites & Museums:** Silo Hill (underground silos, cannons), replica town gates, historic homes, monastery, Quambi House, Stroud Court House, Heritage Trail
- **Infrastructure:** Water treatment plant, cemetery, helipad, defibrillator machine
- **Housing & Growth:** Subdivisions

“Every opportunity you give people to stay in a country town like Stroud, they’ll take.”

James

Social Networks

- **Community Groups:** Women’s Circle, Seniors groups, Men’s Shed, Coffee & Chat group, Lions Club, Stroud & District Historical Society, Friends of St. John’s, Show Committee, Rodeo Association, Common Trust, Showground Management Committee, Rivercare, Junior Landcare, Permaculture at the Pub
- **Youth & Family Groups:** Parents & Citizens Associations (P&Cs) x3, family daycares, after-school care, Booral playgroup
- **Sports Groups:** Pony Club, Stroud Raiders Football Club, Little Athletics, Swim Club, Martial Arts, Cricket Club, darts, physical culture
- **Creative Groups:** Writing, craft, library, crochet, photography & choir

People

- **Population:** 988 residents
- **Workforce & Skills:** Tradespeople, health practitioners, emergency services workers & volunteers, farmers, retailers, business operators, teachers, artists (potters, writers, authors, painters, performers, musicians), educators (yoga, permaculture, martial arts), council staff, energy provider workers, short term workers (e.g., backpackers), Justices of the Peace
- **Community Characteristics:** Generous people, skilled individuals, environmentally conscious, volunteers, multi-generational families, seniors, youth, children, new and long-term residents





Our Strategies & Actions

Theme One

Building Stronger Community Connections, Involvement & Capacity

GOAL

To strengthen community participation, increase volunteerism, and foster inclusive connections among all residents of Stroud.

ACTIONS

1

- **Promote volunteering:** Use regular invitations, online platforms, and an annual appreciation event to encourage participation
- **Map local skills:** Maintain and grow the Community Asset Map to connect people with meaningful projects
- **Connect through information:** Develop a Community Calendar and Local Directory to link residents with events, services, and volunteer opportunities
- **Host inclusive events:** Organise low-cost gatherings like Town Fun Days, outdoor films, markets, and Day on the Common
- **Welcome new residents:** Create a Welcome Kit and host welcome events via a dedicated task team
- **Inspire collective action:** Hold an annual Community Opportunity Workshop (C.O.W.) to share ideas and track progress
- **Use digital channels:** Share opportunities and updates through social media and online platforms

PROGRESS

Community Calendar promoting local events & activities created and remains active

New Magpie Markets established – held monthly at Stroud & District Country Club

Stroud Local Directory created and available online

Follow-up Community Opportunity Workshop proposed

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

RA
NSWCV
MCC
SLC
SDHS

RFS
SES
NSW Ambulance
Stroud community and sporting groups

Stroud business community
Stroud churches
TCT

Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Two

Lifestyle, Liveability & Village Feel

GOAL

To improve Stroud's liveability, accessibility, and appearance through upgraded public spaces, recreational facilities, and mainstreet enhancements that reflect the town's charm and community spirit.

ACTIONS



- **Expand active transport:** Advocate for walking and cycling trails linking parks, the Common, and key community spaces
- **Youth-led recreation:** Support development of a bike/pump track designed with youth input
- **Upgrade public spaces:** Improve pathways, lighting, seating, outdoor gym equipment, and access to Mill Creek and forest trails
- **Enhance amenities:** Extend pool and library hours, refurbish public toilets, expand skate park, and develop an accessible hydrotherapy pool
- **Beautify Stroud:** Coordinate tree planting, update signage, enhance the main street via the Vibrant Spaces Program, and encourage a Tidy Town culture
- **Improve safety & access:** Advocate for safer pedestrian crossings, especially near Stroud Public School
- **Transport advocacy:** Continue efforts to improve transport links and explore reopening Stroud Road Railway Station

PROGRESS

Stroud Heritage Trail Extension proposed & Mid-Coast Council has provided in-principle support

- Stage 1: Extend walking track, as an Aboriginal and Natural Heritage Trail, linking Lion's Park to the Showground via Mill Creek and Mill Brook, connecting to the existing heritage trail at Stroud House
- Stage 2: Concept plan developed for a loop around Stroud Common linking back to the existing heritage trail

Town Signage Project proposed

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

MCC
SSC
SRA

SCR
SLC
Stroud sporting groups

TCT
BBRF



Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Three

Empowering & Supporting Our Young People

GOAL

To create opportunities for Stroud's young people to have a voice, develop leadership skills, and remain connected to their community through learning, recreation, and contribution.

ACTIONS



- **Empower youth leadership:** Create regular opportunities for young people to share ideas, lead projects & contribute to community planning
- **Support youth-led projects:** Establish a youth-led group for connection, fun, and event planning
- **Strengthen school partnerships:** Support collaboration between local schools, P&Cs and preschool to host joint family-friendly events
- **Connect teens across schools:** Foster relationships between high school students from different areas to maintain community ties
- **Offer shared experiences:** Develop youth-focused sports, arts, music events, and leadership workshops
- **Use digital tools:** Create youth newsletters, online groups or age-appropriate social media to keep local teens and young adults informed and connected, and maintain ties with those who have moved away
- **Inclusive participation:** Ensure family daycares and homeschool families are included in youth programs and events
- **Rebuild youth social spaces:** Encourage initiatives like a bike/pump track as a youth-driven recreation space
- **Celebrate youth involvement:** Promote participation in events like Stroud Show Young Woman of the Year, volunteering & cultural projects
- **Mentorship & skills development:** Partner with groups like the Men's Shed to offer hands-on learning
- **Recognise achievements:** Celebrate youth contributions through programs like the MidCoast Youth Awards

PROGRESS

Stroud Little Athletics Club established
Allworth & District Social Fishing Club revitalised
Dungog Youth Council in development
Youth Camp at Wangat Lodge proposed

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Local preschool, primary and high schools, and homeschool networks

Local P&Cs
SMS
SSC
SRC

Stroud sporting groups
MCYAC
DSC Youth Council

Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Four

Environment, Heritage & Place

GOAL

To protect and celebrate Stroud's natural environment, waterways, and both Indigenous and colonial heritage — strengthening the connection between people, place, and history.

ACTIONS



- **Restore waterways:** Establish a long-term program for Mill Creek, Mill Brook and catchments, focusing on revegetation, habitat restoration and improved public access
- **Preserve heritage:** Maintain key colonial sites, including Quambi House, the Court House and historic churches, and highlight AACo origins
- **Promote local history:** Enhance the Heritage Trail app and signage to support self-guided exploration
- **Celebrate culture & identity:** Support public art, murals and creative projects that reflect Stroud's bicentenary, colonial and Indigenous heritage, multicultural identity and natural environment
- **Strengthen Aboriginal involvement:** Collaborate with the Worimi People and local Aboriginal Elders to share stories, language and culture
- **Activate community spaces:** Invite community input on the use of the Showground and Common for recreation, education and cultural activities
- **Coordinate Bicentenary events:** Deliver inclusive 200-year celebrations involving schools, artists, youth and community groups
- **Engage youth & schools:** Encourage young people to participate in heritage, culture and storytelling initiatives

PROGRESS

Performance of Avarice theatrical production: Beginnings of the AACo
Performance of 'Amongst Cedars' radio play exploring 1930s Stroud
Private Restoration of Storekeeper's Cottage and Stroud Baptist Church
Restorative work on Quambi House
Stroud Community Rivercare and Junior Landcare groups established
The Mill Creek community restoration project began
The Stroud 200 Bicentenary Committee formally established
Aboriginal flag and NAIDOC plaque installed at St. John's Anglican Church recognising that Worimi and Birrpai lands were granted to the AA Company
Aboriginal and Natural Heritage Trail plans in development

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

SDHS	Murrook Culture Centre	Stroud 200
SCR	Goori Bug Family	Bicentenary Committee
SJL	KLC	AACo
MCC	TCT	Local artists and schools
SLC	AUH	SSC
Worimi Traditional Owners/Lands Council	DBC	
	GRP	

Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Five Tourism, Events & Business

GOAL

To strengthen Stroud's local economy by supporting tourism, business collaboration, and the town's much-loved community events — celebrating both our heritage and our vibrant contemporary culture.

ACTIONS



- **Strategic partnerships:** Strengthen ties with Destination Barrington Coast, Gloucester & Dungog Chambers, and Dungog Regional Tourism
- **Promote local experiences:** Focus on agritourism, eco-tourism, and heritage-based attractions; support farm-to-plate offerings with local producers and venues
- **Support iconic events:** Continue promoting major events like the Stroud Show, Rodeo & Campdraft, Brick & Pin Throwing, Stockman's Challenge, Boots & Buckles, and Christmas on Cowper
- **Encourage new events:** Develop themed markets, vintage fairs, and seasonal workshops that reflect Stroud's creative and rural character
- **Boost visibility:** Use social media to promote events, accommodation, and visitor experiences; improve signage and branding for festivals at town entry points
- **Foster collaboration:** Host regular business and tourism networking events to share opportunities and training
- **Enhance visitor experience:** Improve facilities, signage, brochures, and shared promotion of local attractions and services

PROGRESS

Planning is underway for the 2026 Bicentenary celebrations
Several local businesses featured in the 2025 Barrington Coast Tourism Magazine, increasing Stroud's regional visibility
Three new wellness businesses have opened
New holiday accommodation offerings opened, each offering unique experiences
Growth in agri-tourism, with workshop opportunities and on-farm experiences
New monthly markets and themed markets were successfully established

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

MCC
DBC
DRT
SSC
SRA

SDHS
SLC
TCT
Local businesses & producers

Stroud 200 Bicentenary Committee
GRP

Our Strategies & Actions

Theme Six

Regional Connections & Collaboration

GOAL

To strengthen partnerships with neighbouring communities and organisations across the Upper Hunter and MidCoast, sharing knowledge, resources, and regional opportunities.

ACTIONS



- **Support local funding:** Contribute to the Stroud Sub-Fund via the Upper Hunter Community Foundation to fund future social and economic projects
- **Strengthen regional networks:** Continue partnerships from the Rural Aid Community Builders Program to share resources and advocate collectively
- **Environmental & cultural links:** Expand the Barrington Rivers Platypus Initiative to support eco-tourism, education, and Aboriginal involvement
- **Joint promotion & tourism:** Collaborate with Dungog, Gloucester, and Destination Barrington Coast on shared tourism trails and regional events
- **Shared resources:** Establish a regional hub for community groups to access event equipment and tools
- **Volunteer collaboration:** Encourage cross-district Landcare and Rivercare partnerships for knowledge exchange and joint action
- **Transport advocacy:** Promote improved infrastructure and transport links between Stroud and neighbouring towns

PROGRESS

Upper Hunter Community Foundation being established

Barrington Rivers Platypus Initiative established, with collaboration from Stroud Junior Landcare and Stroud Community Rivercare - Yappi the platypus mascot to attend the Stroud Brickthrowing Parade to boost community awareness

Collaboration in the Development of Dungog Youth Council and 'It Takes a Village' initiative

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Upper Hunter
Community
Foundation
RA
BRPI
MCTL
KGLL
SCR

SJL
RDA Hunter
LLS
FRRR
NPWS
MCC
DBC

RAA
AUH
DDCC
GBC
GRP
Neighbouring
community groups

Summary

This Action Plan is a starting point, not an endpoint. Every idea within it offers an opportunity to get involved. Whether you have time to volunteer, skills to share, questions to ask, or simply an interest in your community, there is a place for you.

Explore what inspires you, connect with others, and take the first step – together, we can continue building a vibrant, welcoming town shaped by the people who care about it.

Abbreviations

AACo	Australian Agricultural Company
AUH	Arts Upper Hunter
BBRF	Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund
BRPI	Barrington Rivers Platypus Initiative
DBC	Destination Barrington Coast
DDCC	Dungog District Chamber of Commerce
DRT	Dungog Regional Tourism
DSC	Dungog Shire Council
FRRR	Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal
GBC	Gloucester Business Chamber
GRP	Australian Government's Growing Regions Program
KGLL	Karuah Great Lakes Landcare
KLC	Karuah Lands Council
LLS	Local Land Services
MCC	Mid Coast Council
MCTL	MidCoast2Tops Landcare
MCYAC	MidCoast Youth Action Collective
NPWS	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
NSWCV	New South Wales Centre for Volunteering
P&C	Parents and Citizens Association
RA	Rural Aid
RAA	Regional Arts Australia
RDA Hunter	Regional Development Australia Hunter
RFS	Rural Fire Service
SCR	Stroud Community Rivercare
SDHS	Stroud and District Historical Society
SES	State Emergency Service
SJL	Stroud Junior Landcare
SLC	Stroud Lions Club
SMS	Stroud Men's Shed
SRA	Stroud Rodeo Association
SSC	Stroud Showground Committee
TCT	The Common Trust



Inside one of the silos, situated on Silo Hill

NEW SOUTH WALES

Stroud

“

*I want us to be
Stroud proud.*

Kylie

”

