



Strategic Relationships and Partnerships

White Paper



Adopted by Council on 20 July 2022

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Executive Summary

As change accelerates in the world of Local Government, and other disruptors such as technology and the pandemic dominate, the Berrigan Shire Council (Council) needs a clear strategy and competent execution to create or access the capabilities we require to keep pace and to deliver our products and services to the community.

A Strategic Partnership is an agreement between two or more organisations intended to create shared benefit and accept shared risk of equal or similar value. Partnership may allow for the sharing of resources to assist with efficient delivery outcomes.

Local Government's current climate is complex and rapidly changing. Continuing to deliver Council core business, services and deliverables to the community is therefore also becoming increasingly complex. It is firmly believed that delivering Council's services and deliverables the way they have always been, is not a model that will continue to work for Local Governments. Accessing Strategic Partnerships may provide opportunity for Council to reach its community more broadly. Certainly, purely traditional delivery options are proving costly and resource intensive and Council must become more open and flexible in response to the changing environments they are operating in.

The underlying pretext of Strategic Partnership Framework is that any partnership:

1. must be tied to the success of a core goal or objective of Council;
2. should be critical to the development or maintenance of core competencies;
3. mitigate risks noted in the body of the White Paper above and include in Council's risk register;
4. create or maintain a strategic advantage for the Berrigan Shire community; and
5. broaden Council's reach to engage more successfully with the community.

Once Council has established that a Strategic Partnership will meet the needs of Council in the delivery of relevant products or services, it will be important to then decide the type of Strategic Partnership to best suit the situation being presented. The process for establishing these relationships cannot be rushed as mutual understanding is core to the success of Strategic Partnerships.

The development of Strategic Partnerships for and with Council may well provide opportunity for Council to be a broker or commissioner for the delivery of a broader range of products and services. Strategic Partnerships may offer Council broader reach and certainly share some of the risks Council generally bears alone with other service and delivery providers. The range of Strategic Partnerships possible however will need to be considered against Council's resource capability.

Introduction

As change accelerates in the world of Local Government, and other disruptors such as technology and the pandemic dominate, the Berrigan Shire Council (Council) needs a clear strategy and competent execution to create or access the capabilities we require to keep pace and to deliver our products and services to the community.

Against this backdrop of complexity, strategic partnerships have become increasingly important as a complement to our delivery options; but there are hurdles. Creating meaningful partnerships requires deliberate efforts to tackle challenges in strategy and prioritisation, partner evaluation and negotiation, and longer term strategic partnership management.

This paper begins with the disruptive business context that has created a new urgency for the Berrigan Shire Council to understand how to gain access to specific capabilities. It then presents a framework by which partnership opportunities may be evaluated, developed and managed.

The goal of this paper is to provide a clearer view of the motivations, opportunities and the management challenges, along with a broad outline for how to capture the value potential in strategic partnerships.

Strategic Partnerships

Definition

A Strategic Partnership is an agreement between two or more organisations intended to create shared benefit and accept shared risk of equal or similar value. Partnership may allow for the sharing of resources to assist with efficient delivery outcomes.

The goal of each Strategic Partnership should be to create value for both (or all) parties by offering information, services, and other resources neither would be able to fully realise or could only access through a financial exchange. For Council, the aim will always be to create public value (which incorporates social, environmental, economic value etc, but does not place one as having greater importance than any other).

For Council to assess the public value of a partnership or relationship, it will be required to carefully consider its Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and ensure alignment with the outcomes and actions identified through that process.

Advantages

Strategic Partnerships offer each entity involved the chance to reduce expenses and increase capacity; cross promotional opportunities may also present themselves as part of these relationships. It is hoped these partnerships will expand Council's ability to deliver community outcomes, increase awareness of our brand, maximise our reach and increase our service

functionality. Through these partnerships Council may offer access to our information and expertise, or simply our endorsement and support, to assist other entities to develop grant applications, deliver their projects and support the communities in which they are engaged.

To make these partnerships and relationships mutually advantageous however, Council will ensure the access to information, expertise etc is made through a reciprocal arrangement or agreement. Without reciprocity, there is little to gain from any strategic partnership or relationship.

Addressing Business Fears

Whether the changes being faced by Local Government, and therefore Council, are driven by global markets, regulatory changes, social disruption, or machinery changes of government, all provide an element of fear. Strategic Partnerships can help to minimise the impacts of change by increasing the relevance of the Council and its functions within the community and providing a sound foundation for all participating entities to successfully recover from economic stressors and other disruptions being experienced.

Working together in partnership is expected to increase community trust in the services and delivery outputs of Council over the long term.

Increased Access to Expertise and Resources

Council should consider partnerships with other organisations within the Berrigan Shire that increase Council's reach into each relevant target group (i.e., youth, business, elderly, industry etc). Partnership outside of the Shire may also offer an opportunity to address regional issues and to provide the mutual benefit of learning and / or sharing of resources.

Partnering across associations, agencies and industries will increase Council's access to competencies and resources need to contribute to the realisation of our Community's Vision for the Berrigan Shire and the implementation of the Council's Delivery Program. Access to broader reaching competencies and resources will give Council the opportunity to deliver quality outcomes it may find difficult were it not for the partnership or relationship.

It is Council's desire to offer a similar level of resource and information sharing with its partners to allow for them to also increase their capacity and access to what may otherwise be scarce resources.

Decrease costs

Through leveraging the skills, expertise and resources of each participating organisation, the requirement to access these resources individually is decreased, hence reducing overhead and other expenses such as research and development.

Disadvantages

Strategic Partnerships have become more important than ever across government and industry, especially where the work undertaken is in high-risk, uncertain, and complex environments. Local Government certainly operates in a complex, high-risk environment and Strategic Partnerships are therefore attractive.

It needs to be acknowledged that Strategic Partnerships fail about 60% of the time. Research indicates failure tends to be related to a lack of discipline. Often a Strategic Partnership makes conceptual sense, but the parties do not have the necessary frameworks in place to systematically consider, explore, structure, and manage the relationship for the long term.

For Council's Strategic Partnerships to thrive a good governance framework will be required to ensure all parties understand the rules of engagement, their roles and responsibilities and any other parameters in which each relationship may develop. It is therefore, highly recommended that Council ensure it develops a good Policy Framework for the management of these partnerships into the future.

Strategic Partnerships and relationships must be grounded in a common value base to ensure all parties understand and subscribe to the same goals and boundaries, or at minimum appreciate the core values and goals of the other party. A lack of discipline in this area is the reason most strategic partnerships and relationships fail.

Required Management Involvement

Managing Strategic Partnerships will take a considerable amount of time for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Given Council's desire for their CEO to have a more outward and strategic focus however, it is felt that this aligns with the remit of the CEO as set out by the Council.

For these partnerships to be successful, engagement at executive level is vital to ensure those partnering with Council understand the seriousness with which Council wish to treat these Strategic Partnerships.

The CEO will need to rely heavily on the Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO) to manage the day to day running of Council, though this was the reason for the development of the position. During the interview process for a new CEO, Council was clear they expected the new position holder to engage with the community and partners on a frequent basis and to undertake delivery of Council's core business in a way more responsive to the changing climate in which Local Governments now operate.

Resource Allocation

Whilst the CEO will be actively engaged with managing the Strategic Partnerships as they arise, the expertise of relevant staff will be required to attend to the operation of any Memorandums of Understanding or other agreements that might be entered into as a direct result of

developing these relationships. For the Executive Leadership Team, managers and other staff, the opportunity to engage with the partnerships will provide mentoring and professional development opportunities.

Although it is not foreseen that additional staff would be required, it may be a change of culture and focus for the staff involved and will require leadership to affect. This is a challenge for the CEO and Directors as the development of these Strategic Partnerships is a significant shift from the way in which Council has traditionally undertaken its business and delivery of its objectives.

Communication

Communication will need to be carefully managed. Although the objective will be to share as much information as possible, there will be times when Council cannot share confidential information. Council's policy and any MOU documents will need to clearly state that the MOU does not over ride Council's existing legal and legislative obligations and that, should the operation of the MOU at any time compromise those requirements, the legal and legislative obligations of Council will prevail. This will be particularly important for partners to understand where Requests for Information are concerned and where Council's Code of Conduct and rules and regulations surrounding fraud and corruption are concerned.

Equally, any partner may hold confidential information that cannot be shared. Where such information is shared the party to whom the information belongs holds an elevated risk that, once shared, the information is no longer in their control and may inadvertently be divulged by the other party. The terms and conditions of confidentiality will therefore need to be made clear from the beginning of the relationship.

Delivery of Objectives

For a Strategic Partnership to be effective clear goals and objectives will need to be set at the commencement of each relationship. At times, these goals and objectives may not be immediately clear, and some negotiation may be required. Without those foundational matters in place however, it is likely the partnership will fail as it will not have an obvious reason for its existence.

Loss of Control

Where Council enters a Strategic Partnership to assist with some, any, or part of its Strategic Goals, there may be a perceived risk of the loss of control in the quality of the outcome, the costs of delivery of the outcome or indeed the on ground delivery of the product or service itself. It will therefore be important that these issues are as clearly defined as possible at the commencement of any agreement or project that comes out of any Strategic Partnership.

Should loss of control be seen as a risk prior to entering a formal partnership, then that agreement should not be undertaken, or at minimum more work will be required during the

negotiation phase to ensure the scope of the partnership, clarification of the values and risk appetite of Council are considered before a formal agreement is presented for approval.

Where the relationship is of a more informal nature, managing the expectations of the relationship partner will require considered and regular communication between both parties to ensure mutual understanding.

Other Considerations

There are other matters that should be considered before any Strategic Partnerships are developed, or indeed before Council embarks on any program to develop an array of Strategic Partnerships. These are issues which affect Local Government specifically, but private business may not generally need to comply as stringently.

Strategic Alignment

In considering whether to investigate, invest or partner with an organisation, consideration must be given to the degree to which a strategic partnership or relationship will advance, or contribute towards, the outcomes identified in Council's Community Strategic Plan and / or its Delivery Program objectives.

Risk

Council has obligations under its Risk Management Framework, the *Local Government Act 1993* and to its Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee to consider the risks posed to Council by entering any Strategic Partnership either formally or informally.

Immediate and obvious risks include, but are not limited to the following:

- Financial
- Legal
- Work Health and Safety
- Environment
- Community
- Social / Cultural
- Reputational

Each risk is discussed below but should be assessed individually against each Strategic Partnership opportunity should it arise.

Financial Risk

Financial Risk will need to be considered particularly where grant funding is being applied for or where Council is required to commit funds to a project whose delivery is out of the control of Council. The quantum of the risk will depend on the exposure of Council to financial

contribution and should be assessed using the matrix supplied in Council's Risk Management Framework.

Where the risk is seen has Very High, or High, then Council should make every effort to, including entering into contractual agreements or undertaking other legal options to ensure the finances being committed to the partnership are spent and managed according to the requirements of Local Government entities, including reporting and transparency obligations.

Legal Risk

Legal Risk includes matters that consider public liability, professional indemnity and other matters such as breaches of legislation or contract. Council must therefore ensure each party carries its own insurance to mitigate the potential costs of any situations which give rise to these matters, and it will need to ensure these risks are kept to a minimum (i.e., Council's appetite when it comes to managing legal risk is Low). Any Partnerships which potentially move the relationship into higher risk areas will need to include consideration of how Council might mitigate that risk for both Council and its community.

Work Health and Safety Risk

Where Council commits its human resources to undertaking delivery of any aspects of a Strategic Partnership, then Council will need to ensure it retains the right and obligation to manage its employees. Council will, similarly, not become responsible for the management of its partner's employees.

Council will need, at all times, to ensure the worksites utilised by its employees in the delivery of any aspects of a Strategic Partnership meet the requirements of the Local Government (State) Award 2020 and the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and provide a safe and healthy environment for employees to carry out the works required. Inspection of worksites may therefore be required prior to the commitment of Council to the delivery of any programs or outcomes under a Strategic Partnership arrangement.

Environment

Council has environmental responsibilities under several Acts and is committed to ensuring good environmental outcomes. Where opportunities arise therefore to affect good environmental outcomes, Council should consider these favourably. The reach for zero net emissions by 2040 will require Council to consider Strategic Partnerships in this area as it may not otherwise have the capacity to move to these targets with the speed required.

Council should however also consider any works to be undertaken in Strategic Partnership and ensure its obligations under the various Acts are met and damage is not caused to the environment as a direct result of any partnership Council enters in to.

Community

Council's ultimate responsibility is to its community. When considering Strategic Partnerships, Council must therefore always consider any risks such partnership might pose to the community. Where community funds are committed to deliver partnered outcomes the benefits to the community should be clearly identifiable and easily articulated. Any Strategic Partner must be willing to engage in community consultation where that is a requirement for the development or delivery of any project that is the direct outcome of said partnership.

Social / Cultural

As representatives of the community, Council has a responsibility to deliver positive social and cultural outcomes for the community. Any Strategic Partnership must therefore enhance Council's ability to deliver these outcomes on behalf of the community.

Reputational

Council will best manage Reputational Risk where it remains transparent with the community as to the intent and outcomes delivered by any Strategic Partnerships. Joint media communication and celebration of positive outcomes should therefore be part of any agreements formed out of these Strategic Partnerships. Equally the management of any negative reputational outcomes should be managed as per Council's relevant policies and in these cases, Council will take the lead.

Governance

Governance is the system by which a Strategic Partnership operates, is controlled and includes the mechanisms by which decisions are made. It is therefore especially important accountabilities and expected outcomes are set and understood early in the relationship and are recognised as they change over time.

Governance in a Local Government setting is critical and is intended to ensure transparency and accountability are core to the delivery of services and projects. To that end these governance outcomes should be understood by partners to ensure they know all information provided to Council (other than Commercial in Confidence information) becomes public knowledge. This is a risk some potential partners may not consider optimal for their needs.

Current Climate

Local Government's current climate is complex and rapidly changing. Continuing to deliver Council core business, services and deliverables to the community is therefore also becoming increasingly complex. It is firmly believed that delivering Council's services and deliverables the way they have always been, is not a model that will continue to work for Local Governments. Accessing Strategic Partnerships may provide opportunity for Council to reach

its community more broadly. Certainly, purely traditional delivery options are proving costly and resource intensive and Council must become more open and flexible in response to the changing environments they are operating in.

Office of Local Government – Public Private Partnership Guidelines

The Office of Local Government's Public Private Partnership Guidelines (the Guideline) set out the procedures to be followed by Councils when Public Private Partnerships (PPP) are being considered or used for the delivery of infrastructure and services and outline what Councils must do to comply with the requirements of the *Local government Act 1993* in relation to PPPs.

[OLG Public Private Partnerships Guidelines](#)

Motivations

With the increasing pressures of cost shifting to Local Governments, and the increase in service expectations of the community, Council would have to employ a substantial number of extra resources to deliver everything that is expected. Non-traditional areas of engagement such as youth, mental health, economic development, and tourism are increasingly seen as Local Government responsibility to at least support and provide leadership. Council's current human resource budget should not be expected to increase exponentially to provide for increased community expectations nor to fill gaps left as other levels of government remove services from the region. To do so would decrease the delivery outputs in some areas at least.

Council's motivation in entering Strategic Partnerships therefore is to access pools of expertise not generally available, and that will therefore assist Council to improve its delivery outcomes and leverage Council resources more effectively.

Entering Strategic Partnerships in this way should to a considerable extent, reduce financial risks for all parties and certainly reduce political risk for Council. Working with various partners will also provide the opportunity for information and expertise sharing and increase Council's ability to react to market and social pressures in a more expedient and efficient manner.

Current Disruptors

The world is undergoing unprecedented change and Berrigan Shire is not immune to the effects of those changes. Several large-scale and pervasive trends are fundamentally affecting the way we all live. The world is shifting whether it is economics, demographics and social change, or natural resources which are becoming increasingly scarce, as we head towards 10 billion people on earth by 2065, these forces are reshaping the world we live in and are actively impacting our future.

Deloitte Australia's report into [**Government Trends for 2021**](#) noted nine trends all levels of government would have to respond to. Council will need to consider each of these disruptive trends against the information provided below.

Since the 2021 report was considered in this report the [Government Trends for 2022](#) Report has been released and is provided here for further consideration.

Accelerated Digital Connectivity

The pandemic changed digital from “nice to have” to “must have” for governments. To meet the surge in service demand while operating virtually, governments have accelerated their digital journey along three major dimensions: scaling digital infrastructure, creating a more digitally savvy workforce, and investing in citizen connectivity.

Seamless Service Delivery

Government agencies are increasingly providing personalised, frictionless, and proactive services to citizens. There are several avenues that governments are taking to achieve this vision of seamless services delivery: committing to fully digital service delivery; committing to fully digital services, designing proactive services around life events, and building infrastructure to support such seamless services. The goal: have government services approach the ease of the best online experiences.

Adaptive Workplaces

COVID-19 caused organisations to fundamentally change how they accomplished their respective missions. From remote work to telemedicine and online schools, the pandemic brought the future of government work into the present. This trend follows the emergence of adaptive workplaces, including approaches for managing a distributed workforce and delivering high-quality citizen services virtually.

Generating Greater Public Value from Data

Data is assuming an elevated level of importance within and outside government. Public agencies are developing novel approaches to maximise the value of the data they hold, including appropriately sharing that data. Across the globe, the trend toward fluid, dynamic data is changing how data is being used and shared by governments and its partners....

Government as a Cognitive System

The best governments are constantly learning, evolving and making decision... When government understands itself as a “cognitive system”, it can take steps to increase how quickly it learns. This entails using data in new ways to gain insights from the past and present, and to make reliable projections about the future. This augmented learning and decision-making capability can create immense public value. Governments can design programs with an intelligence architecture in mind. The hindsight of past performance, coupled with real-time data in the present, can lead to optimal decisions for the future.

Agile Government

The pandemic has highlighted the need for a fast, flexible and mission-centric government, and many governments around the world have embraced the opportunity and shown they are up for the challenge. Governments had to make timely decisions... This agile imperative can be seen in many areas, including policymaking, regulation, procurement and the workforce.

Adjusting to Help Secure Cyber Ecosystems

A cyber hack that would once damage a single organisation can now spread to threaten an organisation's partners, clients or even the entire industry or sector. Governments want to tap into a growing information ecosystem, but what about the risks? Reliable cybersecurity requires breaking down internal silos, recrafting external relationships, and making sure the public workforce comprises the best cyber talent.

Equity-centred Government

As inclusion and equity issues come to the forefront, governments are focusing more on the underlying causes of systemic imbalances and questioning the fundamentals of how policies are developed, implemented, and assessed. Some of the global approaches being embraced include inclusive and equity-centred design, equitable access to public goods, data sovereignty and equity, and cocreation and citizen engagement.

Sustaining Public Trust in Government

In many parts of the world, trust in government skyrocketed in 2020. In some countries, however trust in government was close to an all-time low. Such trust – and increasingly social trust or social capital – is crucial to managing challenging economic and public health issues. Governments are working towards making trust a core component, tackling information manipulation, weaving in greater transparency, and building trust in government's digital systems, services and data initiatives.

* Government Trends 2021: Global transformative trends in the public sector Deloitte Development LLC 2021

Pandemic

In its report to the National Housing Conference AHURi provided the following commentary regarding the role Local Government has, and continues to provide in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

Across Australia, local governments acted rapidly to provide services and support to their communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. New committees and governance structures were rapidly established to address economic and social impacts, with many changes still operating as we learn to adjust to a 'COVID- normal' way of life in Australia.

During the initial stages of the crisis, local government implemented and regulated the public health response in local businesses and public spaces in order to contain the spread. Local councils also deployed teams of cleaners to work at keeping streets and public spaces clean. In regional areas, local governments played an essential role in coordinating the distribution of Personal Protective Equipment to frontline services and coordinating the response in their regions. Across Australia local governments also provided direct support to vulnerable community members including older people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to access health information and social supports. Financial support in the form of small business grants, rate freezes and business rent reductions were also provided to individuals and businesses experiencing financial hardship.

* [The role of local government in pandemic recovery in Australia](#) - accessed 30/07/2022

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
Murray Local Health District	Jill Ludford (CEO) Dr Thomas Douch (Chair) https://www.mlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/	NSW Govt
Nathalia Cobram Numurkah Health	Jacque Phillips OAM (CEO) Dale Brooks (Chair) https://ncnhealth.org.au/	VIC Govt
Local GPs	Dr Allam – Finley Medical Centre	Private
Local Pharmacists	Various	Private
Intereach	Yvette Buhagiar (CEO) Rob Brown (Chair) https://www.intereach.com.au/	NFP Community Organisation
Finley Regional Care	Ben Levesque https://www.finleyregionalcare.com.au/	NFP Community Organisation
Amaroo Aged Care Berrigan	Matt Hansen (Chair)	NFP Community Organisation
Southern Riverina Mental Health Group	Gabrielle Coupland Jane Harris Catherine Healy	Community Group

Skills Shortages

It remains true that 80% of NSW councils are experiencing skills shortages across their business functionality. * This bleak outlook is underpinned by the Australian Government's Skills Priority List which lists some 153 occupation segments as experiencing current and future shortages.**

The depth and breadth of those shortages has increased due primarily to the reduction in allowed immigration. Every part of Council's workforce from general labourers and heavy vehicle drivers, through to town planners, building surveyors, IT professionals or project managers are increasingly difficult to source. The result of the skills shortage is that Councils have had to become highly creative in how they attract staff and to a considerable extent now must pay higher wages to secure that attraction. Negotiations have been difficult even for this Council.

It is felt, Strategic Partnerships offer the opportunity to not only share limited human resources; it also provides the opportunity to grow talent locally rather than only within the Council workforce. Strategic Partnerships may offer ways for Council to ensure opportunities are maximised in the local area, thus enticing those born here to stay or even those who move here for work, to stay.

Population growth, as always, is the key to productivity and encouraging that growth may well be achieved through Strategic Partnerships.

* [NSW Local Government Association – Draft Submission 2021-2022 State Budget](#) - accessed 30/07/2022.

** [Skills Priority List by Occupation](#) – accessed 30/07/2022

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
TAFE	Nola Pinnuck	NSW Govt
Finley High School	Jeff Ward – Principal	NSW Govt
Cobram High School	Kimberly Tempest – Principal	VIC Govt
NSW Universities	Various	NSW Govt and Private
VIC Universities	Various	VIC Govt and Private

Housing Crisis

NSW indeed the nation, is experiencing a housing crisis that has become critical because of COVID-19. "Currently in NSW almost 50,000 people are waiting for social housing, with wait time of up to 10 years."*

Although social housing and homelessness are not the core business of Local Government, we are responsible for the community's health and wellbeing. The Housing 2041: 2021-22 Action Plan – NSW Housing Strategy**, acknowledges the significances of the issues faced by Local Councils through Priority Area 5 being listed as "working with local governments and communities to achieve the NSW Government housing objectives".

The rise of homelessness in the Berrigan Shire has become increasingly visible with Council an Affordable Housing and Homelessness report and briefing paper offered to Council at their October 2021 Ordinary meeting. The response to that report was Council's decision as follows:

Strategic Partnerships with relevant State Government agencies and the community will be imperative to respond to what is a deepening crisis in the Berrigan Shire.

Berrigan Shire Council Homelessness Report

* NSW Budget 2021-22 Analysis: Housing and Homelessness, NSW Council of Social Service - <https://www.ncoss.org.au/nsw-budget-2021-22-analysis-housing-and-homelessness/> - accessed 07/01/2022

** Housing 2041 - <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Reports/Policy-and-legislation/NSW-Housing-2021-22-Action-Plan-mayv2-2021.pdf> - accessed 07/01/2022

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
Family and Community Services	https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing	NSW Govt
Homes Out West	http://homesoutwest.com.au/	NGO
Homelessness NSW	https://homelessnessnsw.org.au/	Private
Vinnies Deniliquin	https://vinnies.org.au	NGO
Minister for Planning and Minister for Homes	The Hon Anthony Roberts MA (Comms) MP https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/minister-for-planning-and-homes	NSW Govt
NSW Minister for Water, Housing and Homelessness	The Hon Rose Jackson MLC contactRose@parliament.nsw.gov.au	NSW Govt
Minister for Planning and Minister for Housing	The Hon Richard Wynne richard.wynne@parliament.vic.gov.au	VIC Govt

Regionalisation

The trend of regionalisation has been accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic with many Australian households taking the opportunity to move away from densely populated metro areas. “The result has been a 200% increase in net migration from capital cities to regional areas.”*

Regionalisation has placed pressures on regional and rural communities to provide housing, digital connectivity, and access to everything available in metropolitan areas. The same is being experienced in Berrigan Shire and the community is increasingly looking to Council for answers. These challenges are providing opportunities for Council to work more closely with external relevant bodies to find creative solutions to the issues being experienced with rapid and unprecedented growth for the area.

* [Challenges and opportunities in regional infrastructure investment](#) – Infrastructure Australia – Published March 2021 – accessed 30/07/2022

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
Dept of Regional NSW	https://www.regional.nsw.gov.au/about-us/our-leadership-team	NSW Govt
NSW Minister for Regional NSW	The Hon. Paul Toole https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/Pages/member-details.aspx?pk=62	NSW Govt
NSW Minister for Water, Housing and Homelessness	The Hon Rose Jackson MLC contactRose@parliament.nsw.gov.au	NSW Govt
Minister for Planning and Minister for Homes	The Hon Anthony Roberts MA (Comms) MP https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/minister-for-planning-and-homes	
Minister for Regional Development (Minister for Cross Border Co-ordination)	The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas reception.thomas@minstaff.vic.gov.au	VIC Govt
Minister for Suburban Development and Minister for Local Government	The Hon Shaun Leane OfficeMinLeane@ecodev.vic.gov.au	VIC Govt
Minister for Planning and Minister for Housing	The Hon Richard Wynne richard.wynne@parliament.vic.gov.au	VIC Govt

Border Issues

In 2020 NSW closed the border to Victoria from July through to November. Since that time, regular and ongoing border restrictions have affected all border communities for the entirety of the pandemic. The result of restrictions to movement and socialising etc however have seen all border communities affected by the restrictions placed on them locally and from their neighbouring State impact their communities for the full duration of the pandemic – i.e., there has been no reprieve from restrictions to any border community. As a result, border communities such as ours remain fractured and a considerable effort is required to repair those effects on all communities in the region.

With the Berrigan Shire relating more directly to Victoria for its economy and social networks, these restrictions and lock outs have had a severe impact. The implementation of Cross Border Commissioners has however highlighted the plight of communities like ours and made the

unique circumstances in which we operate more obvious to policy makers in various capital cities.

If the complexity of the world in which we have been operating is not evident, the Parliament of Australia's [COVID-19: a chronology of state and territory announcements \(up until 30 June 2020\)](#) will provide some understanding.

Council has strongly advocated to their own State and Federal representatives and worked with Moira Shire Council to advocate to their Victorian counterparts. Strategic Partnerships at all levels of government will assist Council to manage border issues more directly and quickly into the future.

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
Cross Border Commissioner NSW	James McTavish james.mctavish@regional.nsw.gov.au	NSW Govt
Cross Border Commission Vic	Luke Wilson enquiries@crossborder.vic.gov.au	NSW Govt
NSW Minister for Regional NSW	The Hon Paul Tool https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/Pages/member-details.aspx?pk=62	NSW Govt
Minister for Regional Development (Minister for Cross Border Co-ordination)	The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas reception.thomas@minstaff.vic.gov.au	VIC Govt
Member for Farrer	The Hon Sussan Ley MP https://minister.awe.gov.au/ley/contact/contact-form	Fed Govt (NSW)
Member for Murray	Helen Dalton MP murray@parliament.nsw.gov.au	NSW Govt
Member for Nicholls	Awaiting outcome of federal election (Damian Drum retired)	Fed Govt (VIC)
Member for VIC STATE	The Hon Jaclyn Symes jaclyn.symes@parliament.vic.gov.au	

Access to Medical Requirements

While it is acknowledged there is a shortage of medical practitioners in all rural areas, COVID-19 has highlighted the inequities in access to medical needs in general.

The National Rural Health Alliance notes three primary areas of concern:

As we move slowly through the phases of the pandemic, we have three major concerns for rural health.

First is equity, with people not being able to access services in an already sparse rural health system which is being diverted to emergency response.

Second is the state of the rural health workforce, with increasing pressure and fatigue being experienced by the rural practitioners and health professionals.

*Third, and most importantly, are high risk groups, with more vulnerable people living in rural and remote areas.**

* Fears grow for rural communities as COVID-19 spreads beyond Sydney – National Rural Health Alliance - <https://www.ruralhealth.org.au/news/fears-grow-rural-communities-covid-19-spreads-beyond-sydney> - accessed 07/01/2022

The Berrigan Shire has firsthand experience in inequitable distribution of medical supplies and access. When the initial outbreak of Delta was felt in Sydney, much needed vaccinations were diverted from our communities to those in Sydney. Weeks later regional areas were again allowed to travel, potentially exposing the population to the Delta strain and a substantially unvaccinated population at the time. The inequity led to a lower vaccination rate in rural and remote areas when compared to urban centres for an extended period of time. The same issue is now being felt for booster shots, where those in rural and remote areas, including Berrigan Shire are finding it almost impossible to access boosters as no clinics in the area are currently receiving sufficient vaccinations to allow for the new push for booster shots.

The same issues have occurred with hand sanitiser, personal protective equipment and now rapid antigen tests. As demand increases in urban areas, supplies to regional, rural and remote areas becomes more difficult and costly.

Strategic Partnerships with providers and suppliers across the health industry may assist Council to at minimum advocate more strongly for more equitable services.

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
Murrumbidgee Local Health Network	Jill Ludford Jill.Ludford@health.nsw.gov.au	NSW Health
NCN Health	Dale Brooks (Chair) Jacque Phillips OAM (CEO) NCNHealth@ncnhealth.org.au	VIC Health Network
NSW Minister for Health	The Hon Brad Hazzard https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/minister-for-health	NSW Govt
VIC Minister for Health	The Hon Martin Foley minister.health@health.vic.gov.au	VIC Govt

Tourism

Tourism and its supporting industries such as hospitality, have been the hardest hit sector during the pandemic. Although Council has provided a significant amount of infrastructure to support the tourism product in the Berrigan Shire, Council support to assist this industry will be imperative to the area's recovery from COVID-19.

SpendMapp data prior to the pandemic notes that 60% of the area's income is a direct result of visitor spend. Addressing that reliance on visitors will be part of Council's response to recovery efforts. Recovery response will need to include working closely with tourism industry business and peak tourism bodies as will the obvious need for our economy to diversify more broadly so that it is less reliant on single sector income into the future.

Council's engagement with Murray Regional Tourism, including the CEO being on the Board, will be an important part of ensuring Berrigan Shire's voice is included in the work being undertaken in the tourism sector to recover from the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Council is undertaking a review of its Tourism Strategy as a direct result of the pandemic and outcomes from that review will certainly look towards the types of Strategic Partnerships that might be required to address recovery in this area.

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
Murray Regional Tourism	Mark Francis ceo@mrtb.com.au	Govt Board Entity
RDA	Edwina Hayes edwina.hayes@rdamurray.org.au	Govt Department
Destination NSW Riverina Murray	Kate Shilling (Chair) Yvette Myhill (General Manager) info@destinationrm.com.au	NSW Govt
Sun Country on the Murray	Moiria Shire Council staff	Moiria Shire Council
NSW Minister Tourism and Sport	The Hon Stuart Ayres MP https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/minister-for-enterprise-investment-and-trade-tourism-and-sport-and-western-sydney	NSW Govt
VIC Minister Tourism, Sport and Major Events	The Hon Martin Pakula martin.pakula@parliament.vic.gov.au	VIC Govt

Cross Border Commissioner NSW	James McTavish james.mctavish@regional.nsw.gov.au	NSW Govt
Cross Border Commission VIC	Luke Wilson enquiries@crossborder.vic.gov.au	VIC Govt

Social Inequity

Social disadvantage increases with remoteness. Rural and remote communities in Australia exhibit lower socio-economic status when compared with city counterparts. Challenges including fewer job and education opportunities, and the effects of living and working in isolation are experienced in greater numbers where people live in rural and remote regions. These factors can seriously affect mental health and wellbeing.

Social inequities are not limited to access to health, though these are a major priority. Lack of access to banking, education, employment, transport, communications, support services and advice across a broad spectrum of social services mean those in rural and remote areas are not only subject to lower socio-economic outcomes; they are disadvantaged on several fronts, all of which lead to poorer outcomes for those living in our communities.

It is worth noting that many of the experiences of social inequity in the Berrigan Shire area may see positive movement with better access to communications, combined with access to a more mobile workforce.

A link to Council's [Regional Banking Taskforce Submission](#) is included as an attachment to this report and provides valuable information regarding the ways in which better access may positively affect the lives and livelihoods of our community.

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
National Rural Health Alliance	https://www.ruralhealth.org.au/	NGO
NSW Council of Social Services	John Robertson (Board President and CEO of Foodbank NSW & ACT) https://www.ncoss.org.au/about/our-team/info@ncoss.org.au	Charitable Organisation
Intereach	Rob Brown (Chair) Yvette Buhagiar (CEO) contact@intereach.com.au	NGO
Centacare SW	Annemaree Binger (CEO) info@centacareswnsw.org.au	NFP Organisation

Rural Adversity Mental Health	Aimee Markham https://ramhp.com.au/find-ramhp-coordinator/?pc=2713#map	NSW Govt
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Technology

Access to technology in general is essential for regional economic development in the 21st century. Key sectors such as agriculture, resources, energy, tourism, health and education are undergoing dramatic transformation globally and there are enormous opportunities for Berrigan Shire to leverage telecommunications and internet connectivity to increase productivity, diversify industries and access local, national and global markets.

In the last four years, Australians have increasingly taken up use of the internet, to the point where they are one of the highest user populations in the world, third after Sweden and the United States.

a Digital Divide in Rural and Regional Australia?, Current Issues Brief 1 2001-02 Parliament of Australia – accessed 30/07/2022

As stated above, access to a more mobile workforce (such as provision of working from home functionality) will be instrumental in creating the opportunities required to diversify the workforce and / or assist with labour shortages and accessing skills specifically required for Council's and the community's workforce needs.

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport	The Hon Rob Stokes MP https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/minister-for-infrastructure-cities-active-transport	NSW Govt
Minister for Regional NSW	The Hon Paul Toole https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/nsw-deputy-premier	NSW Govt
Minister for Digital Economy	The Hon Jaala Pulford jaala.pulford@parliament.vic.gov.au	VIC Govt
Minister for Regional Development	The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas reception.thomas@minstaff.vic.gov.au	VIC Govt

Infrastructure

Digital Connectivity

Digital connectivity includes access to things such as Smart Phones, Internet of Things, digital health, artificial intelligence applications such as chat bots and virtual and augmented realities. None of those things are possible however without equitable access to the internet. Never has digital connectivity been so important to improving liveability and maintaining people in workforces in rural and regional areas.

Across all sectors, access to secure, high speed and quality internet is seen as a major obstacle for rural and remote communities.

*“While telehealth has been an important lifeline for people in rural, regional and remote Australia during the pandemic, connectivity remains a big issue in rural Australia, and we need to be improving internet infrastructure in the bush otherwise telehealth is difficult or impossible for patients and health practitioners to use,” said National Rural Health Alliance CEO, Dr Gabrielle O’Kane.**

[Telehealth: the rural connectivity divide, Hospital and Healthcare](#) -- accessed 12/01/2022

Millions of children in Australia risk falling behind due to unprecedented school closures with unequal access to the internet, hurting low-income families as classes move online.... 88% of Australians living in major cities have internet access at home. However, about 77% of rural Australians living in remote areas have internet access at home.

[COVID-19 exposes Australia’s digital divide, Teach Learn Grow](#) - accessed 12/01/2022

Further information regarding the issues being faced in digital connectivity are provided in links below.

Berrigan Shire Council Submission into the Regional Telecommunications Review

[2021 Regional Telecommunications Review](#) – A step change in demand

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
Australian Communications Consumer Action Network	Deirdre O'Donnell PSM (Chair) Andrew Williams (CEO) ceo@accan.org.au	Federally Funded Member Organisation
Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport	The Hon Rob Stokes MP https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/minister-for-infrastructure-cities-active-transport	NSW Govt
Minister for Regional NSW	The Hon Paul Toole https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/nsw-deputy-premier	NSW Govt
Minister for Digital Economy	The Hon Jaala Pulford jaala.pulford@parliament.vic.gov.au	VIC Govt
Minister for Regional Development	The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas reception.thomas@minstaff.vic.gov.au	VIC Govt

Energy

Renewable Energies are and will become increasingly important as we move our economy and delivery options towards the 2050 net zero emissions target. Much of the energy infrastructure in our area is fixed, costly and old. Currently we are facing the fact the infrastructure can no longer support growth in the area with Tocumwal already at capacity for its energy infrastructure. Finding solutions to our energy requirements, although not Council's normal remit, will prove imperative to ensuring our communities are able to continue to grow in a sustainable way.

With an abundance of land, it may be possible for Council to work with private investors to establish renewable energy sources in the area to ensure growth remains possible for the area.

Berrigan Shire Council Energy Strategy - Final Report - October 2021

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
Essential Energy	Luke Jenner (Chief Operating Officer luke.jenner@essentialenergy.com.au)	Private Service Provider
Windlab	Lisa Mangelsdorf (NSW Community Relations & Partnership Manager) lisa.mango@windlab.com	Private Company
NSW Sustainable Councils and Communities Program	Lisa Miller Lisa.miller@environment.nsw.gov.au	NSW Govt
Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport	The Hon Rob Stokes MP https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/minister-for-infrastructure-cities-active-transport	NSW Govt
Minister for Regional NSW	The Hon Paul Toole https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/nsw-deputy-premier	NSW Govt
Minister for Regional Development	The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas reception.thomas@minstaff.vic.gov.au	Vic Govt

Transport

Passenger transport is unavailable in the Berrigan Shire. Access to services outside of the Shire, and in some cases even in an adjacent town, is therefore exceedingly difficult for some of our most vulnerable residents. In this area, access to medical attention such as regular GP visits may be an area Council can advocate for better outcomes for the community. Given the fact that many of our community rely on access to the Victorian Health system, including the co-ordination issues that arise from those arrangements, it will be essential cross border considerations are included in any discussion regards passenger transport in and through the Berrigan Shire.

Council has worked with the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) in the development and implementation of the [Regional Freight Transport Plan](#) and [Freight Priorities Report 2022](#).

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
Transport for NSW	Jennifer Travis (Director Customer Engagement and Delivery) freight@transport.nsw.gov.au	NSW Govt
Minister for Regional Transport and Roads	The Hon Sam Faraway MLC https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/minister-for-regional-transport-and-roads	NSW Govt
Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport	The Hon Rob Stokes MP https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/minister-for-infrastructure-cities-active-transport	NSW Govt
Minister for Transport Infrastructure	The Hon Jacinta Allan jacinta.allan@parliament.vic.gov.au	Vic Govt

For personal forms of transport, the rise of Electric Vehicles (EVs) is inevitable, however again, the Shire has been completely left off the map of the NSW Electric Vehicle Strategy and of the Commonwealth's infrastructure planning.

The NSW Government has committed to rolling out 'EV Tourist Drives' with "ultra-fast chargers at 100km intervals across all major highways in NSW*". Whilst this sounds equitable, due to Berrigan Shire's geographically small size, all planned charging stations are to be installed in neighbouring Shires, which is good for them, but potentially disastrous for the Berrigan Shire.

* [NSW Electric Vehicle Strategy](#) - accessed 12/01/2022

To maintain access to our high volume tourist market, the offering of charging stations in Berrigan Shire is imperative otherwise those with EVs will not be able to stop nor stay in the area, being forced through to the stations planned on all sides of our Shire, but not in it.

[NSW Electric Vehicle Strategy](#)

[Future Fuels and Vehicles Strategy](#)

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
Infrastructure Australia	Col Murray (Chair) Romilly Madew AO FTSE (CEO) mail@infrastructureaustralia.gov.au	Fed Govt Department
Minister for Infrastructure Transport and Regional Development	The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP PO Box 6022 House of Representatives Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600	Fed Govt

Freight

With the closing of many rail links across Australia, increase in people moving regionally and population growth, Australia's freight task it is growing rapidly. Road freight movements are not only expected to increase by 26% year on year though to 2026*, but the mass of those vehicles is also increasing to provide efficiencies to market.

* [Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019](#)

The issues being faced by all Local Councils therefore is the increasing stress this is placing on road networks. In Berrigan Shire there are very few roads that are built to a standard that allows for heavy mass and over mass vehicles and yet, out of necessity, these vehicles are accessing our road network.

For Berrigan Shire, and others in the Murray Irrigation footprint, matters are further exacerbated by the fact that NONE of the bridges across the MIL footprint are rated for heavy vehicles, and yet they are on every primary, secondary and some tertiary roads throughout the network. Historical agreements have proved legally impossible to manage and so the risk is not extremely high that one of these bridges will fail, with potentially catastrophic results. Work with MIL has commenced to find a suitable solution to the management of these bridges but it will not be a simple, nor short term solution.

Further, the stress on the rest of the Berrigan Shire's road network means that roads are not able to cope with the traffic being put across them. This is leading to reduced life expectancy and an increasing demand from freight companies to upgrade the network to a suitable level to allow the transport that is required to services agriculture and other industries. For Council this is an extraordinarily complex matter as the cost of upgrading any road is substantial and requires considerable increase in service level, and therefore increase in costs to the ratepayers. An audit of our roads and a plan for their upgrade over time will need to be undertaken, however meeting the immediate and increasing needs of the freight sector will prove challenging for Council for a very long time to come.

[RAMJO Regional Freight Transport Plan](#)

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
MIL	Gabrielle Cusack (General Manager Engagement, Policy and Compliance) gabrielle.cusack@murrayirrigation.com.au	NSW Govt Privatised Organisation
Transport for NSW	Jennifer Travis (Director, Customer Engagement and Delivery) freight@transport.nsw.gov.au	NSW Govt Department
NHVR	The Hon Duncan Gay (Chair) Sal Petrocetto (CEO) https://www.nhvr.gov.au/contact-us Tim Hansen Tim.Hansen@nhvr.gov.au	Statutory Authority
RAMJO	Nicola Gleeson-Coopes (CEO) nicola.gleesoncoopes@alburycity.nsw.gov.au	Joint Organisation (LG Member Funded)
Freight Working Group	In development	

Social Infrastructure

Compare with other Council owned infrastructure, individual social infrastructure assets may seem small and insignificant (i.e., local swimming pools, parks or single social housing dwellings). Together however, these assets form critically important networks that deliver significant benefits to the community, the economy and our environment and social outcomes.

Different social sectors are closely tied which tends to mean many people need multiple and overlapping services and facilities. The opportunity for Council to align with community groups and the private sector to achieve better outcomes, but also make the planning and management of social infrastructure possible, cannot be underestimated. It is primarily here that local memorandums of understanding with private industry and relevant community groups have the best chance of providing the scale and range of social infrastructure required by the Berrigan Shire community.

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
Sporties Barooga	Bobby Brooks (CEO) bobby.brooks@sporties.com.au	Private Organisation
Toc Golf and Bowls	Paul Gemmill (CEO) gm@tocumwalgolf.com	Private Organisation
Toc Foreshore Committee	Ross Bodey (President) judithcarlon@bigpond.com	Section 355 Committee of Council
Chambers of Commerce	Carla and Christine (BDDA Reps) bddasecretary@gmail.com John Bruce (President BAG) john.bruce5@bigpond.com Rick Shaw (President Finley) rick@finleycc.com.au Sergio Redigalli (President Tocumwal) elizmtrrc@optusnet.com.au	Community Groups
South West Arts Inc	Kerry-Anne Jones (Executive Director) eo@southwestarts.com.au	Local Government funded organisation

Water

Advances in technology, markets and planning will require changes in laws and regulations to unlock the benefits of water for our communities. The primary issue in this sector however is that water is poorly understood by users and many in the sector. Unreliable and incomplete evidence appears to continue to undermine the effectiveness of decisions and therefore community confidence in water managers. Overcoming these issues for our community will require a shift in planning and decision making to ensure the long-term interests of a range of stakeholders are protected and indeed voiced at the decision making tables.

Possible Strategic Partners

Group / Individual	Contact	Type
Murray Darling Association	Mark Lamb (CEO) admin@mda.asn.au	NFP Representative Body
Murray Darling Basin Authority	Andrew Reynolds (CEO) https://www.mdba.gov.au/contact-us	Statutory Agency
Minister for Land and Water	The Hon Kevin Anderson MP https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/minister-for-lands-and-water-hospitality-and-racing	NSW Govt
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change	The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP lily.dambrosio@parliament.vic.gov.au	Vic Govt
Minister for Resources and Water	The Hon Keith Pitt MP PO Box 6022 House of Representatives Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600	Federal Govt

Partnership Framework

This section will look to provide a framework to consider when deciding whether to enter a Strategic Partnership or not and how these partnerships might be utilised to the best effect. The underlying pretext of the Framework is that the partnership:

1. must be tied to the success of a core goal of objective of Council;
2. should be critical to the development or maintenance of core competencies;
3. mitigate risks noted in the body of the White Paper above and include in Council's risk register;
4. create or maintain a strategic advantage for the Berrigan Shire community; and
5. broaden Council's reach to engage more successfully with the community.

An overall concept of the Framework is provided below.



There are several types on strategic partnerships available with each offering their own benefits and risks. It may of course be possible that one partnership reaches across several categories depending on the nature of the relationship with Council and the reasons for engagement with that entity.

Prior to developing a Strategic Partnership with any entity, it will be important to consider the type of relationship required and the outcomes Council intends to achieve through that relationship.

Marketing Partnership

A Marketing Partnership would primarily hold the goal of helping both entities achieve specific outcomes whilst expanding their reach into new or different audiences.

To pursue a Marketing Partnership, Council will need to ensure the product(s) or service(s) being delivered compliment Council's own desired outcomes without competing with the other entity.

Marketing Partnerships will be best serviced through a Memorandum of Understanding that will need to include:

- A framework in which social media posts may be shared
- Provision of content for newsletters

- The ways in which each may mention the other entity on social media
- Development of an event(s) with the partner
- The ways in which we will celebrate the conclusion of any projects / success of any events

Product or Service Development Partnerships

Product or Service Development Partnerships will involve multiple entities working together with Council to achieve a singular outcome (for example: one finished project or the delivery of a specific requirement over time).

In these relationships Council will generally own the finished product so these relationships will focus on the timely delivery of that product. Supply Chains may include vendors, suppliers, developers, service providers, designers, consultants or any other professional and non-professional groups required to deliver specific outcomes required by Council.

In these relationships suppliers will need to be willing to work with Council to:

- assist Council in the development of products and services relevant to Council's output requirements. This may include the development of new products, ways of delivering product, or producing those products to achieve Council's desired outcomes.
- work with Council to develop the design of products and / or services to achieve required delivery outcomes (in this case the sharing of Intellectual Property may be required);
- assist Council in managing lead and lag times to ensure the timely delivery of product and / or services within agreed financial and scheduled timeframes
- develop with Council ways of measuring and assessing the success or otherwise of the supply chain to deliver the products and / services as required by Council
- all entities will be required to share information to ensure understanding of the delivery goals and to establish a framework in which the supply chain may exist.

Outsourcing Partnerships

Outsourcing partnerships offer a unique way for Council to obtain access to specific skills, knowledge, physical assets and operational scalability that would simply not be possible through reliance on inhouse abilities alone.

Council do not have the time nor resources to develop the necessary products or services to meet the changing needs of communities in a timely manner. Technology is simply changing too quickly for most humans to keep up with. Missing the first wave of opportunity that accompanies innovative technology usually means a diminished ability to access its potential later.

Even where Council is fortunate enough to have some skill or capability in house, partnering will usually offer the fastest way to develop a product or service offering required by the community.

To establish these partnerships Council will need to ensure:

- there is a realistically achievable outcome Council needs to deliver to ensure product and service provided to the community is of a currently acceptable nature and will meet future needs to a considerable extent.
- the partnership will assist Council to deliver a product or service Council has not been able to consider previously, or does not have the ability to deliver in house only;
- the partner will be willing to work with Council to adjust their product or service to meet the needs of the Berrigan Shire community
- the partner will be able to provide sound advice as to how their product will best meet the current and future needs of the Berrigan Shire community
- the partner should be able to customise their product or service to meet the needs of the Berrigan Shire but not so much that the product or service cannot be scaled should that prove optimal for Council
- the partner is willing to enter a formal arrangement with Council as to the delivery timeframes of its product or service and who will bear what costs in that delivery schedule
- Council will be able to meet the types of Commercial in Confidence requirements of many of the companies in this sector without breaching its own governance standards and requirements
- Council will be able to clearly understand the risks associated with either developing or providing the innovative technology

[The new machinery of government: using machine technology in administrative decision-making](#) and [Annexure A – Revenue NSW case study](#)

Establishment

Once Council has established that a Strategic Partnership will meet the needs of Council in the delivery of relevant products or services, it will be important to then decide the type of Strategic Partnership to best suit the situation being presented. The process for establishing these relationships cannot be rushed as mutual understanding is core to the success of Strategic Partnerships.

In this way it will be especially important that Council consider the offering beyond what is being asked for and weigh the potential outcomes against Council's desire to deliver its strategic goals and outcomes.

Clear Aims and Objectives

The first step in developing a Strategic Partnership will be to quantify the value Council is seeking from the relationship, and equally the value Council believes it offers to our potential partner.

Once the value proposition is understood by both parties it will be easier for Council and their potential partner to be clearer about *why* we are seeking to enter into the agreement and the goals we might be able to achieve as a direct result of the partnership.

Research

For Council, it will be important to reach out to our networks, including contacting others who have dealt with the potential partner to ask questions and gather information about the potential partner; what they are like to deal with; the quality of their product or service, their responsiveness etc.

Whilst it is easiest for Council to enter into agreements with those we are most familiar with and those who offer products and services similar to our own, this may prove limiting. Where non-traditional sector partners are being considered, there may be scope to consider the complimentary qualities the potential partner brings to Council and the challenge they will present through their difference.

Negotiate

It is easy to skip this step when people believe they understand each other, however it will be during this phase the shared objectives and business alignments can be fleshed out. It is also in the negotiation phase where goals and measures will need to be agreed so the development of any form of agreement is then possible and less disruptive to starting the developing relationship.

Agreements

Informal and formal agreements are possible in Strategic Partnerships. Memorandums of Understanding are seen as the informal arrangement and will broadly set out the intent of the relationship, governance arrangements, roles and responsibilities of the relevant parties and any projects to be achieved as a result of the relationship.

Formal and legally binding agreements will however be required for more complex Strategic Partnerships so that each party fully understands the expectations of the other party or parties. Formal agreements will require individual development dependant on the type of relationship and the outcomes the partnership intends to deliver.

Whatever the agreement, it will be necessary to commit it to writing to provide transparency around the relationship and to provide a reporting mechanism to Council and the community.

Appendix 1 – MOU Template

Memorandum of Understanding

Berrigan Shire Council

and

[Insert Partner Name]



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Date: [Insert Date]

This is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between:

Berrigan Shire Council, ABN 53 900 833 102 of 56 Chanter Street Berrigan NSW 2712 (referred to in this document as the Council) and

[Insert Partner Name], ABN [Insert ABN] of [Insert Address] (referred to in this document as [insert any relevant acronym]).

Duration of the MOU

This is a non-binding MOU between the Council and [Insert Name of Acronym of Partner].

The MOU will apply from [Insert Date] and will continue to apply until [Insert Date] or until the termination of the MOU by either party on the giving on one (1) month's written notice to the other.

Scope

The Council and [Insert Partner Acronym] are committed to maintaining a positive and co-operative working relationship.

The Council and [Insert Partner Acronym] are committed, where practicable to work collaboratively to: ***(the below are guides only and can be deleted / changed or added to)***

- identify key mutual outcomes for [township] and the greater Berrigan Shire (with particular focus on tourism, employment, infrastructure, services and population growth);
- apply for and deliver mutually beneficial government grants and other funding opportunities;
- share data and information that is mutually beneficial to both parties;
- promote and facilitate events and opportunities; and
- develop for our youth a collaborative approach to education, training, employment and wellbeing opportunities through the use of available facilities and programs

As part of the parties' mutual commitment, the Council and [Insert Partner Acronym] will act in accordance with the spirit and intent of this MOU, even though neither party intends that it be legally binding.

Goals and Objectives

For the term of this MOU, the Council and [Insert Partner Acronym] agree to work together to achieve a ***(Outline briefly the objective of the MOU)***.

For the term of this MOU, the Council and [Insert Partner Acronym] agree to investigate any opportunities associated with:

- ***List any goals / projects the MOU would like to see achieved during its term***

Roles and Responsibilities

The Council and [Insert Partner Acronym] *summary of the importance of each partner.*

Set out the roles and responsibilities of each party

[Insert Partner Acronym] will ensure it works openly and honestly with Council to align with Council's strategic plans for the area and fulfils its role as a leader in the community.

Consider if regular meetings are required to implement the MOU / report on its effectiveness etc.

Meetings

If there are to be regular meetings, who will attend, how often will they be held and what are the Terms of Reference for the group?

Reporting

How will the MOU be assessed for its effectiveness and what report will be required for Council and for the partner to ensure effective outcomes are a result of the MOU?

Advertising and Announcements

Unless required by law, an announcement, circular or other public disclosure, including promotional materials such as newsletters, brochures, flyers or annual reports, referring to the contents or subject matter of this MOU, must not be made or permitted by a party without the prior written approval of the other party.

Confidentiality

The parties acknowledge that information disclosed by one party to the other (the disclosing party) in the course of the subject matter of this MOU, may be confidential and, unless required by law must not be disclosed to a third part, except with the prior written consent of the disclosing party.

[Insert Partner Acronym] acknowledges that information provided to Council, other than Commercial In Confidence information, will be subject to the provisions of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

Dispute Resolution

If a dispute or difference arises between the parties out of, or in connection with, this MOU, either party may give the other a written notice specifying the dispute or difference.

Within 7 days of the date of the notice, a person holding a position of senior management of each party, must meet and undertake negotiations in good faith, in line with the Scope of this MOU, and on a without prejudice basis with a view to resolving the dispute or difference.

Variation

The parties may agree to vary any of the requirements of this MOU. Such agreement must be in writing and signed by both parties.



Signatures Signed for Berrigan Shire Council by its authorised representative in the presence of:	
Signature of witness	Signature of authorised representative
Name of witness	Name and title of authorised representative
Date:	
Signed for [Insert Partner Acronym] by its authorised representative in the presence of:	
Signature of witness	Signature of authorised representative
Name of witness	Name and title of authorised representative

Date:

Managing Relationships

Whilst the words in any agreement are an essential element of any Strategic Partnership, the relationship between the partners should be managed with the intent of the document in mind and not with the contract at the centre of every discussion. The Agreements should be undertaken to ensure understanding and to be referred to only where differences of opinion might lie.

Should Council decide it is in its best interests to pursue Strategic Partnerships in general, then Council will also need to consider the resources required to ensure the success of each Agreement and which employee will be responsible for which delivery elements of each agreement. Outcomes will therefore be best managed through delegations and regular reporting.

To allow for accurate and timely reporting on the success or otherwise of each Strategic Partnership the mechanisms for regular and meaningful contact and engagement between partners should form part of the Agreement.

By entering Strategic Partnerships Council is agreeing to:

- communicate often with each partner;
- be consistent and trustworthy;
- avoid gossip;
- support Council's employees in their endeavours to foster good relationships with our partners;
- remain positive in interactions with partners, even where relationships may at times be strained;
- know and understand the implications of government guidelines and the guidelines of our partners;
- support its employees in balancing the competing demands of managing strategic partnerships and relationships and that of delivery Council operations; and
- deliver quality work on time.

Conclusion

The development of Strategic Partnerships for and with Council may well provide opportunity for Council to be a broker or commissioner for the delivery of a broader range of products and services. Strategic Partnerships may offer Council broader reach and certainly share some of the risks Council generally bears alone with other service and delivery providers. The range of Strategic Partnerships possible however will need to be considered against Council's resource capability.

Recommendations

It is recommended Council consider the following as a result of the delivery of this White Paper:

1. direct the CEO to develop a Strategic Partnerships Framework and Policy
2. direct the CEO to implement Strategic Partnerships where relevant with the approval of Council with implementation of this outcome to be included in the CEO's next Performance Review