



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN**  
**Community Consultation Summary**

**August 2020**

**Version 1**

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# 1. Introduction

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Glen Innes Council are focussed on delivering a new Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan to ensure the town's future is vibrant, prosperous and delivering against community's expectations. This new strategy will supersede the 2012-2017 Economic Development Strategy and will feature extensive community and business consultation.

The various phases to developing the strategy and action plan include:

- Phase 1: Economic Analysis & Research - COMPLETED
- Phase 2: Community and Stakeholder Consultation - COMPLETED
- Phase 3: Strategy Development & Delivery
- Phase 4: Action Plan Development & Delivery

This report summarises Phase 2, Community and Stakeholder Consultation. The consultation was delivered in various forms considering restrictions due to COVID-19, preventing traditional face-to-face workshops.

This report includes information gathered from:

- Industry Surveys (total 89 responses)
  - Ag (34 responses)
  - Small business (24 responses)
  - Tourism (41 responses)
- Workshops
  - Glenrac workshop (9 participants)
  - Councillor workshops (2 participants)
- Industry online forums:
  - Tourism
  - Agriculture
  - Community
  - Small Business

Surveys and workshops were conducted mostly during June 2020. This report aims to present findings, highlight main themes and provide a summary of the community's input into the development of Glen Innes' Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan to 2025.

This document provides a summary of the consultation as well as individual summaries of the survey, workshops and online forums.

## 2. Key Summary of Consultation

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The key findings from all the consultations are summarized in the following SWOT analysis.

### SWOT Analysis

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experienced farming community</li> <li>• Rich history</li> <li>• Healthy Ag industry</li> <li>• Access to National Parks</li> <li>• Available Farmhouse accommodation</li> <li>• Natural environment</li> <li>• Good environment for manufacturing</li> <li>• Community Pride</li> <li>• Great climate</li> <li>• Two highway junctions</li> <li>• Increasing accommodation and food offerings</li> <li>• Warm and relaxed community</li> <li>• Work life balance</li> <li>• Economically affordable</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disengaged leadership</li> <li>• Lacking promotion of the area</li> <li>• Size of farms prevents economies of scale</li> <li>• No local abattoir</li> <li>• High welfare dependency</li> <li>• Lack of Innovation</li> <li>• Slow DA process</li> <li>• Land is expensive</li> <li>• Lack of support for small businesses</li> <li>• Councils lacks communication</li> <li>• Stagnant population growth</li> <li>• Strong reliance on agriculture</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewable Energy projects</li> <li>• Construction of a dam</li> <li>• Diversify agriculture</li> <li>• Attract/develop an Abattoir</li> <li>• Intensive horticulture</li> <li>• Improve telecommunications</li> <li>• Improve community communications</li> <li>• Farm, food and heritage tourism</li> <li>• Develop live, work, invest program</li> <li>• Virtual business hub/co-working space</li> <li>• Shop local / buy local</li> <li>• Conduct a Skills Audit</li> <li>• Develop equine industry</li> <li>• Future employment in healthcare, education and construction</li> <li>• Develop a customer service program</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Droughts/ Climate change</li> <li>• Expensive land prices</li> <li>• Ageing population</li> <li>• Pandemic restricting</li> </ul>

## 3. Survey Summary

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### 3.1 All Survey Responses

This section focusses across the key questions which were common to all respondent groups; small business, visitor economy and agriculture.

Topics include:

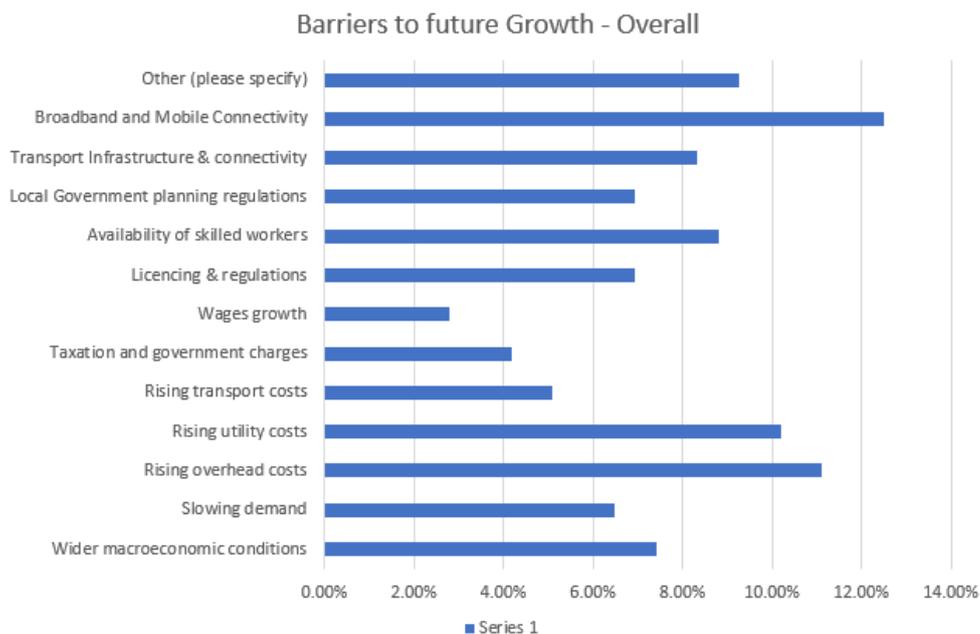
- Barriers to Future Growth in Business/Investment
- The role Glen Innes Severn Council should play in the economy
- The growing population
- Key regional infrastructure to support agriculture
- Growth Industries in next 10 years

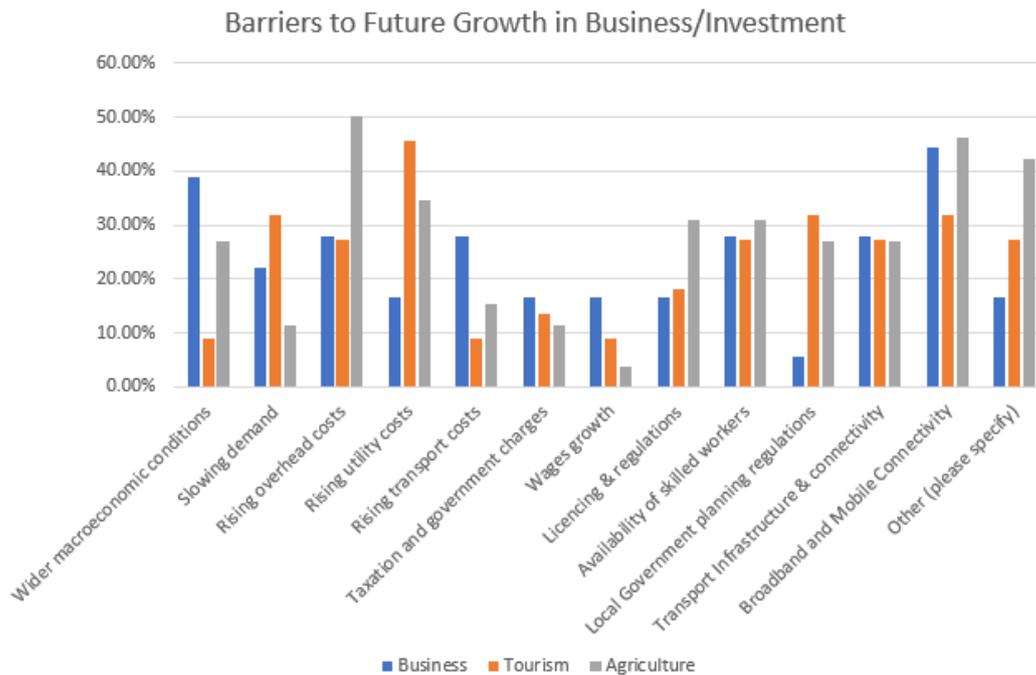
Each key topic will have common themes highlighted showing where possible the differences between respondent groups.

#### 3.1.1 Barriers to Growth

Strongest responses to what might hold back business and investment in Glen Innes included:

- Broadband and mobile connectivity
- Rising overhead and utility costs
- Poor customer service
- Stagnant population growth
- Availability of skilled workers
- Council needing to do more to make Glen Innes attractive to live, work, invest



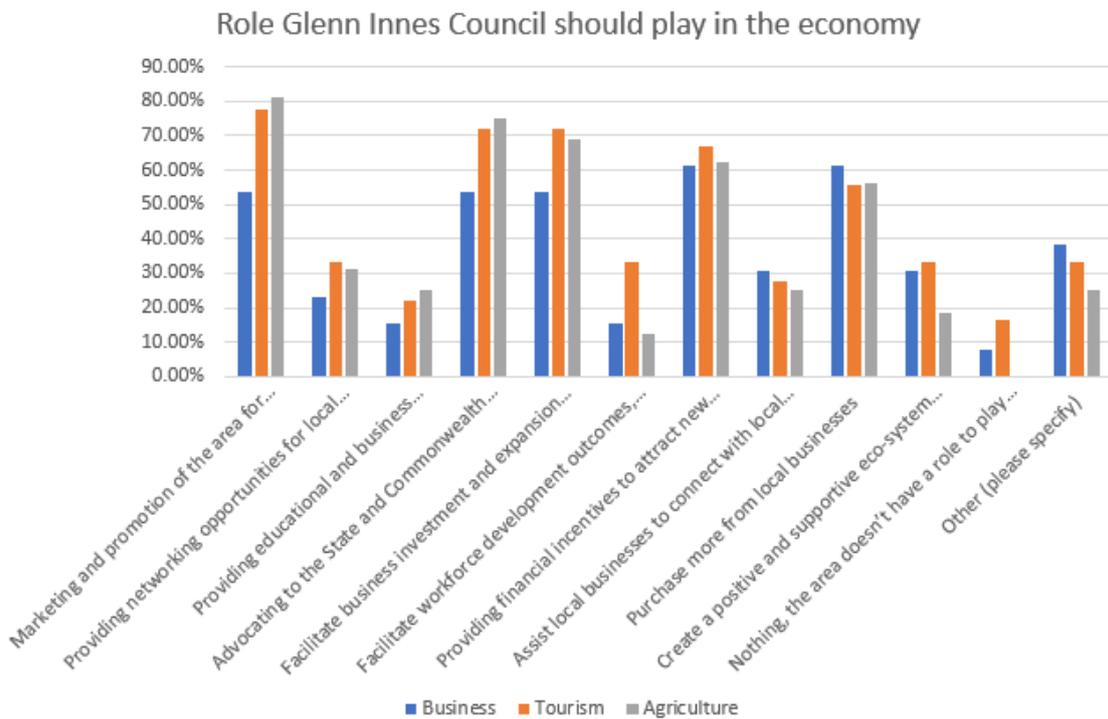


**Other responses: Barriers to Future Growth in Business/Investment**

- Lack of support for start-up businesses in rural regions
- Locals using out of town or internet services
- Council not doing enough to attract industry to Glen Innes
- Need more reasons for visitors to come to Glen Innes.
- Some of the businesses in town need to look at their customer service.
- Improve water supply to attract industry
- Lack of understanding from council as to challenges of the industry.
- No genuine or effective business development.
- Limited infrastructure to support industry and/or manufacturing
- Ageing producers
- There is nothing in Glen Innes to keep the next generation involved and interested in being willing to make changes.
- The Glen Innes community is an aging population with no change in site as far as the next generation can see.
- Lack of population and demand for quality retail
- Research and development generating new ideas
- Physical access to markets

Ageing population  
 Stagnant population growth  
 Lack of Support  
 Water Security  
 Improve Customer Service

### 3.1.2 Role of Council



#### **Other responses: Role Glen Innes Severn Council should play in the economy**

- Council should just be focused local community and improving quality of life to encourage the right investment or people
- Government non repayable grants for start-up business and purchasing of location.
- Maintain and develop infrastructure
- Continue upgrade to the business CBD, improvements to the local services (electricity, water, waste) public art and recreational (parks, libraries), life choices (support our seniors) and good sporting grounds for adults and children's activities.
- More community input into licensing and infrastructure
- Invest in tourist infrastructure - walking tracks, benches, heritage beautification
- We need LESS government intervention. Not more.
- Being professional & leaving personal views out of the decision makings
- If past performance is an indicator probably better if council stays with the three r's: rates roads and rubbish
- Consistent Branding and improve recreation facilities
- Reduction in red tape for the establishment of new business
- Be open, transparent, locally consultative, encourage participation, be accessible, communicate with the population, provide a climate where we are all in this Place Making enterprise together.
- Seek large scale investment opportunities e.g. the next Costa development
- Council should "enable" through provision of infrastructure and expending funding on infrastructure and local government services

Better/more consultation  
 Less red tape  
 More infrastructure  
 Upgrade CBD  
 Improve quality of life

### 3.1.3 Growing Population

When asked what ideas respondents had for growing Glen Innes' population and attracting families and skilled workers to the region in order to address the balance of our future aging population, the following common answers were given.

- Many of the suggestions lead to more jobs
- Improve recreational facilities for families
- Promote low cost of living and natural lifestyle
- Attract aged care and develop more services and facilities
- Attract more businesses to increase jobs
- Improve medical facilities

Below are detailed responses by industry:

#### Small Business

- "Spa" tourism health / enjoyment agriculture and nature
- Service work to aged care industries
- Bio medical industries and agri-industries
- public art, library services, parks, festivals, sports and recreation grounds
- Bigger and better hospital specialist service here for our community.
- COVID-19 has created an opportunity for city businesses major cross roads to Sydney, Brisbane, the coast and the western inland
- Attract more investment in agriculture from existing farmers in other areas
- Make better use of mature workers in the workforce especially part-time skilled work
- Attract services for ageing population; promote as a retirement option
- More assistance with small business
- Helping small business trade on the internet
- financial support for business start-up
- More-shops available i.e. clothes shops, supply, etc.
- Support financial for businesses struggling
- Encourage businesses like wineries
- Encourage businesses to employ older people
- Road building jobs
- Aged care services.
- Substantial money incentives to move here
- Better marketing of our area
- Favourable testimonials from young families who have moved here.
- make land available to support new business moving to the area
- Increase appeal to aged or retired people
- improving life for existing residents
- Use of local industries and services by local business and organisations more

Encourage new industries  
Start-up support  
Improved facilities/activities for families  
Support aged care  
Improve retail offering  
Promote the Shire

## Visitor Economy

- If we want skilled workers, we must provide jobs for them
- Provide more for families to do. No play area for children?
- Encourage better medical facilities. How long does it take to see a Doctor in town?
- Incentivise businesses to locate to Glen Innes
- More attractions
- Attract more businesses to the area with incentives
- railway
- More employment opportunities
- For that we need a business and economic development team who actually understand the challenges faced by our region
- people to change need to feel they won't miss what they came from unfortunately this means we need to look at other regions from growth
- Recreation is a huge growth area and a desired feature
- A retirement village not old people's home
- Sell Glen Innes as a place for a group of older people to come as a group to retire to - bring your friendship group.
- Sell Glen Innes to young families as it is cheaper real estate, a more relaxed lifestyle with everything you need here.
- Industry that provides long-term and stable employment options. Have also read about skilled people with young families wanting to get out of the city and rather than working from home in isolation have access to affordable office/work spaces. This would also require high quality internet access. Bega has setup "co-working spaces" as well as other places around the country.
- Invest in things that appeal to children- parks, sporting grounds, a wildlife park
- Create a BIG thing (not I kilt!!!) something People can be interactive with. An animal that is found here or a flower something appealing. This can get road tippers visiting!
- Get young people and people with families involved in these decisions and marketing
- Encourage more medical procedures into town
- Leverage more \$ from the highway
- Encourage business
- Aggressively market our product to certain destinations. Tree changers, On line businesses, alternative lifestyle.
- Attract larger business to the area for jobs.
- House prices and rents need to go up so we stamp attracting the welfare people here
- Promote the reasonable priced properties we have here compared to the cities
- More family time can be spent with children as quick travelling time to work
- We need to create opportunities to attract skilled workers with young families. I think things like the wind farm provide a great opportunity to attract skilled workers and young families.
- attract more businesses that employ younger people
- attendance at an expo that provides the opportunity to 'sell' our beautiful area
- New industry that is long term and not reliant on agriculture
- Council & community positive action in encouraging industry here
- Have the local doctors prepared to take new patients? Young families will not come & stay if there is no access to good medical assistance and poor school

More jobs  
Business  
Relocation  
incentives  
Improved  
facilities/activities  
for families  
Co-working space  
Better medical  
access and  
services

## Agriculture

- Create more aged care facilities.
- Embrace retirement aged care industry
- Provide better environment for small business
- reduce current inequitable rural rates
- Make better use of the skills mature workers have!! They are an asset, not a problem.
- Attract businesses which are large enough to employ people.
- Concentrate on attracting people from nearby areas - other New England, North Coast and North West areas.
- More jobs
- Promote Glen Innes as a remote work hub
- Have a business centre where people can work out of and/ hot desk if needed
- Promote relatively inexpensive housing options and lifestyle benefits
- Covid has shown that professional people in white collar businesses can work from home. Make it more attractive to people to come to town e.g. no rates for 3 years for a targeted group.
- We need shops
- That will flow on from getting the jobs.
- Champion the right people on skill level not on uni score.
- Equal treatment of all in the sector.
- Advertising quality of life aspects- location, cost of living, housing, clean air, safety, digital connectivity, educational options, cultural opportunity lves e.g. music, theatre
- Establishing, supporting, financing a vigorous local paper with several employees
- Developing an arts hub- artists, musicians, ceramicists, performers....
- Quality retail, customer service.
- Provide a competitive retail market by giving choice in the street and online.
- providing better service to customer glen innes has a wait time of weeks for items that are not on the shelf. This drives people to shop in other towns.
- Provide opportunities for families to come to the region - lifestyle options
- Provide employment opportunities to attract families
- Seek for businesses to relocate to the region from the cities. Provide incentives.
- Development of tourism and associated industries. There are rivers, hiking, adventure tours that could be developed, these engage younger and families. These entities spend money in motels and hotels. This may be hindered in the short term by the corona Virus and reduced disposable income.
- New business start-up incentives
- Attract manufacturing and industry to the area
- Incentives for younger families to take up these manufacturing jobs i.e. low rates etc. This will also encourage house purchases
- Reduction in red tape, "greasing the wheels" for industry to start up in the area
- Ensure good internet levels
- Visual attractive town
- good sporting facilities

More jobs  
More shops  
Promote quality of life  
Co-working space  
Reduce red tape  
Promote regionally  
More arts & culture

### **3.1.4 What is the key piece of regional infrastructure that is required to support the agricultural sector in the Glen Innes Region?**

When asked what was the key piece of regional infrastructure that is required to support the agricultural sector in the Glen Innes region, the following common answers were given. All sectors stressed that better roads were needed with several suggesting rail infrastructure would help support growth in agriculture. Improvement in telecommunication both mobile and internet is also seen as important. Saleyards and Feedlots were seen as important infrastructure to support farmers and long-term water security via building a dam has wide reaching benefits for the whole community.

#### **Small business**

- Air transport and logistics
- Good connecting roads (sealed and unsealed) and bridges.
- Freight rail
- Upgrade of hospital
- Agriculture produce stores for farming needs
- Grants for new business ideas in agriculture R&D
- Better transport.
- Saleyards.
- Mobile coverage and roads to support heavy transport

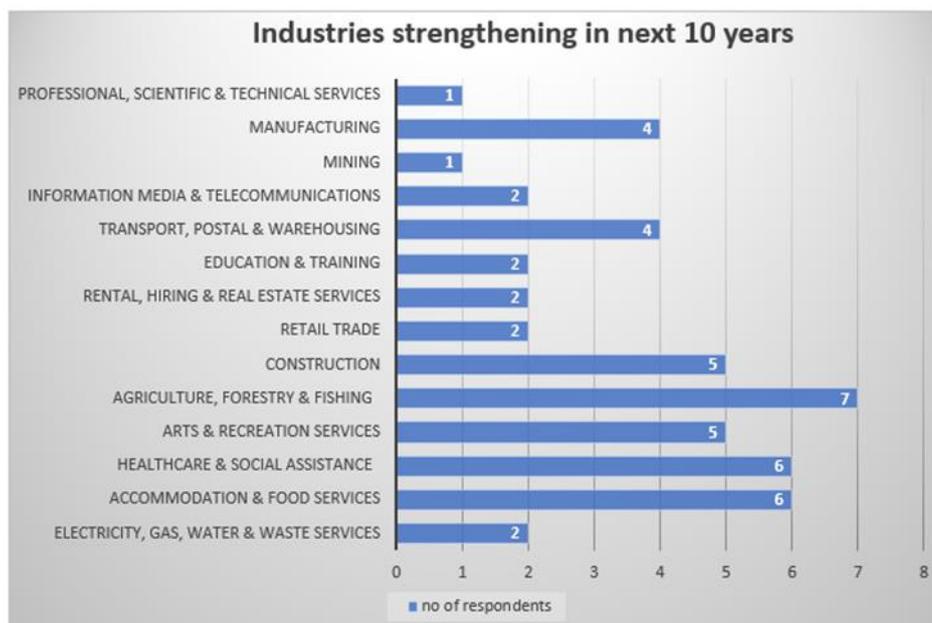
#### **Ag industry**

- Cheap power is a start.
- Better rural roads
- Freight line to markets; improve liveability such as medical/hospital services
- More opportunities i.e. training skills, waste green bin to collect compost
- Connecting roads in good order and first choice for transport companies
- Re-establishment of Dept of Ag, researching horticultural options
- Sale yards
- Eliminate red tape.
- Glenrac/LLS/DPI
- Better internet services.
- Communications and Technology.
- Roads, water, good government facilities ie schools
- Saleyards/weigh station
- a really big dam, not as big as Copeton dam but large enough to support the water requirements of industry/manufacturing. A dam has the added benefit of being a tourist attraction in warmer months
- Reliable mobile service

### Visitor economy

- The Saleyards
- Encourage more feedlots
- Roads
- Better water management
- A cannabis factory and growing facility at the research station
- Rail
- Nil. They run excellent grazing operations & know where to source items.
- Rail but probably not going to happen, Saleyards
- I would like to see more support for tourism
- State of the art selling centre
- None. The focus needs to move away from the heavy reliance on agriculture and start spreading and reducing the risk when times get tough.
- Communal governance
- Logistics
- Communications and Technology.

### 3.1.5 What industries do you believe will be strengthening in our area in the next 10 years that should be considered for growth strategies?



### Observations:

- Industries most likely to strengthen in next 10 years include agriculture, healthcare and accommodation and food
- REMPLAN shows a much higher growth in retail than community expects
- The community expects a much higher growth in Arts & Recreation than REMPLAN data

## 3.2 Agriculture Industry Survey

### 3.2.1 What strategies/initiatives/actions could be undertaken to enable agricultural businesses to create more jobs?

Many respondents had good suggestions on initiatives which could create more jobs in the agricultural sector. These ranged from value-adding produce which opens jobs in manufacturing and marketing to a well-recognised need for a local abattoir which in turn can create more jobs in transport. Training and supporting/subsidizing traineeships were mentioned several times as well as internships for on-the-job training.

The setting up of a training centre, separate or via TAFE seems to support, more trained staff = more jobs.

#### Agriculture respondents

- We are seeing an increase quote requests even though the customer has locked you in. I don't think they realise to calculate a quote could cost a small business an easy \$1k which we don't pass on.
- Entice businesses that will employ people.
- Reduce rates
- Subsidise trainees
- Council visibly supporting any agricultural development such as the proposed Stonehenge feedlot.
- State and Federal industry agencies better market Australian livestock products.
- Better publicise to urban areas what Australian Farmers do and the quality of the product produced. In other words, build up the industry profile which then attracts investment, jobs, new markets, higher prices etc.
- Less bill costs
- More community involvement
- A local abattoir adjoining the Ag station & airport
- Open up to refugee families for market gardens
- Attract more staff to the research station (high income earners)
- More remote work for family farm members who live on farm and are not fully employed on farm i.e underemployed
- Support engagement of agriculture trainees, could be shared across farms.
- Encourage high value horticulture - make representations to horticultural industries
- Agritourism
- Nothing that I can create jobs really
- Eliminate red tape.
- Train & promote staff from within & from away.
- Champion the top 20% of producers
- More intensive horticultural agriculture: vegetables, seeds,
- Value adding to what we produce agriculturally ...processing, packaging marketing labelling local produce
- Science training at universities incorporating business second level industries and opportunities
- Intensify pastoral development
- Improve selection of bulls/rams using measurement

- repairing the land by using other methods ie back from the brink Peter Andrews
- recycling water
- growing food apart from cattle and employing young people and backpackers
- Subsidies paid to businesses to allow for employment and diversification of staff
- Internships with producers for on the job training and skill development and enhancement.
- School-based trainee-ships of high school aged students, not only local students but allow for wider applications.
- Seek to produce high demand products
- Undertake more secondary production
- Look at value adding services
- Training with the next generation to increase the knowledge of hiring, the role of the employer, having local farmers talk with high school students. I believe a limiting factor for agriculture business to create more jobs is due to the size/scale of the agriculture business in the local region. Operations like Rangers Valley have the opportunity to expand employment but this is limited.
- Cooperatives marketing schemes
- micro-finance and business skills to assist youngsters to get a toe into property in the area
- local agricultural training centre
- Create an agribusiness training hub through Tafe
- Support the growth of Glenrac education initiatives - attract young farmers through education opportunities
- Apprentice sharing options for farmers
- Development of intensive AG business such as the Guyra Tomato Farms
- Incentives to encourage more employment such as discounted rates, fees and charges.
- You work out how to gain greater end prices then people could afford to employ.

### 3.2.2 What drivers/trends/observations do you see in agriculture regarding employment?

Some of the common drivers/trends/observations in the agriculture sector ranged from value-adding produce which opens jobs in manufacturing and marketing to a well-recognised need for a local abattoir which in turn can create more jobs in transport. The suggestion to develop renewable energy sector has again been mentioned creating opportunities for higher value employment and other economic benefits. Safeguarding the agricultural industry against climate changes and future droughts by improving the Shire's water catchment is another common theme throughout the survey.

#### Agriculture respondents

- Rangers Valley is a large employer that brings people to town. And they're expanding so more staff, contractors and consultants.
- The aging population is seeing families finally properly succession planning and the next generation returning to take over.
- Drought has made it tough
- Bush fires has made it tough
- Low cash flow position from drought will reduce spending
- Increasing operator age will increase need for labour
- Lack of skilled workforce availability
- specialised products and feedlots
- difficult at a local level as so much depends on state and federal governments
- More opportunities for work
- More local businesses
- More money in our local economy
- More intense agricultural practices
- Possibility of a local abattoir
- More automation in machinery and equipment
- Increasing scale of property size managed, less labour units
- Increased use of contractors for some farm tasks e.g. fencing
- Establishment of a value-added unique products
- Centrelink
- Value adding industry
- School based training.
- More common sense. Less red tape.
- Value adding to what is produced: secondary industries which initially would need to be subsidised
- Sutton's apple cidery at Applethorpe is an excellent example of the above
- We need to think beyond old ideas of intensive agriculture e.g. feedlots which does not generate Employment
- introduction of online selling
- better facilities
- renewable energy focus i.e. windfarms and solar
- Without agriculture the world stops, as there would be no food without agriculture.

Ageing population  
Effects of drought  
Need for a local abattoir  
Value-adding  
More training opportunities  
Entice young people to stay on farms

- Agriculture is a consistent industry that everyone needs, even Vegans as we grow their greens!
- Employment in agriculture can take you anywhere in the world and is an industry that you can learn everything on the spot rather than paying for education so ultimately there are less input costs to get more profit.
- Favourable weather conditions
- Strong growing seasons in the past
- High demand for products
- Scale of operations, commodity prices, availability of labour, increase improvement in technology reducing labour requirements,
- sale of old-established properties
- fewer young people working on properties but going away for better-paid jobs
- older graziers not wanting to change to modern techniques
- Drought - need for short term or casual workers to feed out/assist
- Trend: Younger generations returning to family operations
- Observation: the unemployment is not focused in agriculture but in the wider community in general. Causes include a lack of manufacturing/industry/warehousing type jobs.
- Lack of skilled "hands on" workers,
- Over supply of "agricultural degree's" whom want the wage not the hard slog.

### 3.3 Small Business Industry Survey

#### 3.3.1 What drivers/trends/observations do you see in the visitor economy/tourism regarding employment?

Some of the common drivers/trends/observations in the visitor economy regarding employment included that Glen Innes had no major tourism attraction and accommodation offering could be improved with maybe some incentives from Council.

- Antiquated business models regarding accommodation
- No natural icon or free access activity
- Prohibitive licencing
- Visitors to Glen Innes (Families visiting families)
- Small businesses (novelty purchases - craft, children clothing etc)
- Don't see much more potential for tourism
- Transit
- Older people moving to town for cheaper housing
- More businesses
- More jobs for locals
- Higher tourism
- Great advertising to bring people in
- More economic encouragement to employ ie grants
- Affordable accommodation
- The majority of people moving to the area are retirement age or nearing retirement and hence not seeking employment. They move here for 4-5 years and then return to coast due to lack of medical facilities
- Wind farms/industry
- Stagnation of businesses. Nothing new happening
- Border closures
- Affordable housing
- Proximity to other towns
- Wind/solar power generation
- People relocating because less busy town then where they are from

Affordable  
housing  
Invest in  
renewable  
energy  
Improve  
accommodation  
and facilities  
VFR market

#### 3.3.2 What do you suggest were the key local drivers of the jobs growth in Glen Innes between 2006-2011 across industries?

This question appears to have confused respondents slightly. The most common reasons given:

- People were investing in Glen Innes, buying homes and renovating for investment opportunities
- Nationally Australia experienced growth during that period, people generally had more money
- Businesses such as Photo Create and McDonald's had opened in that time and employed a lot of people in Glen Innes

## 3.4 Tourism Industry Survey

### 3.4.1 What initiatives do you believe would convert more visitors to consider moving to Glen Innes for employment?

A stand-out response involves the need for more family friendly facilities which could be both incorporated in Council's recreation planning and also encouraged in the business community. Increasing employment opportunities would also encourage more people to make the move to Glen Innes. A favourite in many regional towns is also to improve medical services and facilities, along with better educational facilities. Encouraging more industry and business to fill shops is also seen as a way to encourage more residents.

#### Visitor Economy responses:

- Attract more industry so there are more jobs
- Provide better medical facilities
- Better promote the benefits of living in Glen Innes
- Better education facilities
- Broaden employment opportunities
- Increase leisure options
- if buying property, lower rates for two years
- allow more businesses to open
- FIX THE ROADS
- Council fees for development need to be reduced
- Need to be able to attract more businesses to town - reduce red tape and fees for new businesses
- perhaps we need to look at expansion of services available but not to the detriment of our Celtic heritage identity
- Unfortunately the perception out there is that this is not a family friendly town or one that has activities for families and youth available perhaps encourage enterprise that boosts attractions for locals and tourists to enjoy ie mountain bike parks/ support for the skate rink/ kids clubs/ discos/ family picnic days/ family days at a different local park or hospitality locale on a calendar cycle... council could support this
- put the statistics out there to some central towns through papers and media about affordability and features of our town and encourage more services and trades to town that can support expansion
- Better internet
- Some small manufacturing
- Selling our lifestyle
- Good medical facilities - an ability to actually be able to have a doctor's surgery put you on their books
- Continued upkeep and support of facilities and activities for families e.g., sporting complexes, childcare, schools, Art galleries
- A strong Industry supporting long-term employment options - looking beyond retirees
- If they were aware of the low cost of living and housing in Glen Innes
- If they were aware of potential growth and developments in the area
- Encourage business that will bring things 'to do' cinema that operates during the day (particularly in school holidays), treetops challenge, paintball, bowling, indoor playgrounds etc

Better medical facilities  
More family friendly  
Reduce red tape  
Improved internet  
Promote cost of living  
Promote lifestyle  
Attract larger industries  
Community pride campaign  
Improve night-time economy  
Affordable accommodation

- Health Services. Push the fact that New England with one-hour drive offers major health services.
- Push Lifestyle, Welcoming Community, Affordable Housing.
- Advertising
- Better medical to retain those who do come
- More retail opportunities linked to the highway
- Packages for large business to come to Glen - Example Call Centres
- Get the local councils on the highlands to go to Sydney as a collective and offer a Move to the Highlands Expo
- Target large business and have a concentrated direct marketing campaign on why they should come to Glen Innes.
- A larger industry in town so employment is available
- More activities for children I.e bowling alley,
- A larger hospital and more doctors as new visitors cannot get into a doctor
- I think our own community pride plays a huge part in this. Our community attitude needs to be one that is positive and inviting. If we don't love our beautiful town how can we expect visitors to love it.
- Highlight what our area has to offer visitors of a younger demographic. If we are an ageing town we need to appeal to the needs of a younger generation while still respecting the needs of our older generation.
- reliable, fast speed NBN
- lobbying Govt to re-locate some departments or sections
- Non-agricultural industry development with permanent or long-term employment opportunities.
- Doctors taking new patients & the hospital being more efficient and effective
- Council be proactive and positive and transparent in their search for industry to come to town
- More job availability
- More business in CBD
- More "nightlife" options
- Cheap housing promotion.
- Good area for cashed up retirees to do a tree change
- Improve the medical and hospital situation. It's very bad.
- better logistics - no train - no plane - 1 bus pathetic
- spa tourism investing in eco-tourism
- free and well-kept walking trails / bike etc
- Promote lifestyle benefits of the region
- Promote affordable housing options
- Promote the opportunity to set up businesses cost effectively.

### 3.4.2 What ideas can you contribute that would encourage longer stays?

#### Visitor Economy responses:

- Give people more to do
- Encourage people to use Glen Innes as a base for day trips
- Encourage more and better eateries
- Attractions
- Promotion of Glen Innes as a hub and spoke for other regional attractions
- accommodation deals
- more things to do
- railway
- More to do
- More attractions
- A more attractive boutique style main street
- events calendars
- suggested weekend programs ie what to do over your stay. give prospective visitors an experience it needs to be diverse and memorable one they come back for or tell others about. people won't come for 1 thing if they are coming for an experience where several businesses coordinate a weekend experience we have a great brand in high country but several businesses working together that is where you will find we forge an experience to be desired we can't bank on 2-3 events a year we need an opportunity every weekend
- Boutique, Boutique, Boutique- Heritage and culture we a famous for it, heritage stays and experiences to and around the district
- Better eating venues
- Establishments updating and following their opening dates and times
- Better marketing
- More to do
- Having food service places open, particularly on public holidays
- Bike rail trail with Glen Innes as a hub for day trips out to attractions e.g. wind farm loop, minerals and mining loop, national park loop.
- More to see and do in the township
- More advertising about the out of town experiences - mystery face rock, wash pool etc
- Accommodating service from businesses
- The accommodation providers need to take responsibility.
- Signage to attractions
- \$ coupons at tourist locations to move business into other shops
- Discount coupon sheet for all businesses in Glen everyone has a freebie to give to encourage people into their business
- Gawura Gallery is developing Cultural Activities, Tours and Workshops. These are minimum two-day events
- Let visitors know what is here and what there is to see and do here
- Night light show at the Standing stones, people would need to stay the night for this
- More fossicking areas are needed, this is in great demand from visitors
- Package deals, combine a tour and accommodation and throw in some Celtic Cash to get them spending local. People love to feel like they are getting a bargain or something for nothing.

- Perhaps accommodation businesses in town could offer a second night half price to encourage longer stay time.
- accommodation providers being able to offer information on what else to do
- promote the importance of visiting the Visitor Information Centre as staff there are very knowledgeable and often change the visitor mind to stay longer
- creating a package of activities that covers a range of days
- Increased retail sector
- Better promotion of activities available catering to all physical abilities and needs
- No signs that make us look like we're begging. If a place says it's suffering people won't come because they won't want to add to the misery. Those signs placed during the fires were humiliating. And the treatment local firefighting services received was appalling. Glen Innes should have been displaying positivity and resilience. The reality was harmful and shameful.
- Accommodation/Theatre/Dinner packages
- "Day trip" program (self-drive)
- "Day Trip" program (organised bus)
- People will only stay if there is something to do that interests them. Do some market research. I talk to travellers in the street and quite simply. nothing to do in Glen that they haven't done before.
- As Glen Innes is situated around half way between SYD and BRIS I can understand why people only stay overnight. It breaks their trip. Focus on what they can do overnight. Accom/Meal/ Movie/. There is very little in Glen Innes to keep someone here more than 2 nights.
- It's older travellers and retirees. Most are in bed early to start their trip the next day so won't want a "night out"... but maybe they would like a Cafe breakfast? Win for Motel. Win for Cafe.
- transport connections are pathetic
- sightseeing places need to be well maintained
- gi closes its doors @ 6pm the main street is a ghost town
- Work with our neighbours to provide "experiences"
- Provide more events in Glen Innes
- Provide more cultural objects to view such as the sculpture

### 3.4.3 Accommodation & Food services has seen employment growth however retail has declined. What are the key drivers of these changes from your local perspective?

One of the main reasons identified for the overall decrease in retail is the huge popularity of online retail. Nationally and increasingly in regional centres (especially since COVID) consumers are becoming more confident with order online. This trend is set to continue and most businesses must be encouraged to develop their e. Commerce sites if they wish to continue growing, especially traditional bricks and mortar retail businesses.

Another very common response is poor customer service. If long term residents are identifying lack of customer skills, there is a good chance that visitors and perspective new residents will take notice also. Capacity building activities such as workshops, staff training and mystery shoppers' feedback are all good initiatives Council and the business community can investigate.

#### Visitor Economy responses:

- Lower housing costs encourage people in lower social economic demographics to settle here
- Increasing cost of living i.e utility bills mean less money to spend
- Lack of stores selling basic items means people will shop out of town to get these items
- Escape expenditure to other LGA
- Expand the retail offering
- Encourage 7-day trading
- younger folk not wanting to work
- cheaper prices, it's hard to keep my money local
- overheads
- Unattractive main street so not appealing for shoppers
- Too many empty shops so not appealing for shoppers
- Lack of boutique options
- retail has declined due to the increase of online ordering from out of area this is faced by all towns
- Independent businesses need to collaborate with a promote and reward scheme between local council can help with conceptualising this and advertising and subsidising the launch of such a program for eg retailers in conjunction with hospitality or independent services for rewards This needs to be compelling and instantly rewarding as stock standard schemes will flop
- marketing is expensive and I would suggest council works with local retailers to help subsidise marketing on a promote glen scheme to the whole of the northern tablelands all areas that can travel here in a day
- Customer service
- Online buying
- Customer service again
- Retail - people needing to go elsewhere for a range of everyday clothing needs and doing other shopping while there. The hit and miss with what is open, particularly on public holidays
- Retail people not having much money, looking for and finding cheaper options online

Fill empty shops

Welcome

Attract young families

Lack of good accommodation

Longer trading hours

Better signage

Effects of online shopping

Need to improve customer Service

Buy local program

CBD

beautification

- Food and accommodation growth - it's from the wind and solar farm construction
- Employment opportunity - state governments push is for its staff to work from regional locations. Get on that!
- Young families will bring more employment! Kids in schools = more teachers, aides, admin staff, events the schools and community groups hosts will bring visitors who will buy lunches and dinners, stay in motels, buy fuel,
- There needs to be appeal to bring young families here and encourage them to stay.
- Fact. New Gen buy online.
- Why did Council buy so many cars out of town. Fact better trade in prices. SOME of our people don't value the service given by local business. Can you change.
- No signage to our shopping area
- No parking if a tourist stumble upon it
- No marketing of this area to tourists i.e. Spend in Glen only circulates local \$
- Old Tired Motels, they do not rate over 3 stars
- Limited food outlets that do not focus on local produce - In an upmarket way.
- Customer service training for existing business
- Retail stores in the main street have shocking customer services
- People open businesses that are not what people want. There is now where for under 60s to buy reasonably good clothes.
- Need to open past noon on Saturday and open on Sundays, create a vibe down the main street
- The cost of running a business in Glen Innes seems to outweigh profit at present.
- more variety of retail outlets
- presentation of outlet and approachable staff
- providing merchandise that customers want to buy
- Landlords asking exorbitant rents & increased overhead costs
- Locals not supporting or being actively encouraged to support local business
- We pay more for goods from small outlets than big business
- Many empty retail shops... many 10 years +
- Restricted trading hours.
- Govt push to decimate regional areas and corral population into smart cities.
- Poor business operators, reduced trading hours, no major retail presence (like Kmart/Big W
- High unemployment means less to spend on anything other than food.
- web sales - retail is dead
- service! eat drink and relax - free things to do in Glen Innes?
- invest in tourism infrastructure
- More transient visitors

Need better parking  
 Welcome  
 Attract young families  
 Lack of good accommodation  
 Longer trading hours  
 Better signage  
 Effects of online shopping  
 Need to improve customer Service  
 Buy local program  
 CBD beautification  
 Store beautification  
 Longer retail trading hours  
 Customer service

## 4. Glenrac Workshop

Some of the main take-home messages from the Glenrac workshops.

**Table 4.1. Consultation Summary**

Issues/Challenges	Opportunities	Role of Council
Water security to safeguard against droughts	Build a dam, more irrigation Lead to more intense and diversified agriculture	Plan for long-term water security
Keep up with the future of farming, need diversification, technology	Investigate an abattoir Educate farmers on new technologies	Council's Planning to encourage diversification Monitor grant opportunities Assist with capacity building of farmers
Need to attract more residents	Showcase Glen Innes Develop a co-working space	Develop Live, Work, Invest campaign
Condition of roads	Improve access to Glen Innes and secondary roads to places people want to visit	Council must provide good road infrastructure where it's in their control and continue to lobby the State Govt for improved access
Poor telecommunications	Fix black spots and improve internet for residents and visitors	Council to lobby for improved services, easy approval of towers
Need to increase farm income	Many opportunities identified: farm stays/visits, value add local produce and sell locally, farm gate sales, convert vacant farmhouses	Council to assist with planning and capacity building by running a workshop to explore opportunities
People don't know where their food comes from	Develop a Glen Innes produce brand and story to promote food provenance, educate the public and sell more product	Council develop a food systems plan, identify 'champions' Encourage more farmers markets
Transport/distribution/logistics	Develop a central distribution/freight hub, improve road connectivity	Investigate inland rail
Increasing power costs	Renewable energy, community-based	Investigate opportunities for wind/solar

Issues/Challenges	Opportunities	Role of Council
Lack of leadership	Time to step-up, take the lead and commit to change	Embrace the new Economic Development strategy, resource key priorities.  Proactively support investment
Ageing population	Attract younger people and families to balance demographics  retirement villages, aged care facilities	Ensure older residents are catered to  Encourage development catering to families  Actively promote Glen Innes as a great lifestyle for families
Health care services lacking	Attract more medical services, GP's, allied health providers	Council to encourage, invite and facilitate improved health services

### Agricultural Sector Mindmaps

#### Glen Innes Ag industry can stand for/own/ lead:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Branded beef products reflecting our unique resources grown locally.</li> <li>- Value adding food (e.g. tomatoes not suitable for fresh produce) turned into jams, pickles.)</li> <li>- Marketing distinct and local</li> <li>- Consumers want quality produce that respect their environmental and animal care.</li> <li>- Intensive small footprint agriculture and/or industry suited to our soil types</li> <li>- Build a big dam, incentivize industry</li> <li>- Tourism employment (dam, fishing, watersports)</li> <li>- Industry employment, &gt; ongoing employment</li> <li>- Lack of recognition development/access to our Eastern Fall forested areas – Accommodation.</li> <li>- Council to lead, innovate and lobby for better internet</li> <li>- Keep business local</li> <li>- Local feedlot</li> <li>- High end animals</li> <li>- Water from Clarence</li> <li>- Railway Highland cattle</li> <li>- First rate agricultural production Mainly cattle, Growing grass</li> <li>- Railway station (love the rail trail idea)</li> <li>- State of the art equine + equestrian center</li> <li>- A hub for agricultural sustainability, stewardship + innovation</li> <li>- Celebrates local produce and producers, and in turn bring tourism, open other doors coming from utilising local producers and celebrating them.</li> <li>- City to country farm stays.</li> </ul>
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## Combined responses by priority objectives

### Objective 1:

- Promotion of 'farm experience' tourism
- Agricultural tours to showcase local innovation.
- To grow and produce plants/animals on land that is resilient, fertile, well covered by crops, in nutrient rich dynamic soils.
  - o Greenhouses for horticulture. E.g. Tomatoes/peas/carrots/blueberries
  - o Mole River
  - o James Haselwood – microlaena
- Provide the opportunity and the capability to make GISC attractive to big business. Manufacturing (Ag based) – industry (intensive Ag)
- Water: Build a dam Power: Hydro, Wind farm
- Demonstrate a willingness to enable industry (cut rates, taxes, etc.)
- Market analysis > dietary needs of a "world full" population. Protein and Fiber
- Retirement for aging communities
- Develop gated communities
- Downside medical availability
- Small intensive horticulture: Vegetables, Flowers, Food
- Feed lots
- Abattoir
- Food production selling
- Tourism
  - o Farm that grow own food
  - o Provide space for city people
  - o Help grow the food
  - o Cook together with farm produce
  - o Retreats
  - o Eat together

### Objective 2:

- Planning
  - o Agriculture to accommodate drying, warming environment
    - Reducing emergency
- Ease red tape requirements
- Open training opportunity for locals: Mandate a % of workforce to be locally sourced
- Promotion to the world
- Gated communities for older population: Extra health workers,
- Form always industry \*\*\*\* with workers
- Freight hub
- Inland rail
- Agritourism
- Farm gate industry
- Homestay/Airbnb (Farm Only)
- Showcase diversity and what is possible in Agricultural patch
- Food forest hubs
  - o How much food can you grow in one place and market/showcase diversity in an ecosystem.
- Tourism potential

**Objective 3:**

- Small agriculture
- Old apple orchards nearby
  - o Could be developed as per Suttons apple cidery, near Applethorpe/Stanthorpe.
- Demonstrate a willingness to enable industry (cut rates, taxes, etc.)
- Market analysis > dietary needs of a “world full’ population. Protein, Fiber
- Freight hub
- Communications/bandwidth
- More surveys in rural areas and town/village areas
- Plant produce to under
- Temperature advantages
- Communications
  - o Road
  - o Bandwidth
- Renewable energy
  - o Mini solar farm on property
- Marketing/storytelling
  - o Heritage
    - History house
    - History of the area
    - Trove
- Farm stop for city families
  - o Core
  - o Experience work on a farm for a week or 2, or longer.
- School holiday “retreats”
  - o Tap into movement from loud areas
  - o People want to know where food comes from
- Look at Ways to expose them to the local community. Its vision and vibe.

## 5. Councillor Workshop

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### 5.1 Vision

Glen Innes Severn area has set a path for growth that will build and sustain the areas prosperity and opportunities for residents. Based on community values and expectations, Glen Innes Severn area will retain its strong agricultural base, building its tourism offerings and target new business growth. A proactive strategy for population and employment growth will be supported by an attractive environment for new investment that is “open for business” creating one of the leading inland destinations for “tree change” and lifestyle driven business growth in New South Wales.

### 5.2 Opportunities

#### 5.2.1 What Council can do?

- Acknowledge climate change and reducing emissions as a priority in all business deals.
- Use assets to provide business opportunities. Support the above financially example electric cars for council solar on all buildings.
- Growing food for the population.
- Provide our own power hub for community to invest in.
- Look at using CSIRO data on medicinal cannabis and researching at the AG station.
- Building approvals.
- Councils major role is to provide stable, welcoming leadership to business.
- To provide the best infrastructure as roads, water, community facilities, pool, library and sporting fields.
- Open and effective town planning system that welcomes the business and looks ahead.
- Advocate to government to state government services viable. Grow population that is productive growth due to jobs.
- Be open to all developers because we cannot predict all future trends

### 5.3 Key Sectors

#### 5.3.1 Community

- Providing renewable power to the community. Provide our own power hub for community to invest in.
- Providing a pine coffins factory from the Correctional Centre
- Cycle ways and Rail Trails
- Bring the railway station back to life
- maintain and expand services including business build and maintain a sense of community.
- Grow a younger age class.
- Embrace renewable energy, rebuild local energy solutions and my crew grids.
- Marketing our summer climate of no humidity, and sleep for nights.
- Encourage growth of all sectors to build growth on diversification. Be open to all developers because we cannot predict all future trends.
- Sell an alternative to the city supported by the Internet.
- Encourage visitation, not just grey wrinkly but younger families, we need entrepreneurs in all sectors to come to town. That is where the innovation will come from.

### 5.3.2 Agricultural

- We need to diversify it's not all about meat, climate, water,
- we need funding for factories and recycling reusing plastic.
- Key is looking after our water sources without those we are unable to support animals, food growth.
- Farmers need to change their practices education and digital
- Encourage more intensive development.
- Encourage more cultivation, research irrigation opportunities.
- Research all agricultural type growth. Legumes, corn, glasshouse, horticulture, including flowers, chooks intensity grated jobs cut. Beef and cropping.
- Complete the mobile phone tower networks

### 5.3.3 Tourism

- Need more eco-friendly events to give people hope for the future.
- Sustainable alternative housing expo. Strawbale and rammed earth building etc.
- Focus on housing, refugees and using our assets e.g. railway rail Trail
- Guided tours to national parks or old Grattan Road experience.
- Hospitality has been growing until COVID, the industry has taken a hit. Hospitality is important.
- The stories and its continued marketing and development and on-site guides to welcoming engage with people.
- Retail: too easy to drive 100kms to get a better choice, good roads, good cars, affected by online retail
- Targeted marketing to closest urban population sell the climate, open space, and loads of cafes

### 5.3.4 Small Business

- Steve wondered about the accuracy of the statistics vacations seem to dip early last reflected loss of confidence and obviously jobs
- Windfarms brought a lot of employment. Mostly short-term more permanent.

### For the future

More festivals, more music and dance for all. Women's refuge this is needed in community domestic violence exist we could provide a safe place for women. For the future. Electric cars, bikes. Rail Trail. Using our assets to support businesses. Providing our own energy and selling through solar wind and hydro. Researching medicinal cannabis. Providing education at TAFE. Gourmet shops. The factory using pine from the correctional Centre. Looking after our waterways

## 6. Online Forums

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### 6.1 Tourism

#### FOCUS AREAS:

- Importance of Visitor Centre Information, convert longer stays
- The town needs more tourist attractions and places to visit and experience such as a brewery/distillery
- Longer opening hours important for visitors to stay longer and spend more. i.e. all-day Saturday and Sunday
- 'Corporate' customers also good when construction projects are on
- Bring more events and festivals eg country exhibitions, Celtic festival
- Need to improve medical services, access to GP
- Utilise National Parks to develop product: tours, trails, accommodation

Visitor information  
Need more things to do  
More festivals  
Better health services  
Longer trading hours

### 6.2 Agriculture

#### FOCUS AREAS:

- Glasshouses is an opportunity for more intensive farming
- Diversification into Tourism
  - Farm Stays, B&Bs
  - Farm demonstrations to showcase provenance
  - Cooking classes
  - Agri-tourism
- Succession planning is important as farmers age, need to make farming appeal to next generation, investment
- Create more lines of income to sustain a family
- Leverage adjoining state forest and national parks for an immersive tourism experience, connecting with nature
- Embrace automation to scale up farms, encourage R&D
- Sub-let empty farm houses for extra income
- Value-adding is a real opportunity, eg strawberries, olives, look into dried and smoked meats
- Small scale 'exotic farming' eg Alpacas, equestrian centre
- Encourage retail to stock local produce, to encourage buy-local
- E-commerce is the future, must be embraced alongside traditional retail
- Glen Innes attractive for people looking for farmland. There will continue to be turnover of farms (generational turnover)

Succession planning  
Farm B&Bs  
Farm tourism  
Food provenance  
Technology  
Diversification  
Value-adding

## 6.3 Community Sessions

### FOCUS AREAS:

- Healthcare is a big issue, need good healthcare services to attract people.
- Aging population is a big threat. Need new people and new ideas coming through towns.
- Need jobs to get young people to move to the area.
- Need to build community pride
- More events and festivals to showcase and promote Glen Innes
- Need more activities for residents and visitors
- Promote Glen Innes as a safe and friendly place for families with a great climate

Attract new residents

Need more things to do

More jobs

Better health services

Promote living in Glen Innes

Good climate

Jobs for young people

## 7. Summary

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Council's Economic Development team's community consultation approach provided a significant opportunity for local input into the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan. The process captured insights, ideas and clear guidance from industry on the core challenges faced across small business, visitor economy and agriculture.

Despite the lack of participation in the community specific options, the other industry-based sessions still provided a community perspective across the progress. The External Customer Survey will also be utilised for further community insights for the next phase of the project.

What is positive and promising is that a number of initiatives already in progress by the Economic Development team are aligned to the feedback received through this consultative process.