



Somerset Regional Council Corporate Plan 2021-2026

Affordable rates – effective services





***Somerset Regional Council
Corporate Plan 2021-2026***

The *Somerset Regional Council Corporate Plan 2021-2026* has been prepared with the assistance of SC Lennon & Associates.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer

Our Region.....	1
Our Vision.....	1
Our Mission	1
Our Five Core Values	3
Our Strategic Planning and Performance Framework.....	3
The Corporate Plan in Context	4
Our Strategic Goals.....	5
1. Natural Somerset	5
2. Vibrant Somerset	6
3. Prosperous Somerset.....	6
4. Well Planned Somerset.....	8
5. United Somerset	9
Monitoring the Success of Our Corporate Plan.....	10

Message from the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer

We are pleased to present the *Somerset Regional Council Corporate Plan 2021-2026*. In Queensland, Local Government Authorities are required to prepare a Corporate Plan in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* and *Local Government Regulations 2012*.

This Corporate Plan sets the direction for the communities of the Somerset region and Council decision-making for the period 2021 to 2026. It articulates Council's vision for the Somerset region by providing a strategic framework for enhancing the quality lifestyle our community currently enjoys.

Over the life of this plan, Council will work toward its vision of being a vibrant, cohesive, connected and prosperous region. Councillors and staff will continue to work with the community by providing service delivery, which is responsive, cost-effective and of the highest standard. This will assist businesses and residents to undertake day-to-day activities with the support of Council.

We are confident Council and staff, working in partnership with the community to deliver the priority strategies of this Corporate Plan, will not only strengthen Council but also ultimately make the Somerset region an even a better place to live.

On behalf of Councillors and staff, we look forward to delivering the strategies identified in the *Somerset Regional Council Corporate Plan 2021-2026* for the benefit of the communities we serve.

Cr Graeme Lehmann

MAYOR

Mr Andrew Johnson

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Our Region

The Somerset region is located just one hour and fifteen minutes' drive from central Brisbane, and with its authentic country lifestyle, you will feel a world away.

Defined by its warm and inviting local villages, its breath-taking mountain scenery, native forests, placid waterways and picturesque patchwork landscape, the Somerset Regional Council area covers 5,379 square kilometres. With a population of approximately 26,200, the Somerset region is home to almost 2,100 businesses providing around 6,100 jobs. Somerset's key industries include agriculture, food product manufacturing, retail, health, education and construction services as well as a developing visitor economy.

The Somerset region's main townships include Esk, Kilcoy, Fernvale, Lowood and Toogoolawah, which are hubs for a diversity of communities dispersed throughout. The region's smaller villages including Linville, Jimna, Harlin, Moore, Coominya, Tarampa, and Minden also play important roles in the social and economic lives of the region's residents.

The Somerset region takes in the Brisbane and Stanley river catchments with meandering waterways and great lakes surrounded by a beautiful natural environment providing a diverse playground for residents and visitors alike, including anglers, birdwatchers and water sports enthusiasts. The region's expansive wilderness is ideal for camping and four wheel driving, and with a diversity of walking trails and the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, the Somerset region is a drawcard for walkers, trail runners, horse-riders and cyclists.

Situated in the south-east corner of Queensland and part of Australia's fastest-growing region, Somerset's neighbouring local government areas include Lockyer Valley, Ipswich City, Brisbane City, Moreton Bay, Sunshine Coast, Gympie, South Burnett and Toowoomba. According to Queensland Government projections, the population of the Somerset region is expected to reach 36,530 by 2036.

Our Vision

Our vision encapsulates the community's aspirations to live in a prosperous region defined by the quality of its natural environment, the strength of its economy, the wellbeing of its people and its quality lifestyle.

Our Vision

The Somerset region, with its unique identity and proud heritage, is vibrant, cohesive and connected, providing the foundations for a prosperous rural lifestyle.

The vision is supported by Somerset Regional Council's mission statement.

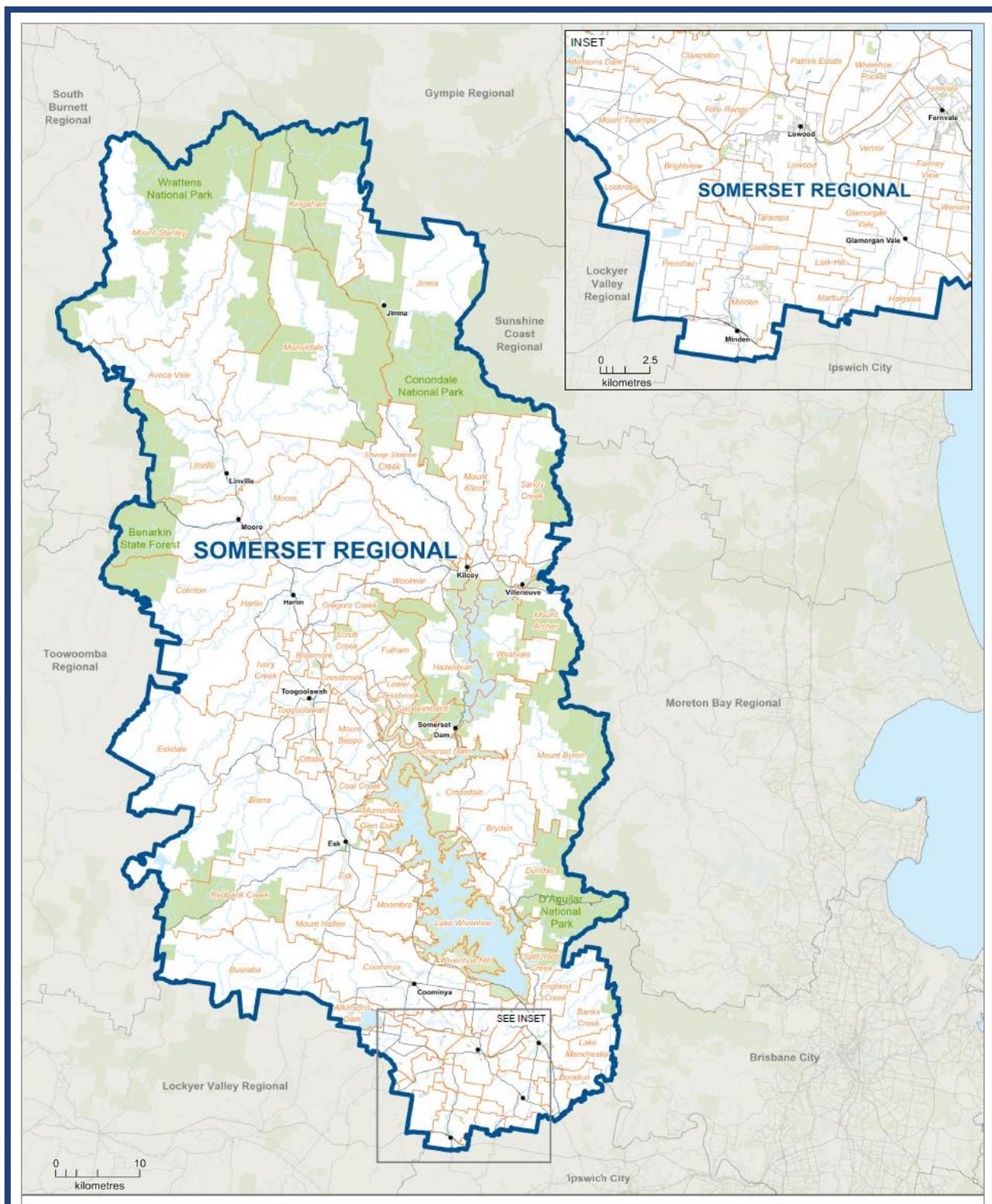
Our Mission

Somerset Regional Council's mission statement sets out the purpose of the organisation and demonstrates how we will achieve the vision.

Our Mission

To provide leadership in making locally-responsive and informed decisions, focussing on our customer's needs to deliver the highest-quality efficient services and facilities to all communities of the Somerset region.

Somerset Regional Council Locality Map



Source: Queensland Government

Our Five Core Values

Our values govern Council's actions and how we serve the communities of the Somerset region. Our five core values are:

1. Positive Interactions

We encourage positive interactions within the organisation and externally, and our relationships are based on integrity, honesty, openness, accountability and equity.

2. Community Champions

As community champions we will provide a foundation for long-term growth and prosperity while providing flexibility to respond to the changing needs of our community.

3. Empowered Workforce

As an organisation, we aim to provide a safe environment for our employees to further develop their productive capacity through the acquisition of skills, teamwork, empowerment and participation in the decision-making process.

4. Safety STAR (Stop, Think, Act, Review)

We recognise that to function efficiently and effectively our organisation and community must feel safe. In doing so, we will take the necessary time to stop and think, take appropriate action to protect our people, and review our processes in the spirit of continuous improvement.

5. Excellence

We encourage our elected representatives, employees, our community champions and our customers to be actively involved in our quest for excellence – meeting or exceeding our community's needs and expectations at the lowest cost possible.

Our Strategic Planning and Performance Framework

Our vision, mission and values inform the strategies presented in this Corporate Plan and the key outcomes Council aspires to realise across five Corporate Plan themes. The key outcomes by theme, are as follows:

Natural Somerset

A place where the natural environment, scenic beauty and rural lifestyle are valued and protected.

Vibrant Somerset

An integrated and welcoming place with something for everyone.

Prosperous Somerset

A place that embraces economic opportunities.

Well Planned Somerset

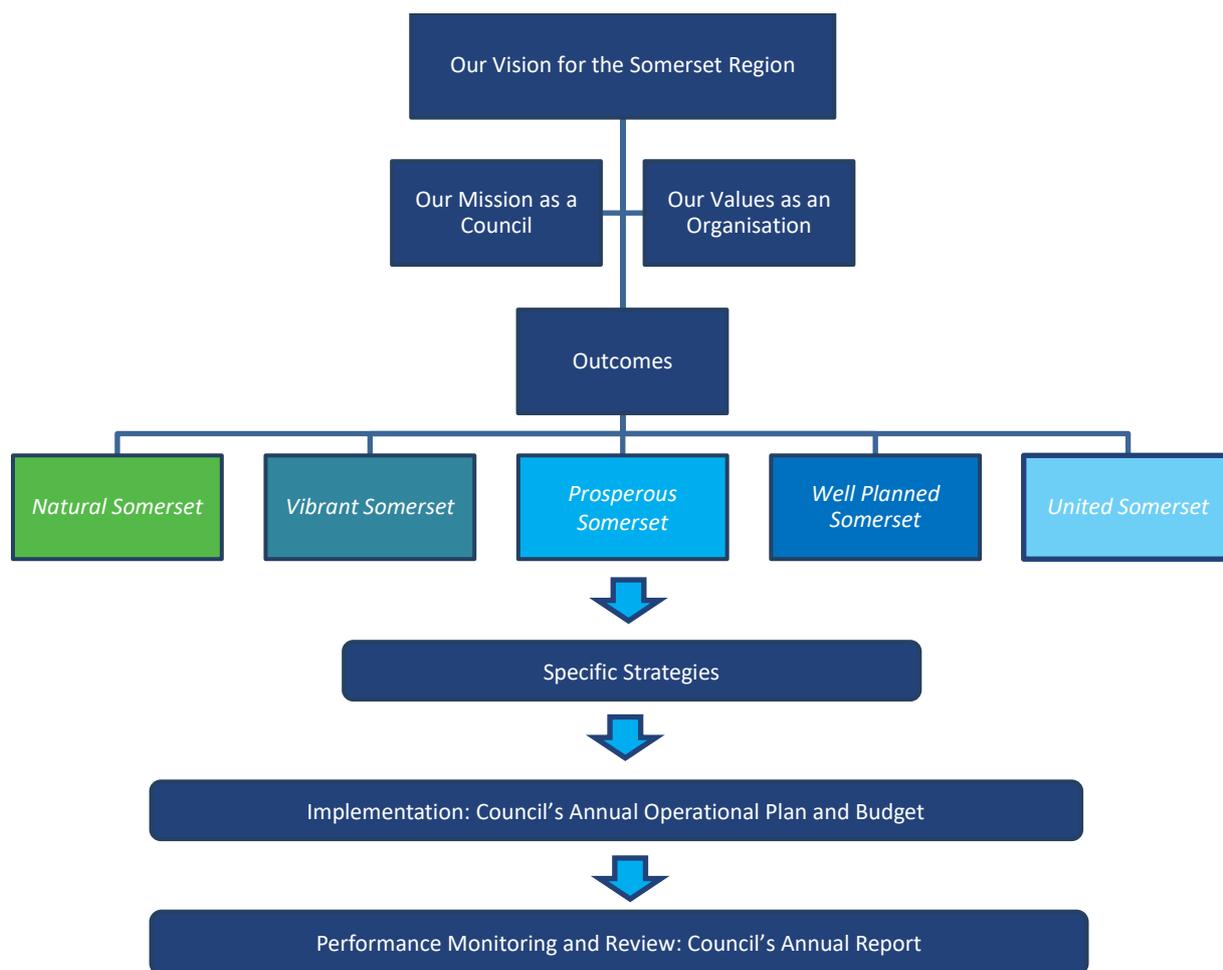
A place where planning and design look to the future.

United Somerset

An active place which values participation.

The strategic framework sets out how the elements of the Corporate Plan fit together.

Corporate Plan Strategic Framework



The Corporate Plan in Context

The *Somerset Regional Council Corporate Plan 2021-2026* is the guiding document informing the preparation and delivery of Council’s annual operational plan and budget. The Corporate Plan has an on-going interface at the planning, operational and performance review levels with other Council strategies.

Somerset Regional Council’s Corporate Plan in Context



Our Strategic Goals

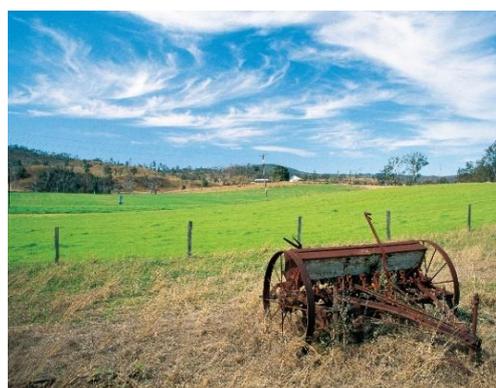
1. Natural Somerset

Outcome: A place where the natural environment, scenic beauty and rural lifestyle are valued and protected.

Somerset Regional Council is committed to supporting a healthy and sustainable natural environment for residents and visitors to the region to enjoy. Environmental sustainability is at the forefront of Council's decision-making. The following strategies are designed to ensure Council's activities support the sustainable development of the region's natural resources.

Strategies

- 1.1 Promote the lakes, valleys, mountains, rivers and natural heritage in the Somerset region's branding, marketing and development.
- 1.2 Protect and utilise our economic assets including our agricultural land, forests and other natural resources.
- 1.3 Implement contemporary and practical strategies to minimise the environmental impact of Council's operations and facilities.
- 1.4 Encourage the State and Federal Governments to support a range of natural resource enhancement activities including re-forestation, land care, riparian restoration and carbon reduction initiatives.
- 1.5 Take an active role in the maintenance and enhancement of the region's natural resources through targeted expenditure of the environment levy and other resources.
- 1.6 Support educational programs which promote the importance of preserving the region's natural features and opportunities for carbon reduction initiatives.
- 1.7 Support long-term financial planning, asset management, strategic planning, emergency management and other Council processes through a considered understanding of regional conditions, including bushfire risk, flooding, and climatic change.
- 1.8 Protect and maintain the natural assets and community amenity through the implementation of Local Laws and environment legislation.
- 1.9 Reduce the impacts of invasive plants and animals through Council's Biosecurity Plan – Invasive Plants and Animals.
- 1.10 Take a long-term view of waste management issues to ensure the best outcomes for the Somerset Region.
- 1.11 Make parks and gardens an integral part of future growth management plans.



2. Vibrant Somerset

Outcome: An integrated and welcoming place with something for everyone.

Somerset Regional Council is committed to the efficient delivery of cost-effective services and facilities which reflect the unique character, roles and needs of the communities throughout the region. The following strategies are designed to ensure all communities feel engaged with a strong sense of pride in their identities and the region of which they are a part.

Strategies

- 2.1 Facilitate well-planned and aesthetically-pleasing town and village gateways that enhance the look, feel and appeal of our individual communities.
- 2.2 Identify, deliver and grow opportunities for arts, cultural expression and the development of creative industries.
- 2.3 Embrace and promote the Somerset region's heritage, to incorporate both Indigenous and European cultural heritage.
- 2.4 Develop and deliver contemporary library spaces, services and resources which facilitate leisure, connection and learning assisting in meeting the recreational, information and cultural needs of the Somerset region's residents.
- 2.5 Develop and implement an Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan/Strategy incorporating all communities to enhance outcomes for the collaboration of visual art, architecture and design.
- 2.6 Facilitate community access to the wide range of sport and recreational pursuits available in the Somerset region.
- 2.7 Make efficient use of existing infrastructure by encouraging connections to services with ample capacity and carry out any works as are necessary to provide the required services to the community.
- 2.8 Increase the range of recreational opportunities by encouraging the construction and operation of regional facilities for regional visitors.
- 2.9 Promote and maintain a high standard of public health in the community through monitoring of food handling, public health risks and the increased awareness of good hygiene practices.



3. Prosperous Somerset

Outcome: A place that embraces economic opportunities.

Somerset Regional Council is committed to playing its part in supporting business innovation and economic development. The following strategies are designed to inform the development and delivery of Council's Economic Development Strategy and its Tourism Strategy, in order to advance the region's potential as a premier visitor destination and a region celebrated for its rich rural lifestyle.

Strategies

- 3.1 Implement the *Somerset Tourism Strategy 2021-2025* with a focus on short-term priorities for supporting visitor attraction and destination management.
- 3.2 Commission the preparation of a Somerset Region Economic Development Strategy, with a focus on Council's roles and functions in promoting, supporting and facilitating economic development.
- 3.3 Continue to operate Council's Visitor Information Centres (VICs) to the highest possible standards.
- 3.4 Collaborate with regional and State tourism bodies on tourism promotion and destination management.
- 3.5 Continue to engage and collaborate with regional, State and national stakeholders on strategies to support the development of a diverse, strong and resilient regional economy.
- 3.6 Continue to develop infrastructure plans, taking into consideration potential urban growth and opportunities for economic development.
- 3.7 Identify the region's catalyst enabling infrastructure needs and priorities and prepare business cases to support project funding applications to State and Federal Government funding bodies.
- 3.8 Pro-actively develop Council partnerships with local industry, community and government agency stakeholders to provide a unifying voice for the Somerset region when lobbying State and Federal Governments on key economic or infrastructure issues.



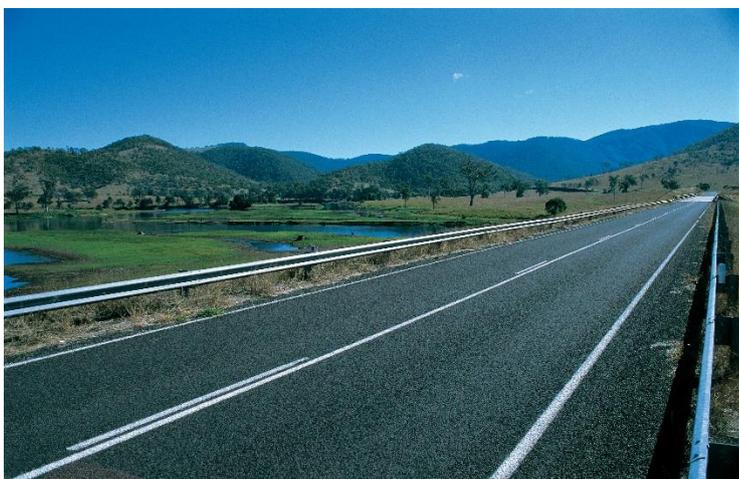
4. Well Planned Somerset

Outcome: A place where planning and design look to the future.

Somerset Regional Council is committed to the design and delivery of a local regulatory and land use planning environment that is open, engaging and responsive to the needs of the region's businesses and communities. It is committed to promoting a strong sense of place and the functioning of its towns and villages through good design, development control, place activation and the delivery of urban and rural infrastructure.

Strategies

- 4.1 Apply a planned approach to roadworks and drainage to ensure all roads in the Somerset region receive appropriate maintenance in a structured, timely and efficient way.
- 4.2 Match closely the pricing and provisions of Council services to the costs of providing those services, particularly the costs of maintaining and constructing infrastructure.
- 4.3 Maintain a regional approach to planning and deliver regionally significant infrastructure in a coordinated manner with other local government authorities and State Government agencies.
- 4.4 Utilise all available funding and revenue raising mechanisms as appropriate to maintain assets and deliver Council services.
- 4.5 Develop a rolling ten-year financial plan incorporating forecast rates and charges requirements, debt levels, grants and subsidies, and current and proposed capital and operating costs.
- 4.6 Provide an active and responsive suite of development management services to ensure that Council's Planning Scheme remains contemporary and relevant to the communities it serves, and development applications are determined in a timely manner.
- 4.7 Provide all towns with open space areas and access to recreational facilities that are safe and meet the needs of residents and visitors to the region.
- 4.8 Develop flood mitigation plans to enable improved forecasting, immunity and development control.
- 4.9 Provide an efficient and effective response to disasters and major emergencies in the region, incorporating resilience, where possible, to mitigate ongoing effects.



5. United Somerset

Outcome: An active place which values participation.

Somerset Regional Council is committed to the highest standards of organisational governance, defined by a balanced, fair, honest, respectful, transparent and accountable approach to management and decision-making. Council is also committed to the highest standards in how it interacts, engages and communicates with the communities of the region. The following strategies are designed to ensure Council's activities promote a united Somerset, for Council and the community.

Strategies

- 5.1 Deliver efficient and effective customer services to all communities of the Somerset Region.
- 5.2 Provide appropriate opportunities for community involvement, participation and input to Council planning and decision-making.
- 5.3 Raise awareness within the community of the range of Council services available, encouraging positive interactions for community members when accessing services.
- 5.4 Manage Council's financial resources effectively and efficiently, in order to meet the service level obligations to the community.
- 5.5 Commit to education, continuous learning and skills development for Councillors and employees to keep pace with changes and current issues.
- 5.6 Develop an empowered workforce to maximise workplace productivity and efficiency supported by sound human resource management practices.
- 5.7 Advocate to all levels of government and relevant industry leaders for the provision and enhancement of appropriate services and infrastructure, in the best interests of the communities of the Somerset region.
- 5.8 Maintain collaborative partnerships with the Somerset region's business, non-government and community-based organisations to ensure a unified approach to national, state and regional advocacy.



Monitoring the Success of Our Corporate Plan

To ensure it contributes to the ongoing enhancement of the region's quality of life, Somerset Regional Council's Corporate Plan will be implemented through the Annual Operational Plan and Council Budget.

Our vision, mission, values and strategic goals will be widely publicised within our organisation, to the communities of the Somerset region and externally to other interest groups. The Annual Operational Plan and Council Budget will be monitored by Council throughout each year and will be used as the basis of reporting performance through Council's Annual Report.

Somerset Regional Council's Annual Planning and Monitoring Framework



Somerset Regional Council is committed to regular engagement with the communities of the region through representation at community advisory groups; and industry organisations. Council will report on the progress of the Corporate Plan implementation (and of other related strategies and programs being led by or contributed to by Council) and listen to community concerns and ideas for the future.

Through its commitment to show respect for all and to continually engage with and listen to the people of our communities, Council's CEO, the Mayor and Councillors will also engage with the communities of the region on ad hoc matters as they arise, ensuring Council can respond to all issues and opportunities appropriately in an informed and strategic manner.

This reflects Council's mission to deliver leadership in making locally-responsive and informed decisions, focussing on our customer's needs to deliver the highest-quality affordable services and facilities to all communities of the Somerset region.



2 Redbank Street

PO Box 117 ESK QLD 4312

p: (07) 5424 4000

e: mail@somerset.qld.gov.au

w: www.somerset.qld.gov.au