## Narrabri's Indigenous Community Report

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment

November 2022

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# Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Country and pay our respects to the Gomeroi/Gamilaroi/Gamilaraay/Kamilaroi people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waters on which the Narrabri Special Activation Precinct is located on.

We recognise their continued connection to Country and that this connection can be seen through stories of place and cultural practices such as language, art, songs, dances, storytelling and caring for the natural and cultural landscape of the area.

We also recognise the continuing living culture of Aboriginal people, and the significance of Narrabri in that living culture.

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	2
Table of Contents	3
Statement about Terminology	5
Glossary	5
Abbreviations	5
1. Executive summary	6
2. Introduction	14
2.1 Background	14
2.2 Purpose of the Indigenous Community Report	16
3. Research Design	17
3.1 Our Consultation Approach	17
3.1.1 The Art of Hosting methodology and yarning circle	17
3.1.2 Participatory Geographic Information System Mapping	18
3.2 Methodology	19
3.3 Summaries of Consultations and Engagements Activities	22
3.3.1 Initial First Nations consultation meetings	22
3.3.2 Aboriginal EbD workshop	22
3.3.3 Outcomes of the Preliminary EbD workshop	23
3.3.4 Scenario designs community meeting	23
3.3.5 Final EbD workshop	24
4. Closing the Gap: The Connecting with Country Framework and Co-design Approach	26
4.1 Overcoming First Nations Disadvantage, Closing the Gap and the SAP	26
4.2 The Connecting with Country Framework	28
4.3 Co-design approach and First Nations voice throughout the project management and implementation processes	20
5. The Current situation of Narrabri: Intersectional approach	30
5.1 Education	34
5.1.1 A snapshot of the education situation in Narrabri	34 34
5.1.2 Education in Narrabri- Needs supports from local education institutions and relevant	34
stakeholders	36
5.2 Business and Employment	38
5.2.1 A snapshot of the employment situation in Narrabri from the statistical data	38
5.2.2 The situation around First Nations Business and employment	39
5.2.3 Employment opportunities for First Nations people in Narrabri	40



5.3 Youth	41
5.3.1 The situation of First Nations Youth in Narrabri	41
5.4 Housing	42
5.4.1 A snapshot of the household situation in Narrabri from the statistical data	42
5.4.2 Housing costs and house tenure in Narrabri	43
5.4.3 Narrabri LGA housing	43
5.5.1 A snapshot of the Health situation in Narrabri from statistical data	45
5.5.2 Narrabri Health	45
5.6 Transportation	46
5.6 First Nations Governance	47
5.6.1 Context	47
5.6.2 Examples of Good Governance and engagement models with First Nations comm	ıunity48
2. Kaart (Head), Koort (Heart), Waarnginy (Talking)	50
5.7 Gender Equality in First Nations community	52
6. Challenge and Opportunities: Findings through First Nations Community Consultations	54
6.1 Context	54
6.2 Community perceptions, exclusion, and cultural recognition	55
6.3 Addressing the complex challenges facing young people	55
6.4 First Nations engagement and culturally safe environment	56
6.5 Barriers to adequate housing	58
6.6 Barriers to successful education, business, training, and employment	59
6.6.1 Limited access to Education	59
6.6.2 Limitations to the First Nations employment and business	59
6.8 Limited Public Transport Service	61
6.9 Health Issues	61
6.10 Services Provision and Social Infrastructures	61
6.11 Applying Gender Perspectives in Narrabri SAP	62
7. Recommendations	63
8. Conclusion	69



# Statement about Terminology

Throughout this report we use several terms for the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Narrabri Local Government Area (LGA). These terms include Kamilaroi, Gamilaroi and Gomeroi.

We do this to both recognise the various terms used in different reports and documentations, as well as recognising the term used by those First Nations stakeholders when speaking to us throughout our consultations.

Glossary

Term	Meaning
Aboriginal Enquiry by Design	"Aboriginal Enquiry by design" was undertaken, to enable the voice of First Nation in the final development of the preferred Scenario for the Narrabri SAP Master Plan. Aboriginal Enquiry by Design will ensure that the involvement and authority of Aboriginal people in such integration are achieved.
Participatory	Participatory GIS (PGIS) or public participation geographic information
Geographic Information	system (PPGIS) is a participatory approach to spatial planning and
System	spatial information and communications management.

# **Abbreviations**

Term	Acronym
Aboriginal Community Engagement and Cultural Input Analysis Report	ACECIA
Aboriginal Education Consultative Group	AECG
Enquiry by Design	EbD
Local Government area	LGA
Participatory Geographic Information System	PGIS
Special Activation Precinct	SAP



# 1. Executive summary

#### Introduction

Narrabri has a large First Nations population, with 14.8% of the population (1,881 people) identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (ABS, 2021). It is anticipated that the Narrabri SAP will encourage economic growth and prosperity within the region by leveraging off various projects such as Inland Rail and the Northern NSW Inland Port and Narrabri Gas Project, which are proposed within the area. Given the proposed economic opportunities that will be provided by the SAP, there is a need to ensure that benefits are enjoyed for Narrabri's First Nations peoples.

The Aboriginal Community Engagement and Cultural Input Analysis Report (ACECIA) Report was prepared by Murawin in January 2022 to analyse the current situation and challenges of Narrabri's First Nations people in terms of health, education, training, employment, housing, infrastructure, family, youth, gender, community services, transport, heritage, cultural landscapes, water, and sustainability. The relevant findings from the ACECIA report were integrated into this report.

As part of the Master Planning process and to inform this technical study two Enquiry by Design (EbD) workshops were convened by Murawin. Following an interdisciplinary assessment of three proposed scenarios, a final EbD workshop was held between 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2022 to study the interdisciplinary constraints of the three scenarios and identify and develop a preferred land use Structure Plan. Murawin then produced a report on 'Development of Scenarios' in June 2022 after the engagement of First Nations people. On 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022, an Aboriginal, social and health outcomes workshop was held at Hatch Roberts Day Office, Murawin's technical consultants with other relevant technical consultants attended the meeting to discuss the outcomes of Final EbD workshop and confirm the final priorities and focus areas for Narrabri SAP.

#### Purpose of the Narrabri's Indigenous Community Report

The Aboriginal health and social outcomes workshop found that the Narrabri First Nations community's needs and aspirations were collectively consistent throughout the consultation and engagement processes, revealing community needs and aspirations for what Narrabri SAP will bring in economic development opportunities and potential outcomes for First Nations people. The First Nations community recognises that the Narrabri SAP requires perseverance and co-design opportunities in collaboration with government and investors to leverage the investment that will enable the Narrabri SAP to create the desired outcomes and benefits for the First Nations community in Narrabri.

This report outlines the needs and aspirations of First Nations people and community in Narrabri toward Narrabri SAP through the co-design workshops and engagement activities Murawin undertook with First Nations community in Narrabri over a period of one year; Murawin facilitated a series of consultation and engagement workshops with First Nation's peoples, Traditional Owners, Narrabri Local Aboriginal Land Council, and the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage, to identify the aspirations and goals of First Nation's peoples arising from the SAP.



#### Research Design

Murawin adopted a consultative approach for the Narrabri SAP to ensure that the voices of Narrabri's First Nations community were heard throughout the development and planning of the various aspects to the project. This also allows for the community to have a say over their Country and increased access to the Narrabri SAP, which can lead to greater social and economic outcomes. As a part of the consultative approach, Murawin facilitated a workshop which adopted an Art of Hosting methodology, Yarning and a Participatory Geographic Information Systems (PGIS) mapping tool to facilitate meaningful discussions and identify key priorities within the community. Murawin also adopted Indigenous models and techniques of **yarning** to enhance spaces for discussion and enable deep listening, respect, problem solving, cultural safety and mindfulness. Yarning Circles were hosted throughout the workshop to facilitate group discussions regarding the contents of each station and to explore common themes that emerged throughout the workshop

#### Closing the Gap, Connecting with Country Framework and Co-design Approach

#### 1. Overcoming First Nations Disadvantage, Closing the Gap, and the SAP

The NSW Premier signed the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap on behalf of NSW in July 2020, along with the National Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations and other tiers of governments including National, other state and territory governments and the Australian Local Government Association. In this National Agreement, governments agreed to do things differently, to work in partnership and share decision making with First Nations organisations and communities to improve life outcomes for all First Nations people. Establishment of effective and respectful relationships are fundamental to achieving successful outcomes when engaging with First Nations communities. Developing and actioning Cultural Protocols is an important first step. Protocols for Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country respectfully acknowledges traditional ownership and custodianship.



Figure 1 Narrabri Lake Source: Murawin Pty Ltd



#### 2. The Connecting with Country Framework

Undertaking a Country-centric design approach and embracing and ensuring Aboriginal heritage and culture are a central part of planning and designing systems allows for First Nations perspectives and concepts to be privileged across all aspects of development, construction, and infrastructure projects.

Murawin's place based project approach includes the following phases and associated skills, each aligning to the NSW Government's draft Connecting with Country framework:

- 1. Project formation can be understood as an immersive process of sensing the point at which we start with Country.
- 2. Project design and conceptualization can be understood as a process of imagining listening to Country.
- 3. Project delivery (current status) can be understood as a process of shaping designing with Country.
- 4. Project maintenance can be understood as part of an ongoing continuum of caring for Country. Included in this process, is delivery of the Narrabri SAP project with opportunities for Designing with Country within the SAP area.

The draft Connecting with Country framework assists project teams to fulfil their commitment to Country through seven statements of commitments and principles for actions which will embrace First Nations perspectives and cultural knowledge throughout the project cycles

### 3. Co-design approach and First Nations voice throughout the project management and implementation processes

Collaborative engagement among industry, governments and First Nations communities could be the fastest solution to discover problems and take joint corrective action towards the management of socio-economic impacts on First Nations communities. Therefore, a co-design approach that will lead First Nations active involvement and engagement in all consultation and decision-making process for Narrabri SAP needs governance that reflects their cultural norms, values, and traditions. Murawin has been working with First Nations communities as well as government and other stakeholders in order to achieve co-design processes throughout the Narrabri SAP project from the outset.

OCHRE is the NSW Government's Plan for Aboriginal affairs, which is symbolic of First Nations communities' deep connection with Country. The key objectives of this plan enables a strategic valuing of First Nations culture into the Narrabri SAP project.



#### The Current situation of Narrabri: Intersectional approach

#### 1. Education

Working collaboratively with the local educational institutions in Narrabri such as the Country Universities Centre and TAFE could lead to achieving successful outcomes for First Nations students at all levels of education and learning. It is understood that the TAFE courses available on campus or through virtual, on campus study are limited in both number and offering. Virtual off campus study has thirty-eight courses available, but it is also noted First Nations community are faced by barriers to engaging in education at home including no internet access, over-crowded housing and lack of tutorial support.

#### 2. Business and Employment

First Nations employment is a critical issue for improving the social and economic situation in Narrabri society, which is a central initiative in the Commonwealth Government's 'Closing the Gap' objective (Norman 2016, p. 244). In the community engagement meeting with Murawin staff, the need for training was raised. A First Nations participant stated that there was a need to "attach trade trainings to this SAP, not just tick a box [for] training – there is a need for meaningful works." The current labour market reality shows a low level of small business ownership and entrepreneurship for First Nations people, especially in remote communities. This highlights the importance of ensuring the development and establishment of profitable First Nations owned and managed businesses.

#### 3. Youth

Participants at the meeting with Murawin staff stated that the "youth need more" and "shouldn't have kids wanting to move away, we want them to stay in the community." Urgent strategies or the actions for youth to engage and enhance their future opportunities in education and employment are critical to the First Nations community.

#### 4. Housing and Health

Community engagement meetings were held in Narrabri which allowed a voice for First Nations people, they identified pressing needs for culturally appropriate mental health and drug and alcohol services in Narrabri and solutions to the lack of housing. The issue of housing intersects with 'health, education, the natural and built environment and social connectedness,' which are based on the quality of life and on the sustainability of communities (McKenzie et al.,2008, p1), therefore the housing problem is a critical issue and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

#### 5. Transportation

Usage of the public transport in Narrabri is very limited. It can take up to two full days travel to and from Narrabri to attend services and appointments. Narrabri to Tamworth is 169km by road and an average 1hr 50mins time. The issues for travellers are the cost of accommodation and time spent. NSW Trains operates a daily Explorer passenger service each way between Narrabri, Moree, Boggabri and a rail coach service from Narrabri to Wee Waa daily Monday to Friday. Public transport within Narrabri is operated by a privately owned company providing regular bus service routes Monday to Friday within the town and a service for mine workers.



#### 6. First Nations Governance

First Nations peoples have always had their own governance. It is an ancient jurisdiction made up of a system of cultural geographies, culture-based laws, traditions, rules, values, processes and structures and which nations, clans and families continue to adapt and use to collectively organise themselves to achieve the things that are important to them. First Nations active involvement and engagement in all consultation and decision-making process for the Narrabri SAP have to be through the First Nations governance that reflects their cultural norms, values, and traditions.

#### 7. Gender Equality in First Nations community

From a gender perspective, it will be important to highlight issues critical to recruitment and retention of First Nations women in the Narrabri SAP. Research has evidenced that collective empowerment is a tool for women to be empowered and they can be an active human agency for change and improving their situation (Fukushima Byrom 2008). A First Nations based women's group in Narrabri may be able to contribute their collective agency in order to improve their rights and situation in a society affected by the current development and achieve social and economic outcomes and benefits from the Narrabri SAP.

#### Challenge and Opportunities: First Nations Community Consultations Findings

#### 1. Community perceptions, exclusion, and cultural recognition

It was noted that First Nation's people in Narrabri experience discrimination and racism, with most workshop participants expressing the need to address and debunk community attitudes. A key message from the workshop was that Narrabri needs to be more educated about issues impacting on the Aboriginal community, that the opportunity to provide programs to raise the cultural awareness of people throughout the community and promote Traditional Owners to enhance cultural safety and capability. Recognising and celebrating Gamilaroi Country through a Cultural Centre was recognised as a need for community members.

#### 2. Addressing the complex challenges facing young people

Youth need to be provided access and opportunity to conduct traditional and cultural activities to reinforce connections to their Country, especially important in preventing youth from leaving rural areas. Urgent strategies or actions to engage youth and enhance their future opportunities in education and employment ensuring they are culturally competent need to be developed.

#### 3. First Nations engagement and culturally safe environment

A lack of communication and limited information dissemination was reported at the community engagement meeting. Therefore, emphasis on regular clear communications and messages being developed by and for Aboriginal community-controlled organisations is a key factor that will support collaboration. Better communications will enable government to engage with First Nations people about policies, programs and services that impact their lives and result in better outcomes.



#### 4. Barriers to adequate housing

Problems surrounding the shortage of housing and the sharp increase in rent are highlighted in this report, a real problem which First Nations People and Government representatives raised at the community meeting in Narrabri.

#### 5 Barriers to successful education, business, training, and employment

Generally, First Nations people have much lower employment rates than other Australians. Reasons for the lower employment rates include lower levels of education, training and skill levels, poorer health, living in areas with fewer labour market opportunities, higher levels of arrest and interactions with the criminal justice system, discrimination, and lower levels of job retention. It is also recognised that the Indigenous employment rate varies by remoteness which is a key factor for the Narrabri SAP. The risks to rural communities of women leaving town for job opportunities elsewhere has been highlighted in this report, the phenomena termed 'rural decline.' It is also important to note that First Nations people currently face a number of barriers to business start-up and operation.

#### 6. First Nations Advisory Committee

Community members recognised a significant need to improve engagement with First Nations community. It was felt that a First Nations Advisory Committee should be developed to ensure Narrabri's First Nations community can provide their input towards the development and operation of the Narrabri SAP.

#### 7. Limited public transport services

Limited public transport services in Narrabri were recorded in this report which further restricts community members accessing a range of services, including appointments with State Government agencies, training and employment services and travel to work

#### 8. Health Issues

Despite mental health issues being apparent, there is minimal data/information on the mental and physical health related to the Aboriginal people in Narrabri. The lack of data poses difficulties in understanding the actual situation with health in general in the region.



Figure 2 Bridge Medical Centre, Narrabri Source: Murawin Pty Ltd



#### 9. Services provision and social infrastructures

Services and social infrastructure are limited in Narrabri, which makes it difficult for the local First Nations community to access essential services and support. Several participants mentioned the lack of transport, health, and retail services, which impacts on quality of life and liveability. Participants recognised that there is a need for improved services and social infrastructure, such as an Aboriginal Medical Centre in Narrabri as many participants advised that they are required to travel out of town for several medical appointments due to lack of available Aboriginal specific, culturally safe health services in Narrabri. Furthermore, it was noted that there needs to be more options and greater accessibility for public transport and retail.

An analysis of service provision across the domains of housing, employment, health, education, youth, transport, and infrastructure was strongly recommended so that First Nations communities have access to efficient and effective services.

#### 10. Applying Gender Perspectives in Narrabri SAP

Gendered perspectives and awareness are increasingly being discussed and considered for many reasons including the key issues raised in the Australian Human Rights Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner's Report - the Women's Voices Report- noting the need to support the empowerment of First Nations women in all areas of life. Therefore, it needs to be stressed that a separate gender impact assessment may be necessary for the Narrabri SAP project.



Figure 3 Sky above the Namoi River Source: Murawin Pty Ltd



#### **Recommendations**

Whilst there is support and agreement on the broad range of recommendations below, currently there is no confirmed strategy to deliver on the recommendations, therefore delivery of the recommendations is dependent on Federal Government, NSW State Government and Council obtaining the necessary resources and funding to progress the initiatives that Murawin recommends. Further discussions and investigation are necessary to implement the recommendations thus no commitment for the recommendations will be made during this phase.

#### **Recommendation One:**

#### **Cultural Centre**

• A Cultural Centre should be built as a part of the SAP investments for residents and tourists to learn about First Nations culture as well as strengthen cultural ties and knowledge.

#### Recommendation Two:

#### One Stop Shop

• The establishment of a One Stop Shop is recommended to provide First Nations people with central access to health services through a Aboriginal Medical Centre.

#### **Recommendation Three:**

#### **Business Education Training Program**

• Business Education training that will contribute to growing a local Indigenous Business Sector, including mentoring and advice is recommended to increase First Nations owned businesses and improve First Nations employment outcomes from the SAP.

#### **Recommendation Four:**

#### First Nations Advisory Committee

• A First Nations Advisory Committee should be established to ensure First Nations people are consulted during the development of the SAP.

#### **Recommendation Five:**

#### An Analysis of Service Provision

 An analysis of service provision across the domains of housing, employment, health, education, youth, transport, and infrastructure is strongly recommended so that First Nations communities have access to efficient and effective services.

#### **Recommendation Six:**

#### Master Plan Performance Criteria

• We recommend developing performance criteria concerning principles of Connection to Country and success criterion is included in the Master Plan to ensure outcomes are generated for First Nations people:

#### **Recommendation Seven:**

#### Develop a First Nations Outcomes and Country Plan

- A First Nations Outcomes and Country Plan should be developed and driven by the community through the Gamilaroi First Nations Advisory Committee. Recommendation Eight: Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Impact Assessment Throughout the Life of Narrabri SAP
- A gender mainstreaming and gender impact assessment should be implemented throughout the whole life of the Narrabri SAP.



## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Background

The New South Wales (NSW) Government, through its introduction of the Special Activation Precincts (SAPs) has identified six distinct areas throughout regional NSW to bring together planning and investment to stimulate economic growth across a range of industries including freight and logistics, manufacturing, waste management and recycling, energy generation and agricultural and food processing activities. The planning and creation of these areas is partially facilitated and funded through the \$4.2 billion Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund. The establishment of SAPs is a joint NSW Government Agency initiative by the Department of Regional Growth NSW, Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) and the Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation (RGDC) as part of the 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW. DPE is responsible for preparing the planning framework whereas the Department of Regional NSW manages each precinct.

Narrabri has a large First Nations population with 14.8% of the population (1,881 people) identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (ABS, 2021). It is anticipated that the Narrabri SAP will encourage economic growth and prosperity within the region by leveraging off various projects in the region such as Inland Rail and the Northern NSW Inland Port and Narrabri Gas Project, which are proposed within Narrabri. Given the proposed economic opportunities that will be provided by the SAP, there is a need to ensure that benefits are encouraged for Narrabri's First Nations peoples. The Aboriginal Community Engagement and Cultural Input Analysis Report (ACECIA) Report was prepared by Murawin in January 2022 to analyse the current situation and challenges of Narrabri's First Nations people in terms of health, education, training, employment, housing, infrastructure, family, youth, gender, community services, transport, heritage, cultural landscapes, water, and sustainability. The relevant findings from the ACECIA report were integrated into this report.

As part of the Master Planning process and to inform this technical study two Enquiry by Design (EbD) workshops were organised. A preliminary EbD was held on the 29th and 30th of March 2022 to develop three initial land use scenarios. Following an interdisciplinary assessment of the three scenarios, a final EbD workshop was held between 5th and 8th of September 2022 to study the interdisciplinary constraints of the three scenarios and identify and develop a preferred land use Structure Plan. Murawin also facilitated a workshop in December 2021 with Aboriginal representatives, Knowledge Holders, and Elders in Narrabri. Then, Murawin produced the report 'Development of Scenarios' in June 2022 after that engagement of First Nations people.



The purpose of the Scenarios Report was to evaluate the three Scenarios that were developed during the Preliminary EbD workshop to determine the most appropriate aspects of the three Scenarios that align with the outcomes of the ACECIA Report and Murawin's community engagement. Particular attention was paid to those issues highlighted in the Aboriginal EbD, the community EbD, as well as the Precinct's vision which was premised off baseline findings within the ACECIA Report, initial stakeholder engagement and Murawin's involvement in the preliminary EbD Workshop. On 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022, an Aboriginal, social and health outcomes workshop was held in Sydney, Murawin's technical consultants with other relevant technical consultants attended the meeting to discuss the outcomes of Final EbD workshop and confirm the final priorities and focus areas for Narrabri SAP.



Figure 4 Narrabri Town Centre Source: Murawin Pty Ltd



# 2.2 Purpose of the Indigenous Community Report

The Aboriginal health and social outcomes workshop found that the Narrabri First Nations community's needs and aspiration were consistent, revealing community needs and ambitions for what Narrabri SAP will bring in their economic development for First Nations people. The First Nations community recognises that the Narrabri SAP requires perseverance and co-design opportunities in collaboration with government and investors to leverage the investment that will enable the Narrabri SAP to create the desired outcomes and benefits for First Nations community in Narrabri.

This Narrabri's Indigenous Community Report provides an overview of what was heard through consultations and engagements with First Nations community undertaken by Murawin Pty Ltd. The picture drawn by the community consultation and engagement was of a First Nations community that has experienced systemic racism, disadvantage, social issues, and intergenerational trauma.



# 3. Research Design

### 3.1 Our Consultation Approach

For the Narrabri SAP, Murawin adopted a consultative approach to ensure that the voices of Narrabri's First Nations community were heard throughout the development and planning for the Narrabri SAP. This also allows for the community to have a say over their Country and greater access to the Narrabri SAP, which can lead to greater social and economic outcomes. As a part of the consultative approach, Murawin facilitated a workshop which adopted an Art of Hosting methodology, Yarning, and a Participatory Geographic Information Systems (PGIS) mapping tool to facilitate meaningful discussions and identify key priorities within the community.

#### 3.1.1 The Art of Hosting methodology and yarning circle

The agenda for the workshop followed the Art of Hosting methodology, which encourages open conversation and collaboration in order to work towards developing holistic solutions. Several stations were set up, with each station focusing on a different aspect of the Narrabri SAP and Integrated Analysis report, prepared by Hatch Roberts Day. This was to ensure that participants had an understanding of the Narrabri SAP and the opportunity to provide input, while affording Murawin the opportunity to develop a holistic understanding of the community, their needs, priorities, and future possibilities associated with the SAP, which would be conveyed to the wider consortium. Five stations were set up with butcher's paper, pens, and sticky notes to ensure that all participants were able to write down their experiences, thoughts and ideas which were brought forward in the Preliminary EbD. Topics included the vision and principles of the SAP and whether or not they reflected the Kamilaroi Country and People and Connecting with Country Framework. Additional discussions were held regarding processes adopted for the Narrabri SAP, developing 'big ideas', what the Aboriginal community want included in the SAP and current gaps and needs within the Aboriginal community.

Murawin also adopted Indigenous models and techniques of **yarning** to enhance spaces for discussion and enable deep listening, respect, problem solving, cultural safety and mindfulness. Yarning Circles were hosted throughout the workshop to hold group discussions regarding the contents of each station and to explore common themes that were emerging throughout the workshop.

Murawin will continue to use the above methodology throughout the project to maximise the First Nations voice in the Narrabri SAP project and to ensure the investment benefits and opportunities presented through the SAP are equally provided to First Nations stakeholders in Narrabri.



#### 3.1.2 Participatory Geographic Information System Mapping

PGIS is a powerful spatial analysis process which can also function as an engagement tool. A PGIS station was set up in the workshop in order to gather data relating to sites of cultural importance for the local community and promote discussions regarding the existing landscape of Narrabri as well as potential opportunities associated with the Narrabri SAP.

Three separate maps of Narrabri were assigned to one station. Four participants sat with a Murawin employee, who holds relevant skills and qualifications in GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping, to map out key places of cultural significance for Gamilaroi people. This enabled discussions with community which allowed for a greater understanding of places of cultural significance within Gamilaroi Country. Valuable and insightful discussions were held throughout the Aboriginal EbD workshop which allowed for Murawin to gain insight towards community needs and priorities. It is vital that these voices are reflected in the Narrabri SAP.



Figure 5 Tourist Hotel, Narrabri Source: Murawin Pty Ltd



## 3.2 Methodology

The process for Narrabri's Indigenous Community Report has been prepared in line with Murawin's Place Based Project Methodology, which is informed by NSW Government's Draft Connecting with Country framework and the Our Place on Country Strategy both of which work from a strengths-based perspective (please see Section 4 for the framework and strategy).

Detailed stages in the Methodology are listed as follows (see Table 1):

Table 1 Methodology stages

Stage	Tasks	Outputs
Identification of stakeholders and establishment of relationships	Initial contact and establishment of relationships Emails and follow up phone calls.	Additions to the list of people to contact.
,		Consultation dates and times set up.
Initial consultation	Various introductory meetings organised with Aboriginal stakeholders.	
	Walk on Country and local cultural immersion for the Murawin project team in line with cultural protocols.	
Desktop research	<ul> <li>Development of a Communications Strategy, including:         <ul> <li>Stakeholder mapping and analysis of all relevant organisations, groups, and communities according to level of interest, stake, or potential impact, making use of information and data collated in the desktop review.</li> <li>Early engagement with key stakeholders through phone and email introductions to build rapport and trust and allow for the gathering of early input and advice.</li> <li>Identification of specific touch points and milestones along the project timeline where engagement activities needed to occur and for what outcome</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Aboriginal Community Engagement and Cultural Input Analysis Report.
First Nations community engagement	A suite of stakeholder engagement activities were undertaken to understand the issues in the communities. These activities included interviews, Big Ideas workshops and Scenario identification and Planning workshops	Aboriginal Community Engagement and Cultural Input Analysis Report.



#### In March 2022. Murawin facilitated an EbD face to Aboriginal Enquiry Aboriginal EbD workshop face workshop with key First Nations stakeholders by Design summary including representatives from Narrabri Aboriginal report: Feedback on services, key community Elders and Knowledge the potential 3 Holders along with representatives from Regional Scenarios, NSW. DPF and Narrabri Council in the Narrabri considering such community prior to the preliminary Narrabri issues as aspirations Preliminary EbD workshop. An Aboriginal EbD for the community, workshop was attended by 15 First Nations including participants which ensured inclusion of First employment, and Nations voices in the SAP Scenario development business alignment process. The workshop also helped determine the with the key priorities and values of Narrabri's First Nations development of the community which was then taken into the SAP precinct. preliminary EbD for potential integration. Workshop activities enabled participants to provide input towards developing 'big ideas and recommendations for the Narrabri SAP. These ideas and recommendations were presented to the consortium of technical consultants at the preliminary EbD to ensure that the community's voice was heard and considered in the Scenario designs. The key priorities, themes and values from community are (1) Youth, (2) Service and social infrastructure, (3) Greater engagement and input, (4) Housing, (5) Community attitude and perception, (6) Business, training, and employment. Participation in the In March 2022, a preliminary EbD took place over Narrabri SAP EbD workshop two days with technical consultants, local business Scenario Report owners, and First Nations stakeholders. Participants were divided into working groups that took part in several sessions that were designed to identify key principles and emerging themes for the Narrabri SAP. These were then developed into three distinct scenarios that were presented to participants who took these learnings for further development and technical testing. Murawin presented Indigenous views in the enquiry by design process



Final EbD workshop (Murawin could not participate in this workshop)	During the final EbD, participants were given the opportunity to understand constraints, test ideas and develop solutions at scale. Sessions were designed to ensure that multidisciplinary exchanges took place to encourage innovative thinking and solutions. The workshop took place over four days with each day building on the previous sessions. Key outcomes from each day included:  • Day 1 - Design parameters for investigation area to progress  • Day 2 - SAP-boundary and sub-precincts  • Day 3 - Narrabri Strategic Plan - Master Plan Framework, Alignment of the preferred SAP and Narrabri Strategic Plan & Structure	Final Scenario Report
Aboriginal, social and health outcomes workshop	Plan.  Final Enquiry by Design Draft Structure Plan Overview Presentation was delivered. It was identified and confirmed by each relevant consultant on what social infrastructures were needed by First Nations communities.	Draft Narrabri's Indigenous Community Report Final Narrabri's Indigenous Community Report



# 3.3 Summaries of Consultations and Engagements Activities

#### 3.3.1 Initial First Nations consultation meetings

Murawin conducted various introductory meetings organised with First Nations stakeholders. Processes were established at the beginning of the project through Walk on Country and local cultural immersion for the Murawin project team in line with cultural protocols. Murawin's ACECIA report has also been drawn upon after desktop reviews and engagements with First Nations communities.

#### 3.3.2 Aboriginal EbD workshop

Murawin facilitated an Aboriginal EbD workshop in March 2022 with key First Nations stakeholders including representatives from Narrabri Aboriginal services, key community Elders and Knowledge Holders along with representatives from Regional NSW, DPE and Narrabri Council in the Narrabri community prior to the preliminary Narrabri Preliminary EbD workshop. The Aboriginal EbD workshop was attended by 15 First Nations participants which ensured inclusion of First Nations voices in the SAP Scenario development process. The workshop also helped determine the key priorities and values of Narrabri's First Nations community which was then taken into the preliminary EbD for potential integration.

The workshops and Participatory Geographic Information System (PGIS) discussed below enabled participants to provide input towards developing 'big ideas and recommendations for the Narrabri SAP. These ideas and recommendations were presented to the consortium of technical consultants at the preliminary EbD to ensure that the community's voice was heard and considered in the Scenario designs. The key priorities, themes and values from community are (1) Youth, (2) Service and social infrastructure, (3) Greater engagement and input, (4) Housing, (5) Community attitude and perception, (6) Business, training, and employment.

The agenda for the workshop followed the Art of Hosting methodology, which encourages open conversation and collaboration in order to work towards developing holistic solutions. Several stations were set up for group discussion. Murawin also adopted Indigenous models and techniques of yarning to enhance spaces for discussion and enable deep listening, respect, problem solving, safety and mindfulness.

A PGIS station was set up in the workshop to gather data relating to sites of cultural importance for the local community and promote discussions regarding the existing landscape of Narrabri as well as potential opportunities associated with the Narrabri SAP.



Murawin returned to Narrabri on 16 May 2022 on completion of the drafting of the three Scenarios. A community meeting was held to gain input on the three Scenarios to determine if the proposed designs suit the needs and priorities of Narrabri's Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander community. The outcomes of the community meeting, in combination with the Aboriginal EbD, informed the analysis of the three Scenario designs and outcomes of this report.

A Country-centric design approach was used to embrace and ensure First Nations heritage and culture are a central part of planning and design of systems. This approach allows for First Nations perspectives and concepts to be privileged across all aspects of development, construction, and infrastructure projects. Details of the findings and outcomes from this workshop is described in Section 6.

#### 3.3.3 Outcomes of the Preliminary EbD workshop

A Preliminary EbD workshop was facilitated by Hatch RobertsDay with the Narrabri SAP consortium to present the outcomes from the initial technical studies. Consortium members collaborated across three days to develop scenario plans for the Narrabri SAP. Three scenarios were drafted by consortium members and refined by Hatch RobertsDay. Following the workshop, the scenario designs were assessed by the consortium which helped inform the development of the preferred SAP Structure Pan and Town Centre Framework.

#### 3.3.4 Scenario designs community meeting

On completion of the drafting of the three Scenarios, Murawin facilitated a community meeting on Monday 16 May 2022 to present the designs to the community. A total of 18 community members attended the meeting and provided their input on the Scenarios, which has informed the analysis of the three designs to determine which design and components are most suitable. Community members were contacted after the community meeting to allow an additional opportunity to provide input into the designs, with one community member contributing additional feedback.



#### 3.3.5 Final EbD workshop

The investigation area for the Narrabri SAP is located to the west of the existing township and incorporates two areas separated by an environmental buffer zone. This investigation area is being utilised as a basis for all technical studies, however, will not necessarily form the final SAP boundary which may change throughout the master planning process.

The final EbD Workshop was held in Narrabri on the 5th to the 8th of September 2022. It outlines the development of the preferred SAP Structure Plan and Town Centre Framework during the workshop, including HRD's final presentation delivered on Day 4.

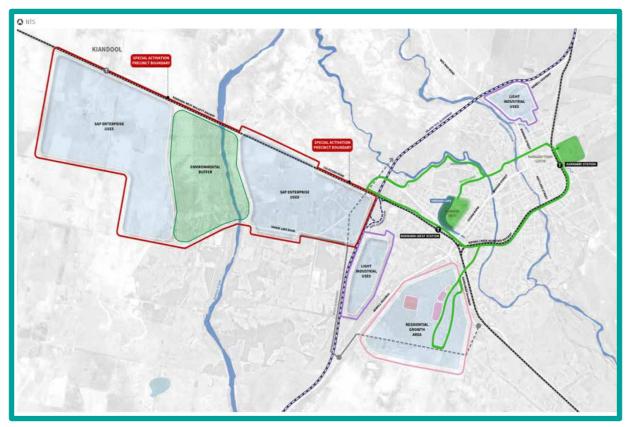


Figure 6 Narrabri Structure Plan Diagram Source Hatch RobertsDay 2022, pg. 45



The Final EbD Workshop Snapshot is as follows (Hatch RobertsDay 2022, p7):

- √ N2IP site as first stage of development supporting non-energy reliant industrial uses leveraging the containerised siding.
- ✓ Western SAP expansion to support higher hazard, energy intensive uses proximate to gas and with a separate siding.
- ✓ Bulk grain siding options investigation.
- ✓ Consideration of 200m buffers between uses and sensitive receptors.
- ✓ Enabling the potential Narrabri Shire Council Landfill's expansion and future circular economy initiatives.
- ✓ Conceptual design for preservation/ avoidance/ bushfire safety of high value biodiversity pockets and corridor.
- ✓ Preservation of sites of cultural significance associated with Bohena Creek.
- ✓ Capacity for approximately 3000 dwellings, local community infrastructure and convenience retail, health and education precinct within a complete community and residential growth area (meeting demand to 2060).
- ✓ Provision of a road connection off the Newell Highway to the SAP.
- ✓ Future-proofing a corridor for extension/upgrade of the road network.
- ✓ Identification of light industrial areas external to the SAP providing opportunities for light industry and small to medium local businesses expansion.
- ✓ Developing Narrabri Town Centre's tourism and 'eat street' character.
- ✓ Enhancing the sport, recreation and social infrastructure of the Lakeside Village



# 4. Closing the Gap: The Connecting with Country Framework and Co-design Approach

# 4.1 Overcoming First Nations Disadvantage, Closing the Gap and the SAP

First Nations people comprise three per cent of the Australia's total population, but they make up 27-per-cent of the total prison population; the gap in school attendance rates remains at ten per cent; and non-Indigenous men and women outlive their First Nations peers by ten years and eight years, respectively. Furthermore, tragically, we continue to see First Nation's deaths in custody 30 years after the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

The concerns of First Nations residents are a central issue for Narrabri because of the size of the local First Nations population (12.2%). There is also under-representation of First Nations perspectives on social impact issues in consultant reports except indirectly via the possible business outcome in the region. Therefore, the social impacts/issues in the project have not been appropriately treated for First Nations groups in the region (Ziller & Viney 2020). O'Faircheallaigh (2009) also described that First Nations people have been almost entirely excluded from participation in impact assessment (IA) processes, and their interests ignored by those conducting Social Impact Assessments (SIAs). Although First Nations communities would be directly and indirectly affected by the development, their existence was ignored in the SIAs. Thus, this exclusion of First Nations people from IA processes and the tendency to ignore their interests and concerns reflected their economic, social, and political marginalization within dominant societies (O'Faircheallaigh 2009, p.99).



The Closing the Gap agenda at the national level aims to improve the lives of First Nations peoples in Australia. It is underpinned by the belief that when First Nations peoples have the right to determine their lives and have a genuine say in the design and delivery of policies, programs and services that affect them with the view to achieving better life outcomes. It also recognises that structural change in the way governments work with First Nations peoples is needed to close the gap. The new Closing the Gap Partnership Agreement, for the first time, commits the Commonwealth, states and territories, local government, and the Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations to be jointly accountable for ensuring the outcomes of closing the gap are achieved through implementation, and will report annually on their success in progressing actions against their plans.

The NSW Premier signed the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap on behalf of NSW in July 2020, along with the National Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations and other tiers of governments including National, other state and territory government and the Australian Local Government Association. In this National Agreement, governments agreed to do things differently, to work in partnership and share decision making with First Nations organisations and communities to improve life outcomes for all First Nations people.

At the national level, the National Agreement on Closing the Gap has four priority reforms that seeks to change the way governments work with First Nations people and communities in the areas of partnerships and shared decision making, building the community-controlled sector; transforming government organisations; and shared access to data at a regional level. NSW has added a fifth priority reform on employment, business growth, and economic prosperity.

The NSW Implementation Plan for Closing the Gap outlines the specific actions necessary to achieve the priority reforms and to ensure accountability for meeting the State's commitments under the National Agreement. This Plan builds on existing work and partnerships between NSW Government and First Nations communities and organisations. Aboriginal Affairs, NSW is leading the NSW Government's collaboration with the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations to design new policies and programs that will make a difference for First Nations communities state-wide. It will be important to ensure that efforts being undertaken as part of the Narrabri SAP align with the NSW Closing the Gap work.

Establishment of effective and respectful relationships are fundamental to achieving successful outcomes when engaging with First Nations communities. Developing and actioning Cultural Protocols is an important first step. Protocols for Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country respectfully acknowledges traditional ownership and custodianship.



# 4.2 The Connecting with Country Framework

It is important to recognise that development of the SAP will incur significant impacts and change to Kamilaroi Country. Therefore, Kamilaroi Country needs to be cared for and First Nations people's relationship with the environment needs to be supported and reinforced through healing.

Undertaking a Country-centric design approach and embracing and ensuring Aboriginal heritage and culture are a central part of planning and designing systems allows for First Nations perspectives and concepts to be privileged across all aspects of development, construction, and infrastructure projects.

The NSW Government Architect released the Draft Connecting with Country Framework (Government Architect NSW 2020). The framework advocates for connection to Country to inform planning, design, and delivery of built environments. While the Connecting with Country framework is in draft form and still being piloted throughout NSW, there are a number of principles within the framework that suggest best practice ways of working with the First Nations community. The Connecting with Country Framework sets out four, equally important pathways for working with First Nations people to design with Country, in a Country centric way. Murawin's place based project approach includes the following phases and associated skills, each aligning to the NSW Government's draft Connecting with Country framework:

- 1. Project formation can be understood as an immersive process of sensing the point at which we start with Country.
- 2. Project design and conceptualization can be understood as a process of imagining listening to Country.
- 3. Project delivery (current status) can be understood as a process of shaping designing with Country.
- 4. Project maintenance can be understood as part of an ongoing continuum of caring for Country. Included in this process, is delivery of the Narrabri SAP project with opportunities for Designing with Country within the SAP area.

A critical success factor for this project will be honouring the First Nations engagement and building working relationships with Community leaders and agencies to support the delivery of improved economic, social, cultural, and environmental outcomes for First Nations peoples in Narrabri.

For all projects, providing opportunities for First Nations people to give guidance and leadership about how to fulfil these commitments will be fundamental to achieving a connection with Country (Government Architect 2020, p32).



The draft Connecting with Country framework assists project teams to fulfil their commitment to Country through seven statements of commitments and principles for actions and this will embrace First Nations perspectives and cultural knowledge throughout the project cycles as summarised below (Government Architect 2020, pp32-33):

- 1. Respect and support the rights of Country to be cared for through Aboriginal Cultural Intellectual Property, first languages, and working in collaboration with local community groups and their recognised Cultural Knowledge Holders.
- 2. Prioritise Aboriginal people's relationship to Country and their cultural protocols through education and engagement with cultural practices led by community groups and their recognised Cultural Knowledge Holders with links to Country.
- 3. Prioritise financial and economic benefits to the Country where we are working and the Traditional Custodians of that Country, by considering impacts to Country and culture when evaluating economic, environmental and social benefits and disadvantages of the project.
- 4. Share tangible and intangible benefits with the Country where we are working, and by extension to current and future Traditional Custodians of that Country, by developing indicators to measure impacts to Country and culture during project formation.
- 5. Prioritise the local, place-specific cultural identity of the Country we are working on, build relationships with local Aboriginal communities and incorporate enterprise opportunities for Aboriginal businesses (local and beyond, existing and emerging) at all stages through the project life cycle, including future opportunities.
- 6. Prioritise recognition and responsibility of Aboriginal people by partnering with Aboriginal owned and run businesses and professional services, from project formation through to delivery and maintenance, to help guide design and engagement processes.
- 7. Create opportunities for traditional first cultures to flourish and support Aboriginals people to continue their practices of managing land, water and air through their ongoing reciprocal relationship with Country by identifying immediate and longer-term opportunities to support cultural practices on Country (Government Architect 2020).

The Connecting with Country Framework can provide crucial principles and key elements for each stakeholder to utilise projects in Narrabri SAP which will provide them the base for the actions to be taken in order to maximise benefits for First Nation people.



# 4.3 Co-design approach and First Nations voice throughout the project management and implementation processes

Collaborative engagement among industry, governments and First Nations communities could be the fastest solution to discover problems and take joint corrective action towards the management of socio-economic impacts on First Nations communities. Therefore, a co-design approach that will lead First Nations active involvement and engagement in all consultation and decision-making process for Narrabri SAP needs governance that reflects their cultural norms, values, and traditions. Murawin has been working with First Nations communities as well as government and other stakeholders in order to achieve co-design processes throughout the Narrabri SAP project from the outset.

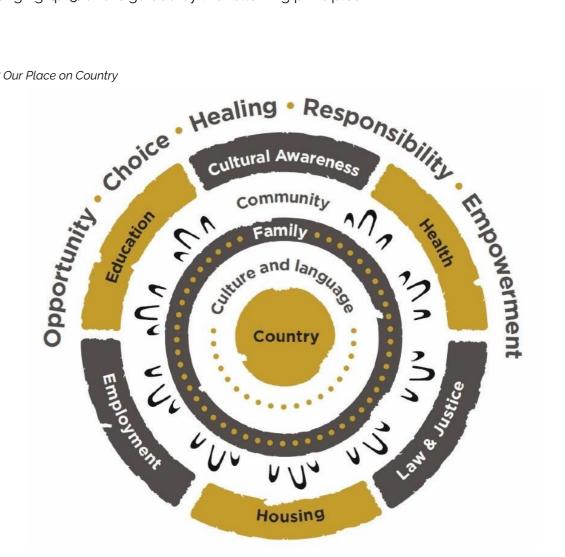
If a collaborative co-design process with First Nations people and communities can be taken in a culturally appropriate and respectful manner. with understanding meaningful approaches to the Country, and If each stakeholder can co-design and co-facilitate the Narrabri SAP on First Nations owned land or communities, given the greater resourcing and capacity building are necessary for First nations communities and people, the result could be a collaborative model of SAP projects and Narrabri SAP which will improve First Nations people's social and economic situation, which is central to the government's initiative 'Closing the Gap' objective.

The Department of Planning, and Environment (DPE) and the Department for Regional New South Wales, in partnership with the Aboriginal Support Network, developed The Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy to support both departments by developing a better understanding of Aboriginal communities and integrating this knowledge into Itheirl work; creating partnerships based on codesign and collaboration (NSW government, DPE 2020). In the context of NSW Government's guiding documents for work with First Nations communities and particularly as it relates to the Narrabri SAP, OCHRE is the New South Wales Government plan for Aboriginal affairs. It stands for **opportunity, choice, healing, responsibility, empowerment** and is symbolic of First Nations communities' deep connection with Country. The key objectives of this plan will enable a strategic valuing of First Nations culture into the Narrabri SAP project.



The Strategy recognises that Country is at the core of every Aboriginal person's identity and sense of belonging' (p. 5) and is guided by the following principles:

Figure 7 Our Place on Country



Source: Our Place on Country. Adapted from Our Place on Country Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy 2020-23, NSW Government, p.5.



Figure 8 The principles for the Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy

#### The Principles for the Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy

Acknowledge, value and embed Aboriginal cultural knowledge and world views in program delivery and business as usual.

Promote and strengthen connections to culture and identity. Respect Aboriginal people's rights, obligations and roles as Traditional Custodians of the land, sea and waterways.

Establish and maintain meaningful ongoing relationships with Aboriginal people and Country.

Recognise
appropriate
engagement and
connection with
Aboriginal people
and Country as core
to our service
delivery.

Prioritise economic independence for Aboriginal people through increased employment and enterprise development.



It also drew the desired outcomes as follows:

Figure 9 The desired Outcomes

Aboriginal people and communities determine the Aboriginal culture and stories that are reflected in the built and natural environment across NSW.

DPIE's approach to
working with
Aboriginal people in
NSW is consistent
with the principles of
self-determination
and co-design.

Aboriginal people and communities have greater choice, access and control over land and water, housing, and resources.

Residents and visitors to NSW gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal history and culture through our tangible and intangible heritage. The Desired Outcomes

Aboriginal organisations and businesses are supported to succeed and grow NSW's first economy.

The continuum of Aboriginal history and culture is a visible part of NSW's built and natural environment.

DPIE's Aboriginal
workforce increases
across all areas of the
organisation and at
all levels as DPE
becomes an
employer of first
choice for Aboriginal
people.

With the Connecting with Country Framework, this strategy can provide a blueprint for embedding First Nations principles into various different projects such as Narrabri SAP, as the Strategy provides examples of what actions can be taken to improve outcomes for First Nations people. Murawin facilitated the co-design workshops and meetings in collaboration with First Nations communities as well as non- First Nation stakeholders and government based on the strategy and principles above.



# 5. The Current situation of Narrabri: Intersectional approach

### 5.1 Education

#### 5.1.1 A snapshot of the education situation in Narrabri

In the 2021 Census of First Nations people in Narrabri, 455 attended an educational institution. 74 First Nations children (equalling 10.1% of the

First Nations children aged between 4 and 5 years old) attended preschool, 334 attended primary school and 200 (equalling 81% of the First Nations children aged between 12 and 17 years old) attended high

school.

Overview

66 (9.1%) First Nations people attended post-school education in 2021, of which 42 (5.8%) attended a technical or further education institution and

24 (3.3%) attended university or tertiary institution.

Pre-School

74 First Nations children attended pre-school equalling 91% of the First Nations children aged 4–5 in comparison to non-Indigenous pre-schoolers in this LGA who represented 100% of their age group.

**Primary School** 

334 First Nations primary students in Narrabri attended primary school equalling 98% of the First Nations children aged between 6-12, in comparison to non-Indigenous primary schoolers in LGC who represented 98% of their age group.



#### Secondary School

200 First Nations children attended secondary school, equalling 73% of the First Nations children aged 12–17 in comparison to 85% for non-Indigenous secondary school students.

#### Year 12 Gap

178 First Nations Female adults in Narrabri had completed Year 12, in comparison to 1756 non-Indigenous Female adults, while 140 male adults completed Year 12, in comparison to 1,418 non-Indigenous male adults who completed Year 12.

In total, 322 of First Nations adults completed Yr. 12 in 2021 while 3,180 non-Indigenous students completed Yr.12, which shows a huge gap between First Nations and non-Indigenous Yr. 12 completion.

#### Tertiary Qualifications

In 2021, 32 (2.6%) First Nations people in Narrabri completed a degree or higher qualification in comparison to 8.3% of First Nations people in NSW and 10.9% of Narrabri non- Indigenous residents.

Certificates III were the highest qualifications commonly completed by Narrabri First Nations adults – 183 people (15%).

#### Tertiary Qualification Gap

In 2021, only 2.6% of Narrabri First Nations people completed a degree or above qualification, in comparison to 10.9% of non-Indigenous residents, equalling a 8.3% gap.



### 5.1.2 Education in Narrabri- Needs supports from local education institutions and relevant stakeholders

Walton, McCrea and Jeanneret states in their report (2018, p.13) that the main driver of community wellbeing was the level of services and facilities in Narrabri. It shows that resident's satisfaction with the local school's services and facilities in the Narrabri and surrounds were 3.58 compared to 4.3 in the rest of Shire, which indicates these areas needs to be targeted and promoted to improve people's wellbeing. One participant who attended the meeting with Murawin staff informed the meeting that education needs to be improved in Narrabri, another participant mentioned that there is no AECG or any First Nations Liaison Officers at the high schools, an area that needs to be reviewed. Working collaboratively with the local educational institution in Narrabri could lead to achieving successful outcomes for First Nations students at all levels of education and learning. Educational institutions include as follows:

The Country Universities Centre opened on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019, as an affiliate of Country Universities Centre with support from the NSW Government, Narrabri Shire Council and Moree Plains Shire Council. The regional education centre in Narrabri and Moree was provided to give access for regional people to secure spaces where students are able to focus on their studies. Enrolling in a university degree or course provides students with opportunities to access a range of new contacts and broaden perspectives. Despite this accessibility to study a degree at any university in Australia, one participant told Murawin staff that 'there is no university in Narrabri,' an indication that there is little knowledge of the availability of the resource, so unfortunately the First Nations population won't effectively utilise these resources if they are unaware that they even exist.

TAFE Narrabri also provides opportunities to access higher qualifications. Although this is limited to entry and low certificate courses in business admin, vocation pathways, salon assistant RCG and RSG, IT and Music. Eleven courses are currently on offer through onsite delivery and nine through Virtual Classroom on campus delivery. It is noted there is a further 38 courses available through Virtual Classroom off campus delivery with barriers to engagement experienced by First Nations community such as no internet access, overcrowded housing and lack of tutorial support.

It must be noted that CSIRO promotes STEM education for students. Funded by BHP Foundation and delivered by CSIRO, the Indigenous STEM Education Project demonstrates the link between the traditional ecological knowledge of First Nations people and the science curriculum and how it can be taught using inquiry-based methods. The project has a national footprint working with primary, secondary, and tertiary students in remote, regional, and metropolitan areas (CSIRO website).

Santos also offers opportunities for young First Nations students from across Australia introducing an interactive engineering camp in Adelaide, as part of a partnership between Santos and the University of Adelaide. The students can experience a diverse engineering program including engineering businesses, sports engineering with elite sports people, and coding activities with robots, as well as a five-day camp (Santos's website).



In addition to the above opportunities, the government has created a job-ready graduate package which will create more university places for Australian students and provide more support for regional students and universities. The Job-ready Graduate Package website says that 'Under the Job-ready Graduates Package (the package) of reforms to higher education, Government university funding of \$18 billion in 2020 will grow to \$20 billion by 2024. The package will create up to 30,000 new university places, and 50,000 new short course places by 2021 and provide additional support for students in regional and remote Australia' (Australian Government 2022) which should be introduced and encouraged to the First Nations community in Narrabri.

In Narrabri, there are some gaps in education attainment for First Nations people, for example Yr. 12 gap (completion rate is 15% lower than the non-Indigenous adults) and only 2% of First Nations adults completed a degree or higher qualification in comparison to 12 % of non-Indigenous residents in Narrabri (please see the population information on education). In order to close these gaps, the above programs could be introduced to First Nations students in Narrabri. Working collaboratively with the local educational institution in Narrabri could lead to achieving successful outcomes for First Nations students at all levels of education and learning.



# 5.2 Business and Employment

### 5.2.1 A snapshot of the employment situation in Narrabri from the statistical data

- > In the 2021 Census of Narrabri, 57% of First Nations adults were in the labour force, compared with 67% of non-Indigenous adults.
- In 2021, 88% of the First Nations population of Narrabri were > employed; 97% of the non-Indigenous workforce were employed.

The unemployment rate in Narrabri in 2021 was 4.1%, which is 0.8% lower than the NSW average. However, the unemployment

> rate for First Nations people in Narrabri was higher, at **11.9%** with 79 people out of work, while the non-Indigenous unemployment rate was **3%**.

#### 1. Overview

- The highest rates of First Nations unemployment were among those aged 15–24 years (2.5%) and 25–44 years (1.8%). The lowest was among those aged 55–64 years (0.6%).
- The most common industries of employment were coal mining 7.4%, supermarket and grocery stores 5.8%, aged care residential services 4.5%, Local; Government Administration 3.6%, and Hospitals (except Psychiatric Hospitals) 3.0%.

The most common occupations were machinery operators and drivers 21.3%, labourers 19.8%, community and personal service

- > workers 17.3%, technicians and trades workers 12.4%, sales workers 9.7%, professionals 7.3%, clerical and administrative workers 5.8%, and managers 5.0%.
- > In 2021 39.8% (485) First Nations adults were 'not in the labour force', in comparison to 31.6% of non- Indigenous adults.



2. The Unemploym ent Gap	>	For 2021, the unemployment gap between First Nations people and non-Indigenous people in Narrabri was 8.9%.
3. The Employment Gap	>	For 2021, the employment gap between First Nations and non-Indigenous people was -9%.

### 5.2.2 The situation around First Nations Business and employment

According to the 2020 Closing the Gap Report, in 2018, there was a large employment gap between First Nations people and other Australians. In 2018-2019, the employment rate of Frist Nations people of working age was 49.1% compared with 75% for non- indigenous Australians. The gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous people and non-indigenous people was widest in remote and very remote Australia (Closing the Gap Report 2020). However, according to the report, First Nations people with higher levels of education showed no difference in employment levels than with non-indigenous Australians (Closing the Gap Report 2020, p66), the employment rate for Indigenous Australians increasing slightly (by 0.9 percentage points), while for non-Indigenous Australians it fell by 0.4 percentage points. As a result, the gap has not changed markedly.

Academic critics also report that First Nations people are not able to access business development and employment opportunities (Trigger et al. 2014; Z), barriers to access these opportunities are described as the fast cycle of the development outpacing a group's ability to expand the business, a lack of access to contracts/contractors/ sub-contractors, lack of formal qualifications, bias towards First Nations people regarding their skills, failure to commit, failure for companies and contractors to commit to First Nations employment, and for First Nations people for failure to complete any training without employment opportunities (Trigger et al. 2014, p. 182).

Between 2006 and 2016, the number of First Nations businesses increased by almost 72 percent to 11 587. Despite rapid growth, the rate of First Nations business ownership is much lower than non-Indigenous people. First Nations businesses only represent between 0.6 and 0.8 percent of the 2.1 million businesses nationwide.

Achieving better outcomes for First Nations businesses requires policy and programs that are responsive to the needs, strengths and aspirations of First Nations business owners and entrepreneurs. The current labour market reality shows a low level of First Nations small business ownership and entrepreneurship, especially in remote communities, displaying the importance of ensuring the development and establishment of First Nations owned businesses. First Nations people currently face a number of barriers in starting and running a business. Barriers can include a lack of relevant business educational knowledge and skills, support, advice, and mentorship (Australian Government Department of Industry Science, Energy and Resources website).



The role of Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) is to work for First Nations people to be economically independent and an integral part of the economy. IBA was created to assist and enhance the economic development opportunities of First Nations people across Australia (Indigenous Business Australia n.d.), if their programs and assistance acknowledge more across First Nations communities in Narrabri, that could lead to an increase in First Nations owned businesses in Narrabri.

Generally, First Nations people have much lower employment rates than other Australians. Reasons for the lower employment rates include lower levels of education, training and skill levels, poorer health, living in areas with fewer labour market opportunities, higher levels of arrest and interactions with the criminal justice system, discrimination, and lower levels of job retention. It is also recognised that the Indigenous employment rate varies by remoteness which is a key factor for the Narrabri SAP.

It is well understood that participation in employment provides financial and economic security and assists in opening the door to self-determination. Employment status also has associations with outcomes for health, social and emotional wellbeing, and living standards. The low employment rate of First Nations people continues to contribute to economic deprivation and a range of social problems. Increasing employment rates is key to reducing First Nations people's disadvantage. Employment is central to the Closing the Gap targets that directly refer to engagement with the mainstream economy. Paid employment can provide the economic independence and autonomy that allow Indigenous people to explore their own aspirations.

### 5.2.3 Employment opportunities for First Nations people in Narrabri

The potential local economic impact on jobs, and of a fertiliser manufacturing plant was reported by CSIRO (CSIRO's final report 2021). According to the CSIRO final report, the development of an onshore gas industry in Narrabri will bring economic benefits to the region. Santos (2020) estimates that 220 local jobs on average will be generated in Narrabri regions across the life of the project (from 2021 to 2046), of which it is estimated that around 172 jobs on average will be direct jobs related to the natural gas extraction activity.

Following their (CSIRO) experience from Queensland, the main gains from job spill-over from natural gas extraction activity will occur in service jobs such as electricians and construction, and some local services (such as accommodation and food services). One of the potential industries that could emerge in the Narrabri region, as a by-product of the onshore gas project, is fertiliser production for which "a heads of agreement" has been signed between Santos and Perdaman- a company specialising in chemical production and fertilisers, the potential direct jobs in the Narrabri fertiliser plant could reach up to 100 (Perdaman 2019 cited in CSIRO 2021)



### 5.3 Youth

#### **5.3.1** The situation of First Nations Youth in Narrabri

CSIRO's survey conducted between December 2016 and September 2017 (Walton, A, McCrea, R, & Jeanneret, T, 2018, pg) on the community wellbeing in Narrabri region reveals that even though overall community wellbeing rated moderately high (M = 3.96), perceptions of the community as a place suitable for teenagers was considerably lower compared to suitability for young children and for seniors. Feedback discussions highlighted reasons for this result such as the reputation of the Narrabri High School at the time, lack of job opportunities, limited leisure activities other than sporting options, particularly for girls; and teenagers' reliance on parents to get around because of limited public transport. They also emphasised the existing activities for youth such as the Narrabri Youth Shack activities and Agribusiness Careers & Professions (AGCAP) educational programs to overcome the issues and meet young people's expectations (CSIRO 2018, p.15).

In the training and employment section, the 'Rural decline' phenomenon in remote areas was reported (see the training and employment section in this report). Rural decline in this context describes a net out-migration of skills and youth (particularly in young females) and increasing poverty levels in rural areas. This was confirmed by participants at the meeting with Murawin staff who stated that the "youth need more" and "shouldn't have kids away, we want them to stay in the community." Urgent strategies or the actions for youth to engage and enhance their future opportunities in education and employment ensuring they are culturally competent need to be developed.

Academic literature has featured recent social problems facing First Nations communities especially among youth can be rooted in the loss of their cultural knowledge. Trigger et al (2014) emphasised that strengthening links to traditional 'Country' (the term used to refer to the physical and spiritual property of land and waters) and their strategies for reconnecting to country can include conducting tradition-derived activities such as hunting, fishing, and teaching children cultural information about the bush. Many of the social problems faced by Indigenous people, particularly youth can be the cause of the failure of cultural knowledge and identity.

The importance of participation in the economic mainstream to overcome poverty are main discussions in current academics and First Nations communities, however the strengthening of the connections to their country and culture will be the critical means to improve community's social wellbeing (Trigger et al. 2014). In this regard, creating activities for youth linked to the First Nations traditions will be the target area for the Narrabri First Nations societies which should be supported by the governments and related organisations.



# 5.4 Housing

### 5.4.1 A snapshot of the household situation in Narrabri from the statistical data

- In 2021, there was a total of 811 households with an average of 2.9 persons per
   household which is slightly higher than the rest of Narrabri where there was an average of 2.4 persons per household.
- For dwelling types, 88.4% were separate houses, 10.9% were semi-detached, row or terrace houses, townhouses etc, 0.6% were flats or apartments and 0.9% were other dwellings.
- 244 First Nations households comprised of a family couple with children, 203
   households (25%) were a one parent family, 14 households (1.7%) were other households, and 161 households (19.9%) were a family couple with no children.
- Non-Indigenous single parent families were 7% in Narrabri and 15.8% in NSW.
- Data available for average number of children per couple is only available for 2016. As a result, the average number of children per First Nations couple was 2.4 children, in comparison to 2.1 per non-Indigenous couple in Narrabri.
- Data available for average number of children per one parent household's is only available for 2016. The average number of children per First Nations one parent family was 2.1 children in Narrabri, in comparison to 1.8 children per non-Indigenous one parent families.

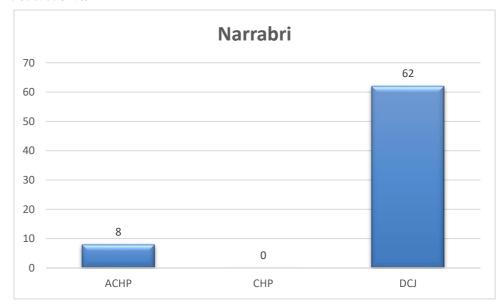


### 5.4.2 Housing costs and house tenure in Narrabri

- The median weekly rent for First Nations people in Narrabri is \$250, the same as for non-First Nations people, however 50.2% of the total First Nations people rented households, in comparison to 24.6% for-non-Indigenous people.
- While median income of First Nations adults in Narrabri was \$586 a week (\$1,416 per household), this shows that a significantly high number of First Nations people renting their homes in Narrabri spend their income on housing rental.
- First Nations people who fully owned their households was 16.3% which is 22.6% lower than for non-First Nations people in Narrabri (38.9%).
- > 27.6% of First Nations people owned households with a mortgage, in comparison to 29.7% for non-Indigenous people.
- Median monthly mortgage repayment was \$1,395 for First Nations people in Narrabri, which is similar to the \$1335 for non-Indigenous people.

### 5.4.3 Narrabri LGA housing

Figure 10 Counts of AHO-owned dwellings by managing organisation, by LGA, as of 30 June 2021. Managing organisations include Aboriginal Community Housing Providers (ACHPs), Community Housing Providers (CHPs), and the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)





The median weekly rent for First Nations people in Narrabri is \$200, the same as for non-Indigenous people, however 56.2% of the total First Nations people rented households, in comparison to 31.9% for-non-Indigenous people. While median income of First Nations adults in Narrabri was \$456 a week (\$1,035 per household), this shows that a significantly high number of First Nations people renting their homes in Narrabri spend their income on housing rental. First Nations people who fully owned their households was 13.4% which is 21.2% lower than for non-Indigenous people in Narrabri. A total of 23.9% of First Nations people owned households with a mortgage, in comparison to 28.6% for non-Indigenous people. Median monthly mortgage repayment was \$1300 for First Nations people in Narrabri, which is similar to \$1395 for non-Indigenous people (please see the population information for other information on housing). There is housing stress among low income and First Nations residents.

According to Ziller and Viney (2020), the existing shortage of housing in Narrabri due to the mining activities in the region:

'This is not an impact on bricks and mortar or property prices, but an impact on people's lives, particularly on levels of overcrowding and stress. Housing is basic to quality of life so pressures on affordability will have social significance' (Ziller & Viney 2020, p.45)

Narrabri Shire Council discussed how they were trying to put in place measures to mitigate issues arising from the transient population increase this project will bring. Community spoke of the housing problems, stating that "issues when the mines arrived caused a sharp increase in rent leaving people without rental accommodation." In a discussion with community, it was also stated that "housing due to mines and gas became unattainable", a community member went on to talk about the issue, providing the information that "previously 3rd and 4th generation First Nations people were forced to move when Fly In Fly Out (FIFO) workers arrived as rent increased so much. Elders were displaced and slept on cots in overcrowded housing as they could not afford the rent."

The issue of housing intersects with 'health, education, the natural and built environment and social connectedness,' which are based on the quality of life and on the sustainability of communities (McKenzie et al.,2008, p1), therefore the housing problem is a critical issue for First Nations communities and needs to be addressed immediately.



### 5.5 Health (PHIDU Social Health Atlas n.d.)

### 5.5.1 A snapshot of the Health situation in Narrabri from statistical data

- > Narrabri has higher rates of circulatory disease hospitalisations and deaths as well as higher rates of smoking attributable hospitalisations and deaths than NSW.
- > Alcohol attributable deaths in Narrabri are increasing.
- > Narrabri has high rates of mental health and mood affective disorders being diagnosed in hospitals
- Narrabri region experiences higher rates of intentional self-harm hospitalisations than NSW for both men and women.
- > According to the Health Stats NSW data, Narrabri has higher rates of potentially preventable hospitalisations than the rest of NSW.

#### 5.5.2 Narrabri Health

CSIRO's research stresses that the results for people's perception on health/ mental health in Narrabri showed the average residents rated their satisfaction with their health highly (M = 4.07) and their mental health particularly highly (M = 4.27). However, the report highlights that their discussions with community agencies involved with mental health services showed their surprise at this result, describing increases in demand for their services in the area. There has been particular emphasis on psychological and health impact studies of the extractive projects (Luke, Brueckner & Suus 2018).

Narrabri LGA is a community which has a number of adverse health indicators with a significant proportion of the population experiencing addiction to tobacco and alcohol and mental health issues (Please also see the population information on health), they conclude that this may be because individuals with lower levels of mental health may not have chosen to participate in the survey. Lack of engagement is a common attribute associated with mental health conditions (CSIRO 2018, p.14). Moreover, one community participant at the community engagement meeting suggested that "culturally appropriate mental health and drug & alcohol services" are needed in Narrabri with another participant stating that there are no First Nations Medical Services in Narrabri.



# 5.6 Transportation

Participants at the initial engagement workshop mentioned public transport is limited in the Narrabri region which further restricts community members accessing a range of services, including appointments with State Government agencies, training, and employment services and travelling to work. Furthermore, it was reported by community members travelling to the larger centre of Tamworth for needs and services outside of Narrabri availability incurred a two hour wait at Werris Creek (see Figure 11). This is in fact a three hour stop. It can take up to two full days travel to and from Narrabri to attend services and appointments. Narrabri to Tamworth is 169km by road and an average 1hr 50mins time. The issues for travellers are the cost of accommodation and time spent.

NSW Trains operates a daily Explorer passenger service each way between Narrabri, Moree, Boggabri and a rail coach service from Narrabri to Wee Waa daily Monday to Friday. Public transport within Narrabri is operated by a privately owned company providing regular bus service routes Monday to Friday within the town and a service for mine workers.

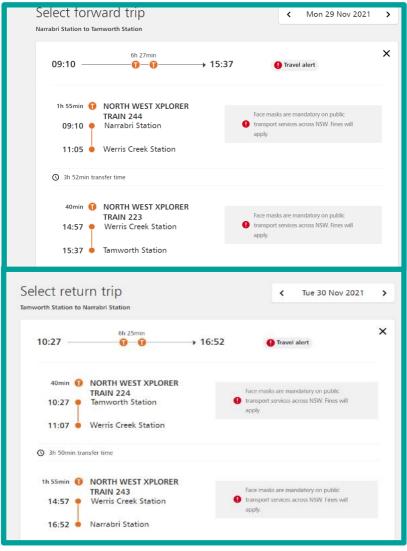


Figure 11 Public transport journey from Narrabri to Tamworth Source: <u>Transport for NSW Trip Planner</u>



### 5.7 First Nations Governance

### 5.7.1 Context

First Nations peoples have always had their own governance. It is an ancient jurisdiction made up of a system of cultural geographies (referred to as First Nations countries), culture-based laws, traditions, rules, values, processes and structures that has been effective for tens of thousands of years, and which nations, clans and families continue to adapt and use to collectively organise themselves to achieve the things that are important to them. The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute argues that First Nations governance is not the same thing as organisational governance (The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute n.d.). While governance is a critical part of the operation and effectiveness of legally formalised and registered incorporated organisations, it can also be seen at work every day (The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute n.d.):

In the way people own and care for their Country, arrange a ceremony, manage and share their resources, and pass on their knowledge

In networks of extended families who have a form of internal governance

In the way people arrange a community football match or an art festival, informally coordinate the activities of a night patrol and develop alliances across regions

In the voluntary work of First Nations men and women within their own communities, and as governing members on a multitude of informal local committees and advisory groups

What makes it *Indigenous* governance is the role that First Nations cultural, social, and philosophical systems, cultural values, traditions, and beliefs play in the governance of:

- Processes—how things are done.
- Structures—the ways people organise themselves and relate to each other.
- Institutions—the rules for how things should be done.

In other words, just like all other societies around the world, the practice of First Nations governance cannot be separated from its traditions and culture.



Today, many First Nations people are working to rebuild and strengthen their contemporary governance arrangements. The challenge in doing this is to ensure that governance solutions continue to reflect cultural norms, values, and traditions, while remaining operationally effective.

In the context of the Narrabri SAP project contemplating from the outset the process for inclusion of a First Nation governance structure will enable lasting and genuine engagement of Narrabri's First Nations community to have a say in what happens with the SAP over the life of the project. First Nations active involvement and engagement in all consultation and decision-making process for Narrabri SAP have to be through the First Nations governance that reflects their cultural norms, values, and traditions.

### 5.7.2 Examples of Good Governance and engagement models with First Nations community

#### 1. Good Governance and OCHRE

Local Decision Making is an initiative of OCHRE which represents a fundamental and positive change in the relationship between government and First Nations communities in NSW (Please refer to Section 4.3 for the details of OCHRE).

The process is underpinned by the principle of self-determination and aims to ensure that First Nations communities have a genuine voice in determining what and how services are delivered to their communities. It is intended that this approach places First Nations people at the centre of service design, planning and delivery, enabling the staged devolution of decision making and accountability to the local level.

The OCHRE Good Governance Guidelines (the Guidelines) have been created to help the NSW Government and Aboriginal regional alliances work together to strengthen both First Nations community and public sector governance capacity. Outlined below is a set of good governance principles outlined in the Guidelines:



Table 2 OCHE Good Governance principles

Principle	What it looks like
Scope of decision- making	<ul> <li>How decisions are made as a body or group.</li> <li>Relationships with other bodies or groups such as institutions, community organisations or government.</li> </ul>
Leadership	<ul> <li>How leaders and decision-makers are chosen, how their performance is monitored and how they are held accountable.</li> <li>How they hand over power and responsibility.</li> </ul>
Decision-making	<ul> <li>How decisions are made through formal or informal decision-making bodies such as committees.</li> <li>How decisions are documented and written down.</li> <li>How decision-making rules are agreed and guide decision making.</li> </ul>
Self-determined regions and legitimacy	<ul> <li>How cultural values are communicated, protected, and respected.</li> <li>How power and authority are shared.</li> <li>How key stakeholders (inside and outside of the organisation) influence and inform values and power.</li> </ul>
Strategic direction	<ul> <li>How longer-term social, economic, and cultural development is considered.</li> <li>How elements for development are considered.</li> </ul>
Participation and voice	<ul> <li>How communities and relevant stakeholders are involved in decision-making.</li> <li>How government stakeholders may be involved in decision making.</li> </ul>
Accountability	How decision makers are accountable to internal and external stakeholders.
Resource governance	<ul><li>How resources are managed.</li><li>How systems are developed to manage resources.</li></ul>
Organisational performance	<ul> <li>How governance structures and goals are developed, monitored, and reviewed.</li> <li>How the capacity of an organisation is developed to create and deliver policies and services.</li> <li>How an organisation ensures it is transparent, stable, and innovative.</li> <li>How an organisation manages risk.</li> </ul>



### 2. Kaart (Head), Koort (Heart), Waarnginy (Talking)

Another good working example that Narrabri SAP relevant stakeholders can draw on in considering how to establish and run the First Nations Advisory Group in Narrabri. Kaart, Koort, Waarnginy (Head, Heart, Talking) is a Cultural Compact Agreement between the Whadjuk Traditional Owners and the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority in Perth, Western Australia. The agreement came from a desire to see things improve in relation to engagement and greater collaboration between First Nations people, government, and developers. Noongar Elder, Dr Richard Walley OAM, stated that,

'What I did is look at how things are done in a traditional sense and take that way of negotiating, communicating and getting outcomes against the Master Plan of a project and saw how they were complementary.'

The discussion focussed on moving away from a Prior Business Approach refers to a commonly used consultation methodology which generally involves:

- Consultation being the responsibility of a specialist consultant or sub-consultant.
- A lack of clarity and consistency regarding agreed methodology and approach.
- A process that is designed to support statutory or other project approvals.
- Individual contact and liaison with Noongar families and representatives, rather than through a representative body that is endorsed by the Whadjuk community; and
- Requiring the consultant to achieve consensus on individual issues, rather than holistic involvement in project planning, theming, and creative / cultural opportunities.

In this 'prior business approach', consultation is included to achieve a specific outcome as opposed to being ongoing and participatory and often leaves organisations and individuals feeling disengaged, leading to frustration and disengagement, particularly when contact is concluded without a clear direction or outcome, or when consensus has not been achieved. Developing an approach that enables ongoing dialogue and engagement with First Nations people throughout all project stages provided certainty and clarity for everyone involved.

Kaart Koort Waarnginy's (Head, Heart, Talking) central idea is to bring together the narratives and protocols that Noongar people have practiced for thousands of years and the six seasons that influence all stages and cycles of life, with the structured and time lined processes that characterise Western methods.



The purpose of Kaart Koort Waarnginy's (Head, Heart, Talking) is to:

- Develop a relationship of trust and respect.
- Create a straightforward way for government and non-government organisations and Noongar people to communicate and collaboratively plan projects and places.
- Provide clarity for everyone involved with regard to process, expectations, and outcomes.
- Be flexible and responsive to each organisations' needs, and the specific needs of different projects.
- Integrate Kaart Koort Waarnginy (Head, Heart, Talking) with conventional project delivery.
- Develop ongoing and respectful engagement with the traditional owners to enable cultural contribution and participation in MRA projects.
- Provide clear guidance for cultural engagement implementation for the MRA including staff and project partners.
- Enhance the creation and regeneration of places, delivering spiritual, ethical, cultural, and practical benefits and opportunities.

In delivering Kaart Koort Waarnginy (Head, Heart, Talking) the Noongar six seasons are integrated with the MRA's Place Making Model, and the Traditional Owners are the consistent Reference Group throughout the engagement process of the project. There is a Framework that guides the work along with a Cultural Blueprint that maps the stages and stakeholder engagement.

First Nations active involvement and engagement in all consultation and decision-making process for Narrabri SAP have to be through the First Nations governance that reflects their cultural norms, values, and traditions.



# 5.8 Gender Equality in First Nations community

UN Women states that 'Gender mainstreaming is mandated by the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action as a strategic approach for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels of development' (UN Women 2014, p3). Since gender equality is the goal, gender mainstreaming is the strategic approach for 'making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres' (UN Women 2014, p3).

The ground-breaking Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) Securing Our Rights, Securing Our Future Report led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner from the Australian Human Rights Commission, June Oscar, articulates nine principles for guiding reform for First Nation women and girls, they are:

- Embedding culture and respect for identity where First Nations women and girls are able to learn and practice their culture, knowledge, language, and their diverse identities are respected.
- Truth-telling where all Australians recognise past and contemporary injustices experienced by First Nations people, including women and girls and understand the ongoing impacts of those on First Nations communities.
- Equity in leadership where First Nation women and girls are respected and equally represented in leadership roles.
- A rights-based approach where the human rights of First Nation women and girls are built into policy and decision-making processes of government, are co-designed and proactively seeks to address existing inequalities.
- A place-based approach where governments acknowledge the efficacy of place-based initiatives that promote community leadership, participation, and solutions.
- Understanding intersectional discrimination and that the experiences of First Nations women and girls are informed by a complex mix of race, gender, age, and other attributes.
- Lifting women lifts the whole community and that it is understood that measures should be designed to enhance the enjoyment of human rights by First Nations women and girls are of benefit to their entire communities.
- Inclusion and participation of First Nations women and girls are enabled and supported to participate in decision-making that affects their lives.
- Accountability and transparency on the basis of government actions and decisions is transparent and there exists accountability for outcomes, including through robust measurement and targets that are relevant and agreed by First Nations peoples.



Drawing on the Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) Securing Our Rights, Securing Our Future Report will align with the collective efforts being undertaken at various levels across government, Corporate Australia, and the Non-government sectors as there is a significant focus on embedding the recommendations and stakeholders are drawing on this report to improve outcomes for First Nations women and girls.

The Gari Yala (Speak the Truth) report undertaken by the Jumbunna Centre, University of Technology, Sydney looks at the lived experience of Indigenous workers within Australian businesses. The report notes that there is a significant underrepresentation in the Australian workforce of First Nations women and explores four key themes: Identity Strain, Cultural Load, Cultural Safety and Organisational Authenticity. From a gender perspective, it will be important to highlight issues critical to recruitment and retention of First Nations women in the Narrabri SAP.

A lack of literature on First Nations women's involvement in the development projects in Australia are significant. For example, the impacts of mining are gender differentiated primarily because women and men play different roles in households and communities in almost all societies. They have access to different resources and control of different assets, as well as different rights and responsibilities. Consequently, women's capacity to seize the opportunities provided by new large-scale development projects vary. Often more men gain employment in the extractive industries than women which can result in women becoming more economically dependent on men. The needs of women should be promoted through women's empowerment and participation in community decision-making processes. Therefore, gender impact assessments are necessary to identify and mitigate potential effects and increase the benefits of extractive projects toward women (Oxfam 2017, pp1-2).

In addition, research has evidenced that collective empowerment is a tool for women to be empowered and they can be an active human agency for change and improving their situation (Fukushima Byrom 2008). A First Nations based women's group in Narrabri may be able to contribute their collective agency in order to improve their rights and situation in the society and make the best possible outcome and benefit from the Narrabri SAP.



# 6. Challenge andOpportunities:Findings through FirstNations CommunityConsultations

### 6.1 Context

Marginalisation of the social, cultural and economic spheres of First Nations communities during development projects has received attention and discussion in recent times. The linkage between the social and economic problems and the Narrabri SAP requires consideration and collective consultation with the First Nations community, government, and industry. The situations surrounding First Nations people on employment, education, youth, public health, and gender are varied. It is important to note these situations have informed Murawin's works and are likely to influence how the Narrabri's First Nations community interact with the Narrabri SAP.

Murawin facilitated an EbD workshop in March 2022 with key First Nations stakeholders including representatives from Narrabri Aboriginal services, key community Elders and Knowledge Holders along with representatives from Regional NSW, DPE and Narrabri Council in the Narrabri community prior to the preliminary Narrabri Preliminary EbD workshop. An Aboriginal EbD workshop was attended by 15 First Nations participants which ensured inclusion of First Nations voices in the SAP Scenario development process. The workshop also helped determine the key priorities and values of Narrabri's First Nations community which was then taken into the preliminary EbD for potential integration.

On completion of the drafting of the three Scenarios, Murawin facilitated a community meeting on Monday 16 May 2022 to present the designs to the community. One community member who wanted to provide more input into the designs was provided with a follow-up interview. From the community meeting, significant concerns were raised regarding proposed housing location, road bypass options, transport, employment, training, and business opportunities. Discussions were held regarding the proposed bypass, across all three designs, and its potential impact on Country and tourism Industry.



# 6.2 Community perceptions, exclusion, and cultural recognition

It was noted that First Nation's people in Narrabri experience discrimination and racism, with most workshop participants expressing the need to address and debunk community attitudes. A key message from the workshop was that Narrabri needs to be more educated, culturally aware and promote Traditional Owners to enhance cultural safety and capability. It was felt that a project such as Narrabri SAP would be able to benefit the local First Nations community by establishing a dedicated Aboriginal Cultural/Arts Centre to promote cultural education and awareness which is also discussed in the assumptions and limitations section in this report.

Recognising and celebrating Gamilaroi Country through a Cultural Centre was recognised as a need for community members. However, further discussion on where it should be located is required. The proposed location for a Cultural Centre on the Showgrounds is considered unsuitable. It was felt that developing a Cultural Centre on the Showgrounds would impede on local preservation and cultural heritage. Furthermore, developing a new centre on the Showgrounds is perceived to incur high costs due to the need to build new facilities and buildings. The Showgrounds are also too far from the Town Centre with limited transport options, especially for those who rely on public transport. As such, it was recommended that a Cultural Centre should be developed utilising an already existing vacant building is more sustainable and would minimise impacts to the Country. In addition, for the Narrabri SAP project, potentially the architecture of the building structures could incorporate and reflect key landforms with cultural significance or components of narratives, as identified through Murawin's engagement with the local First Nations community and Cultural Knowledge Holders. The significance of such First Nations design integration does not just lie in its aesthetics, but in the act of usage and the empowerment that such public statements of value bring.

# 6.3 Addressing the complex challenges facing young people

Concerns around young people are some of the critical topics raised by the First Nations community, Youth may need to be provided access and opportunity to conduct traditional and cultural activities to reinforce connection to their Country. Youth leaving rural areas is a significant phenomenon and needs to be prevented through the creation of activities or opportunities for the First Nations younger generation. This was confirmed by participants at the community meeting who called for activities to retain youth in the community. Urgent strategies or actions to engage youth and enhance their future opportunities in education and employment ensuring they are culturally competent need to be developed.

It is also noted that similar issues surrounding youth were also highlighted in the ACECIA Report. It was commonly discussed that First Nations youth have limited opportunities and suitable facilities in Narrabri, which contributes to youth disengagement and anti-social behaviour.



When engaging in further discussions regarding youth retention in Narrabri, the common consensus was that there needs to be more support and infrastructure that focuses on engaging youth and breaking cycles of disadvantage through supporting mothers and young children. It was also felt that youth need to be more engaged and provided access to greater employment and education opportunities as well as infrastructure such as a cultural centre, PCYC or sporting grounds to encourage pro-social behaviour, a recommendation also reported in the ACECIA Report.

The SAP should also consider developing a 'Youth Strategy' which targets youth in High School for training and development opportunities to ensure they have employment and training options once they finish their studies.

# 6.4 First Nations engagement and culturally safe environment

During the workshops, participants disclosed that community consultation and engagement with First Nations people in Narrabri has been limited, also a finding of the ACECIA Report and noted in the assumptions and limitations section in this report. There is a perceived notion that meaningful collaborative engagement is not being conducted with First Nations people in Narrabri. First Nations people in Narrabri frequently reported that there has been a lack of communication with First Nations people and limited information dissemination across other projects in the local area. It was felt that despite Narrabri being within proximity of major development projects and initiatives, the First Nations community have experience little or poor engagement and social outcomes.

At the beginning of the engagement process, the meeting participants stated that it was necessary to 'talk to all of the community' and that 'people keep information away from others, so they don't know what's going on until after the fact, everyone needs to know what's coming up not just a few,' another participant told the meeting that 'everyone needs to know about these things and what's coming up'. Therefore, emphasis on regular clear communications and messages being developed by and for community-controlled organisations is a key factor for collaboration between the government bodies and First Nations communities.

A common sentiment amongst participants was that consultations were being facilitated in order to 'tick boxes' and obtain statistics, rather than to enact meaningful change and meet community needs. It was felt that engagement was constantly being facilitated with the promise of enacting positive change and outcomes for the local community, with such commitments not being fulfilled. Therefore, participants advised that there should be ongoing and meaningful engagement with the local community, through a council-led Aboriginal Advisory Committee, to allow for input from the First Nations community and address needs.



First Nations people expressed there was a lack of communication with First Nations people and limited information dissemination at the community engagement meeting in Narrabri. Frustration among participants at the meeting was also obvious with quotes such as 'things need to happen and quick', 'tired of waiting', they need 'meaningful stuff - 15 years talking and tired of waiting' and "never has changed in my years and I am 70" all made it plain to see there was severe disillusionment with the process.

Better communications will enable the government to engage with First Nations people about policies, programs and services that impact their lives and result in better outcomes.

Providing First Nations people cultural safe environment is very important way for non-First Nations stakeholders to engage First Nations community and people. We have seen the need for an improvement internally in company and stakeholder capability and cultural awareness in engaging with First Nations communities. Lower levels of 'cultural proficiency' (or cultural competence) in engaging with First nations people delays business which causes disappointment and frustration to both companies and First Nations communities.

Cultural awareness and cultural competence are discussed widely in the academic literature (Stokes et al. 2019; Trigger et al, 2014). Stokes et al. (2019, pp.50-51) described that 'Racism in the workplace can arise from differences in culture between workers and a lack of understanding between cultures. Mining, LNG(Liquefied Natural Gus) and economic development sectors felt that cultural awareness training is important to implement in the workplace in order to minimize racial conflict'.

Trigger et al (2014) also highlighted that the internal company's capability to engage with Aboriginal communities and implement agreements in the rapid development industries such as OSG companies is still challenging, so often lower levels of 'cultural proficiency' (or cultural competence) in engaging with Aboriginal people delays business which causes disappointment and frustration to Aboriginal communities. Moreover, their qualitative research with Aboriginal people and practitioners in the extractive companies across Queensland confirms that the integration of Aboriginal engagement 'throughout the different functions of the company' with the support from senior management, is beneficial, so greater professional collaboration among all parties is needed. Company's Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) are an opportunity to engage with a range of internal stakeholders via a working group, as well as an opportunity for senior management to stress the importance of First Nations relations to the rest of the company (including commitments to promote Indigenous engagement by contractors and sub-contractors) (Trigger et al. 2014, p. 180).

Thus socio, cultural and economic impacts and benefits from the Narrabri SAP require urgent consultation and discussion with First Nations communities. Following the engagement with First Nations communities, mitigation and cumulative impacts of the project should then involve collaborative consultation with the wider stakeholder groups.



## 6.5 Barriers to adequate housing

There are significant barriers to housing in Narrabri for First Nations people, in terms of availability and affordability, an issue frequently raised during workshop discussions and in the ACECIA Report. Several workshop participants disclosed that either themselves or someone they know experience overcrowding in their residence or are unable to afford appropriate housing due the lack of available and affordable housing. As a result, community members identified that there is a significant need to address the housing situation and increase access to affordable housing suitable for low-income households. Community members who attended the workshop felt that there are opportunities for the SAP to address the housing crisis by supplying viable housing options suitable for First Nations people.

Housing was also recognised as a key priority during the EbD community meeting due to the lack of diverse and affordable housing options in Narrabri. The development of additional housing is an important component of the SAP design. However, the community felt that the proposed locations of the housing developments across each Scenario design were not suitable. This was mainly due to flooding risks and distance from Narrabri Town Centre. Several members noted that Narrabri has been subject to flooding for many years, therefore, building neighbourhoods in flood zones is strongly advised against given the impacts of flooding. It was also noted that there is a need to increase housing diversity and availability of affordable housing. Concerns were raised regarding the potential barriers to accessing affordable housing, due to the likelihood of the housing neighbourhoods being developed by private construction companies. This was felt to result in unaffordable housing options. The Narrabri SAP design needs to guarantee affordable and accessible housing for the Aboriginal community. Housing also needs to be accessible, as several community members noted that the proposed location for the housing developments were too far from Narrabri Town Centre, which enforces barriers for those who rely on public transport. The Narrabri SAP design needs to ensure that any proposed housing developments are not built-in flood zones, are close to the Town Centre or can be accessed via public transport, are affordable and accessible.



# 6.6 Barriers to successful education, business, training, and employment

#### 6.6.1 Limited access to Education

There is a disproportionate gap between First Nations people and non-Indigenous in educational achievement, as demonstrated by Yr. 12 completion and tertiary qualification factors which are recorded in the ACECIA Report. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) suggested that higher levels of education have been linked with improved health and wellbeing, health literacy, income, employment, better working conditions and a range of other social benefits. In addition, the need for an improvement in education and outcomes for youth was raised as an issue by First Nations participants throughout consultations.

Participants advised that opportunities for employment, training and education are limited, which is perceived to be contributing to Narrabri's declining population. One participant told that 'there is no university in Narrabri,' an indication that there is varied knowledge of the availability of the education and training facilities and resources that could be accessed locally. TAFE Narrabri also provides opportunities to access higher qualifications. It was noted by an officer from Narrabri Shire Council at the community meeting that a lack of IT facilities available at the TAFE to enable streaming in courses from other locations, an indication that digital and IT upgrades are needed e.g., more internet devices and computers to cater to the demand for online learning.

### 6.6.2 Limitations to the First Nations employment and business

Generally, employment rates amongst First Nations people are also disproportionate when compared to other Australians. Reasons for the lower employment rates include low levels of education, training and skill levels, poorer health, living in areas with fewer labour market opportunities, higher levels of arrest and interactions with the criminal justice system, discrimination, and minimal job retention. It is also recognised that the Indigenous employment rate varies by remoteness which is a key factor for the Narrabri SAP.

First Nations employment is a critical issue for closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage and improving social and economic outcomes for individuals and their families. However, risks to rural communities of people leaving town, particularly women for job opportunities elsewhere have been highlighted in this report, the phenomena termed 'rural decline.' Rural decline means a net outmigration of skills and youth (particularly in young females) and increasing poverty levels in rural areas.

It was noted that there has been a loss of industry in Narrabri, which is believed to have contributed to a decrease in economic standards. Several discussions were held regarding the need to upskill local workforce and provide opportunities for the local First Nations community. It was also stated that there is a need to encourage, develop and commit to the First Nations community and businesses either through funding, training programs, strategies, or advisory committees. The need for employment training was consistently mentioned throughout consultations. Acquiring skills, particularly literacy, numeracy and digital problem-solving skills is associated with better labour market outcomes. Therefore, access to higher education and training linked to employment is key



for First Nations people to close the employment gap. It was also felt that there is an opportunity to leverage off the SAP by upskilling the community and increasing transferable skills. However, it was noted that a skills audit across the community would be needed.

In the community engagement meeting with Murawin staff, the need for training was raised, A First Nations participant stated that there was a need to "attach trade trainings to this SAP, not just tick a box [for] training – there is a need for meaningful works." The enablers and barriers to First Nations Australians' participation in employment are multiple and intertwined with social, cultural, geographic, and economic factors. Acquiring skills, particularly literacy, numeracy and digital problem-solving skills is associated with better labour market outcomes. Therefore, access to higher education and training linked to employment will be key for First Nations people to close the employment gap.

The current labour market reality shows a low level of First Nations small business ownership and entrepreneurship for First Nations people, especially in remote communities. It is important to note that First Nations people currently face a number of barriers to business start-up and operation. Barriers can include a lack of relevant business educational knowledge and skills, support, advice, and mentorship (Australian Government, Department of Industry Science, Energy and Resources website). To support First Nations entrepreneurship, it is important to support the development and establishment of profitable First Nations owned and managed businesses.

First Nations employment is a critical issue for improving their social and economic situation in the society, which is central initiative in the Commonwealth Government's 'Closing the Gap' objective (Norman 2016, p. 244). In addition, First Nations involvement in the extractive economy will open new possibilities for the transformation of energy policy, as Norman (2016, p. 251) stated that 'these roles are taken up and redefined by First Nations participants, who (for the first time in some respects) become direct agents in the production of their own and wider community futures', which it is hoped will also be the case for First Nations people in Narrabri LGA.

Community members also recognise a need to promote employment opportunities for First Nations people in Narrabri, either by engaging a First Nations employment consultant or developing an employment opportunity register to ensure First Nations people have access to employment and business opportunities. There are a number of ways local communities can benefit from employment opportunities. For example, unemployed people obtain work, employed people improve their income and local businesses benefit from the increased spend in the local area, as CSIRO's final report discussed (CSIRO 2021).

Risks to rural communities of women leaving town for job opportunities elsewhere has been highlighted in research, which has been documented as part of the phenomena of 'rural decline.' Rural decline in this context describes a net out-migration of skills and youth (particularly in young females) and increasing poverty levels in rural areas (Measham & Fleming, 2014 cited in CSIRO final report 2021).



# **6.7 First Nations Advisory Committee**

Community members recognised a significant need to improve engagement with First Nations community. It was felt that a First Nations Advisory Committee should be developed to ensure Narrabri's First Nations community can provide their input towards the development and operation of the Narrabri SAP.

# 6.8 Limited Public Transport Service

Limited public transport services in Narrabri have been identified from research and outcomes of community engagements which restricts community members ability to access a range of services, including appointments with State Government agencies, training and employment services and travel to work.

### 6.9 Health Issues

A lack of recognition on the public health, particularly the mental and physical health issues related to the First Nations people affected by the extractive projects also indicate that these demands for supporting mental health and public health are paid no attention, there is minimal data/information on the mental and physical health related to the First Nations people in Narrabri, signifying the actions and strategies to overcome these issues need to be developed urgently.

# **6.10 Services Provision and Social**Infrastructures

Services and social infrastructure are limited in Narrabri, which makes it difficult for the local First Nations community to access essential services and support. Several participants mentioned the lack of transport, health, and retail services, which impacts on quality of life and liveability. Participants recognised that there is a need for improved services and social infrastructure, such as an Aboriginal Medical Centre in Narrabri as many participants advised that they are required to travel out of town for several medical appointments due to lack of available Aboriginal specific, culturally safe health services in Narrabri. Furthermore, it was noted that there needs to be more options and greater accessibility for public transport and retail.

An analysis of service provision across the domains of housing, employment, health, education, youth, transport, and infrastructure is strongly recommended so that First Nations communities have access to efficient and effective services.

The service provision analysis will include a detailed analysis of delivery organisations, funding values and sources and the extent and effectiveness of community services in Narrabri. The eventual outcome and overall aim of the analysis will be to see an improvement in a variety of services such as public transport, sufficient housing, and integration of First Nations engagement throughout the different functions of related organisations.



Community members advised that a smaller total area for the SAP is more suitable. It was felt that a smaller SAP would be more beneficial and allow for land preservation by ensuring impacts to Country are minimised. It is important to note that although the key issues have been ranked, they should all be considered in the final design of the SAP.

# 6.11 Applying Gender Perspectives in Narrabri SAP

Gendered perspectives and awareness are increasingly being discussed and considered for many reasons including the key issues raised in the Australian Human Rights Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner's Report - the Women's Voices Report- noting the need to support the empowerment of First Nations women in all areas of life. Therefore, it needs to be stressed that a separate gender impact assessment may be necessary for the Narrabri SAP project.



Figure 12 Women yarning Source: iStock



# 7. Recommendations

Whilst there is support and agreement on the broad range of recommendations below, currently there is no confirmed strategy to deliver on the recommendations, therefore delivery of the recommendations is dependent on Federal Government, NSW State Government and Council obtaining the necessary resources and funding to progress the initiatives that Murawin recommends. Further discussions and investigation are necessary to implement the recommendations thus no commitment for the recommendations will be made during this phase.

Finally, to conclude this report, the targeted and prioritised recommendations that should be urgently addressed from a First Nations perspective are as follows:

### Recommendation One: Cultural Centre

- A Cultural Centre should be built as a part of the SAP. The creation of a Cultural Centre will
  provide a setting for culture and language to flourish. Through the strengthening of the
  connections to their Country and traditions, the community's social wellbeing will be
  improved. This could also provide a business opportunity for First Nations people in the
  SAP.
- The need for First Nations public art to tell the stories of Narrabri was discussed in the community engagement sessions. The cultural centre should include some local First Nations art both on the interior and exterior of buildings to help identify how social infrastructure and housing should be designed to be welcoming and useful for First Nations communities as well as assisting local First Nations artists.
- A Cultural Centre should be developed utilising an already existing vacant building is more sustainable and would minimise impacts to the Country. It would be a way of making Culture visible and could provide a source of income and employment opportunities for the community.
- Related business opportunities such as tours, food services, retail and affordable accommodation could all be connected to the Culture Centre and should be encouraged.
- The Cultural Centre should be a place to learn about First Nations culture for all ages to strengthen cultural ties and knowledge.
- A location for the Cultural Centre should be identified, along with identifying potential functions it will serve. An Action plan should be formed to Investigate ongoing funding for a Cultural Centre and a suitable site for a Cultural Centre.



### Recommendation Two: One Stop Shop

- An easy to access One-Stop Shop for services and community activities was recommended through community engagement and consultations. This would be a community hub that includes diverse spaces and functions. There should be a focus on services being delivered by First Nations people.
- The establishment of a One Stop Shop is recommended to provide First Nations people with central access to health services, it is suggested the Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS), provides not only access to specialist services, dental health services, general practitioner clinics etc. but also the services for pregnancy, mental health, drug & alcohol abuse and other support which First Nations people may be struggling with. This will provide health care access to First Nations people who may be intimidated by regular services, keeping health information and care centralised and reducing the need for the community to travel. Whilst it is understood that the SAP is potentially about uses within the Investigation Area, such a facility could provide a service to those linked to the SAP through their employment etc.
- In addition to the above services, a First Nations focused early education and childcare centre is recommended for inclusion as part of the community hub.
- A location for this community hub should be identified through the consultation with First Nations community. In addition, First Nations consultation can also help identify the types of services that can be included in this building.
- Future opportunities could include locating an AMS hub in Narrabri that would cater to the wider region.



Figure 13 Narrabri Town Centre Source: Murawin Pty Ltd



### Recommendation Three: Business Education Training Program

- The facilitation of Business Education training that will contribute to growing a local Indigenous Business Sector, including mentoring and advice is recommended. This will increase First Nations owned businesses supporting the SAP. This will lead to an improved aggregate in First Nations employment, not only because of the direct employment as owner-operators, but also because of possible increased First Nations employment as employees in First Nations owned and managed enterprises.
- A Business Education training program which would offer training in creating, owning, and operating First Nations businesses is recommended. A key focus identified was how to make the First Nations economy sustainable without having to rely on government grants and subsidies.
- Capacity building for First Nations communities should be developed, this could include programs delivered by Council, such as mentorship on Indigenous businesses, etc.
- Development and delivery of skills development courses is recommended for people to be equipped for the jobs that are available and provide skills for career development. A collaborative effort is needed between education institutions, governments, and high schools to create opportunities for young First Nations people to undertake trade training courses connecting directly to employment trends likely to be within the SAP. Upgrading the TAFE facilities including more computer devices is also recommended so that First Nations students can have access to online lessons to enhance their future opportunities.
- The implementation of a Graduate package as discussed in Section 5.1.2 should be implemented to create more university places for Australian students and more support for regional students and universities which could be utilised in the Narrabri SAP. The program could be delivered via block release or remote working which would enable graduates to remain in their home communities. The implementation of the 'Graduate package' could be used as an immediate benefit to First Nations students, they can gain the skills and qualifications which will open doors for employment opportunities particularly in regional and remote areas.
- Employers should be referred to the Australian Indigenous Employment Index
   (2022) for a framework that guides employers on how to create workplaces where
   First Nations employees thrive and create a culturally safe environment for First
   Nations employees.



### Recommendation Four: First Nations Advisory Committee

- A First Nations Advisory Committee should be established to ensure First Nations people are consulted during the development of the SAP. A First Nations Advisory Committee should be set up to enable an ongoing dialogue with the First Nations community.
- The First Nations Advisory Committee should scope, recommend, and develop a range of actions that could be put in place to support and promote beneficial outcomes between First Nations peoples and relevant stakeholders in the SAP.
- The First Nations Advisory Committee should come together through a First Nations led community process. The remit of the First Nations Advisory Committee should be to:
  - o Maintain and advance First Nations sites in the SAP area,
  - o Enable ongoing dialogue regarding Designing with Country, which includes "letting Country speak for herself," considering place, history and spirit, hills, plains, waterways.
  - Supporting relevant stakeholders to guide the inclusive involvement of First Nations peoples within the Narrabri SAP and governance.

# Recommendation Five: An Analysis of Service Provision

- An analysis of service provision across the domain of housing, employment, health, education, youth, transport, and infrastructure is strongly recommended so that First Nations communities have access to efficient and effective services.
- The service provision analysis will include a detailed analysis of delivery organisations, funding values and sources and the extent and effectiveness of community services in Narrabri.
- The eventual outcome of the analysis will be an improvement in a variety of services such as public transport, sufficient housing and integration of First Nations engagement throughout the different functions of related organisations, highlighted in this report,



Figure 14 Narrabri Post Office Source: Murawin Pty Ltd



### Recommendation Six: Master Plan Performance Criteria

- We recommend the following performance criteria in the Master Plan.
  - Principle: Connection to Country: The Gamilaroi people are acknowledged as the custodians of the SAP throughout planning and development. The Gamilaroi people have a Cultural responsibility to care for Country which will be respected and enabled through activities undertaken in the SAP.
  - That First Nations Advisory Committee be set up to enable an ongoing dialogue with the First Nations community.
  - Success criterion in the Masterplan should stipulate that the Delivery Plan includes:
    - o The creation of the First Nations Advisory Committee
    - o First Nations Outcomes, Culture and Country Plan with targets
    - o Principles for design that reflect Gamilaroi Designing with Country
    - o A Gamilaroi arts strategy

#### **Recommendation Seven:**

### Develop an Aboriginal Outcomes and Country Plan

- The development of an Aboriginal Outcomes and Country Plan is recommended.
   This plan should be driven by the community through the Gamilaroi First Nations
   Advisory Committee. The following are recommended areas of consideration for the First Nations Advisory Committee:
  - 1. Engaging with Education providers and setting employment targets
  - 2. Setting obligations for investors (to be included in contracts)
    - a. Create First Nations employment (employment quotas)
    - b. Indigenous Procurement Policy in supply chains
    - c. Provide a cultural levy for employment of Gamilaroi people to Care for Country, maintaining riparian corridors, Travelling Stock Routes, and SAP
    - d. Undertake cultural training with the LALC



### Recommendation Eight: Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Impact Assessment Throughout the Life of Narrabri SAP

- A ender mainstreaming and gender impact assessment should be implemented through the whole life of the Narrabri SAP.
- Since the gender mainstreaming is a tool / strategy for integrating a gender perspective into the project cycle and processes, the Narrabri SAP project cycle such as the preparation, design implementation, monitoring and evaluation should be assessed towards gender equality.
- Without considering and integrating gender equality, sustainable development project would not exist. An intersectional approach is required as all people including First Nations people have complex, multiple and overlapping social identities. Intersectionality is a way to understand how and why people have different views, positions, perspectives and issues/problems. Therefore, intersectionality informs 'the ways in which systems of inequality based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, class and other forms of discrimination "intersect" to create unique dynamics and effects' (Centre for Intersectional Justice n.d.) The relevant stakeholders in Narrabri SAP need to understand that gender equality and intersectional approaches / analysis are needed for efficient and sustainable Narrabri SAP.
- A stand-alone gender impact assessment is required for the Narrabri SAP project, as there are apparent absences from a gender perspective in the impact assessments and projects.



Figure 15 Narrabri Lake Source: Murawin Pty Ltd



# 8. Conclusion

This report outlines the needs and aspirations of First Nations people and community in Narrabri toward Narrabri SAP through the co-design workshops and engagement activities Murawin undertook with First Nations community in Narrabri over a period of one year; Murawin facilitated a series of consultation and engagement workshops with First Nation's peoples, Traditional Owners, Narrabri Local Aboriginal Land Council, and the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage, to identify the aspirations and goals of First Nation's peoples arising from the SAP.

The SAP has the potential to develop and embed an innovative approach to change, including new models, wrap around solutions, and the elimination of ad hoc and fragmented programs across a range of key areas to support First Nations people to develop and design social, medical and employment and training programs to address the inequities that exist in these areas.

A core strength and value of First Nations culture is centred on a unique worldview that draws on the experiences of continued connection to Country. In embracing and valuing this worldview, greater focus needs to be placed on the uniqueness of the "First Nations voice," not only on its validity but also on the importance it brings to understanding of the place. It is hoped that the release of the Designing with Country Framework will also be another step in enabling ongoing connection to Country during the development of the Narrabri SAP.

Appropriate and effective engagement and co-design approaches with First Nations peoples in Narrabri needs to be undertaken to leverage the SAP program to create and sustain First Nations employment and business in the Narrabri region to address the cultural, social, emotional and wellbeing, health, local justice, transport, and housing needs. Furthermore, the NSW Government OCHRE framework and Kaart Koort Waarnginy provides models for appropriate engagement with First Nations peoples in the Narrabri region and support understanding of what these models can look like in practice. Each recommendation is derived from our engagement and consultation with First Nations community and the First Nations strong desire to determine their future and have equal opportunities to prosper. The First Nations empowerment and capacity building with collaborative relationships with each relevant stakeholder should be focused on and incorporated for the sustainable development in the Narrabri SAP.



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