

A stylized map of the Southern Tuggerah Lakes area. The map features a large blue lake in the center, surrounded by yellow land. A road winds through the landscape, connecting various points of interest. On the left, there is a small house with a blue roof and a bridge. In the middle, there is a small garden with a wooden fence. On the right, there is a sign that reads "The Entrance Community Centre". The background is a solid blue color, and the foreground is a light beige color. The map is decorated with various trees and plants in shades of green, yellow, and blue.

Southern Tuggerah Lakes

Our Connected Community Action Plan

Central
Coast
Council

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play.

We pay our respects to Darkinjung country,
and Elders past and present.

We recognise the continued connection
to these lands and waterways and extend
this acknowledgement to the homelands
and stories of those who also call this place
home.

We recognise our future leaders and the
shared responsibility to care for and protect
our place and people.



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Definitions

Resilience

According to the Australian Institute Disaster Resilience, resilience is the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.

Community resilience

The ability of communities to withstand, adapt, and recover from adversity.

Social cohesion

Social cohesion is the foundation of community resilience. Strong social networks, a sense of belonging and trust enables communities to support one another during challenging times.

Original artworks by
Lucy Ward, Cred Consulting



Introduction

The Southern Tuggerah Lakes community has shown great resilience and community spirit amid a long history of natural disasters, including floods and bushfires. We have faced many challenges together in recent years, including a global pandemic and increasingly frequent climate-related natural disasters. These successive events have impacted our ability to prepare, adapt and bounce back.

Research tells us that for communities to be resilient in the face of emergencies, they need to be connected with each other, their places, and local services. Knowing our neighbours, having good relationships with friends and family, and being part of a connected community means someone will notice if we're missing, help if we're in trouble, and get us back on our feet after a crisis has passed.

Central Coast Council (Council), with funding from the Australian Government through the NSW Disaster Risk Reduction Fund, has been working with local residents to prepare this Connected Community Action Plan (this Plan). It aims to build a more socially cohesive and resilient Southern Tuggerah Lakes.

Included in this Plan is:

- An overview of our community including what makes Southern Tuggerah Lakes unique, who lives here and our strengths.
- Our challenges.
- Our community vision and values.
- Our opportunities for making Southern Tuggerah Lakes more socially connected and resilient.

Who is this Plan for?

Community members and groups can use this Plan to take action to improve social cohesion and community resilience. It can also be used to support grant funding applications.

Council can use this Plan for forward planning and resource allocation for infrastructure, strategic city planning and community development activities. Council can also use this Plan for advocacy, lobbying and promotion of community successes and challenges to industry and all levels of government for funding support or program delivery.

Why was Southern Tuggerah Lakes chosen?

Southern Tuggerah Lakes was chosen for this Plan because the area shows strong disaster resilience, with high coping capacity and a good ability to adapt to changes. The community's existing strengths and strong connections make it well-suited to handle and recover from challenges.

This Plan will build on the existing community resilience and connections to make the community even more prepared and connected for future events.

Please see Appendix 1 for more detailed research from the Australian Disaster Resilience Index detailing the area's capacity for disaster resilience.

How this Plan was developed

Everything in this Plan reflects the vision, values, concerns, ideas and priorities of the Southern Tuggerah Lakes community. This Plan is rooted in the principle that the people who call Southern Tuggerah Lakes home are best positioned to identify opportunities to create a more socially cohesive and resilient community.

Across four events, more than 50 community members from all walks of life contributed to this Plan. Two of the events were community workshops where most participants stayed for two hours, providing feedback and connecting with each other. The other two events were pop-up sessions where participants shared their feedback in shorter interactions, typically around 5 minutes.



Step 1

Gathering ideas and information

In late 2023 a hazard mapping workshop was held to identify key hazards and risks facing the community during fires and floods. This information was used as basis for a pop-up event in March 2024. At this event, community members shared what they love about Southern Tuggerah Lakes, the challenges their community experience, and their ideas to strengthen social cohesion and resilience.



Step 2

Truth-testing the draft Plan

A draft Plan was developed based on community input at step 1. At a community event in June 2024 community members provided feedback on the draft Plan and suggested ideas to improve the Plan.



Step 3

Closing the loop

Following community feedback, this Plan was finalised and presented back to the community at a community pop-up event held in July 2024.



Step 4

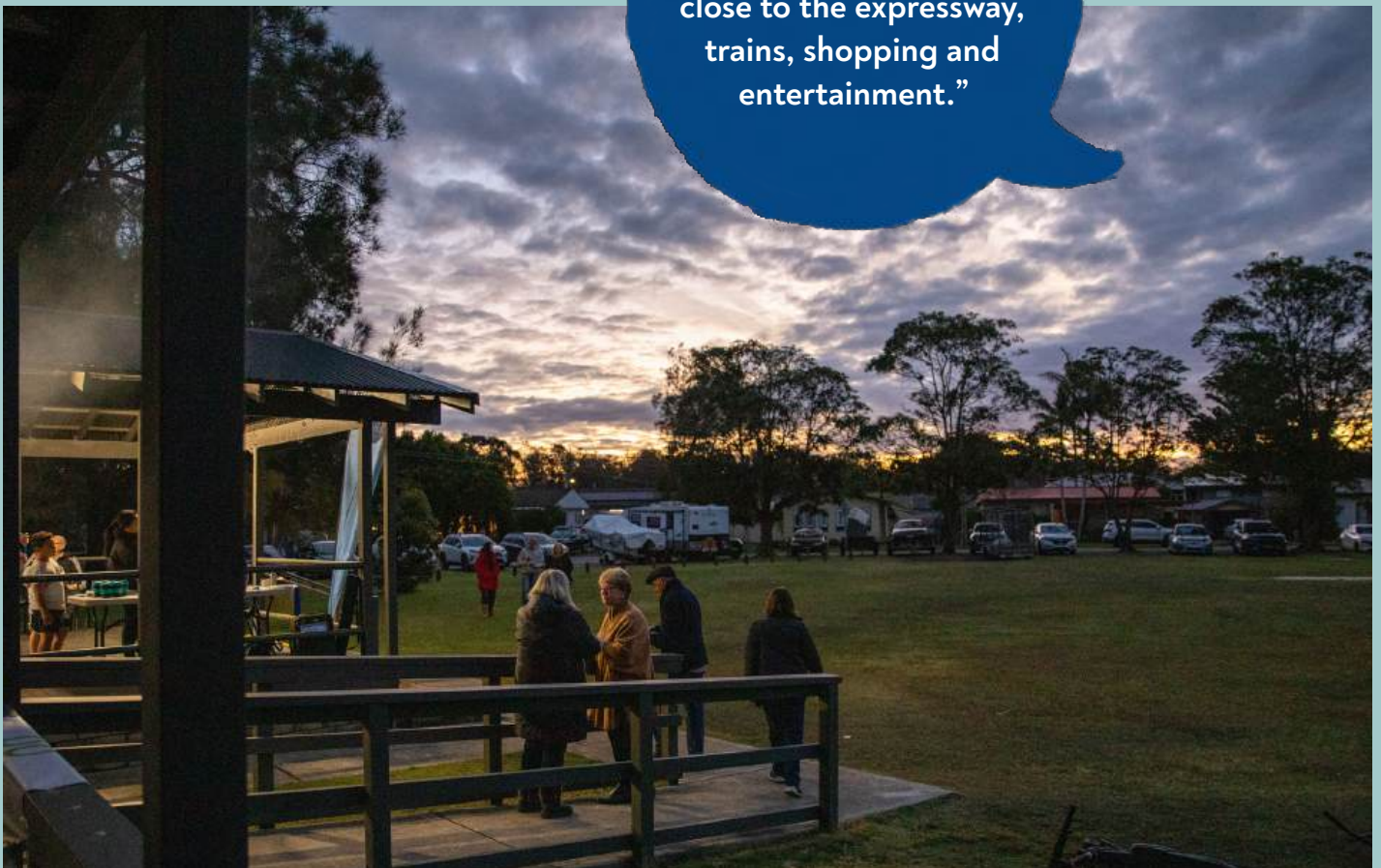
Working together to build resilience

Council and community will continue to work together to build resilience in Southern Tuggerah Lakes. The opportunities in this Plan will help guide action and priorities going forward.

“We have really good neighbours that helped us out with flood prepping and response.”



“I love that it is convenient, being close to the expressway, trains, shopping and entertainment.”



Our community

Our place

Southern Tuggerah Lakes is located on the traditional lands of the Darkinjung people. Nestled on the southern tip of Tuggerah Lake, it is 6km from Wyong and 100km from Sydney.

One of the biggest draw cards of Southern Tuggerah Lakes is the beach vibes. We have quick and easy access to a number of different beaches, including the dog-friendly North Entrance Beach, Tuggerah Beach, Toowoan Bay Beach, Shelly Beach and Bateau Bay Beach.

We are a friendly and welcoming community, and enjoy the peace and quiet of living away from a main CBD area while still enjoying easy access to shops, services and amenities.

We have a beautiful waterfront walkway from Lions Park in Chittaway Bay all the way through to Killarney Vale foreshore playground that offers the best views of Tuggerah Lake. We are also located near other waterways, including Ourimbah Creek, Berkeley Creek, Quondong Gully, Tumbi Umbi Creek and Saltwater Creek.

However, living near so many waterways means we are susceptible to flooding and coastal erosion. Although our roads and telecommunications can often be negatively impacted, our community pulls together to help each other out during these emergencies.





Figure 1 - Map of Central Coast LGA

Our people

In 2021, there were approximately 31,975 people living in the Southern Tuggerah Lakes area. This includes the suburbs of Berkeley Vale, Chittaway Bay, Chittaway Point, Killarney Vale, Long Jetty, The Entrance and The Entrance North. A comparison of key demographics of Southern Tuggerah Lakes, Central Coast LGA and Regional NSW can be found overpage.

We are home to First Nations residents

Southern Tuggerah Lakes is located on the traditional lands of the Darkinjung people and **6%** of our population are First Nations. This is higher than the Central Coast average (5%) and lower than Regional NSW (7%).

One fifth of our population are children and young people aged under 18

One fifth (**22%**) of our population is children and young people aged under 18. This is the same as the Central Coast (22%) and similar to Regional NSW (21%).

Almost one third of our population is over 60

Just under one third of our population (**28%**) is aged 60 years and over. While this is lower compared to the Central Coast (30%) and Regional NSW (29%), demographic data indicates our population is ageing.

We have more people living alone

We have a higher proportion of people living alone (**29%**) compared to the Central Coast and Regional NSW average (26% each).

We have a similar household income to the Central Coast

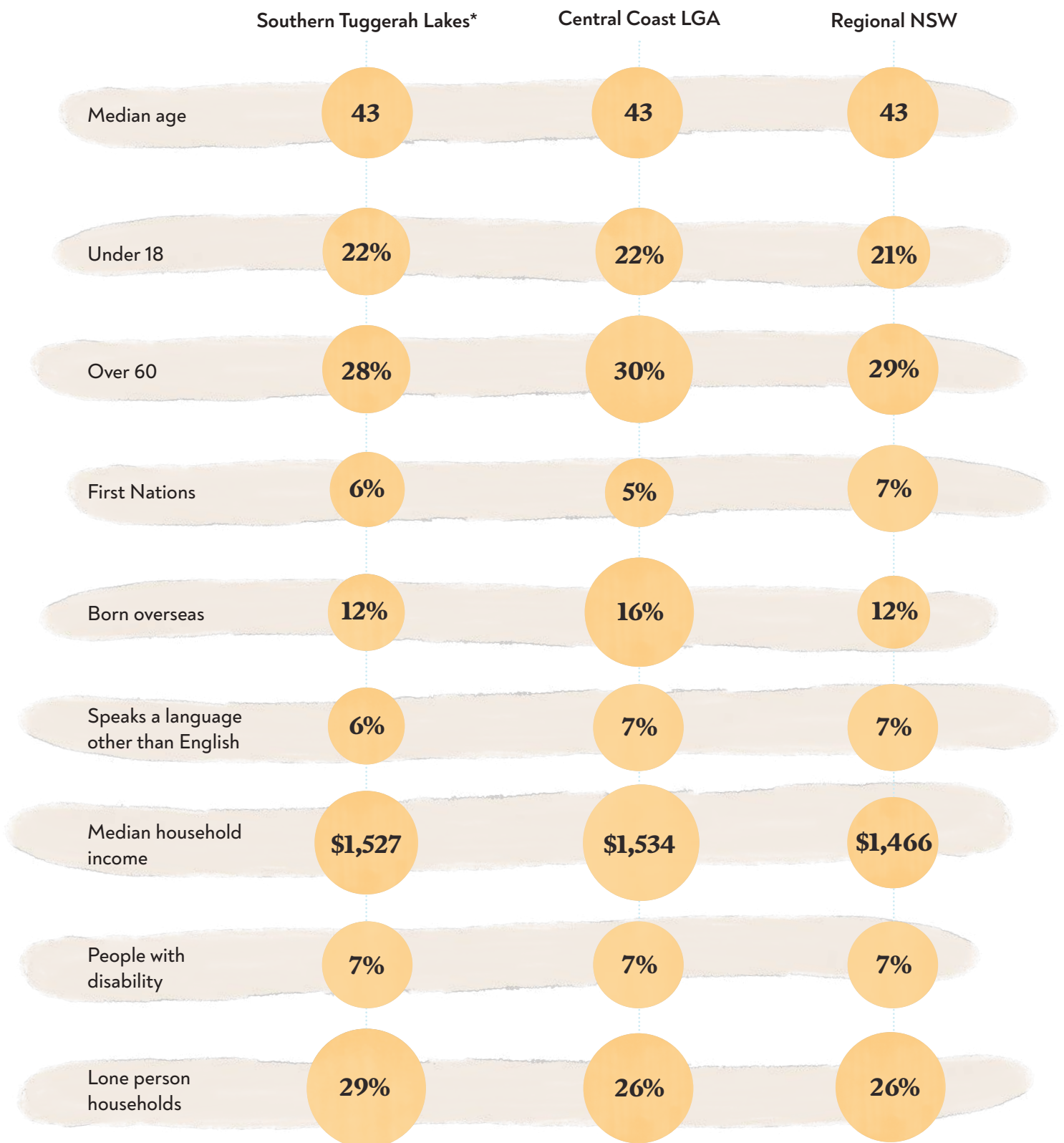
On average, we earn a similar amount per week (**\$1,527**) compared to the Central Coast average (\$1,534). This is around \$60 more per week compared to Regional NSW (\$1,466).

We have similar cultural diversity compared to the Central Coast

6% of our population speaks a language other than English at home, which is similar to the Central Coast and Regional NSW (7% each). Spanish, Punjabi, Cantonese and Italian are the more common languages we speak, among many others.

As cultural diversity grows across Sydney and NSW it is likely we will become more culturally diverse in the future.

Figure 2- Southern Tuggerah Lakes demographic comparison to Central Coast LGA and Regional NSW (Source: ABS Census 2021)



* **Note** Southern Tuggerah Lakes includes the suburbs of Berkeley Vale, Chittaway Bay, Chittaway Point, Killarney Vale, Long Jetty, The Entrance and The Entrance North



“This Plan will help us connect so we can do better after a disaster.”

“I think this Plan will give the community important information they need.”



Our strengths

The Southern Tuggerah Lakes community has many strengths that we can draw on together when faced with challenges.

The map overpage shows a selection of the places identified as important by our community.



We have **strong communications networks**. Our local Facebook pages are a good source of information both during disasters and in day-to-day life.

We are a **friendly and welcoming community** that checks in on one another and helps prepare and respond to disasters.



We have **dedicated local leaders** who guide us in building resilience and preparing for emergencies. This includes the Berkeley Vale RFS, SES, Ourimbah Residents Association, and the Chittaway Flood Response Group.

We have **access to a range of services** including public transport, shops and entertainment options. These services are easily accessible by the community.



We have **local businesses** that provide spaces for connection and boost our local economy. This includes dog-friendly cafes and local gyms.

We have **community events** such as street parties and local markets that help us connect and get to know each other better.



We have a number of **important spaces and places** that help us to access services and build community connection. This includes The Entrance Community Centre, Chittaway Point Community Hall and local men's and women's sheds.

We are **surrounded by nature**, including beaches, rivers and green space. We have many opportunities to connect with nature through recreational activities such as walking, cycling and swimming.





Pacific Motorway

Pacific Highway

To Tuggerah

Chittaway Community Hall

Kangy Angy

Chittaway Point

Chittaway Shopping Village

Chittaway Bay

Tuggerah Lake

Berkeley Vale Neighbourhood Centre & Community Garden

Berkeley Vale

Wyong Road

The Entrance Community Centre

The Entrance

The Entrance North

Long Jetty

Blue Bay

Central Coast Highway

Tumby Umbi

Killarney Vale

To Bateau Bay

Bateau Bay Neighbourhood Centre

Our challenges

We also experience challenges living in Southern Tuggerah Lakes. This section outlines some of the challenges we face under the following themes: social, built environment, natural environment and economic.

Our social challenges

Community groups have differing priorities and interests which can make it hard to work together.

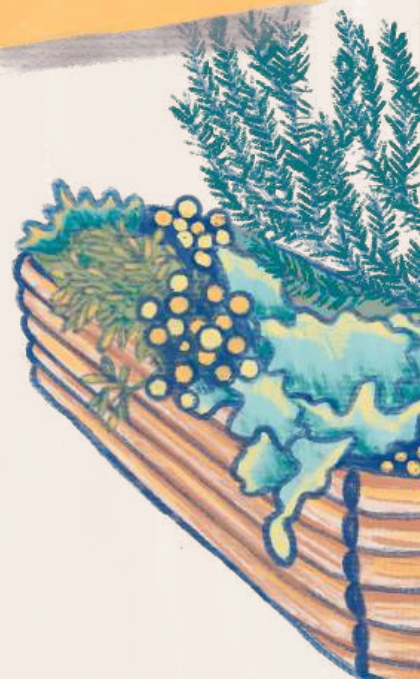
We have an over-reliance on social media as a communications tool, which leads to people being excluded from accessing important information.

Our mental health is negatively impacted by ongoing disasters.

We have an ageing community with a need for appropriate health, housing and recreation services.

It can be hard to access timely and accurate information.

There is a growing number of people staying in Airbnbs for the weekend who are less connected and prepared for disasters



Our built environment challenges

Our roads are poorly maintained and dangerous, particularly after floods, and get cut off early meaning we become isolated.

Pedestrian safety is a challenge, with a need to build more footpaths.


Our telecommunications system is poor which makes it hard to access information during disasters.

We don't have access to enough public or community transport.

Our parks are poorly maintained and often don't have enough amenities.

Sometimes our sewer pump fails and discharges raw sewerage which can impact our health.

Our economic challenges



We have more people working from home, meaning ongoing power and internet outages impact our livelihoods.

The cost of living crisis is making it harder for us to provide basics such as groceries for our households. At the same time, insurance and building maintenance costs are also rising.

There is a lack of affordable housing in Southern Tuggerah Lakes, particularly for young people and families.

Many of us do not have property insurance.

Our natural environment challenges

Our location means we experience more natural disasters including fires, floods and landslips.

There are concerns around the loss of our ecosystem and the toxicity of debris impacting the health of the Lake.

The Entrance Channel is small and gets blocked easily, making it more likely we will flood more often.

Flooding

We have a long history of flooding in Southern Tuggerah Lakes. This includes flood events in 1978, 1981, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1999, 2004, 2015, 2020 and 2021. In 2020 and 2022, severe weather storms and coastal erosion in The Entrance area led to evacuations, property damage and property loss.

More recently in, we experienced some of the worst flooding we have ever seen in July 2022. With bad flooding already hitting us in 2020 and 2021, this flood compounded issues around road maintenance and property damage.

Our community experiences many challenges during flooding events, including road closures, lack of telecommunications coverage and power outages. This impacts our ability to access emergency information or evacuate to safer spaces. The impacts of these floods can last for many weeks and even months after the waters subside. Not only do we have to rebuild all of, or parts, of our properties, we have to spend time and energy navigating insurance and government websites and processes. This can have lasting effects on mental, physical and financial wellbeing.

Fires

In 1991, deliberately lit fires spread across the Central Coast including in Southern Tuggerah.

Although our main impact is flooding, we are surrounded by bushland meaning that bushfire is also a risk for us. Many of our residents are unaware of this and are not prepared for fires.

Similar to flooding events, past fires have led to road closures, lack of telecommunications coverage and power outages. This means we can become isolated and unable to access important information.

The impacts of bushfires on our community can be long-lasting and devastating on the mental, physical, social and financial wellbeing of our residents.





“We need opportunities for older people to meet up with each other and socialise and do activities.”



Our community vision and values

Our vision for a connected community

Southern Tuggerah Lakes is a special place to us, and we cherish the laid back lifestyle we have here. We will continue to be a friendly community with neighbours that come together and support one another.

We are surrounded by waterways which serve as important places for recreation and community connection, including Tuggerah Lake and the Wyong River. There is opportunity to expand our offerings with more parks, trails, local markets, and community gardens, and to bring

people together more often with activities and events.

Our community would like Southern Tuggerah Lakes to be a place that promotes good health and wellbeing. This means providing more affordable housing, aged care facilities, and health centres. Our network of walking and bicycle paths allows us to stay active and provides easy access to shops, services and amenities.



Our values



A friendly and caring community



Equal access to information for all



**Protecting the rural character of
Southern Tuggerah Lakes**



**Strong local community
groups and businesses**



Our natural environment



An active and outdoors lifestyle



**Diverse opportunities for
community connection**



**An inclusive and liveable place -
with affordable housing options and
access to quality support services**

Our opportunities

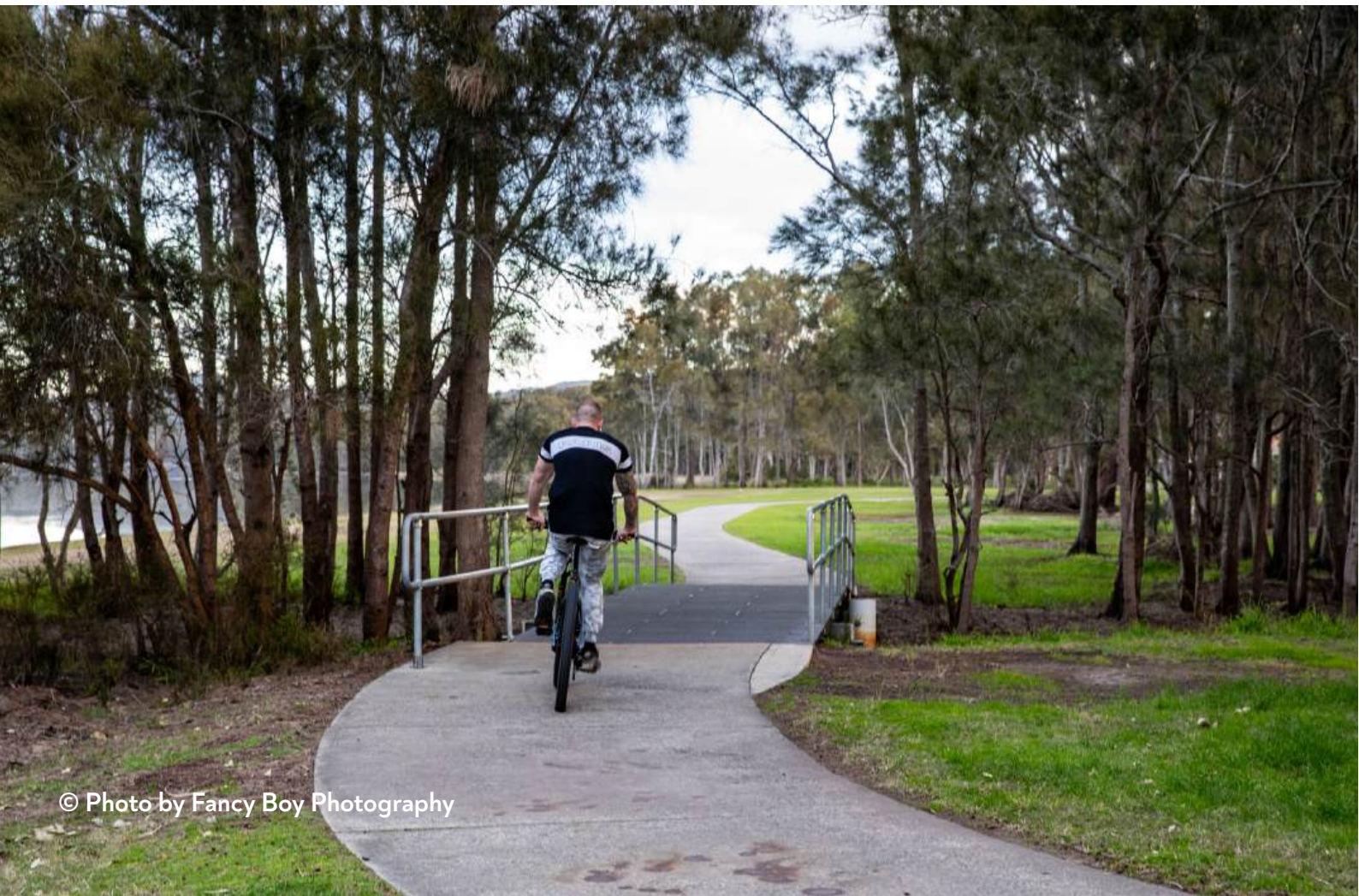
There are a number of opportunities for our community to improve community resilience. Some of these are short term opportunities we can implement in the next year, while others may take us a bit longer. Some of these we can do on our own, and others might require partnerships or funding from Central Coast Council or the NSW Government.

This section provides an overview of the key opportunities we have identified for community resilience in Southern Tuggerah Lakes, including:

- Develop a “Living in our area” manual.
- Host more community events.

There are also a number of opportunities for us to advocate to local, state and federal government for better resilience outcomes, including around:

- Cleanliness and maintenance of Southern Tuggerah Lakes.
- More flood gauges.



1 Develop a “Living in our area” manual

New residents moving to Southern Tuggerah Lakes are often not fully aware of local hazards and the importance of emergency preparedness. Developing a “Living in Our Area” manual will provide essential information to assist newcomers in understanding potential risks ensuring they are prepared for floods.. It will also help residents know who to contact in different emergency scenarios.

Information we need in this manual:

- Planning for emergencies including what supplies and equipment are needed, evacuation points and emergency contacts.
- Insurance information.
- How to connect with your neighbours, including older neighbours.
- Information on bulk-billing medical services, late night pharmacies and 24 hour vets.

Who should create this manual?

Either Council or local community groups can take ownership of the manual.

What format should this manual be in?

The manual should be available in both hard and soft copy. It is important that this is a living resource that can be continually updated.

How should this manual be promoted?

The manual and register can be promoted in many ways, including:

- Facebook.
- Library.
- Email.
- Radio.
- Local newspaper.
- At local businesses.

Timing

Short term (Less than 1 year)

Research from the Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal found that meaningful locally generated information provides more robust protections against misinformation than generic and reductive messages framing communities as passive recipients.

Research from the Minderoo Foundation highlights the importance of tailoring resilience building information and resources to a local context.

Howard, A., Rawsthorne, M., Sampson, D. & Katrak, M. (2020) Supporting community led approaches to disaster preparedness: learnings from three pilot locations. Evaluation of the Get Ready Disaster Resilient: Future Ready pilots for the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal and Resilience NSW; University of Sydney and University of Newcastle.

Minderoo Foundation (2022) Resilient Communities Framework, available at: <https://cdn.minderoo.org/content/uploads/2022/05/25130720/FFR-Resilient-Communities-Framework.pdf>

2

Host more community events

We sometimes have local street parties or markets where we can meet our community. However we want more events that bring us closer together, reduce isolation and create a strong sense of belonging. Events are also a great way to welcome new community members to the Southern Tuggerah Lakes community.

Events we want in Southern Tuggerah Lakes:

- Street parties.
- Events and activities for young people.
- Local markets.
- Fun runs.
- Men's and women's shed.
- Family-friendly events.
- Fireworks.
- Exercise groups.
- Community BBQs.

It is important these events are accessible for older people and people with disability.

Who should organise these events?

These events could be hosted by Council or local community groups.

Where should these events be hosted?

Community events can be hosted in a range of locations in Southern Tuggerah Lakes including at local parks, community halls and along the foreshore of the lake.

“We need more free activities and events for young people. It would be great to see more happening at the library, along with water play activities.”

- Southern Tuggerah Lakes community member

How should these events be promoted?

Our community events can be promoted in a number of ways, including:

- Facebook.
- Community noticeboard.
- At local businesses.

How can we fund these events?

Funding of these events could come through paid events or Council grants.

Timing

Medium term (1-3 years)

“We need more events and activities that meet the different needs of our community. In particular we need more opportunities for older people to socialise such as yoga classes or walking groups.”

- Southern Tuggerah Lakes community member

Other opportunities

Advocate to improve the cleanliness and maintenance of Southern Tuggerah Lakes

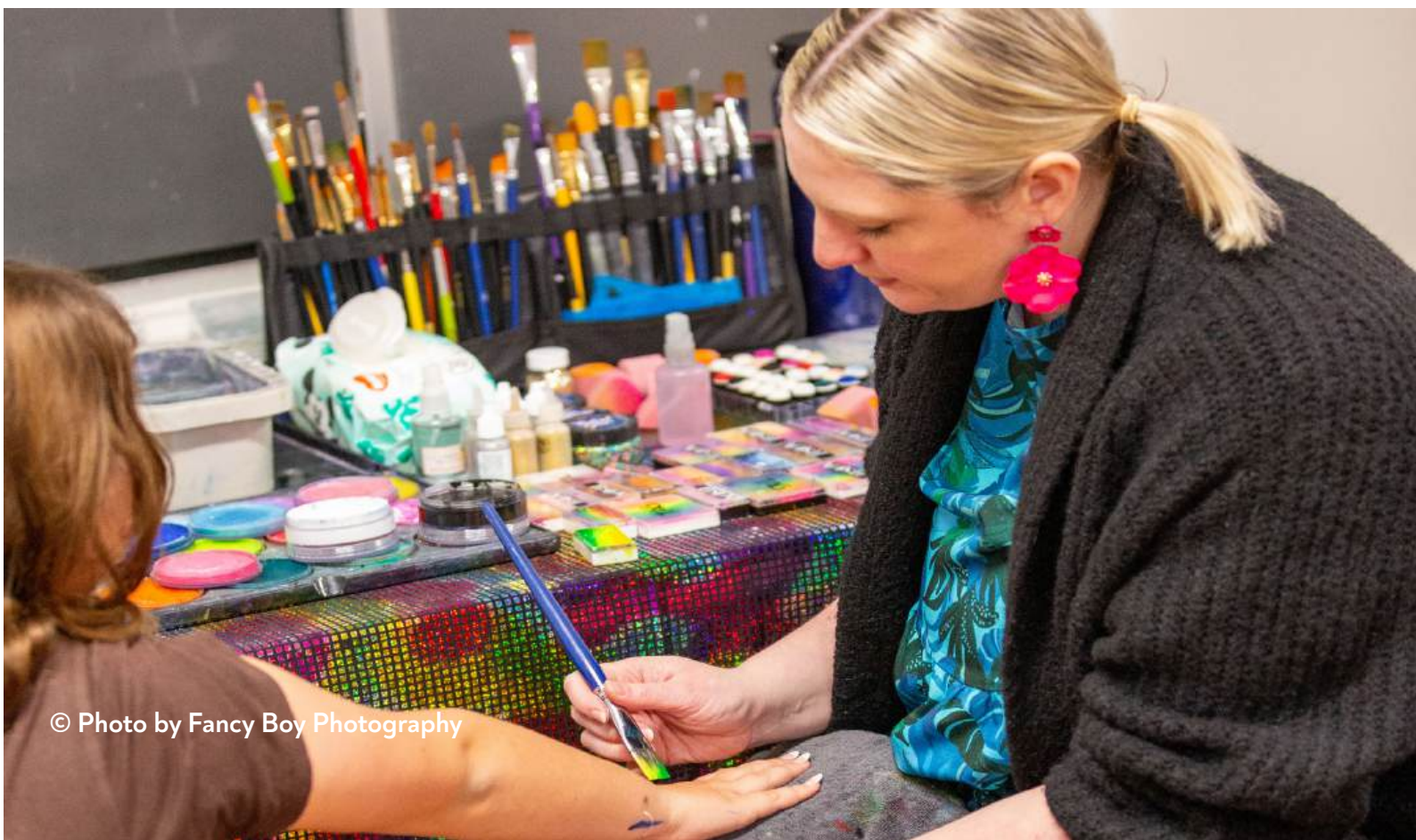
We want Southern Tuggerah Lakes to be clean, well-maintained and beautiful to make both residents and visitors to feel welcome and safe. Currently we have concerns around lawn maintenance, insufficient bins and the overall streetscape of Southern Tuggerah Lakes.

Advocate for more flood gauges

Installing flood gauges along Tuggerah Lake is essential to provide us with accurate and timely data on water levels and access important emergency information.

Other opportunities

- Defib project.
- Raise awareness about available grant and support for writing them.
- A mobile-recovery van so people can access recovery services in Southern Tuggerah Lakes.



Appendix 1: Disaster Resilience Index

Disaster resilience capacity

Disaster resilience is the capacity for communities to prepare for, absorb and recover from natural hazard events and to learn, adapt and transform in the face of future events. Below is an overall measure of disaster resilience formed from coping and adaptive capacity. The index values range from 0 to 1, where 1 indicates the highest capacity for resilience, and 0 represents the lowest.

Chittaway - .6812

This area is assessed as having high capacity for disaster resilience.

Communities in areas of high disaster resilience have enhanced capacity to use available resources to cope with adverse events, and enhanced capacity to adjust to change through learning, adaptation and transformation. Factors contributing to high disaster resilience may include employment, education, income, good access to or provision of resources and services, strong community cohesion and ample opportunities for adaptive learning and problem solving

The Entrance - .4628

This area is assessed as having moderate capacity for disaster resilience.

Communities in areas of moderate disaster resilience have some capacity to use available

resources to cope with adverse events, and some capacity to adjust to change through learning, adaptation and transformation.

Moderate disaster resilience is generally contributed by moderate levels of coping and adaptive capacity, which in turn are associated with moderate levels of economic capital, moderate provision of and access to services, moderate community cohesion and variable encouragement for adaptive learning and problem solving.

Coping capacity index

Coping capacity is the means by which communities or organisations can use available resources and abilities to face adverse consequences. The coping capacity index also ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 being the highest capacity to cope.

Chittaway Bay - Tumbi Umbi- .7355

This area is assessed as having high Coping Capacity.

Communities in areas of high Coping Capacity have enhanced capacity to use available resources to cope with adverse events and to prepare for, absorb and recover from a natural hazard.

The Entrance- .4926

This area is assessed as having moderate Coping Capacity.

Communities in areas of moderate Coping Capacity have some capacity to use available resources to cope with adverse events and to prepare for, absorb and recover from a natural hazard.

Adaptive capacity index

Adaptive capacity is the arrangements and processes that enable adjustment through learning, adaptation and transformation. The index ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 representing the highest adaptive capacity.

Chittaway Bay - Tumby Umbi- .6068

This area is assessed as having moderate Adaptive Capacity.

Communities in areas of moderate Adaptive Capacity have some capacity to adjust to change through learning, adaptation and transformation.

The Entrance- .4178

This area is assessed as having low Adaptive Capacity.

Communities in areas of low Adaptive Capacity may be constrained in their capacity to adjust to change through learning, adaptation and transformation.

Disaster resilience factors

Social character

The social and demographic characteristics of the community. Factors such as household and family composition, age, sex, education, employment, disability, language, and length of residence have well-known influences on capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural hazards.

Economic capital

The economic characteristics of the community. Economic capital can contribute to the reduction of losses from natural hazard events through improved mitigation and risk management, individual flexibility and adaptation, enhanced recovery, market continuity and business continuity.

Emergency services

The presence and resourcing of emergency services. Emergency management is a core government service and is integral to natural hazard preparation, response and recovery. Emergency services undertake a range of activities to assist communities before, during and after natural hazards.

Planning and the built environment

The presence of legislation, plans, structures or codes to protect communities and their built environment. Land use planning articulates and regulates relationships between development and hazards. Planning reduces current and future risk and enhances the readiness and capacity of organisations to respond to events.

Community capital

The cohesion and connectedness of the community. Social capital is a resource that facilitates collective action for mutual benefit. Sense of community fosters participation, community competency, pro-social behaviour and preparedness through working with others to solve shared local problems.

Information access

The potential for communities to engage with natural hazard information. Telecommunication and internet access is vital to information sharing before, during and after natural hazard events. Community engagement activities benefit communities through capacity building, social connectedness, self-reliance, training, awareness of risk and psycho-social preparation.

Governance and leadership

The capacity within organisations to adaptively learn, review and adjust policies and procedures, or to transform organisational practices.

Adaptive institutions have conditions suited to the development of the skills, knowledge and culture for managing complex change. They have flexibility and can learn from experience, innovate and adjust.

Social and community engagement

The capacity within communities to adaptively learn and transform in the face of complex change. Adaptive communities have support and resources to manage complex change and to renew for mutual benefit. Characteristics of adaptive communities include social engagement, trust, cooperation, learning and wellbeing.

The identified communities possess the above strengths and have the common barrier of:

Information access

The potential for communities to engage with natural hazard information. Telecommunication and internet access is vital to information sharing before, during and after natural hazard events. Community engagement activities benefit communities through capacity building, social connectedness, self-reliance, training, awareness of risk and psycho-social preparation.

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