

# Byron Shire Council Agriculture

## Action Plan

The Aim of this Action Plan is to elevate the profile of Byron Shire’s agricultural community, to ensure the future of sustainable farming in Byron Shire, to improve the overall customer experience in relation to rural land use enquiries and to develop plans and systems to support the Shire’s farming community.

The Action Plan has been derived from the below resources and confirmed as priority actions by the Byron Shire Agricultural Cluster Group as well as internal Council staff and managers. The Action Plan is intended to guide the focus areas of work undertaken by Council’s Farm Liaison Officer.

### SOURCES

- 2018 Farming Industry Consultation Report and Action Plan
- Council’s Rural Land Use Issues database
- 2017 Byron Shire Rural Land Use Strategy
- 2004 Byron Shire Sustainable Agricultural Strategy

<b>Goal 1 – Ensure agriculture remain a major economic contributor to Byron Shire’s Gross Regional Product (GRP).</b>			
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>PRIORITY</b>
<b>Establish opportunities for agriculture and agribusiness to increase viability and adapt to new practices, product and markets.</b>	1.1 Liaise with Strategic Planner to ensure agricultural challenges and opportunities are addressed in the Rural Land Strategy.	1.1.1 Meet regularly with Strategic Planners and Council Planners to ensure that the long-term viability of agriculture and agribusiness and preserving a ‘farmers right to farm’ are represented within Council. 1.1.2 Identify best-practice opportunities and new opportunities to pilot Byron Shire. 1.1.3 Use these best-practice examples to demonstrate opportunities so that State Government, Management and Council can support the ongoing evolution of agriculture in the Shire.	Ongoing
	1.2 Determine viability of Byron Shire provenance brand.	1.2.1 Undertake business case into the feasibility of a Byron Shire Agriculture provenance brand. 1.2.2 Develop outcomes to Management and ACG.	3-5 years
	1.3 Continue to improve land use environment planning procedures to assist farmers negotiate regulation.	1.3.1 Continue to meet regularly with planners and communicate to farmers general outcomes. 1.3.2 Maintain database of issues to feed back into Strategic Planners.	Ongoing
	1.4 Liaise with Planners on ways to support new and strengthen development associated with primary production, value-add and/or ways to improve conservation.	1.4.1 Continue to meet regularly and record opportunities in the database. 1.4.2 Continue to work with Strategic Planners and Planners to support such development, value-add and conservation.	Ongoing
	1.5 Undertake longevity study into the changes in agricultural land use within Byron Shire	1.5.1 Identify funding opportunities to fund this study. 1.5.2 Work with the sector to identify changes and scope of research. 1.5.3 Identify ongoing opportunities this research can provide for planning, economic development and sustainability within Council. 1.5.4 Assist the sector to explore new market opportunities.	3-5 years
	1.6 Determine the viability for a local distribution and food hub.	1.6.1 Undertake business case into the feasibility of a Byron Shire distribution and food hub for agricultural produce.	3-5 years

		1.2.2 Develop outcomes to Management and ACG.	
	1.7 Determine viability of produce as part of a Byron Shire 'buy local' campaign.	1.2.1 Undertake business case into the feasibility of a buy local produce campaign. 1.2.2 Develop outcomes to Management and ACG.	3-5 years
	1.8 Determine issues and opportunities around employment now and into the future	1.8.1 Investigate employment opportunities and farm labour.	5+ years
	1.9 Determine the impact of technology on the farming sector	1.9.1 Keep abreast of technological advancements. 1.9.2 Develop a think-tank to identify opportunities so that local farmers can take advantage of these advances.	5+ years
	1.10 Identify infrastructure in order to make recommendations on capacity building	1.10.1 Work with local farmers to improve capacity for rural roads to be used in connection with farming operations. 1.10.2 Work with grants team to support the improvement of this infrastructure. 1.10.3 Identify processes in order for farmers to access roads for stock movement or drought feeding.	3-5 years

Goal 2 – Continuously improve sustainable land use practices on all rural lands.			
OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	PRIORITY
<b>Develop and deliver tools specifically to address the challenges and opportunities for farmers in Byron Shire.</b>	2.1 Develop publications designed specifically to the needs of our rural lands and community.	2.1.1 Develop 'Farmer's Farm and Cows Do Moo' brochure – hard copy and online. 2.1.2 Publicise the delivery of this publication and use stakeholders to promote the use ie: real estate agents. 2.1.3 Include benefits of leaving land in farming circulation ie: rates; carbon; reduced weeds.	By June 2020
	2.2 Develop and deliver sustainable land use publication, biodiversity and workshops as part of the Smart Farms Small Grants deliverables.	2.2.1 In collaboration with stakeholders develop and deliver sustainable land use and regeneration publication specifically developed for Byron Shire. 2.2.2 To support to roll out of this publication, supporting workshops and field days will also be rolled out over a two-year period. 2.2.3 Identify mentors and best-practice to feature in publication and workshops. 2.2.4 Develop videos of farmers and best-practice being undertaken within the Shire.	By June 2021
	2.3 Establish agricultural mentoring pilot to support the publication and workshops.	2.3.1 Identify best-practice farmers. 2.3.2 Design and implement Pilot. 2.3.3 Identify process improvements and the viability to rolling out into a program long-term. 2.3.4 Identify funding opportunities to provide ongoing support.	By June 2021
	2.4 Establish links to subject matter experts regionally, nationally and internationally in order to draw on specialist professionals.	2.4.1 Look for opportunities to link Byron Shire projects best-practice. 2.4.2 Work with the Byron Shire agricultural sector to pilot sustainable land use practices and engage with experts. 2.4.3 Identify opportunities in infrastructure and technology such as mobile abattoir, farm tours and value add	2021
	2.5 Develop models to increase opportunities to re-activate access to farmland.	2.5.1 Undertake research into share-farming, leasing and ad hoc arrangements currently being used in Byron Shire. 2.5.2 Develop models that can be used by lifestyle farmers to re-activate their farmland.	3-5 years
	2.6 Improve the tools that farmers use to improve their farmland.	2.6.1 Work with relevant Council staff and stakeholders to improve land use and environmental mapping. 2.6.2 Work with relevant Council staff to improve access to planning procedures, regulations and decisions.	Ongoing
	2.7 Develop awards program to identify exemplary farmers	2.7.1 Work with ACG and Council team to develop a business case for agricultural awards within Byron Shire – evaluate whether can be included in Symposium.. 2.7.2 Provide business case and recommendations to Management and Council.	2021

Goal 3 – Improve communication, engagement and trust with rural landholders and rural lifestylers.			
OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	DELIVERABLES	PRIORITY
<b>Build communication and engagement framework and tools to provide and receive up-to-date information.</b>	3.1. Establish Bryon Shire's Agricultural Cluster Group	3.1.1 Establish meeting schedule to ensure that the group meets often enough to maintain momentum. 3.1.2 Develop Terms of Reference that are reviewed and updated as the group evolves. 3.1.3 Ensure outcomes of the meetings are fed back into Council via the Strategic Business Panel (SBP). 3.1.4 Ensure meeting schedule covers issues and locations that meet to overall aims and objectives of the group. 3.1.5 Provide opportunities for sectors to provide input such as cattle growers meeting etc...	2019 and ongoing
	3.2. Develop communications plan to ensure that agriculture is top-of-mind within the Council and community.	3.2.1 Update Council website with all relevant information and contact details. 3.2.2 Meet with agriculturalists, land holders and stakeholders as the need arises. 3.2.3 Capture all issues and opportunities in the database and feed the trends back to management, Council and ACG. 3.2.4 Improve the narrative around sustainable and regenerative farming within the Shire and its capacity to increase production whilst looking after the land. 3.2.5 Promote Byron Shire as a place where small scale food production is a viable lifestyle and business opportunity.	2019
	3.3 Establish issues and opportunities database from enquiries from farmers and stakeholders.	3.3.1 Design database to capture all enquiries and opportunities raised by farmers, stakeholders, internally and community. 3.3.2 Report quarterly on the trends and the implications for the Action Plan to Management and the ACG. 3.3.3 Report internal issues to the relevant section of Council and follow up. 3.3.4 Develop a small-scale newsletter to communicate issues to the farming community and stakeholders.	2019 and ongoing
	3.4 Establish FLO as first point of contact at Council	3.4.1 Communicate to sector FLO role and the scope of the role.. 3.4.2 Ensure all staff understand the role and when to include the FLO in discussions and projects. 3.4.3 Ensure FLO work with traditional owners to identify ways to improve protection of culturally significant lands. 3.4.4 Work with Council staff in order to communicate to farmers around issues such as weddings in rural areas and tourism approvals. 3.4.5 Establish procedures and measures to ensure improved customer service levels.	2018/19
	3.5 Establish regional links	3.5.1 Work with other Councils in the Northern Rivers to develop consistent planning policies which better reflect the agriculture, food production and rural tourism development in Byron Shire and region.	2019 and ongoing