



# Federal Village MASTERPLAN

**A 20-year vision**  
2022—2042

The Federal Village Masterplan Steering Group and Byron Shire Council would like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which Federal village sits, the Widjabal of the Bundjalung nation and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We would like to extend that respect to the Midjungbal people to the north and the Arakwal people to the east and all Aboriginal people who reside within the Shire.

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Part 1

# Introducing Our Masterplan

# Introducing Our Masterplan

## Why Federal needs a masterplan

Federal is situated in the beautiful Byron Shire hinterland with its established park at its centre and a strong sense of community. The area is experiencing unprecedented challenges from increased visitors, a changing climate and development activity that requires a strategic planning framework to ensure the needs and the desires of the residents and the environment are managed for the next 20 years.

The village of 784 residents already supports a growing population in surrounding areas and the current infrastructure is challenged dealing with this. Federal village and surrounds, like the rest of Byron Shire, is coming under pressure from increased traffic and tourism, holiday-letting, availability and affordability of housing and adaptation to climate change.

Until the masterplan process began, responses to these pressures had been ad hoc rather than holistic. This was recognised by the community and by Council. To address this, residents suggested a community-led process whereby the community members would come together to visualise what they would like their village and hence, their community, to look like in the next couple of decades.

Council agreed to empower the local community to lead itself through a master-planning process and offered help and support to facilitate this study.

## Purpose and scope

A masterplan is a non-statutory, strategic policy document that informs existing state and local government statutory planning documents. In Federal's case, these are the current Byron Local Environmental Plans 1988 and 2014, and the Byron Shire Development Control Plan 2014, which includes a chapter (E6) for Federal village. Up until now, Federal has not been the subject of a masterplan.

The Federal Masterplan — created by the community with Council's guidance — establishes a vision for a liveable, community-orientated village, ensuring that the needs and issues of the residents and the environment for the next 20 years are addressed. It defines what is important about the village and identifies opportunities for preserving and enhancing the unique quality of Federal. It provides a vision, a spatial framework and strategies to preserve Federal's distinct rural character and manage limited change and development over the next two decades. It provides a long-term planning framework for prioritising actions that support the vision, to guide future planning documents and funding priorities.

The aims of the project are:

- to establish a shared vision for Federal, prioritising actions that align with that vision;
- to develop a formal and collective document (the Masterplan) that will provide the strategic basis to promote and fund priorities and actions;
- to produce a Masterplan that will be adopted by Council as one of Byron Shire's Place Planning Strategies and feed into future statutory-planning documents; and,
- to test community-led planning that could be a framework for the whole Shire going forward.

## The masterplan process

The Federal Community Centre and the Federal School of Arts Association joined forces to initiate discussions with Council. The process evolved from these early community consultations, discussions with Council's Place Planning staff and input from an independent professional and academic facilitator. This led to the establishment of a Federal Village Masterplan Steering Group to coordinate the development of the Plan.

In January 2021, traffic surveys conducted by members of the Steering Committee and other interested residents supported what most had noticed — that vehicle and pedestrian numbers in Federal's main street were high and that the street was in dire need of a redesign to calm traffic and ensure pedestrian safety. The results of the traffic surveys were collated into a report, which was given to Council.

Members of the Steering Committee then conducted a door-to-door survey in the study area. The survey was also posted online through the many and varied local community groups and all residents of the greater Federal area were asked to participate.

In mid 2021, the Federal community was invited to attend the first formal Masterplan community meeting at Federal Hall. This meeting (which was offered at three timeslots) was led by the independent facilitator. Council's Place Planning staff addressed each session, along with members of the Masterplan Steering Committee. The facilitator then led the 152 attendees on an envisioning exercise, whereby they were encouraged to write down how they imagined the village might have evolved in 20 years' time.

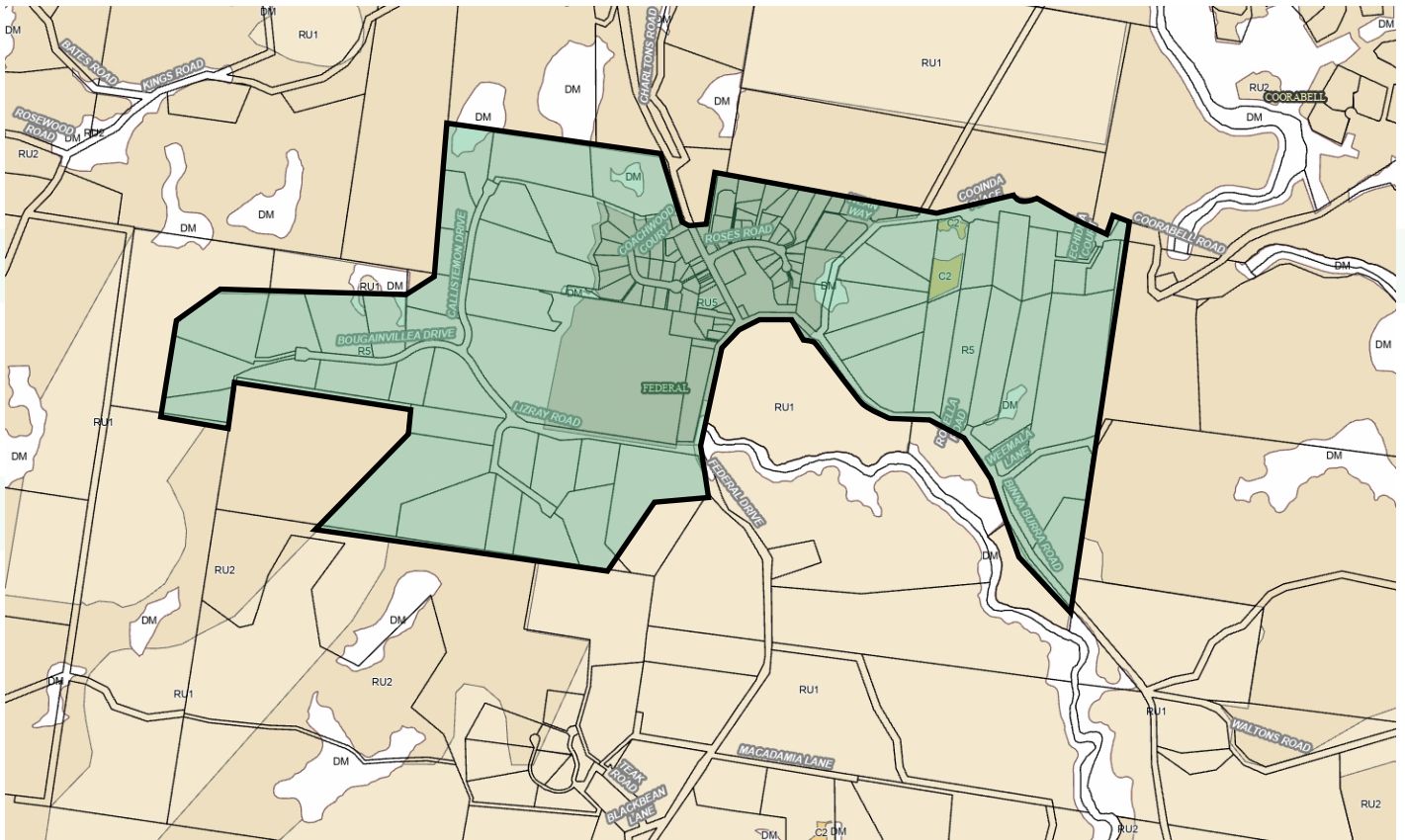
From these initial community meetings, as well as the various surveys, there was a clear focus on three main areas: access and mobility; environment and green space, and; development within the village. Members of the Steering Committee then drafted two sets of vision statements and principles which were presented to the community to vote on and one set was selected. A draft list of actions was also prepared which was presented to the community for comment and input at a second round of meetings held in late 2021.

In mid 2022 a draft Masterplan document was completed by the Steering Committee and presented to Council for endorsement to go on public exhibition. Following this, the Masterplan document was refined and finalised and submitted to Council for formal adoption in December 2022.

# The Masterplan Process



# The Masterplan Focus Area



**FOCUS AREA:** The Federal Masterplan includes the Village zone (RU5 village centre) and the adjacent R5 (Large Lot Residential zone) properties. The catchment of Federal village (which is not completely shown on this map) is much larger than this focus area.

## Our Vision

Federal village is a welcoming and inclusive meeting place, with people and nature at its heart. We embrace our rural village lifestyle within the hinterland and champion a future where our community flourishes, with each generation.

## Our Principles

### **A vibrant people**

We are bound by our strong sense of community, where diversity and creativity are celebrated, and our neighbourhoods are safe and welcoming for all.

### **A long-term focus**

We foster a determination for a sustainable future and want long-term thinking to underpin all growth in Federal.

### **A thriving hinterland**

We treasure our hinterland environment — acknowledging the Widjabul people as its first custodians, its Big Scrub origins, productive farms and regenerating forests — and we actively seek to protect and enhance the biodiversity of Federal.

### **A living village**

We are proud of the distinctive, unassuming character of our village and the intangible spirit of place, and keenly support the places and the occasions which bring community together.

## Character Statement

Federal is a low-rise community surrounded by an undulating hinterland that also bears its name. At the centre of the village, smaller residential blocks on recent rural subdivisions are accessed from curved cul-de-sacs. Bordering the village are acreage allotments, which, in turn, are fringed by working farms and stretches of regenerating bushland.

At the heart of Federal village is a small commercial strip on one side of the main road, with shops and services catering primarily to the needs of the residents of both the village and its outlying areas, as well as the visitors drawn to Federal. On the other side is extensive parkland and open space with thriving rainforest plantings and an ephemeral creek. The community-owned assets including a tennis court and a child-care centre, as well as two of the oldest buildings in the village — an 1895 School of Arts hall and an adjacent repurposed church building — all together provide a well-used and loved community hub.

Almost all the village's buildings are single-storey and most are clad in timber with pitched metal roofs, eaves and protected verandas. Some of these timber and tin buildings date back to the early 20th century when selectors settled here and cleared the Big Scrub to make way for dairy farms. Newer housing stock features lightweight cladding or brick, which is sometimes bagged or rendered. All buildings are self-sufficient in terms of water collection and wastewater treatment. Allotment sizes vary, but allow for lush gardens that screen the buildings from the streets and each other.

Throughout the village, which is interlaced with greenery, development is low-rise, small-scale and low-density. Paths for walking and cycling meander through the parkland and connect the village to its outskirts. Wide streets are lined with native trees, including the main street, which is the bustling heart of the community. Here the street's layout and its extensive landscaping calm the traffic and provide shady places for people to gather.



COMMUNITY SESSION 1: BLUE-SKY VISIONING

# Summary of Actions

## Movement and access

### Main street upgrade

#### Action 1

Upgrade the Federal main street to create a safer pedestrian-friendly street and a green, functional centre for the community that alleviates existing issues between cars, buses and pedestrians, while retaining the village's unpolished character.

### Paths and cycleways

#### Action 2

Improve connectivity in and around the village with the construction of safe, pedestrian-friendly paths and cycleways.

### Welcoming gateways

#### Action 3

Install welcome signage, including wildlife-awareness signs, and minor landscaping in the public road reserves at the entrances to the village.

### Coorabell Rd and Binna Burra Rd intersection

#### Action 4

Upgrade the intersection of Coorabell and Binna Burra Roads to improve safety.

## Sustainable development

### Planning rules and zonings

#### Action 5

Update the Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan to reflect the vision, principles, and character statement of the Federal Village Masterplan.

#### 5a

Ensure that all developments in and around the village incorporate integrated green space in their design that links to and complements the existing community green space of the village.

#### 5b

Promote the Federal Village Masterplan to ensure it is considered by Council, community, and developers – especially during the period prior to Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan updates.

#### Action 6

Conduct a heritage assessment of the main street and into Federal Drive (towards Eureka), leading to consideration of a Heritage Conservation Area listing.

#### Action 7

Contain commercial development to one clearly zoned area (the extent of which to be determined during detailed planning) and reinforce planning controls accordingly.

### Affordable, attainable and sustainable housing

#### Action 8

Encourage more affordable, attainable and sustainable housing, that is also environmentally responsive, within the existing village zone.

### Crown Lands – Native Title

#### Action 9

Collaborate with Council, Crown Lands, Native Title Rights and Interests Owners, Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council to get the best outcome for claimants and community regarding Crown Land (Lot 89 DP755697 Public Reserve 105960 and Lot 90A DP 374765 Public Reserve 228590).

# Summary of Actions

## Community green space

### The future of Lot 1 DP1003205

#### Action 10

##### 10a

Investigate the potential for the community to purchase the vacant block on the corner of Roses Road and Federal Drive (Lot 1 DP1003205), to be managed as a community asset.

##### 10b

If community purchase of the site is not possible, implement planning controls or the like to ensure the best possible development outcome with maximum community benefit, which incorporates the site into the village life of Federal.

### Federal Park

#### Action 11

Upgrade Federal Park and develop a landscape plan to incorporate the following: more seating; path improvements; increased planting; updated children's play/sports equipment; a performance space.

### Interpretive signage/village history

#### Action 12

Install two interpretative signs that acknowledge the traditional custodians and provide a brief history of the village and surrounds (supported by online/hard copy information).

## Community development

### Community events

#### Action 13

Hold regular community-focussed events that support and champion the local arts community.

### Disaster planning

#### Action 14

Prepare the community for natural disasters.

### Development contributions plan

#### Action 15

Investigate incorporating Federal and surrounds as its own area under the Byron Shire Development Contributions Plan.

### Funding opportunities

#### Action 16

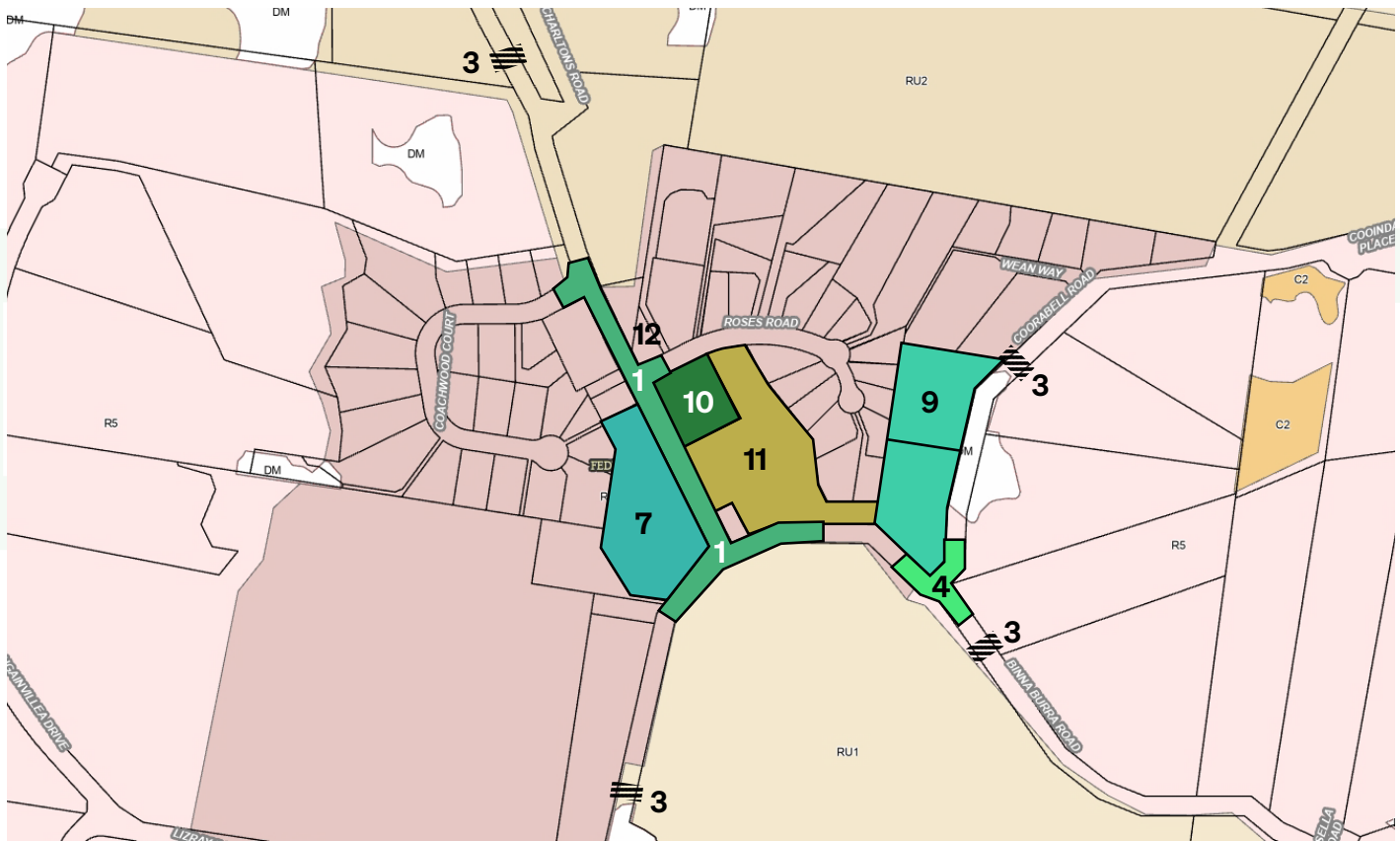
Create a report on other potential funding streams for Federal Village Masterplan Actions

### Masterplan implementation team

#### Action 17

Establish an ongoing Federal Village Masterplan Implementation Team to progress actions, investigate funding opportunities, provide annual reports to the community and initiate a review of the Masterplan after five years.

# Summary of Actions



ACTIONS MAP: The numbers on this map correspond to the relevant Action. Not all actions have been noted on this map.

## Part 2

# **Implementing Our Masterplan**



COMMUNITY SESSION 1: BLUE-SKY VISIONING

# Governance and Funding

## Governance

The Federal Village Masterplan has been created by the Federal community and reflects the importance of shared responsibility between Byron Shire Council and the community.

In terms of governance, a Federal Village Masterplan Implementation Team, with members drawn from across the Federal community, will be established to work collaboratively with Council to progress actions, explore funding opportunities, provide annual reports to the community and initiate a review of the Masterplan every five years.

Council manages each of the Shire's individual masterplans through Council's Place Planning team, with input from other Council departments as necessary (such as Infrastructure Services, Community Development and Events, etc).

The Masterplan Implementation Team will have representation on the Place Planning Collective — a group of community members, council staff and councillors which guides the implementation of actions in town/village masterplans across the shire. At least two Federal Village Masterplan representatives will be appointed to the Place Planning Collective.

## Reporting to Council and the community

As actions and projects are developed, progress will be reported back to Council with priority projects included in the Council budgetary process.

The Masterplan Implementation Team will also provide regular updates to the Federal community through an annual reporting process.

## Funding

The speed and efficacy of the Masterplan implementation will largely depend on funding sources and continued social capital provided by the community.

Many projects in the Federal Village Masterplan will be dependent on grants and/or Council operational plan funding. In all likelihood, Council's operational plan funding will be used to get projects to 'grant-ready' design status, with grant funding being used for implementation and construction.

One action in the Masterplan is to look at other ways to fund Masterplan projects. As a small village that receives a relatively large number of visitors, the Council and community could seek appropriate ways, within legislative frameworks, to gain financial contributions from visitors. More visitors mean a greater strain on existing infrastructure, and it is acknowledged that current systems often fail to account for this financial burden. That said, as a small community we need to be realistic about the opportunities to raise funds from visitors and we acknowledge that creative thinking will be necessary to find workable solutions.

One of the actions in the Federal Masterplan is for Council to undertake a review of its Development Contributions Plan to investigate separating Federal from the rest of the hinterland communities, thereby helping to ensure that local development funds local infrastructure.

# Action 1

## Main Street upgrade

Upgrade the Federal main street to create a more accessible pedestrian-friendly street and a green, functional centre for the community that alleviates existing issues between cars, buses and pedestrians, while retaining the village's unpolished character.

### Process

Redesign Federal's main street (the primary study area, outlined in red on the plan below). The new main street design will include pedestrian paths and crossings, cycleways, bus stops, parking, traffic-calming devices, landscaping and stormwater management.

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Have the plan adopted by Council.

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Have the works fully costed and apply for a grant to fund the construction.

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Construct the upgrade.

### Category

Infrastructure (road upgrade)

### Principle

A living village

### Objectives

To alleviate existing issues between pedestrians, vehicles and buses.

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To create a lower speed environment that allows people to move safely around the village centre.

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To beautify the main street.

### Study area

Refer to Actions map on p13.

### Dependencies

Adoption of concept plan by Council.

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Funding for construction.

### Cost estimate

Cost of design: \$75,000.

Cost of construction to be determined through design.

### Funding

Grant funding – village centres, safety, footpaths etc.

### Timing/urgency

Design — immediate to short-term.

Construction — short-term (funding-dependent).

### Responsibility

Council-led, with community collaboration.

### Consultation

Transport NSW

Landowners

Businesses in the study area

Bus companies

School children and parents

Tenants and residents in the study area

Masterplan Implementation Team (see Action 16)

The wider community

Access Consultative Working Group

### Rationale

**Why is this project important?**

We want to improve safety for the village community.

**Who will this project benefit?**

All users of Federal Drive.

### Relevant history

As the village continues to get busier there is a pressing need to address safety concerns and think strategically about how to improve the village centre for residents, pedestrians, business owners, bus and delivery truck drivers and all other users.

### Strategic consistency

Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP) and bike plan will need updating to achieve consistency.

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Development Control Plan.

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Consistent with Community Strategic Plan (CSP) – Community Objective: We have connected infrastructure, transport and facilities that are safe, accessible and reliable.

# Action 2

## Paths and cycleways

Improve connectivity, and accessibility, in and around the village with the construction of safe, pedestrian-friendly paths and cycleways.

### Process

Make a plan of desired paths in and around the village.

Have them adopted in the Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP) and bike plan.

Have the works fully costed and apply for a grants to fund the construction.

Construct them.

### Category

Infrastructure (footpaths and bike paths)

### Principle

A living village

### Objectives

To improve connectivity — connecting all parts of the village and outlying areas.

To improve health and safety — a reduction in local car movements as people are encouraged to walk and cycle more.

To improve accessibility — equal access for all people.

To increase opportunities for social interaction and thus strengthen community bonds.

### Study area

Federal village and surrounds.

### Dependencies

Updates to bike plan and PAMP.

Funding for construction.

### Cost estimate

Cost of construction — likely to be covered as part of adoption into PAMP.

### Funding

Grant funding — footpaths, active transport, etc.

### Timing/urgency

Design — immediate to short-term.

Construction — short-term (funding-dependent).

### Responsibility

Council-led, with community collaboration.

### Consultation

Landowners, tenants and residents who will be impacted by path locations

Masterplan Implementation Team

The wider community

Major landowners

### Rationale

#### Why is this project important?

This action will reduce short-distance use of vehicles within and around the village, encourage residents to exercise and improve social connections.

#### Who will this project benefit?

Locals and visitors, young and old.

#### Relevant history

Many (unnecessary) local traffic movements are the direct result of a lack of safe pedestrian pathways.

### Strategic consistency

PAMP and bike plan will need updating to achieve consistency.

DCP

Consistent with CSP – Community Objective: We have connected infrastructure, transport and facilities that are safe, accessible and reliable.

# Action 3

## Welcoming gateways

Install welcome signage, including wildlife-awareness signs, and minor landscaping in the public road reserves at the entrances to the village.

### Process

Hold a design competition to determine the design (wording and landscaping) of the gateways.

Agree on the best location for the gateways on approach roads into the village.

Cost the works.

Have them approved by Council.

Construct and install the signage and landscaping.

### Category

Infrastructure and Arts

### Principle

A vibrant people

### Objectives

To welcome people at defined gateways to the village.

To slow down traffic as it enters the village.

To protect wildlife.

To establish a community identity.

### Study area

Federal village approach roads.

### Dependencies

Identifying the best locations for the gateways at key approaches to village.

Achieving an appropriate design for the gateways.

### Cost estimate

To be determined at design stage.

\$5K — design competition.

### Funding

Arts grants

### Timing/urgency

Not urgent

### Responsibility

Community-led (Masterplan Implementation Team), in collaboration with Council.

### Consultation

Local creatives

Federal Community Centre (FCC)

### Rationale

#### Why is this project important?

Welcoming signage will not only let visitors know they are arriving at a living village, it will also improve safety.

#### Who will this project benefit?

Residents and visitors alike, plus our local wildlife.

#### Relevant history

One of the identified issues in the traffic and movement study was that many drivers failed to reduce speed on entering the village zone.

### Strategic consistency

Byron Shire Council Biodiversity Conservation Strategy

Byron Shire Public Art Strategy

Consistent with CSP – Community Objective: We have connected infrastructure, transport and facilities that are safe, accessible and reliable.

# Action 4

## Coorabell Rd and Binna Burra Rd intersection

Upgrade the intersection of Coorabell and Binna Burra Roads to improve safety.

### Process

Identify the main safety issues at the intersection

Design appropriate measures to improve the safety of the intersection.

Have the plan adopted by Council.

Have the works fully costed and apply for a grant to fund the construction.

Construct the upgrade.

### Category

Infrastructure (roads)

### Principle

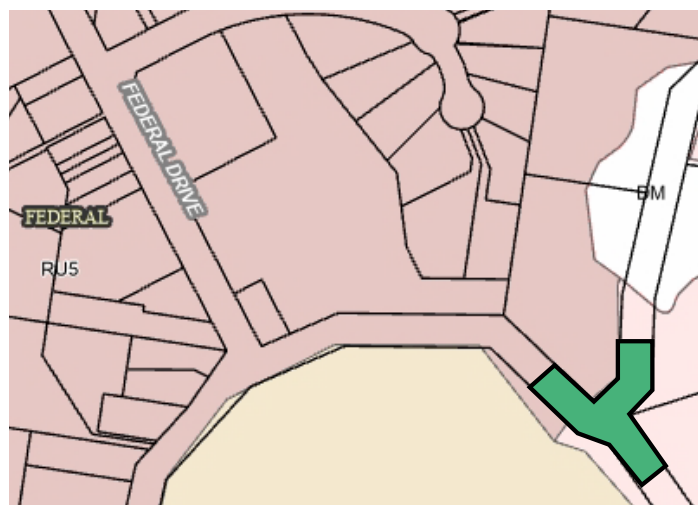
A vibrant people

### Objectives

To improve safety for all road users from all directions.

### Study area

Coorabell Rd and Binna Burra Rd Intersection. Refer to map.



### Dependencies

N/A

### Cost estimate

Council to estimate.

### Funding

Road safety grants/Infrastructure upgrade grants.

### Timing/urgency

Design — immediate to short-term.

Construction — short-term (funding-dependent).

### Responsibility

Council-led

### Consultation

Crown Lands, Department of Planning and Environment (DPIE)

Adjoining landowners

Masterplan Implementation Team

### Rationale

**Why is this project important?**

Increased traffic has made this intersection more dangerous.

**Who will this project benefit?**

All users, especially those accessing the Federal Community Children's Centre located near the intersection.

**Relevant history**

Evidence of accidents and near misses.

### Strategic consistency

Consistent with CSP – we have connected infrastructure, transport and facilities that are safe, accessible and reliable.

# Actions 5, 6 & 7

## Planning rules and zonings

### Action 5

Update the Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan to reflect the vision, principles, and character statement of the Federal Village Masterplan.

#### 5a

Ensure that all developments in and around the village incorporate integrated green space in their design that links to and complements the existing community green space of the village.

#### 5b

Promote the Federal Village Masterplan to ensure it is considered by Council, community, and developers – especially during the period prior to Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan updates.

### Action 6

Conduct a heritage assessment of the main street and into Federal Drive (towards Eureka), leading to consideration of a Heritage Conservation Area listing.

### Action 7

Contain commercial development to one clearly zoned area (the extent of which to be determined during detailed planning) and reinforce planning controls accordingly.

#### Process

Incorporate these actions into the operational plan/delivery plan and seek budget and resources to complete the planning control review.

Council staff draft changes. Local Environmental Plan (LEP) amendment process begins if necessary.

Any relevant studies are completed.

Consultation occurs with community and any relevant agencies.

Changes are adopted.

#### Category

Strategic Planning

#### Principle

Long-term focus

#### Objectives

To ensure that the Vision, Principles, Character Statement and Actions — as established by the community in the Federal Village Masterplan — inform all future state and local government planning controls for the village.

#### Study area

Federal village and surrounds

#### Dependencies

Endorsement of the Masterplan by Department of Planning and Environment.

Operational Plan/Delivery Plan resourcing.

#### Cost estimate

Approximately \$50,000.

#### Funding

Council

#### Timing/urgency

Urgent, due to development pressure on major sites in the village.

#### Responsibility

Council-led, in collaboration with the community.

# Actions 5, 6 & 7 contd.

## Consultation

Masterplan Implementation Team

Landowners, tenants and residents

Local business owners and tenants

NSW Government departments (DPE, Transport NSW, Department Primary Industries) and Rous County Council

Environmental groups

The wider community

## Rationale

### Why is this project important?

The masterplan is a reflection of the community's desire for its village.

The identified priorities need to be reflected in the planning controls for the village.

### Who will this project benefit?

Village residents and business owners.

### Relevant history

Existing omissions and inconsistencies between various planning documents make it difficult for all parties to understand what can and cannot be achieved.

## Strategic consistency

North Coast Regional Plan

Rural Land Use Strategy

Residential Land Use Strategy

Byron DCP 2014

Consistent with CSP — We manage growth and change responsibly.

# Action 8

## Affordable, attainable and sustainable housing

Encourage more affordable, attainable and sustainable housing, that is also environmentally responsive, within the existing village zone.

### Process

The Masterplan Implementation Team to engage with all parties (Council, landowners and developers) to promote the development of affordable housing at every opportunity.

### Category

Advocacy

### Principle

A vibrant people  
A living village

### Objectives

To provide more diverse and affordable housing choices, thus ensuring diversity in the Federal community.

### Study area

Federal village and surrounds

### Dependencies

LEP and DCP review (in part).

### Cost estimate

N/A

### Funding

To be determined

### Timing/urgency

Ongoing

### Responsibility

Community-led

### Consultation

Byron Shire Council  
NSW Government  
Housing providers  
Landowners/developers

### Rationale

#### Why is this project important?

A diverse community, living in environmentally responsive housing, is a vibrant and sustainable one.

#### Who will this project benefit?

All residents, now and in the future.

### Relevant history

The rapid increase in land and house prices in and around Federal has seen a lessening in the diversity of housing types and the socio-economic mix in the area, which is viewed as a negative for the long-term liveability of the village.

### Strategic consistency

Housing Crisis resolution

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Housing SEPP

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Short Term Rental Accommodation

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Consistent with CSP — We have an inclusive and active community where diversity is embraced and everyone is valued.

# Action 9

## Crown Lands – Native Title

Collaborate with Council, Crown Lands, Native Title Rights and Interests Owners, Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council to get the best outcome for claimants and community regarding Crown Land (Lot 89 DP755697 Public Reserve 105960 and Lot 90A DP 374765 Public Reserve 228590).

### Process

Start a conversation between Crown Lands (Department of Environment and Planning), traditional owners and the community regarding future use of the sites.

### Category

Advocacy

### Principle

A thriving hinterland

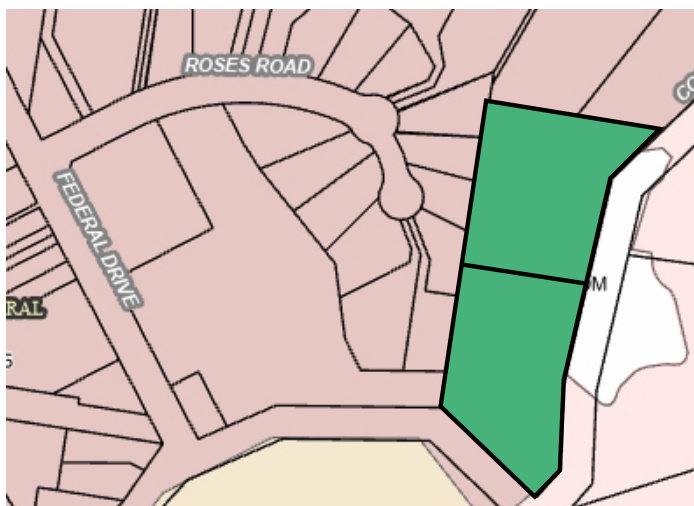
Long-term focus

### Objectives

To achieve the best possible outcome.

To connect and collaborate with the traditional custodians of the land.

### Study area



### Dependencies

Resolution of Native Title Act and Land Rights Act claims.

Coorabell and Binna Burra Road intersection upgrade.

### Cost estimate

N/A

### Funding

N/A at this point

### Timing/urgency

Ongoing

### Responsibility

Community-led

### Consultation

Traditional custodians

Native Title Rights and Interest Owners

Jali Aboriginal Land Council

Crown Lands, NSW Department of Planning and Environment

Council's Executive Officer and Community Development

Aboriginal Project Officer

The wider community

### Rationale

#### Why is this project important?

The community wants to be part of the reconciliation process in a meaningful way, and this seems an ideal opportunity to be involved and to help achieve a good outcome.

#### Who will this project benefit?

Traditional owners and residents.

### Relevant history

There is a long-term history of use of these lots by the community.

### Strategic consistency

We have effective decision-making and community leadership that is open and informed.

We have an inclusive and active community where diversity is embraced and everyone is valued.

# Action 10

## The future of Lot 1 DP1003205

### 10a

Investigate the potential for the community to purchase the vacant block on the corner of Roses Road and Federal Drive (Lot 1 DP1003205), to be managed as a community asset.

#### Process

The Masterplan Implementation Team to maintain an established connection with the landowner and to continue discussions about the future of the land.

If the owner(s) is/are open to selling the site, or part of the site, the Masterplan Implementation Team to investigate the feasibility of raising funds through the community.

Meanwhile, as a part of the review of LEP and DCP controls for the whole village, ensure best possible development outcomes with maximum community benefit for this lot.

#### Category

Community land acquisition

#### Principle

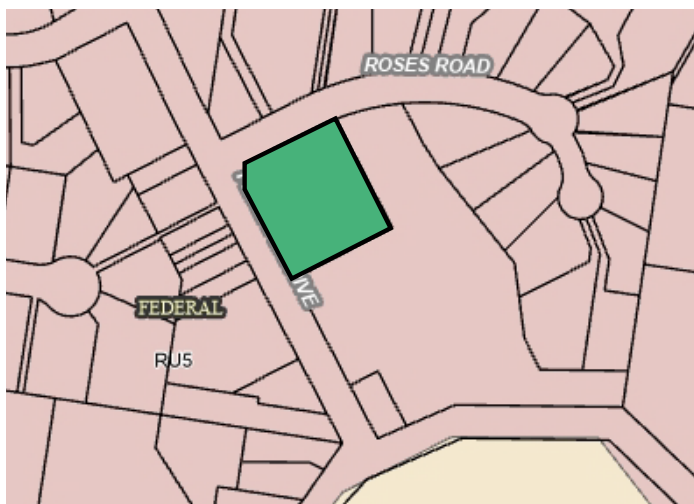
A living village

Long-term focus

#### Objectives

To ensure that the central community areas of the village – the park and Jasper corner – remain connected.

#### Study area



### 10b

If community purchase of the site is not possible, implement planning controls or the like to ensure the best possible development outcome with maximum community benefit, which incorporates the site into the village life of Federal.

#### Dependencies

Availability to purchase the site.

Securing purchase funds/commitments from the community.

Establishing a community governance model.

LEP/DCP review being supported as an Operational Plan/DP project.

#### Cost estimate

To be determined by a real estate valuation if needed.

#### Funding

If purchase — from the community.

#### Timing/urgency

Opportunity-dependent

#### Responsibility

Community-led (purchase option).

Council-led (development controls amendments).

#### Consultation

The wider community

#### Rationale

##### Why is this project important?

A growing village will never have too much green space. The community have strongly expressed the view that the two key elements of the village community heart, Federal Park and Jasper Corner, should be connected.

##### Who will this project benefit?

The community and visitors.

##### Relevant history

This block was originally part of the green space of the village with various uses over the decades and evidence of those uses still visible today. In its current vacant state it is visually part of the green centre of the village.

##### Strategic consistency

Consistent with CSP — We manage growth and change responsibly.

# Action 11

## Federal Park

Upgrade Federal Park and develop a landscape plan to incorporate the following: more seating; path improvements; increased planting; updated children's play/sports equipment; a performance space.

### Process

Develop a landscape plan for Federal Park that defines the ongoing upgrades for the park (with regular reviews and updates).

Have the plan adopted by Council.

Have the works fully costed.

Apply for grants to fund any construction.

Construct the upgrades.

Identify a management plan to maintain the park.

### Category

Infrastructure (Open Space)

### Principle

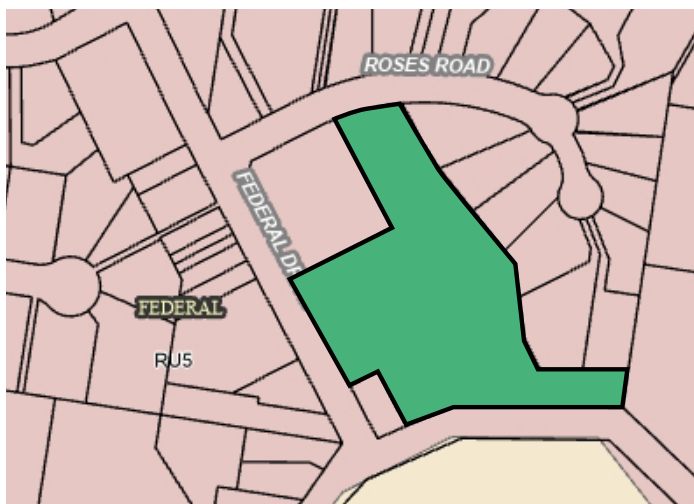
A living village

A thriving hinterland

### Objectives

To meet the future public open space needs of the Federal community.

### Study area



### Dependencies

N/A

### Cost estimate

\$30k for development of a landscape plan

### Funding

For construction — Open Spaces grant funding.

### Timing/urgency

Plan — short-term.

Upgrades — ongoing.

### Responsibility

Council-led, in consultation with the community.

### Consultation

Masterplan Implementation Team

Federal Community Children's Centre

Federal Landcare

Federal Community Centre (FCC)

### Rationale

#### Why is this project important?

There is a need to achieve sustainable and long-term planning and support for a vital community asset.

#### Who will this project benefit?

All users.

#### Relevant history

The park was advocated for, created by and managed by the community, but there has never been a structured support programme from Council.

### Strategic consistency

Byron Shire PoM

Recreation Needs Strategy

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Consistent with CSP — We have connected infrastructure, transport and facilities that are safe, accessible and reliable.

# Action 12

## Interpretive signage/village history

Install two interpretative signs that acknowledge the traditional custodians and provide a brief history of the village and surrounds (supported by online/hard copy information).

### Process

Draft the text for the signs.

Have the proposed signage approved by the traditional custodians and Council.

Apply for heritage or other grant funding to construct the signage.

Erect the signage.

Create a physical and online archive with open access.

### Category

Heritage/Historical

### Principle

A living village

A thriving hinterland

### Objectives

To acknowledge the traditional custodians.

To give residents and visitors alike information that engenders a sense of place and, for residents, encourages a sense of pride and ownership.

To reinforce community identity.

To develop a secure repository for historic information that can be regularly added to and updated.

### Study area

Federal Park (one sign) and Jasper Hall (one sign)

### Dependencies

Gathering of historical data/research.

Identify location of physical archive.

Approval/input from traditional owners

### Cost estimate

\$10k

### Funding

Heritage grants/Council funding

### Timing/urgency

Not urgent

### Responsibility

Community-led

### Consultation

Widjabul people

Relevant local and state historical societies and libraries

Local elders and long-time locals

The wider community

### Rationale

#### Why is this project important?

History recording and telling will enhance the sense of ownership and pride that locals hold for the village. Reconciliation as a nation starts locally and this will contribute to that process.

#### Who will this project benefit?

All locals and visitors today and into the future.

### Relevant history

There exists much knowledge about the settler story, but it needs comprehensively documenting and storing, with the ability to be updated regularly. Pre-settler history remains largely unrecorded.

### Strategic consistency

Consistent with CSP:

We have an inclusive and active community where diversity is embraced and everyone is valued.

We have effective decision-making and community leadership that is open and informed.

# Action 13

## Community events

Hold regular community-focussed events that support and champion the local arts community.

### Process

Organisation of the events will be led by the Federal Community Centre (FCC) and the Hall Committee (Federal School of Arts Associated Incorporated), however all members of the community should be encouraged to become involved in organising and supporting a regular of calendar of events.

### Category

Creative Arts/Community Development

### Principle

A living village

### Objectives

To facilitate pathways with Council's events team.

### Study area

Jasper Corner and the Federal Park

### Dependencies

'Fun' SEPP (Department of Planning and Environment)

### Cost estimate

Varies

### Funding

Arts/health grants

### Timing/urgency

Ongoing

### Responsibility

Federal School of Arts Associated Inc (FSAAI, aka the Hall Committee) and the Federal Community Centre (FCC).

### Consultation

Council events team  
Council grants officer  
Arts Northern Rivers

### Rationale

#### Why is this project important?

Jasper Corner will always require funds to enable it to continue to offer affordable access to a variety of local users. Community events (such as the 'Park Party'), as well as music and arts events (such as 'Fed Rocks') help to bring community together, support local artists and fundraise for community facilities.

#### Who will this project benefit?

The entire community.

#### Relevant history

A long history of community events has helped to strengthen the Federal community, giving it a strong identity.

### Strategic consistency

Council Events Guide

Consistent with CSP — We have an inclusive and active community where diversity is embraced and everyone is valued.

# Action 14

## Disaster planning

Prepare the community for natural disasters.

### Process

Form a Community Leadership Resilience Team

Create a plan for action in emergencies.

Establish a reliable communication network for emergency situations.

Establish a safe local evacuation/distribution centre/hub.

### Category

Strategic planning and infrastructure

### Principle

A living village

### Objectives

To establish a safe, secure, local evacuation and distribution centre.

To set up a communication system to keep people informed in times of emergency (that does not rely on fragile infrastructure).

To establish procedures, including evacuation plans, to enable people to safely respond to emergency situations.

To develop a local Community (Leadership) Resilience Team and provide appropriate and necessary training to community members.

To support emergency and fire services in natural disasters and establish strong relationships outside of these times.

### Study area

Federal village and surrounding villages

### Dependencies

Establishment of a Community Leadership Resilience Team.

Community consultation and engagement.

Establishment of localised stand-alone infrastructure for power and communication.

Funding for necessary activities, training and infrastructure.

### Cost estimate

Administrative help, publicity, etc. — TBD

Training course costs — TBD

Infrastructure costs for evacuation/distribution centre — TBD

### Funding

State emergency funding (via Resilience NSW, RFS, Red Cross and others).

### Timing/urgency

Urgent

### Responsibility

Council and community collaboration (Masterplan implementation group to establish the Community Leadership Resilience Team).

### Consultation

The Masterplan Implementation Team

Byron Shire Council

RFS

SES

Resilience NSW

Red Cross and other NGOs

### Rationale

#### Why is this project important?

Preparedness, adaptability and a recovery space will help reduce stress and could save lives.

#### Who will this project benefit?

All residents and visitors

#### Relevant history

The bushfire emergency of 2019 and the floods of 2022 have highlighted the vulnerability of the community, as has the increased likelihood of extreme weather events resulting from climate change that affect infrastructure, communication and supply chains.

### Strategic consistency

In line with state-wide initiatives, including local initiatives (e.g., Chillingham CRT in Tweed Shire).

DCP 2014

Consistent with CSP — We have effective decision-making and community leadership that is open and informed.

# Action 15

## Development contributions plan

Investigate incorporating Federal and surrounds as its own area under the Byron Shire Development Contributions Plan.

### Process

Investigate making changes to Council's Development Contributions Plan to identify Federal as its own entity, separate from the wider hinterland, so that money collected can be put back into the village and surrounds.

### Category

Governance/funding

### Principle

A long-term focus  
A thriving hinterland

### Objectives

To secure the benefits from development in and around Federal for the community.

To keep the Federal Masterplan front of mind with council and developers.

### Study area

Federal and surrounding villages.

### Dependencies

NSW Government review of Development Contributions Plans

### Cost estimate

N/A

### Funding

N/A

### Timing/urgency

Urgent — for next review of Byron Shire Development Contributions Plan.

### Responsibility

Byron Shire Council

### Consultation

Surrounding villages  
NSW Government  
The wider community

### Rationale

#### Why is this project important?

To ensure hinterland areas are equitably receiving their share of development contributions over the long-term and in a transparent manner.

#### Who will this project benefit?

Current and future residents of Federal.

#### Relevant history

There has been a large increase in development in and around Federal with little evidence of infrastructure spending.

### Strategic consistency

Byron Shire Development Contributions Plan

Consistent with Community Strategic Plan — we manage growth and change responsibly.

# Action 16

## Funding opportunities

Create a report on other potential funding streams for Federal Village Masterplan Actions

### Process

Research creative solutions to ongoing issues with funding Masterplan projects

Look to other international examples for inspiration

Continue to lobby all levels of government to allow communities like Federal to have the infrastructure and services to support the village.

### Category

Funding

### Principle

A long-term focus

### Objectives

Ensure the financial sustainability of the Masterplan Actions

Seek solutions to harness funds from tourists and visitors in the village

### Study area

N/A

### Dependencies

N/A

### Cost estimate

N/A

### Funding

N/A

### Timing/urgency

Short term

### Responsibility

Masterplan implementation group in collaboration with Byron Shire Council

### Consultation

Business owners

Tourism operators

### Rationale

#### Why is this project important?

There are a lot of actions included as a part of the Masterplan and all of these actions will need resourcing. We can't rely on the rate base to provide funding for all community desires ad must look for creative solutions.

#### Who will this project benefit?

All residents, Council, Masterplan process.

#### Relevant history

A lack of funding has restricted the ability to provide infrastructure improvements and meet community expectations.

### Strategic consistency

STRA policies

Consistent with CSP — We manage growth and change responsibly.

# Action 17

## Masterplan implementation team

Establish an ongoing Federal Village Masterplan Implementation Team to progress actions, investigate funding opportunities, provide annual reports to the community and initiate a review of the Masterplan after five years.

### Process

Identify community members committed to steering the implementation of Masterplan actions.

Recruit members and formalise the group following the adoption of the Masterplan.

Prioritise actions

Liaise with Council and the Place Planning Collective to progress actions.

Report back regularly to the community on the implementation of the Masterplan.

Conduct a thorough review of Masterplan action progress every five calendar years.

### Category

Governance

### Principle

A long-term focus

A thriving hinterland

### Objectives

To ensure continued collaboration between Council and the community.

To ensure a range of views/experiences/skills are represented in the Implementation Team.

### Study area

N/A

### Dependencies

N/A

### Cost estimate

N/A

### Funding

N/A

### Timing/urgency

Short-term

### Responsibility

Masterplan Implementation Team in collaboration with Byron Shire Council.

### Consultation

The wider community

Place Planning Collective

### Rationale

#### Why is this project important?

Having a local team driving the action and implementation of project will help to ensure the longevity and sustainability of the Masterplan. Five-yearly reviews will keep the Masterplan on track and relevant.

#### Who will this project benefit?

The Federal community and Byron Shire Council.

#### Relevant history

The Federal Community Centre (FCC) has often held this role; having a Masterplan Implementation Team will enable a more deliberate approach. Financial restrictions have inhibited action on all aspects of village infrastructure improvements and general community desires.

### Strategic consistency

Community Participation Plan

Consistent with CSP — We have effective decision-making and community leadership that is open and informed.

Part 3

## **Behind Our Masterplan**

# A Brief History of Federal

The hinterland village of Federal is situated 16km due west of Byron Bay, in Northern New South Wales. It stands on land that was originally part of the Big Scrub — 75,000 hectares of lowland subtropical rainforest.

The acknowledged custodians of the Big Scrub, known as Gabul, are the Widjabul people of the Bundjalung nation<sup>1</sup>. For thousands of years, pathways through their country linked spiritually significant features of the landscape, ceremonial, initiation and meeting grounds, men's and women's sites, areas of seasonal plenty, places to shelter during the wet season and sources of traditional medicine.

This culturally significant and richly bio-diverse landscape was transformed from the mid 1800s by Europeans who cleared almost all of the rainforest, first harvesting the timber and then establishing dairy farms and banana plantations. Men from China and the Punjab in India also worked on the European farms until the Immigration Restriction Act (which formally established the White Australia policy) came into being on 23 December 1901.

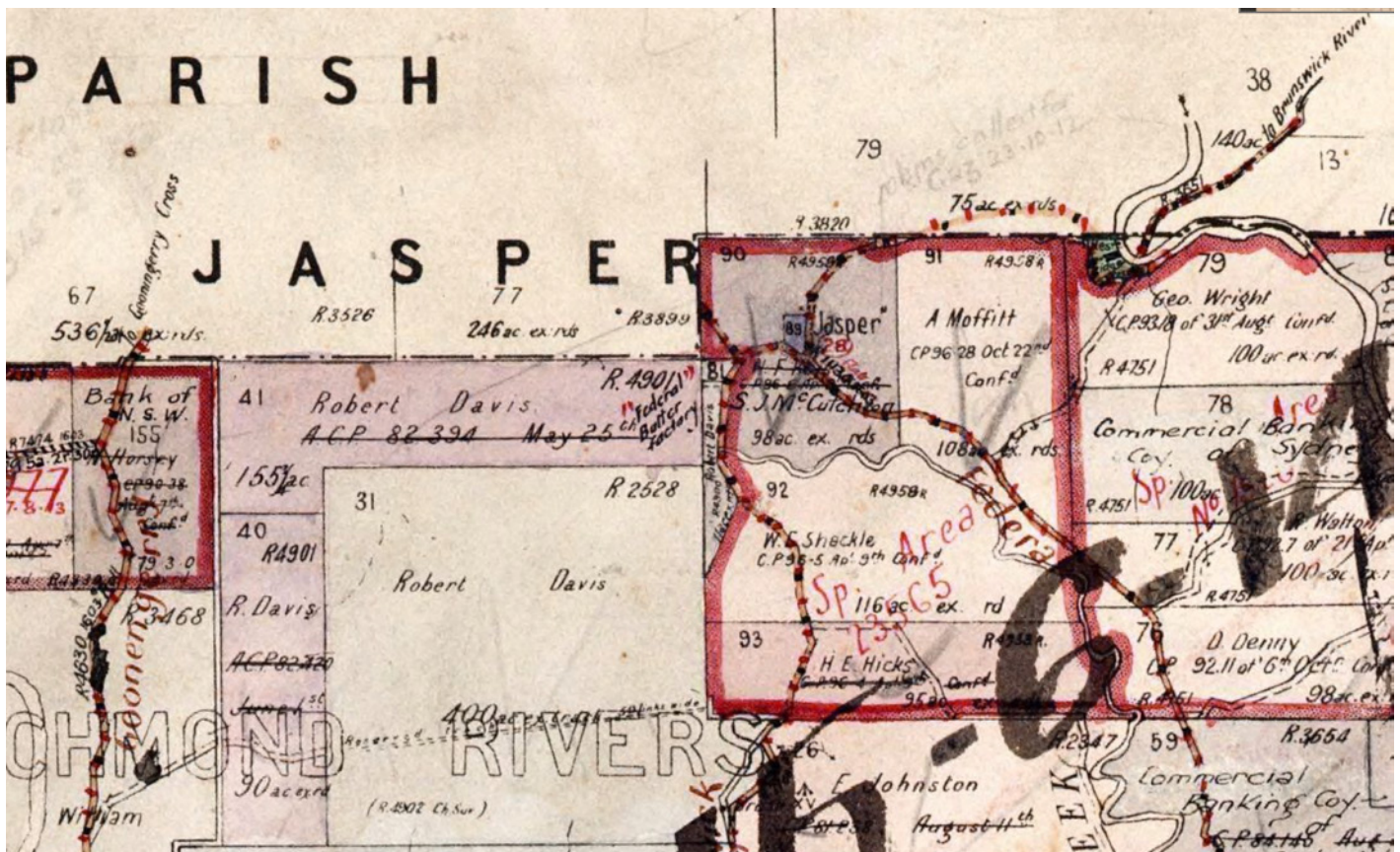
The arrival of the Europeans had an undeniably profound and devastating impact on the Bundjalung people and their culture.

Large-scale land clearing destroyed the natural environment and food resources. As well as dispossessing the original inhabitants of their country, the European settlers also brought disease<sup>2</sup>.

Among the first European settlers to select land in the area were William Risley and William John Bate, two farmers from the South Coast of NSW. According to Bate's obituary, he was guided to the area in March 1882 by a cedar-getter called Daniel Withers<sup>3</sup>. Other early dairy farmers to settle in what is now called Federal included Robert Davis and W.E.Shackle.

Parish maps of the early 1890s show a settlement at the junction of Old Brunswick Road (now Federal Drive) and Binna Burra Road, straddling the boundary of the Parishes of Jasper and Clunes. Federal, which was then known as Jasper, is one of a handful of villages that sprang up along Old Brunswick Road, the oldest road in the Byron Shire, which linked Lismore to the Brunswick River. By 1893 a butter factory had been established in the village<sup>4</sup> and tenders were called for the erection of a school building on Crown Land at Jasper two years later.<sup>5</sup>

An obituary for Andrew Keys, one of the district's first European settlers, notes that he was a member of a delegation of local



DETAIL FROM 1904 PARISH OF CLUNES MAP

<sup>1</sup> The Big Scrub Rainforest: A Journey through Time, Rous County Council and Big Scrub Landcare, 2017, p. 25

<sup>2</sup> Joanna Boileau, Community Based Heritage Study, Thematic History, Tweed Shire Council, Sept 2004 [https://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/documents/community/heritage-and-history/tweed\\_thematic\\_history\\_2004.pdf](https://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/documents/community/heritage-and-history/tweed_thematic_history_2004.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Northern Star, 9 July 1948

<sup>4</sup> Northern Star, 24 January 1935

<sup>5</sup> Northern Star, 17 July 1895

<sup>6</sup> Northern Star, 9 July 1948

# A Brief History of Federal contd.

residents who took a petition to Parliament to have the village's name changed from Jasper to Federal<sup>6</sup>. The catalyst for the name change was perhaps a bout of nationalistic fervour around the time of Federation.

By 1909, the Wise's NSW Telephone Directory lists 61 people living in the wider area of Federal. Most were farmers, but there were also two blacksmiths, a butcher, a storekeeper/postmaster and a teacher. In the 1920s two tick inspectors joined the community and, in the 1940s, the owner of refreshment rooms is listed. The population waxes and wanes with the times, swelling in the 1920s and 1930s and then halving in the 1940s and 1950s following the outbreak and aftermath of the Second World War.

The hub of community life was — and still is — the School of Arts building, opened on 2 January 1899. Over the last 120-plus years the School of Arts (now known as Federal Hall) has been the venue for public lectures, balls, concerts, dances, euchre tournaments, farewell parties, Christmas celebrations, community and local club meetings, table tennis, carpet bowls and theatre performances. More recently, film nights, pop-up food events and art shows, as well as yoga, community choir practice, wedding parties, wakes and dance classes have been held there.

## Recent history and continued community activism

Federal is noted for its strong community spirit, which has achieved much for its residents. The first European settlers were committed to creating the village's public buildings, donating land and raising money to construct a Butter Factory (since demolished), School of Arts building and two churches, as well as campaigning for a local school.

Following the closure of the school in 1978, and the removal of the school building to Clunes two years later, a group of dedicated Federal locals — now named the Federal Community Centre Inc. (FCC) — successfully campaigned for the retention of the 1905 schoolmaster's house for use as a preschool. When the Methodist Church (designed and built by Lowe and Beckinsdale, and opened on 28 May 1909) was moved to Eureka in 1987, the FCC was responsible for the construction of two low-cost houses on the former church site, near the junction of Federal Drive and Binna Burra Road, to mark International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. The FCC also drove the creation of Federal Park in the early 1990s.

Both Federal Hall and the adjacent Anglican Church — the latter also designed and built by Lowe and Beckinsdale and opened on 28 July 1909 — form what is now known as Jasper Corner. In 2012, the Federal School of Arts Associated Inc. management committee (also known as the Hall Committee) raised over \$200,000 for the purchase of the Anglican church for community use, and it is now a popular venue for weddings and other classes and events. The two heritage buildings are listed as local heritage items in the Byron Local Environmental Plan 2014.



JASPER PUBLIC SCHOOL, 1901



CRICKET IN FEDERAL



GATHERING AT FEDERAL HALL 2019 | PHOTO BY KURT PETERSEN

# Challenges and Opportunities

## Environment and natural hazards

Federal village is situated on a small plateau at 140m elevation in the Wilsons River Catchment — a supplementary water source for Rous County Council (the main source being Rocky Creek Dam). A tributary, Stoney Creek, runs through the western side of the village.

The topography of this area is typical of the Byron Bay Hinterland – rolling hills and valleys with rich soils and high rainfall. Federal's soils are primarily deep, well-structured red/brown balsatic soils with a high clay content. Undulating country surrounds the village and while some of it has been retained as grazing land, there are also hobby farms and small-acreage residential allotments, as well as stretches of regenerating rainforest that provide both visual amenity and habitat corridors, particularly to the resident koala population. The result is that the greater area of Federal is now a mosaic of vegetation types — including mono-cultural farm forestry, a variety of farming (including grazing), weed-dominated sections, rainforest remnants and regrowth areas.

Federal Park, in the centre of the village, is a gathering place and a green space — a reminder of how our community is connected to the ecological history of the area. Importantly, the ongoing planting of endemic rainforest species ties the park to the area's ecological roots as part of the Big Scrub.

## Challenges

### Risks for wildlife

The local environment faces multiple challenges. Increases in population, development and tourism, including the escalation of traffic that accompanies these changes, has a devastating impact on the native flora and fauna. Roadkill of native wildlife has increased at an alarming rate over the last few years and there are major concerns for the small and vulnerable local koala population due to cars, domestic pets and feral animals.

### Climate change impacts

Climate change, with its irregular rainfall patterns and higher temperatures year-round, is providing a unique challenge to the ecology of the area. Re-establishing lowland subtropical rainforest with bush regeneration is becoming increasingly difficult in a changing climate as unusually dry and hot weather increases the risk of failure. As fauna populations gradually move south to find a more suitable climate, they are faced with diminishing corridors and the disappearance of habitat.

More frequent heavy rainfall events due to climate change will increase the likelihood and severity of flooding in the Northern Rivers region. Whilst Federal village is elevated and unlikely to sustain any major damage, such events not only heavily impact riverine systems through erosion and landslips, but also the local ecology through a flush of new weed infestation from upstream. Flood conditions in the village flow through the existing stormwater systems, further exacerbating erosion along roads and waterways.

The village of Federal is now surrounded by areas of designated bush fire-prone land. Bush fires in late 2019, made worse by climate change, resulted in massive habitat loss in the Nightcap Range National Park, including that for vulnerable and threatened species. Bush fires also pose an interesting evolution of the local ecology as

more fire-resistant species (e.g. eucalypts and banksias) spread into areas that were traditionally lowland subtropical rainforest. But even these species, including those which rely on fire for regeneration, cannot withstand intense, high-temperature fires.

### Invasive weed species

The few Big Scrub remnants that remain are listed as critically endangered. Invasive and noxious weeds continue to impact both remnant and regrowth areas of native vegetation. Weeds seriously degrade the rainforest structure and arrest the potential for natural regeneration. Riparian zones are particularly prone to infestation and, as major wildlife corridors, are critical to maintaining viable populations for local biodiversity.

### Water quality

The importance of water quality is, of course, not limited to the flora and fauna. While residents of Federal must collect and store their own water, other hinterland villages and towns are connected to town water. Rocky Creek Dam is the main source of potable water in the region, however Emigrant Creek Dam and the Wilsons River Source (which pumps water directly from the river to the Nightcap Water Treatment Plant) are supplementary sources for Rous County Council.

Monitoring of the Wilson River catchment sites show that the key high-risk hazards included biological hazards from poor-functioning on-site sewage management systems and livestock access to waterways, as well as turbidity due to urban stormwater, bank erosion and runoff from exposed soils due to agricultural land use. Horticultural land use is particularly associated with elevated oxidised nitrogen potentially indicating fertiliser runoff to waterways. The effect of these hazards on aquatic biota can be devastating and anecdotal evidence suggests there has been an overall reduction in the quantity and quality of aquatic wildlife. While the issues of water quality don't directly affect most Federal village residents (due to the need to be self-sufficient in terms of water collection and storage), there are indirect impacts on the overall wellbeing of our community, as well as our connections with others in the region.

## Opportunities

### An active community

There is immense interest and passion within our community to protect and enhance the local environment. Many residents, often with the help of environmental groups such as Federal and Goonengerry Landcare, are proactively restoring the forest with bush regeneration practices on both private and public land.

The Wilsons River, Coopers Creek and associated tributaries, provide critical riparian habitat for native species and a connection for residents to interact with nature. With concerted effort and increased funding, our local community can build upon some of the excellent outcomes already achieved in restoring, protecting and maintaining these wildlife corridors.

Conservation of High Environmental Value (HEV) vegetation can be prioritised for protection and enhancement. Private landholders, Council, Environmental Protection Agencies, local Landcare groups and other stakeholders can be encouraged to work together to conserve and improve environmental outcomes. Priority areas identified under the Byron Shire Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (2020-2030) could also be included in local restoration and conservation plans.

# Challenges and opportunities

## **Connecting with the Bundjalung people**

There are a number of portions of Crown Land within Federal Village that are under Native Title investigation. There is an opportunity for partnerships with the local Widjabul community leaders to ensure appropriate cultural protocols are followed respectfully.

## **Improving water quality and greening the village**

Rous County Council monitoring has shown that sites within catchments with high native vegetation cover (such as national parks and nature reserves) had lower turbidity and nutrient concentrations. With this in mind, land and riparian management practices should, wherever possible, work towards increasing native vegetation cover, including planting dense groundcovers in riparian zones to improve the buffering of waterways and the quality of water. Federal Landcare is already working with local landholders on the western edge of the village along Stoney Creek to restore the riparian zone and other opportunities can be identified.

## **Development controls**

The revision of development controls will provide an opportunity to nurture and protect the existing wildlife and support local biodiversity by developing and protecting green corridors that link private and public lands and assist in the movement of native fauna around Federal.

## **Bush fire risk mapping and management**

The mapping of bush fire-prone land by the NSW Rural Fire Service is constantly under review. When a property's status changes, an alert system could be triggered so that affected property owners can make any necessary adjustments.

# Challenges and Opportunities

## Built heritage, desired character and development

Federal village originally consisted of a string of shops, workshops and cottages lining the western side of Old Brunswick Road and Albert Street (now known as Federal Drive), plus the two timber-clad civic buildings on the eastern side of the road. Timber farmhouses, dairy bails and piggeries dotted the surrounding hills, standing on land parcels of around 100 to 150 acres. Examples of these buildings still exist both within the village zone itself and the wider area that constitutes Federal.

With the adoption of the first Byron Local Environment Plan in 1988, subdivision for residential development was permitted on parts of the surrounding grazing land and new building blocks became available. In the early 1990s, the Roses Road, Wean Way and Coachwood Court cul-de-sac subdivisions in the village centre and larger acreage subdivisions along Coorabell, Binna Burra and Lizray Roads were included in a Development Control Plan (DCP) for Federal.

In spite of these more recent subdivisions, as well as further new development, the overriding character of the village core continues to be rural and low-rise. Houses in and around the village are generally clad in timber with pitched metal roofs, eaves and verandas. Some of the newer dwellings in the village have second storeys, though these tend to read as attic conversions. Newer housing stock features mainly lightweight cladding, though there is a small number of masonry houses.

Allotment sizes vary, but most allow for lush gardens that screen the buildings from the streets and each other which emphasises the small-scale and low-density nature of development in the village. Trees and connecting green spaces feature, providing shade, privacy screening, pathways and habitat for wildlife.

The fact that Federal is not connected to town water or sewerage facilities continues to act as a natural constraint on development as any new resident or commercial operator has to factor in on-site water storage, stormwater and wastewater disposal. Larger lot sizes are required to deal with this constraint, which, in turn, helps to safeguard the rural feel of our village.

## Challenges

### Population growth, changing demographics and development pressure

As of the 2021 Census, there were 784 people living in 344 private dwellings in greater Federal, which includes the village centre and outlying areas. In the early days the majority of residents listed dairy farming as their main occupation, but today's residents have diverse backgrounds, illustrating the changing demographics of the area. There are residents who travel outside the area to work each day, some who work from home and others who have retired to the area. Families with young children make up a sizeable percentage of permanent residents, while a growing number of properties are used as holiday homes by their owners who live elsewhere.

The number of absentee owners with different priorities has had a negative impact on the fabric and social cohesion of our village. Across Australia real estate values are rising rapidly as city dwellers move to regional areas. This makes the provision of affordable housing stock and long-term rental accommodation for essential workers more difficult to achieve.

Increased numbers of residents on new Community Title subdivisions in outlying areas leads to increased pressure on existing services and infrastructure, as does the growing number of tourists being drawn to Federal. With popularity comes development pressure in the form of commercial development geared towards tourists rather than residents. This leads to a further lessening of locally available services as higher rents push out small businesses serving locals. In turn, there is an increased need for locals to travel to access essential services.

### Land-use restrictions and custodianship

Present land-use zonings restrict the expansion of the village. Further significant residential subdivision is currently only possible on one parcel that was zoned RU5 in the original DCP in 1989. The parcels of Crown land (the former primary school/paddock site) are subject to a land claim by traditional owners, the Widjambul people. Federal Park is council-owned and Jasper Corner is owned by the community.

## Opportunities

### Planning for the future

The state and local government planning codes could be updated to align with the vision and principles of our Masterplan. While the opportunities for residential expansion are limited due to current land zonings, a future revision of the Byron LEP could lead to an expansion of the village RU5 zone. At the time of publication, there are two 4000 sqm vacant RU5 blocks on the main street within the village centre that are yet to be developed, and some large R5-zoned lots could meet the requirements for subdivision or strata-titled dual occupancy.

A sizeable percentage of the housing stock in Federal is older houses, with many buildings having been moved to the village in recent years. Encouraging the retrofitting of these older buildings to make them more energy-efficient — by increasing insulation and ensuring water-capture is maximised, for example — could make a considerable contribution to sustainable outcomes for our village.

### Affordable housing

Providing a diversity of housing choice will help to ensure a vibrant, living, sustainable village. Secondary dwellings are permitted in the RU1, RU2 and RU5 zones under the current LEP and R5 zone under the Affordable Housing SEPP. Council is actively encouraging that these buildings be used to provide permanent rental accommodation.

Notwithstanding the constraints of water supply and wastewater disposal, a percentage of any new large-scale residential development can be set aside for affordable housing under the Affordable Housing SEPP.

### Federal heritage study

As the largest of the string of hinterland villages that sprang up along the Old Brunswick Road, what remains of Federal's built heritage is historically significant and deserves protection. A heritage assessment would identify and list surviving historic elements, helping to ensure that future development does not detract from those items and respects the existing low-rise, low-density, rural character of our village, thus meeting the expectations of the community. Defining the oldest part of our village (along Federal Drive) as a Heritage Conservation Zone would further protect its historic core.

# Challenges and opportunities

## Public open space, community facilities, road safety and connectivity

### Public open space and community facilities

The primary community facilities in Federal are the public open space of Federal Park, the Children's Centre (preschool) and the two heritage buildings comprising what is known as Jasper Corner.

Federal Park was created when the second stage of the Roses Road subdivision was established in the early 1990s and Council purchased part of the land for a park. It is a well-used open space equipped with a playground, skate park, sculptures, picnic tables and a large, grassed area ringed by rainforest trees. The Federal Community Centre has driven ongoing improvements to the park over the last three decades through grant funding and other fundraising activities such as the annual 'Park Party'. The park also contains the Federal tennis court, situated in the south-western corner of the park, and Federal's one public toilet, which is maintained by council.

Both the Federal Community Children's Centre and Jasper Corner are thriving community assets. The Children's Centre provides preschool and long day-care for children aged 2-5 years, while Jasper Corner is used almost daily for various activities. The Jasper Corner buildings are managed by the Hall Committee, with significant additional volunteer contributions in maintenance and fund-raising.

### Roads and parking

Three roads link Federal to adjacent villages and larger towns:

- Federal Drive, which leads to Eureka (and onto Lismore) to the south, and Goonengerry (and onto Mullumbimby) to the north;
- Binna Burra Road to Bangalow;
- Coorabell Road (which leads into Coolamon Scenic Drive) to Coorabell and onto Byron Bay or Mullumbimby.

While all are classified only as local roads, both Federal Drive and Coorabell Road carry large numbers of vehicles of varying types and sizes, including delivery trucks and buses.

There is a need for additional public parking in Federal, centred on the retail and commercial zone along Federal Drive. There is informal parallel parking on both sides of Federal Drive and a number of formal nose-in parking spaces on the park side of the road, opposite the Federal Store. There is also public/staff parking behind the Store and the Doma Café. On very busy days, residents and visitors currently use the vacant, privately owned block on the corner of Roses Road and Federal Drive (DP 1003205) as an overflow parking area.

### Public transport

The only public transport currently servicing Federal is the school bus system. This is provided by a number of private bus companies and transports children to and from schools in surrounding villages and towns. There are no ride-share facilities currently in operation.

### Connectivity

There are no dedicated pedestrian/cycle paths along the roads in and around Federal and only two formal paved paths within the village: one crosses the park and leads to the Federal Community Children's Centre, while the other links the eastern end of Coachwood Court to Federal Drive.

There are a number of informal walking tracks around the village. The most popular of these are the two informal routes from Roses Road: one leading to the preschool, the other to Wean Way.

The roads in and around Federal Village are not provided with kerb and guttering and there is no engineered stormwater management. The absence of both has a degrading impact on road edges during heavy rain events.

## Challenges

### Road safety

The conflicts caused at peak traffic times in particular, and by vehicles speeding through the village generally, is impacting on our lives. Federal is the major transfer hub for the school bus network and the school bus drop-off and pick-up times are the most chaotic times of the day, creating significant tension between pedestrians, cars, delivery trucks and the buses themselves. On most weekends — and particularly on monthly market days — the main street is lined with parked vehicles and up to 800 pedestrian movements (people crossing the road) have been recorded in the middle of the day.

### The current state of the village

Federal is clearly under a pressure. The general appearance of the village's public areas is scruffy and uncared for. Federal Park is in need of an upgrade.

### Limited walking and cycling connections

A lack of formalised footpaths and increasing vehicular traffic is a barrier to being able to safely walk and cycle in and around the village, particularly in wet weather when people tend to walk along the roads.

### Accessibility issues

There is a complete lack of compliant footpaths around the village. There is one disability parking space opposite the Federal Store, but inclusive access generally is very limited.

### Pressures of tourism

Federal is increasingly under pressure from rising tourist numbers, which is causing significant congestion and impacting the amenity of our village and our ability, as locals, to access the village's facilities.

## Opportunities

### Main street upgrade

Byron Shire Council is funding a design plan of the main street, with significant community input facilitated by the Masterplan process. The main street upgrade is intended to address many of the critical issues summarised above, including addressing pedestrian safety and accessibility issues, parking, drainage, and also aesthetic issues, such as landscaping and replacing the overhead cables with underground power.

# Challenges and Opportunities

## Improving connectivity and accessibility

Walking around the village, rather than driving, is to be encouraged, as it eases the need for more parking. Along with the improvements scheduled for the main street as part of the upgrade of that area, there is a community desire to formalise existing walking tracks to further connect the village and the outlying areas, as well as along riparian zones to provide recreational networks.

The property (Lot 1 DP 1003205) of around 5000m<sup>2</sup> on the corner of Roses Road and Federal Drive is currently undeveloped. Historically it was used as recreation fields and an old concrete cricket pitch can still be seen near the Roses Rd verge. The Masterplan engagement with our community revealed the hope that the property can be incorporated into the village common, either wholly or by incorporating a landscaped pedestrian link between the village's two main public spaces, Federal Park and Jasper Corner.

## Upgrading Federal Park

Federal Park has expanded in an organic way since its inception in the 1990s. It would benefit from further enhancements in coming years and a consolidated approach to landscaping and facility upgrades.

# Challenges and Opportunities

## Adaptability, self-reliance and infrastructure

Recent extreme weather events have highlighted the impending challenges of climate change. The Byron Shire Council Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2021 provides a blueprint for how communities can build resilience to limit climate change impacts. This is especially important where there is a clear need — for example in Federal, where there is currently no safe evacuation plan or centre for use during bush fires and ex-tropical cyclones/east-coast lows, both of which have recently impacted our community.

The village of Federal grew organically to service the needs of the surrounding dairy farms, which were established in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With the shrinking of the dairy industry and increasing numbers of people moving to the area to enjoy the benefits of the local lifestyle, our village is now home to a larger population with diverse needs and priorities.

## Challenges

### The effects of climate change

As long as Federal remains un-serviced, without piped town water or waste sewerage, water security will remain a major concern for residents. Large-capacity water storage is essential, but space for this on smaller residential allotments in the village is sometimes constrained.

Power outages caused by storm damage are not infrequent, and it is not unusual for properties to be left without power for hours, sometimes days. These power outages are likely to become more frequent due to severe weather events caused by climate change.

Federal village is also liable to being cut off during storms and times of high rainfall that result in landslips blocking roads and bridges being damaged, as happened in the torrential rain events of early 2022. These events cause massive damage requiring expensive repair, but also have long-lasting impacts on the social life of our village and the surrounding area.

### Lack of infrastructure investment

For decades little has been invested by government in Federal village and the result is failing public infrastructure, including stormwater controls and road safety for both pedestrians and vehicles. Infrastructure projects, including the main street upgrade and construction of footpath networks, etc., are desperately needed in order to address this and promote self-reliance and safer and healthier outcomes.

Federal, as with the region in general, has an above average ageing population. At the same time there exists a lack of local services for this demographic, including public or community transport to support older residents or people with a disability. Moving around the village is also difficult for these groups, due to failing or non-existent accessible pedestrian infrastructure.

Mobile phone coverage is patchy, as is access to a dependable and stable internet connection. Wireless broadband is not available to all properties and those unable to access it have to rely on either older ADSL connections or a satellite connection, which can be variable, to the National Broadband Network or to expensive private companies. Upgrading and installing any type of infrastructure is costly, but with increasing numbers of people working from home, dependable

internet connections and mobile phone coverage is vital. These infrastructure deficits potentially lead to safety issues for individuals and, in the case of natural disasters, for the whole community.

## Opportunities

### Building resilience in the community

Our village's strong community spirit will continue to support and build resilience in the face of development pressures, as well as the challenges presented by climate change.

A disaster management plan for the village would be beneficial as a way of formally identifying a safe place or places for us to gather should an emergency arise (such as a bush fire).

There is an opportunity for Federal to strengthen its role as a rural centre for the benefit and greater resilience of the surrounding area. Services needed for the village to support this would include medical, mechanical (vehicle servicing) and financial (fee-free ATM, fully serviced Post Office), along with more shops servicing locals (such as a baker, local produce barn, etc.).

One issue to come out of the community surveys was a need to provide younger people with local employment and other incentives to stay — strengthening Federal's position as a rural centre would help achieve this.

### Water Security

Until such time as Federal is connected to town water, water security remains a major concern and every opportunity to capture water should be harnessed, both for use in tending the public park and street plantings, as well as for fire-fighting. This could include capturing stormwater from roads and other paved surfaces for use in public areas, such as the planned upgrades of the main street and Federal Park.

### Embracing technological advances and providing alternative services infrastructure

Forecasting technological changes is difficult but it is clear that our community will be early adopters, and the Masterplan should allow for advances in technology to be integrated into the village wherever possible. Ideas include: a green micro-grid, better and reliable internet connectivity (fast broadband to the node or house), a free wi-fi point(s) in the village, an innovation hub/eco centre, and an internet-based labour exchange to enable younger members of the community to be paid for work required by older residents.

As petrol and diesel-driven vehicles are phased out, charging stations for electric vehicles need to be provided.

### Supporting an ageing population and people with a disability

Priority infrastructure projects identified in the Masterplan should consider the challenges associated with an ageing population and providing access for people with a disability.

### Encouraging repair and reuse of older materials

The mantra 'reduce, reuse, recycle' should be encouraged in all aspects of village life, including housing and landscaping construction. Financial incentives could be offered to people renovating existing building stock to retrofit energy-efficient measures. Other initiatives could include a village tool exchange or hire service.

# Steering Group Members

## **Toni Appleton**

Toni is a local of 43 years. Founding president of the Federal Community Centre and landscape designer of Federal Park. She is most interested as a designer of Commons projects – places that will be enjoyed by thousands of people.

## **Peter Garrard**

Peter is a retired builder (of more than 40 years) and longtime resident of Federal. He and his wife live on 20 acres and raised their three children here. He is a member of Federal Repair Co-op, and helps regularly with building maintenance at Jasper Corner.

## **Alan Goldstein**

Alan is a 25-year local, father and landcarer. President Federal Film Society, Treasurer Federal Community Centre, believer in community empowerment, organiser of FedRocks and FedTalks, commercial property owner in Federal Village centre.

## **Gary Haughton**

Originally from Melbourne, Gary has lived locally for 35 years. Has been a member of the FCC for 32 years and President for 24 years. He loves working with likeminded people who care about Federal.

## **Julie Lipsett**

Julie has lived in Federal with her husband and three children since 2006. She runs her small architectural practice in the village and is a founding member of Federal Loves Refugees.

## **Meg Louis**

Meg is a newer Federal local of 7 years, and lives here with her family. She works as a designer from her home studio and is a big fan of village life and our community. She joined Federal Community Centre in 2020.

## **James Mayson**

James has lived for 13 years in Federal, on 77 acres bordering Wilsons River with his two teenage daughters. He is the President of Federal Landcare, previous president of Eureka football club and member of Federal Community Centre.

## **Megan Passey**

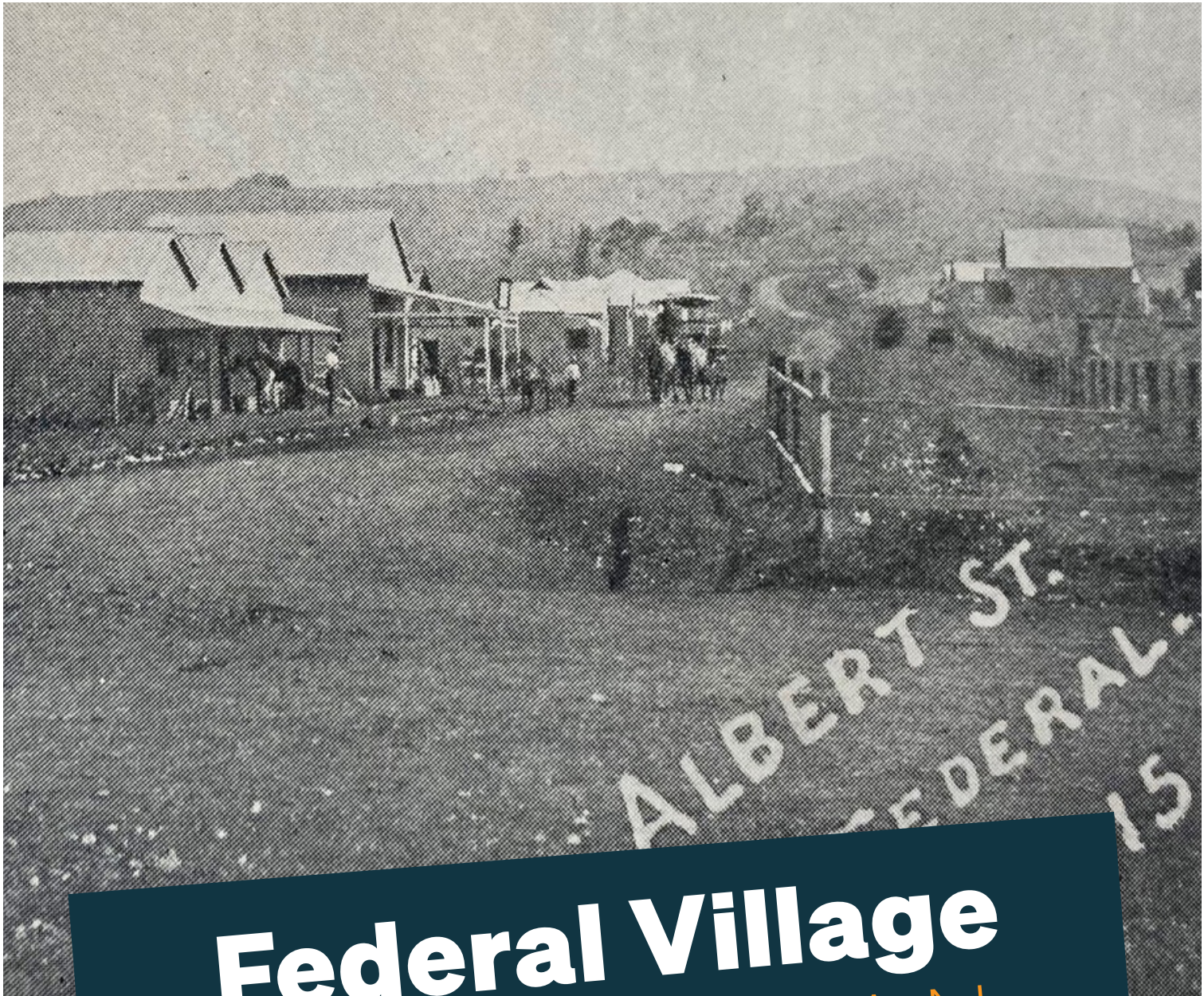
Megan has lived in the Federal community for over 20 years. She is currently on the management committee for the Jasper Corner facilities and was very involved in the campaign to buy the Church at Jasper Corner.

## **Jenna Reed Burns**

Jenna Reed Burns is a writer and researcher with an interest in design, architecture, heritage and landscape design. She, her husband and her aptly named terrier, Jasper, relocated to Federal in May 2020.

## **Ant Solomon**

Ant is a father of three, long time resident of Federal and member of the Federal Community Centre (FCC). He is committed to a sustainable, diverse and vibrant Federal. He works as a doctor in Byron and Lismore, and is known to enjoy singing and dancing!



# Federal Village

## MASTERPLAN

