



**Narembeen 2036**

# **A Community Direction for Sustainable Strength**

Prepared for the Shire of Narembeen

**April 2026**

Developed from community workshops and strategic sense making undertaken as part of the 10 Years Time process

**Prepared by Julian Canny and Frankie Mann of Euphorium pty ltd**

# NAREMBEEN IN 10 YEARS TIME...

## WHAT DRIVES US

Why we come together

**Narembeen is a town built by choice and sustained by agency.**

Narembeen works because people step up.

Across Council, community, businesses and residents, there is a strong culture of contribution. This is a major strength to build from. The next step is to better support and align this effort so Narembeen can keep turning local commitment into practical progress.

## WHAT INSPIRES US

The Vision



We see a future community of...  
**Sustainable Strength**

We see a future where Narembeen remains strong, steady and viable, with growth happening in ways that support long term stability rather than strain it.

This is a future where people can live and work locally, housing supports a working population, and local businesses, services and community groups continue to have the people and capacity they need to thrive.

It is a future where growth is deliberate, resources are used wisely, and decisions strengthen the town's ability to remain liveable, connected and resilient over time.

## NAREMBEEN HAS STRONG FOUNDATIONS...

- A capable and willing community
- Strong local relationships and strong tradition of civic contribution
- Improving stability within the Shire
- Knowledge and experience across community organisations and groups

## AND CONSTRAINTS TO OVERCOME...

- Housing is the key constraint
- Volunteer efforts are stretched
- Services require ongoing support to remain consistent and effective
- External funding is limited and competitive

# WHO WE NEED TO BECOME IN 4 YRS TIME...

## WHAT EVOLVES US

Our Next Evolution

To realise the vision, over the next four years **Narembeen needs to become a more deliberate, self directed community, confident in shaping its own future.**

To sustain its strength, Narembeen needs to become a more deliberate, self directed community, confident in shaping its own future.

This does not mean becoming something different. It means building on the way Narembeen already works, while being clearer about where effort is placed, how decisions are made, and what needs to be prioritised.

## IN PRACTICE, THIS MEANS BECOMING MORE...

- Focused on what matters most
- Open in making and communicating trade-offs
- Supportive of those who step up, while sharing responsibility more broadly
- Integrated across Council, community and organisations
- Strategic in how limited resources are used
- Grounded in what works locally

## THE CHOICES THAT MATTER THE MOST NEXT

### Housing

- Increasing supply to support families, workforce, services and population

### Local Economy

- Supporting businesses to create employment opportunities

### Essential Services

- Supporting consistency and continuity in healthcare, childcare, education and aged care

### Core Infrastructure

- Keeping the fundamentals reliable, fit for purpose, and able to support the town into the future.

## WHAT GUIDES US

Our unique way of thinking

The "Narembeen" way

### Contribution

People participate and take responsibility for the life of the town

### Shared responsibility

Leadership is distributed across the Shire, community groups, and individuals

### Belonging through participation

People become part of the community by getting involved

### Local agency

There is a strong belief that the community can shape its own future

### Practical action

Progress comes through doing, not waiting

# Narembeen 2036

*Prepared with insight from the comprehensive insight developed through the "10 years time workshops" March 2026.*

*Prepared by Julian Canny and Frankie Mann of Euphorium Pty Ltd, April 2026.*

## A community built direction

Narembeen 2036 has been shaped through a level of community participation that reflects the strength of the community itself.

Across the 10 Years Time process, 130 individual people contributed through workshops, forums and surveys. The workshops and forums involved 84 individual attendees, with many people choosing to participate across multiple sessions.

This direction was not developed separately and simply presented back to the community. It was built through engagement, conversation and shared sense making. People tested ideas together, named what matters, challenged assumptions and helped shape the priorities and tensions that sit within this report.

For that reason, this document should continue in the same spirit. It should be used, questioned, scrutinised and evolved over time by Council and community together.

That ongoing civic participation is part of what gives regional communities like Narembeen their strength. It is how a town remembers what matters, makes sense of what is changing, and keeps choosing its future together.

## Introduction

This document provides a distilled strategic direction for Narembeen, developed from the community workshops and sense making undertaken through the 10 Years Time process in March 2026.

**A more detailed Community Insights Summary has also been prepared as a companion document.**

That summary contains the broader workshop notes, engagement material and supporting insights that informed this version.

This document is intended to support the Shire of Narembeen in considering the long term future of the town, the conditions that shape what is possible, and the choices that matter most over the next four years.

It does not attempt to capture every idea raised through engagement. Instead, it draws together the strongest patterns, priorities and tensions that emerged across the process. These include the importance of housing, workforce, essential services, core infrastructure, local business, volunteer capacity and shared responsibility between Council and community.

At the centre of the report is the idea of sustainable strength. This reflects a future where Narembeen continues to stand on its own feet, supports the people who live and work here, and makes deliberate decisions about what can be sustained over time.

This is not a growth plan for growth's sake. It is a practical direction for maintaining a strong, capable and working community, while enabling the kind of targeted growth that supports long term viability.

## Vision and Purpose

### **Narembeen is a town built by choice and sustained by agency.**

From its earliest days, the community has relied on people choosing to be here, stepping up, and making things work with what they have. The strength of the town has never come from outside support alone, but from the willingness of people to take responsibility and contribute.

### **Vision: We see a future community of sustainable strength.**

This means a town that stands on its own feet, supports its people, and makes deliberate decisions about what it does and does not take on. It is not about growth for its own sake, but about maintaining a strong, stable and capable community over time.

This idea of sustainable strength reflects both how Narembeen operates today and the direction the community continuously needs to commit to choosing for its future.

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## The future we are planning for

Planning for a future of sustainable strength requires being clear about the different paths available to the town over the next 10 years.

Without intervention, there is a risk of gradual decline, driven by farm consolidation, pressure on services, and limited pathways for people to stay or return.

There is also a steady path, where the town continues much as it is now. In this scenario, Narembeen maintains its population, continues to function well, and builds on its existing strengths.

A third path is one of growth, but only where the right conditions are in place. This includes having enough housing, a stable workforce, and services that can support more people living in the town.

The direction being set is not about choosing one of these paths in isolation. It is about being deliberate in how the town moves between them.

Narembeen has never been a place that grows without purpose. Growth is supported where it helps sustain the town, not where it risks stretching it beyond its means.

### **This creates a clear position for shire planning:**

The focus is on maintaining a strong, functioning community, while enabling the kind of growth that supports housing, workforce and long term sustainability.

In practical terms, this means backing decisions that keep the town viable, rather than chasing outcomes that look good but cannot be sustained over time.

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## The community we are determined to continue building

### **Narembeen works because people choose to contribute.**

This is a place where, when something needs doing, people get on with it. Whether it's running the footy club, supporting the rec centre, stepping into community programs, or organising events, much of what keeps the town going happens because people take responsibility for it.

That same pattern shows up across the town. Businesses support local groups. Volunteers step in where services are limited. People back each other, especially when things get tough.

There is also a practical way of thinking that runs through the community. Decisions tend to be based on what will work and what can be sustained, not just what sounds good at the time.

This is not something new that needs to be created. It is already how the town operates.

Looking ahead, the challenge is not to hold onto the past, but to keep choosing this way of working.

### **This means continuing to be a place where:**

- People step up and take responsibility
- Community life is active and supported through local effort
- Businesses and residents back each other
- Decisions are grounded in what is practical and sustainable

At the same time, there is a need to be more deliberate about how this is supported. The current model relies heavily on a small number of people doing a lot, and that is not sustainable without broader participation and clearer support.

The strength of Narembeen has always come from its people and their willingness to act. The future depends on continuing to back and grow that.

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## Who needs to be able to see a future here?

Narembeen's future depends on people being able to see a place for themselves in the town.

This is not just about growing the population. It is about making sure people can live here, work here, contribute here and feel part of the community

### **There is a clear need to support and retain:**

- Working age people who can fill local jobs and sustain businesses
- Families who support the school and community life
- Young people who can see a reason to stay or return to the town after moving away
- Older residents whose knowledge, care, leadership and lived experience can help inform the town's future

These groups are not the only people who matter to Narembeen's future. Long term locals, volunteers, farmers, business owners, service providers, retirees and people who contribute in many different ways remain central to the life of the town.

The reason these groups are named specifically is because they are critical to maintaining the town's future workforce, school population, services, clubs, businesses, care networks and community activity over time.

As the population ages, this also means making sure older residents can continue to live well, stay connected and access the support they need.

At the same time, there are some clear gaps that need to be understood.

The youth engagement suggested that some young people can more easily see a future in Narembeen than others. Pathways connected to farming, trades and local industry appeared clearer, while other young people, particularly some young women, were less able to see long term pathways for themselves in the town.

This is not a judgement on the town or on young people. It is an important signal to understand, because it may affect who feels able to stay, return or build a life here over time.

There is also a challenge in attracting and retaining people in their 20s and 30s, especially those who are not directly connected to farming or existing local networks. Without clear pathways into work, housing and community life, it is difficult for people in this group to settle and stay.

For the future to work, Narembeen needs to continue becoming a place where more people can clearly see a role for themselves.

**That includes:**

- Having access to housing
- Having meaningful work or a way to contribute
- Feeling part of the community, not outside or separate to it

At the moment, not everyone can clearly see their place in that future.

Addressing that gap will be critical to maintaining a balanced, working and sustainable community over time.

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## Foundations and constraints

Narembeen's future is shaped by a small number of practical conditions.

The town is not short on ideas or effort. The main limitations are what can realistically be supported and sustained over time.

### Key constraints

- **Housing availability**  
Housing is the most significant constraint. Without more housing, it is difficult to attract new families and workers, support services, or grow the population. It sits behind many of the other challenges the town is facing.
- **Access to funding**  
Funding is more limited and competitive than it has been in the past. The town can no longer rely on funding being readily available and must be more targeted in how it seeks and uses resources.
- **Volunteer capacity**  
A small number of people are carrying a large share of responsibility. This creates pressure and is not sustainable over time without support. Particular consideration needs to be taken around succession planning and expectation management.

- **Fragility of essential services**

Healthcare, childcare and workforce availability are all areas that can quickly become limiting factors if not maintained. Inconsistency of care can quickly become destabilising.

## Key foundations to build on

- **Strong community capability**

People are willing to step up and take responsibility when needed. This is a core strength of the town and well understood and valued within the culture of the community.

- **Existing infrastructure and facilities**

Narembeen has a solid base of infrastructure and community assets that can be built on. Many of these assets are well considered and multi-purpose, serving both practical and social functions. They act as important gathering places where relationships are built, information is shared, and community issues can be worked through together.

- **Social connection and collaboration**

People know each other, work together, and support local efforts. This makes coordination easier than in many other regional towns. Culturally there is an understanding of the value of social connection to get things done.

- **Stability within the Shire and capability across the community**

There is improving stability within the Shire, providing a stronger foundation for planning and delivery. At the same time, the ability to get things done does not sit with the Shire alone. Local organisations, clubs and groups hold knowledge and experience that play a key role in how the town operates and delivers outcomes.

These conditions show that the future of the town is less about ambition and more about capacity.

Unlocking key constraints, particularly housing, has the potential to enable progress across population, economy and services at the same time.

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## The choices that matter the most next

The next four years will come down to making a small number of clear choices and backing them.

There is no shortage of things that could be done, but not everything can be done at once. The focus needs to be on the areas that will have the greatest impact on the long term sustainability of the town.

**Four areas stand out as the most important:**

- **Housing**

Choosing what level of investment, leadership and role the Shire will play in housing challenges and opportunities will be critical for Narembeen's future. Without more housing, it will be difficult to attract workers, support local businesses, or maintain essential services. It is the constraint that sits behind many of the other challenges the town is facing.

- **Local economy**

Supporting existing businesses and creating the conditions for new ones will help provide jobs and keep the town active. A stronger local economy supports population, services, and overall viability.

- **Essential services**

Health, childcare, education and aged care all influence whether people stay in the town or leave. These services are critical to maintaining a liveable community.

- **Core infrastructure**

Roads, facilities and basic services are expected to be reliable. There is a strong view that the core infrastructure should be looked after before new projects are taken on.

These choices are closely linked. Progress in one area supports progress in others, particularly when it comes to housing.

The key shift is not in identifying what matters, but in being prepared to prioritise and make trade-offs.

The decisions made in the next four years will shape whether the town is able to maintain its strength over the next ten.

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## **Shared leadership: Roles of Council and community**

Narembeen works because people share the load.

Council, community groups, businesses and residents all play a part in keeping the town going. This has been a strength of the community for a long time, but it is also under pressure.

A small number of people are doing a lot, and expectations are not always clear. Over time, this creates strain and makes it harder to sustain the level of effort that the town relies on.

Looking ahead, there is a need to be clearer about who does what, and where responsibility sits.

### **Council**

Council plays a key role in setting direction, enabling outcomes and advocating for the town. This includes:

- Planning for the future and making clear decisions about priorities
- Investing in core infrastructure and key services
- Supporting the conditions needed for housing, workforce and economic activity
- Advocating to the State and Federal Governments where support is needed

### **Community organisations and volunteers**

Community groups and volunteers are central to how the town functions. Their role includes:

- Delivering activities, events and local initiatives
- Maintaining social connection and community life
- Stepping in where services or support are limited

At the same time, there is a need to recognise that this cannot continue without additional support. Volunteer effort needs to be enabled and shared more broadly.

### **Businesses**

Local businesses support employment, services and day-to-day activity in the town. They play a key role in:

- Providing jobs and supporting the local economy
- Contributing to community life and local initiatives

### **Residents**

Residents contribute through participation, volunteering and supporting local efforts. The strength of the town relies on people being willing to take part, not just live here.

This is a town where things get done because people step up. That cannot be taken for granted.

Plans must provide clearer alignment across these roles to ensure responsibility is shared in a way that is realistic and sustainable over time.

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## Who we need to become over the next four years

### How we will achieve what we are aiming for and who we need to become to realise the opportunities ahead

To realise the vision, over the next four years Narembeen needs to become a more deliberate, self directed community, confident in shaping its own future.

To sustain its strength, Narembeen needs to build on how it already works, while being clearer about where effort is placed, how decisions are made, and what needs to be prioritised.

This does not mean becoming something different. It means continuing the Narembeen way with greater clarity, focus and intent.

### In practice, this looks like becoming a community that is...

- **More focused on what matters most**, and willing to back those priorities properly, recognising that Narembeen has never had the capacity to do everything at once.
- **More open and deliberate in making trade-offs**, recognising that progress in one area will often mean delaying or doing less in another, and being clear about those choices.
- **More confident in leading together**, with Council and community leaders creating space for open conversations about priorities, trade-offs and the direction of the shire.
- **More supportive of the people who step up**, while making sure responsibility is shared beyond the same small group of people over time.
- **More connected in how work takes place**, with Council, community and local organisations operating as a shared effort.
- **More strategic in how limited resources are used**, focusing on actions that create multiple outcomes, particularly across housing, workforce, and services.
- **More grounded in what works for Narembeen**, focusing on what is practical and sustainable, rather than what works elsewhere.

This is not a shift away from how Narembeen operates. It is a continuation of it, with greater clarity and intent.

The town has always been built on people taking responsibility and getting on with what needs to be done. The difference going forward is being more focused about where that effort goes.

Who Narembeen chooses to be in the next few years will determine whether it can continue to sustain its strength over the long term.

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## How we will judge decisions over time

As conditions change, decisions will need to be tested in a consistent way.

### **A simple set of questions can help guide this:**

- Does this help keep the town strong over the long term?
- Does this support people to live and work in Narembeen?
- Does this align with how the community operates and what it values?
- Does this build self reliance rather than increase dependence?
- Does this make the most of limited resources and create more than one benefit?

These questions are not about slowing decisions down. They are about making sure effort is focused on what will have a long lasting impact.

Used consistently, they provide a practical way to stay aligned with the future Narembeen is working towards over the next 10 years.

## What this makes possible

If this direction is carried through, Narembeen can continue to be a strong, capable and self-reliant community over the next 10 years.

### **This future is grounded in the town's own story**

From its earliest days, Narembeen has been shaped by people choosing to act, creating what was needed and taking responsibility for the future of the place. The same qualities that helped establish and sustain the town remain important now.

Narembeen 2036 has been shaped through community insight and conversation. It reflects what people shared about the town's strengths, limits, opportunities and responsibilities, and gives Council and community a shared basis for making decisions over time.

A future of sustainable strength means Narembeen remains a place where people can live well, work locally, contribute to community life, access the services they need and see a place for themselves over time.

This will require clear priorities, shared responsibility and disciplined decision making. Not every opportunity can be pursued, and not every project can be prioritised. The role of the plan is to help Council and community keep making deliberate choices that protect what matters, address what is limiting the town, and create the conditions for Narembeen's future to remain viable, active and connected.

**- END -**