

# **Northern Rivers Social Development Council**

## **Strategic Plan 2010-2013**

June 2010



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## Introduction

At Northern Rivers Social Development Council (NRSDC) we work together for community wellbeing across the Northern Rivers.

We serve two key and connected groups of clients:

- vulnerable individuals and communities within the region through advocacy and direct service delivery, and
- our partners in the community sector of the Northern Rivers through collaboration, innovation, and sector development.

At NRSDC, we are changing. We need to because:

- our communities are dynamic, diverse, and organic
- our clients experience multiple and complex needs, and
- changing policy, demographical, and technological landscapes require constant renewal and adaptation.

This strategic plan outlines the key directions that will guide our development over the coming years

## Who we are

We are a community-based not-for-profit organisation that promotes fairness and social inclusion in the Northern Rivers region of NSW. NRSDC represents and strengthens communities and services by:

- Providing opportunities and services to alleviate disadvantage
- Advocating and promotion
- Informing and educating people, organizations and government
- Encouraging partnerships
- Research and planning for future needs.

## Our History

We formed in 1976 when a strong group of local people came together to identify ways of improving and developing the communities on the far north coast of NSW, the Northern Rivers. NRSDC was incorporated in 1985. Over 25 years NRSDC has developed into a recognised and credible organisation delivering direct services, community development projects, and regional advocacy across the northern rivers. In 2010, NRSDC has a budget of \$1.6Million with 27 staff across 14 programs. Our head office is located in Lismore and service staff located in Tweed, Ballina, Casino and Grafton.

## Our values

NRSDC applies the following values in our work:

- **Integrity:** We will act honestly, openly, consistently and in accordance with the aims of NRSDC
- **Respect:** We will value the expertise, knowledge and opinions of others
- **Empowerment:** We will work to increase the capacity of individuals, communities and organisations to become more self-reliant
- **Fairness:** We will promote equity and justice when dealing with others
- **Collaboration:** We will work in partnership to promote the best result for everyone
- **Inclusion:** We value diversity and will work to ensure that the benefits of prosperity are shared by all.

## Diversity Statement

NRSDC will continue to build its capacity to work effectively and equitably to improve the quality of life of people across the region. We recognise the diversity of communities and respect their cultural, linguistic, sexual, ethnic and religious differences. We acknowledge, and will continue to work with, Aboriginal communities of the region to ensure that Aboriginal people can attend to their cultural business and build healthy communities.

## How we work

NRSDC adopts a strengths-based, non-stigmatising approach to our work that seeks to identify and build upon the many strengths of communities and individuals in our region. We recognise that, despite the many positive attributes of the Northern Rivers, many people within our community experience significant disadvantage. NRSDC aims to alleviate the high level of disadvantage within the region by providing services directly to community members in need, providing practical support to other agencies that work with vulnerable and disadvantaged people and advocating on behalf of the community. Our advocacy, sector development and training activities are intended build a well resourced and effective service system to support vulnerable people within the community.

## Acknowledgment of Traditional Custodians

NRSDC acknowledges the Bundjalung, Arakwal, Gumbaingirr and Yaegel peoples who are the traditional custodians of the land that comprises the Northern Rivers.

## Beneficiary groups

NRSDC works for two key beneficiary groups:

- vulnerable individuals and communities within the region; and
- the community sector that works to the benefit of people and communities in the Northern Rivers.

We recognise that not-for-profit community organisations in the region share our primary objective of promoting community wellbeing. Community organisations are enablers of positive change for individuals and communities. Our support and advocacy for community organisations in the region is a key strategy to achieve our organisational objective of promoting community wellbeing.

## Other stakeholders

Other stakeholder groups are important to the organisation but are not direct beneficiaries of the NRSDC's activities. These groups include:

- government
- funders
- staff
- media.

## Stakeholder expectations of NRSDC

We strive to meet the expectations of people and organisations within our region. These include:

Individual expectations:

- issues adversely affecting their lives and/our region to get better
- quality services provided efficiently and effectively
- consultation, communication and the opportunity to contribute and participate.

Community organisations expect:

- advocacy for the region
- collaborative leadership
- quality service delivery that is professional, effective, efficient and based on partnership.

Equity and accessibility are important in all things – at both the individual and organisation levels, and also geographically across the region.

**Organisational Purpose:** WE WORK TOGETHER FOR COMMUNITY WELLBEING ACROSS THE NORTHERN RIVERS

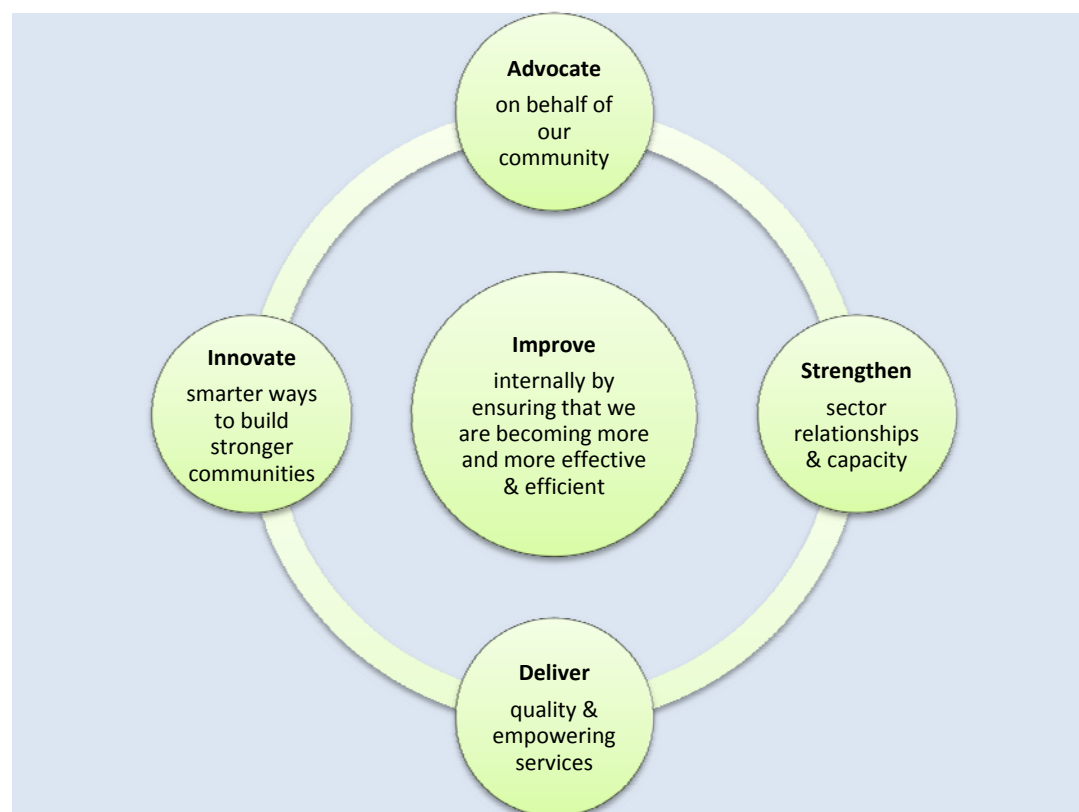
## Organisational Goals

### External

- Advocate – on behalf of our community
- Strengthen – sector relationships and capacity
- Deliver – quality & empowering services
- Innovate – smarter ways to build stronger communities.

### Internal

- Improve – internally by ensuring that we are becoming more and more effective & efficient



## Goal 1: Advocate

### Result: A strong Northern Rivers Community and Sector

<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Proposed Actions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote the interests of the region to influence local, state and national policy and planning frameworks</li><li>• Increase NRSDC's role in influencing the development of social policy across the region and whole government.</li><li>• Be a voice for the human services sector in the region</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop and maintain an up-to-date and comprehensive set regional social priorities and policy/position statements</li><li>• Proactively position NRSDC for budget and election campaigns</li><li>• Develop and secure opportunities for funding that align with regional priorities</li><li>• Develop a strong media network to facilitate organisational presence and 'go to' status</li><li>• Inform and involve our communities</li><li>• Strengthen links between our advocacy and our development, innovation and service delivery activities</li><li>• Develop strategies to evaluate our advocacy activities.</li></ul>
<i>Measures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ability to influence government decisions – measured as level of resources devoted to advocacy</li><li>• identification and responsiveness to issues – measured by number of media releases and submissions</li><li>• perceived value of the organisation's efforts by beneficiaries – measured by stakeholder survey</li></ul>

## Goal 2: Strengthen

Result: A vibrant, responsive, diverse, strong and effective human services system that meets local needs

<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Proposed Actions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Empower groups within the region to improve community wellbeing</li><li>• Work with our Peers to build connection and cohesion between human services agencies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Foster active partnerships with the human services sector in the region</li><li>• Promote inter-organisational networking to develop sector capacity and resilience</li><li>• Expand NRSDC professional development program</li><li>• Develop skills register for NfP sector, consultants and other professional resources</li><li>• Develop evaluation process for NRSDC sector development activities</li><li>• Review and update NRSDC membership strategy</li></ul>
<i>Measures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Level of uptake of NRSDC professional development activities – measured by attendance at training &amp; positive feedback on training evaluation forms.</li><li>• Number of projects developed and implemented successfully in partnership</li><li>• Perceived value of the organisation’s efforts by beneficiaries – measured by stakeholder survey</li><li>• Change in Membership</li></ul>

### Theme 3: Innovate

#### Results: Our community has capacity to try new ways of working

<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Proposed Actions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage innovation and support strategic research</li><li>• Develop strategic alliances to address emerging trends</li><li>• Develop new projects and ideas to meet community needs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Form active research partnerships with governments, universities and other institutions</li><li>• Develop and maintain an up-to-date and comprehensive regional profile statement</li><li>• Publish findings and requesting feedback to ensure the information gathered from stakeholders is current</li><li>• Capitalise on opportunities to use innovative tools to address emerging trends</li><li>• Take opportunities to enhance the region's resources and its ability to address key priorities</li></ul>
<i>Measures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regional profile developed and maintained</li><li>• Number of projects developed successfully in partnership with other agencies</li><li>• Perceived value of the organisation's efforts by beneficiaries – measured by stakeholder survey</li></ul>

#### Theme 4: Deliver

- Results:
1. NRSDC services work with clients to meet individual needs and aspirations
  2. NRSDC is a respected and valued service partner

<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Proposed Actions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote a culture of continuous quality improvement and ensure quality service delivery to improve capacity</li><li>• Capture and develop opportunities into successful ventures and programs</li><li>• Identify and secure opportunities for partnership and collaboration</li><li>• Seek strategic opportunities to expand our service delivery</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop and implement a clearly defined service development process in accordance with NRSDC service development guidelines (Appendix 3)</li><li>• Develop and implement a clearly defined a best practice outcomes-based project management system</li><li>• Investigate opportunities for government funding in both traditional and non-traditional areas</li><li>• Actively pursue non-government funding opportunities</li></ul>
<i>Measures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of client referrals from a diverse range of partners</li><li>• Perceived value of the organisation's efforts by beneficiaries – measured by stakeholder survey</li></ul>

## Theme 5: Improve

Result: NRSDC has the people, systems, processes and funds in place to achieve our objectives.

<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Proposed Actions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build financial sustainability</li> <li>• Plan for growth and change</li> <li>• Instil a culture of respect, service and teamwork</li> <li>• Ensure we have the skills we need to embrace on new opportunities</li> <li>• Support a culture of continuous quality improvement.</li> <li>• Enable measurement of all critical performance indicators and activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement financial targets program</li> <li>• Develop and implement strategic plan review program</li> <li>• Undertake organisational skills and interests stock take</li> <li>• Improve asset management</li> <li>• Prioritise and optimise resource allocation and use</li> <li>• Diversify income streams</li> <li>• Develop our workforce to meet changing needs</li> <li>• Review structure to ensure that it meets current needs</li> <li>• Develop and implement a better practice HR and performance management system</li> <li>• Develop and implement a comprehensive stakeholder survey</li> <li>• Develop and implement a comprehensive communications strategy</li> <li>• Develop and implement a comprehensive risk management strategy</li> <li>• Develop and implement a comprehensive corporate governance program</li> </ul>
<p><i>Measures</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial targets developed and met</li> <li>• HR and performance management system implemented</li> <li>• Stakeholder survey system implemented and agreed targets met</li> <li>• Staff survey system implemented and agreed targets met</li> <li>• Communications strategy implemented and agreed targets met</li> <li>• Risk management strategy implemented and agreed targets met</li> <li>• Corporate governance program implemented and agreed targets met</li> </ul>

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## Appendix 1: Service development guidelines

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NRSDC has a long history of direct client service provision through delivery of services such as Northern Rivers Reconnect and Lismore/Kyogle Family Planning. When service delivery funding opportunities arise, NRSDC may end up in competition with other non-government agencies within the region. These service delivery guidelines have been developed to minimise the adverse effects of competition and to clarify the circumstances under which NRSDC will apply for service delivery funding.

### Focus

NRSDC will stay within its core competency of contributing to community wellbeing in the northern rivers

### Essential considerations

- NRSDC must be well placed to deliver the service and be a logical 'home' for it,
- The service must generally be at a regional level; services at sub regional levels will be considered if there is no other more appropriate delivery body; services at a local level will not be considered where an appropriate local delivery body can be identified.
- The service must contribute to community well being.
- NRSDC will partner with other organisations where appropriate and possible.
- NRSDC must be able to deliver the service in a manner which is at least cost neutral. NRSDC will not under-cut other agencies by tendering for services at below actual cost.

### Desirable considerations

- The service should provide an opportunity for innovation, or for testing new models of delivery.
- The service should relate to regional priorities.
- The service should support NRSDC's advocacy or sector development objectives.
- The service should be designed to promote strength based outcomes for individuals, rather than reinforcing long term dependency.
- The service should reinforce or extend NRSDC's presence in the region.