

"Sustainability Planning"

An outline of a new collaborative planning approach to support the emergence of sustainable regional communities

This 'ideas paper' presents the argument for a new planning approach to sustainability. It outlines the 'what', 'how' and 'why' of this new collaborative and 'whole of community' planning approach.

What is Sustainability Planning and Why the need for a new planning approach? 'Sustainability Planning' is based on complex system theory and emergence thinking. It differs from the predominant 'strategic planning' approach which has been used successfully in the past for controlling development of, and managing the growth in organisations and city -regions. But strategic planning is best employed with 'simple system states near equilibrium'. it does not work so easily in complex or rapidly changing environments.

How is Sustainability Planning unique? Instead of 'planning control tools' as in the strategic planning approach, Sustainability Planning relies on social learning dialogues, collaborative visioning and decision-making to make sense of the complexity of sustainability, to elicit sustainable initiatives and to re-design organisations, local places and city-regions. **Where can it be used?** 'Sustainability Planning' is suited for co-managing the complexity of large organisations, local place communities and city-regions, for identifying and co-designing sustainable pathways through the uncertainty and turbulence of climate and global economic changes. Sustainability Planning is based on the 'learning dialogue and co-design processes' that have proved successful in the Waterfall Way Ecotourism Concept and Brand Design project, in multistakeholder Sustainability Dialogues in the Northern Rivers region, for the New England Sustainability Strategy, for Peace Building Dialogues for Sustainable Peace in Fiji, Sri Lanka and for facilitating community based bottom-up sustainability strategies in Fiji communities.



evolving new ways of thinking, seeing, knowing
and working together for growing sustainable transitions

Evolveris is a not for profit
action think tank based in the New England Region
on the east coast of Australia

**An Evolveris Ideas Paper No 3- supporting discussions on catalyzing and nurturing sustainable regional communities
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Dr. Micheal O'Loughlin Dr Rebecca Spence
Evolveris welcomes your feedback and comments.
Contact michealoloughlin1@gmail.com 0423585449

What is Sustainability Planning and Strategizing

- an emerging ensemble of social learning dialogue processes and tools

1. Exploring - Developing a Shared understanding of our place community, city-region (or organisation or national conflict) as a Complex System

Included in the last section of this ideas papers is an example of a collaborative SWOC dialogue map compiled across a large group of social, economic, environmental and cultural stakeholders for the New England Sustainability strategy. Dialogue process tools include open spaces (to devise local agendas, identify key issues & priorities) & World Cafes as tools to generate multiple ideas around next steps and opportunities. Here communities and stakeholders learn together, make sense of, and develop a shared understanding of present capacity and determine and prioritise actions and opportunities that are unfolding.

2. Visioning Sustainable Futures

These dialogue visioning tools help identify the core values and design principles that elicit and define a sustainable future. Examples here include the collaborative vision painting work by Tex Skuthorpe & Anne Morrill of Tuckandee and visioning maps used in the New England Sustainability Strategy (see attachment 2). Here we probe the future, we want to nurture.

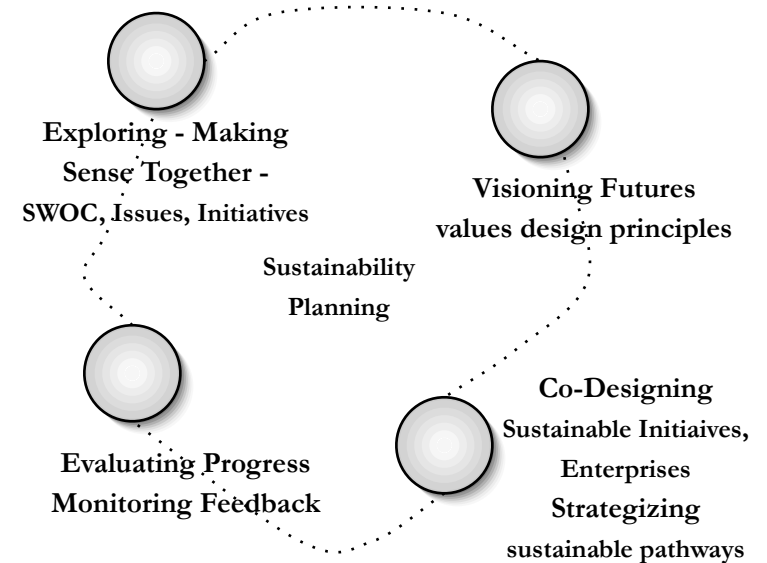
3. Strategizing - Identifying Sustainable Pathways, Co-Designing Regional Initiatives-Enterprises

Strategizing involves identifying the key strategic themes, co-designing sustainable enterprise initiatives around new business models and then collaboratively developing strategies and actions to realise these initiatives. Examples of strategizing and co-designing sustainable initiatives include the New England 'Regeneration' Strategy and its solar energy initiatives, the Northern Rivers proposed interconnected eco-villages for a sustainable region and the Waterfall Way sustainable design for a diverse network of walking tracks, stories and local cultures and cuisines (a total regional ecotourism destination).

See attachments.

4. Monitoring Progress towards Sustainability, evaluating and making sense together of social, economic and environmental feedback.

We are currently working on piloting sustainability monitoring learning tools to help communities councils, landholders and agencies to evaluate changes across their region.



Sustainability is viewed here as a

holistic notion - involving social, economic, environmental and cultural dimensions. Social indicators could include communities engagement in decision-making, inclusion & harmony across different cultural communities, & social capital. Economic indicators could include new jobs & diverse enterprises, eco-efficient industry measures like waste, green energy, water usage etc. Environmental measures could include biodiversity, species preservation, air - catchment water quality etc. Cultural activities supporting sustainability could include SLEX events say etc.

social learning journey where communities, state agencies landholders and councils learn together to identify sustainable initiatives, new practices and pathways using monitoring - evaluation tools to strategize.

place - regional context dependent - this means that what is sustainable in one place or region isn't necessarily sustainable in another place - community or region.

**Strategic Management - Planning is more procedures - outcomes focused'
more about aligning, focusing, cohesion and results.
It has a managing, top down, control and command perspective
and best for near equilibrium system states**

**'Sustainability Planning is more process- learning focused;
nurturing connections, mutuality, partnership networks, innovations,
and bottom-up top-down supported; it is best for complex systems far from
equilibrium or approaching edge of chaos**

Attachments - some examples of ' sustainability planning tools'

- 1. Collaborative SWOC analysis - New England Sustainability Strategy**
- 2. Visioning - New England Sustainability Strategy**
- 3. Co-Design - 3.1 Sustainable Waterfall Way Ecotourism Concept Design**
 - 3.2 Northern Rivers Sustainable Urban Regional Design**
 - 3.3 New England Sustainability Priorities - Initiatives**
 - 3.4 New England Sustainability Strategizing**

Note: In complex systems jargon, sustainability planning seeks to 'catalyze both emergence and novelty'. This collection of process social learning tools provides ways of nurturing the emergence of new understandings, new knowledge about systems, and the dynamic nature of place communities, regions and organisations. It provides new collaborative ways of working together and multi-stakeholder partnership networks and deliberative democratic network governance arrangements. We can't continue to expect Local Councils, Agencies or individual local enterprises to manage the complexity of adapting regional transitions. Novelty refers to the collaborative design of new unique and innovative regional initiatives and partnered business models...breaking the same old, same old moulds whether they be ways of working together, energy arrangements, ways of managing waste or ecotourism initiatives. This notion of sustainability planning is based on research work initially undertaken at the University of New England and now being advanced by both Evolveris and Peaceworks.

1. A Summary of the Common Themes, Focus Areas, Regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges as identified by 7 stakeholder groups New England Sustainability Strategy Process

Youth Themes

Importance of urgency around resource depletion, engaging youth; awareness, learning & knowledge of sustainability practices; community workshops, school programs & social events around sustainability

Environmental Themes

Importance of social capital, awareness commitment & capability of community & landcare network in remedial work; cool climate, water, new diversified woodland models of integrated land-use & carbon sinks, diversified ecosystems, diversity of species, national parks sunlight, wind, water

Armidale Dumaresq Council Themes

Importance of stewardship - Protecting & enhancing our unique environment, community assets & cultural life; involving community in transparent decision =making;commitment to LT vision

What was Novel - Unique?

Developing an Eco-Uni
Peer to Peer mentoring around sustainability
sustainability Tours for educating regional stakeholders
Region as centre of excellence for a neweconomy



Economic Themes

Importance of Education, Agri-business & Global Research IT Knowledge enterprises; a new regional identity Wine / Food / Ecootourism & diverse land-use; policies / infrastructure for regional development

Global Themes

Importance of intelligent, culturally rich, diverse & internationally connected & networked region; existing international partnerships and Student - alumni & business links

UNE Students

Importance of a new culture of innovation, experimentation leading sustainability practices, holistic designs around water energy, waste, sanctuaries, biodiversity international links, research, training, linking with communities in collaborative projects - enabling downstream effects

Social Themes

Importance of rich education & cultural scene, need to recognize & reward volunteers & local sustainability champions for commitment to place, empowering community in decisions, availability sunlight, water for sustainable housing

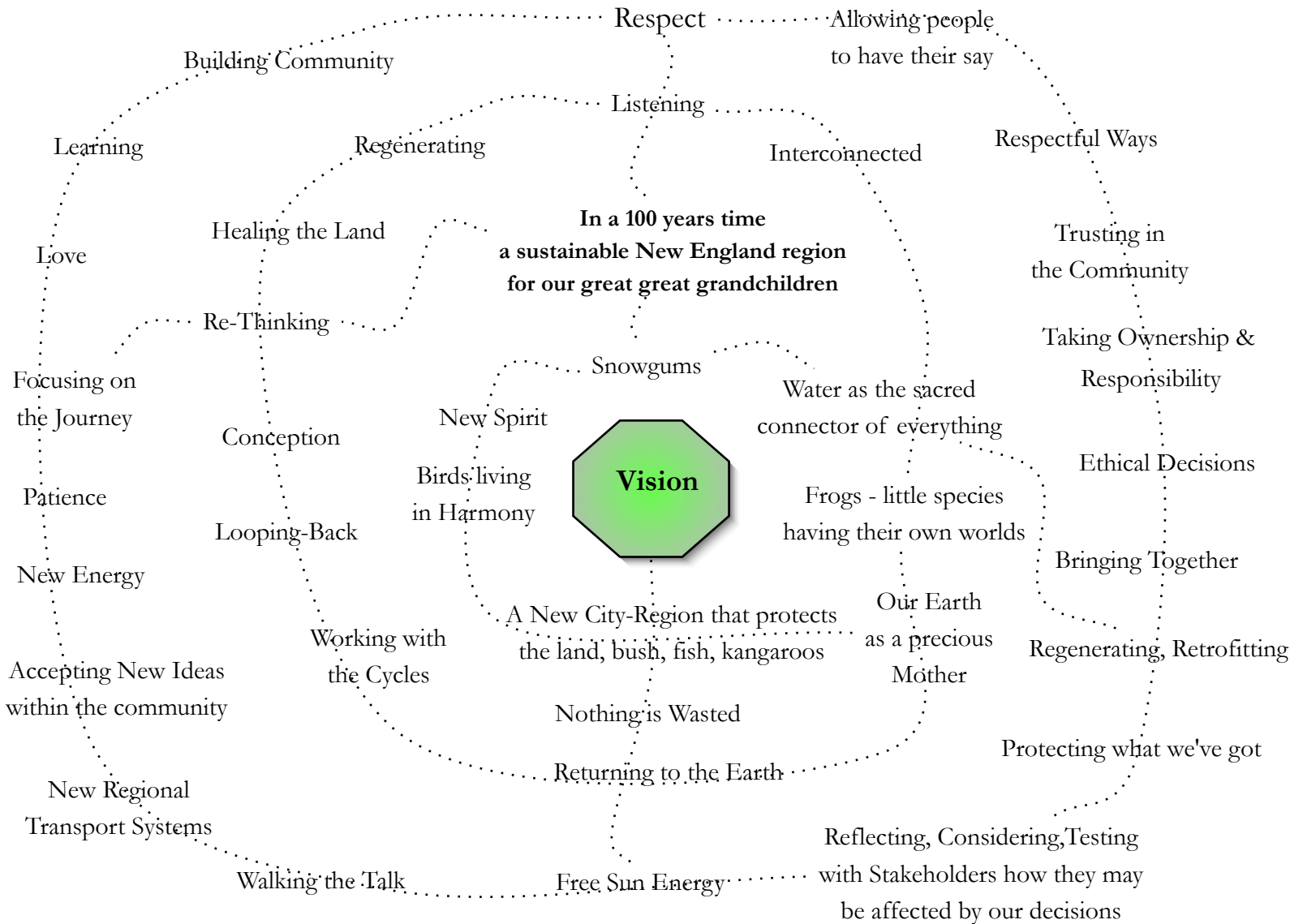
Micheal O'Loughlin Evolveris

Example 2.

Vision.....

A Whole of Community New England Sustainability Strategy

for a Sustainable New England Region



This vision was facilitated by Tex Skuthorpe & Ann Morrill (Tuckandee) involving around 30 people painting their collective vision of a sustainable New England Region in 100 years time.

This represents the ethos, values, new ways of relating and working together, the 'vision painters' felt are required to realize a sustainable New England in 2108.

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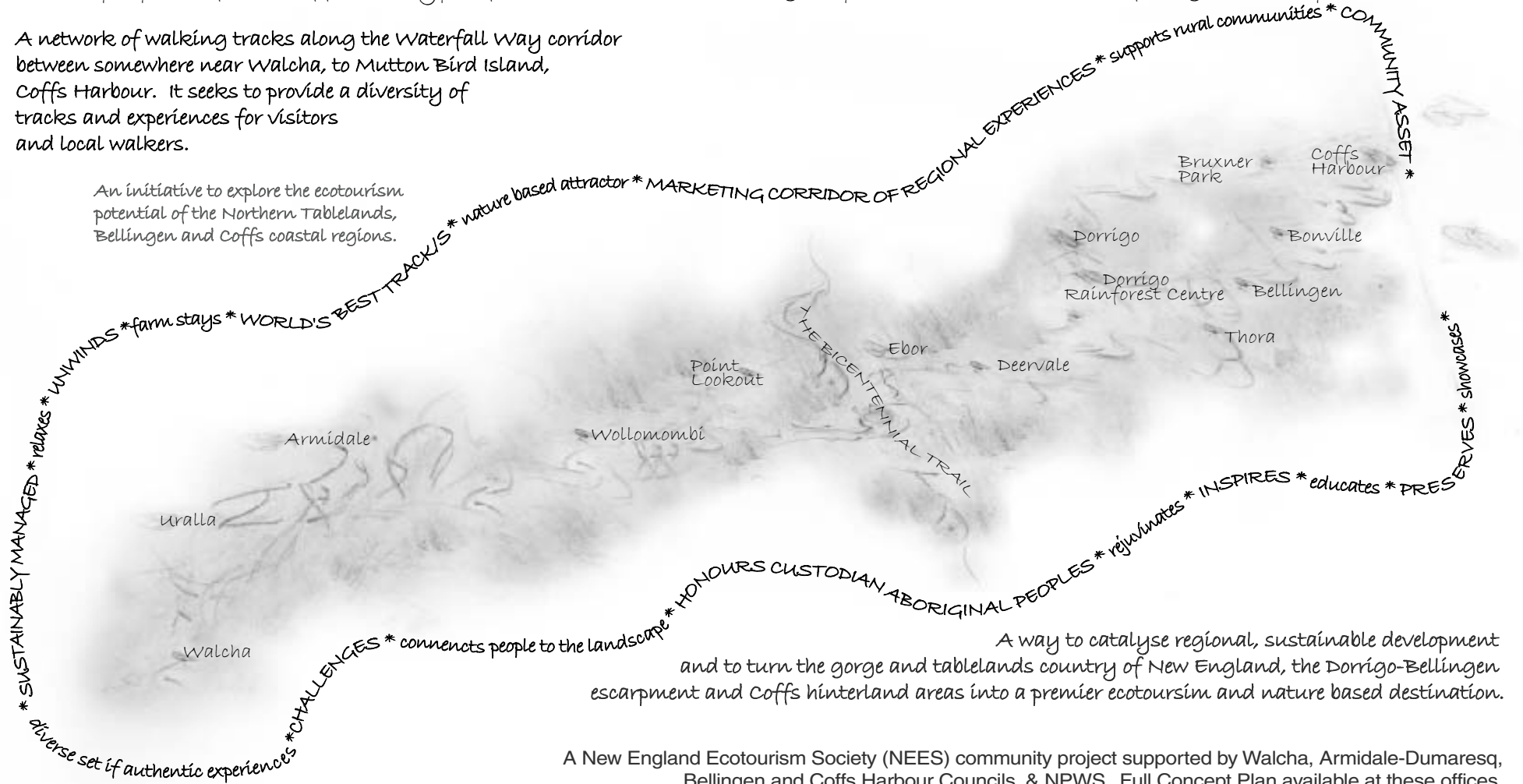
Example 3.1 Co-design

Concept Plan: Waterfall Way Walking Tracks

A proposal for a different type of World Class Walking Experience - A Corridor of Regional Experiences

A network of walking tracks along the Waterfall Way corridor between somewhere near Walcha, to Mutton Bird Island, Coffs Harbour. It seeks to provide a diversity of tracks and experiences for visitors and local walkers.

An initiative to explore the ecotourism potential of the Northern Tablelands, Bellingen and Coffs coastal regions.



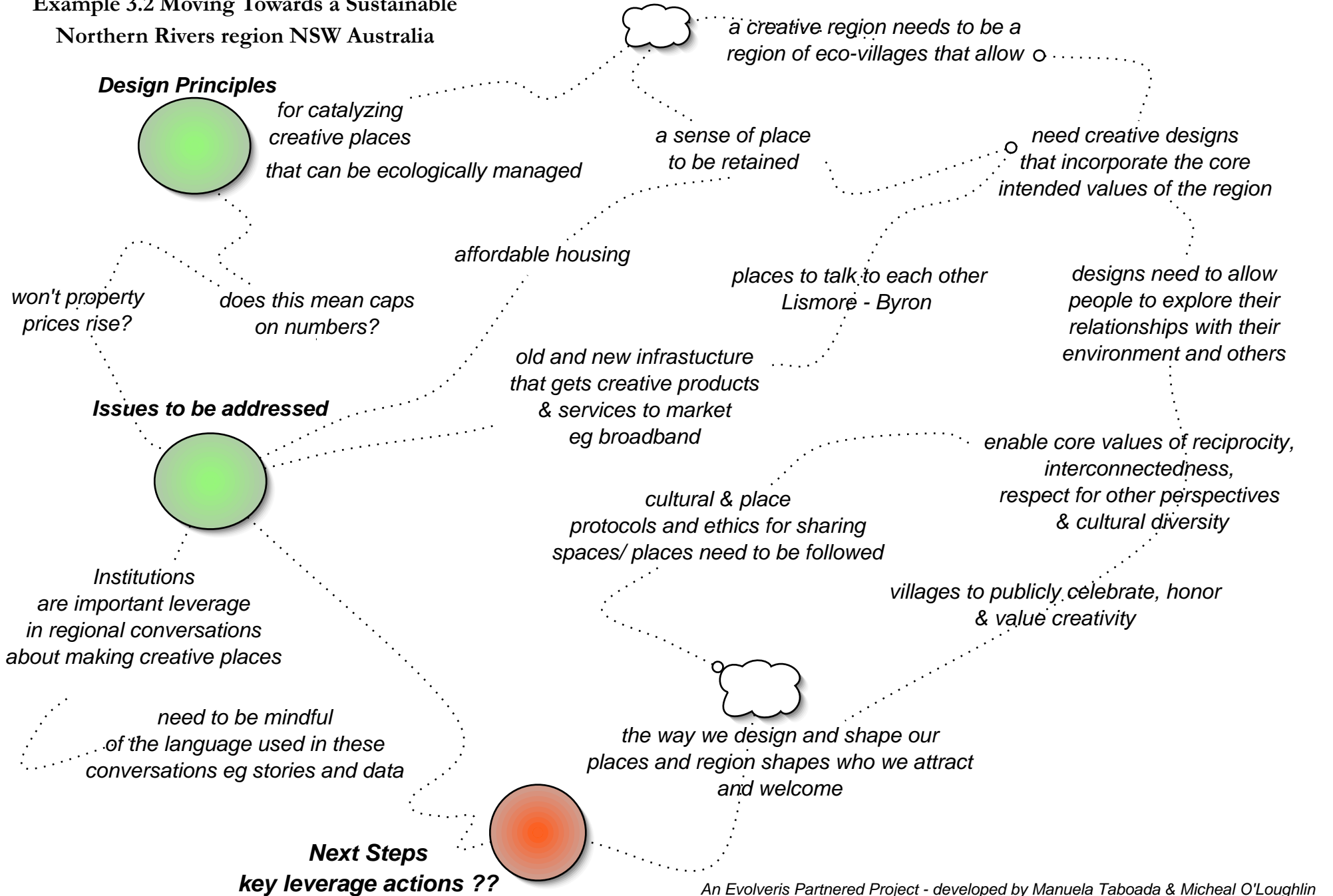
A way to catalyse regional, sustainable development and to turn the gorge and tablelands country of New England, the Dorrigo-Bellingen escarpment and Coffs hinterland areas into a premier ecotourism and nature based destination.

A New England Ecotourism Society (NEES) community project supported by Walcha, Armidale-Dumaresq, Bellingen and Coffs Harbour Councils, & NPWS. Full Concept Plan available at these offices, or Mick O'Loughlinon 02 6773 3986, or www.une.edu.au/cwpr/track/conceptplan

for NEES information visit www.ecotourism.com.au or contact Lindsay Teychenne on 0438 713886 or lindsay@ecotourism.com.au

research undertaken by the CEEWPR, University of New England

Example 3.2 Moving Towards a Sustainable Northern Rivers region NSW Australia



Priorities and Initiatives - Whole of Community New England Sustainability Strategy



*Evolveris
Micheal O'Loughlin*

Example 3.4

New England Sustainable Strategies -Laying the Foundations

This map outlines the 5 Strategies, Actions - Outcomes that emerged from the Armidale Sustainable Strategies Forum

New Enghd Sustainability Office
Education- Projects

Strategy 1 Regional Regeneration

- Actions**
- * preserved TSR's
 - * wildlife corridors
 - * habitat regeneration
 - * riparian regeneration
 - * zero waste (water, nutrients)
 - * regenerative showcases

- Regeneration Outcomes**
- * carbon neutral region
 - * increased land fertility/productivity
 - * increased adaptability/resilient landscape
 - * increased biodiversity
 - * increased adaptability of farmland
 - * increased water retention/quality
 - * thriving -sustainable ecosystems

- Financing**
- Carbon Trading
 - Bio Banking
 - 1% NESAC Sustainability Investment levy
 - New England Sustainability Foundation
 - Buy Regional

- outdoor ecotourism setting
- classroom incl. wineries
- quality place to live
- * Farmers Market for local food supply
- * Local Food - Wine - Autumn Festival
- * walking school bus
- * Old Mole
- * Sustainable Living Armidale
- * Home Gardening
- * New England ENGO Co-alition
- * Iron Man Welding

Strategy 5 Let 2 Dozen Roses Bloom

- * Eco-Burials

Research & Education

CSIRO / Chiswick/ UNE
Establish Baseline Data & measure change

carbon data
ecological footprint
backcast vision
transport audit

Strategy 2 Building on our Strengths & Assets

Outcomes

- * a model sustainable region - brand identity-showcases
- * consolidate, grow, export beyond our 5km business radius
- * world class agribusiness, knowledge, education professional industry
- * affordable housing
- * services for ageing population
- * cultural tourism
- * global work, sustainable sister city connections - learning community
- * climate/environmental refugee haven

Transitions
Armidale
regional policy
framework

* Green Business
Cluster
diversified new
enterprises

Diversify Energy
Sources
Combined Heat & Power
Gas
Biomass
Solar
Wind
Geothermal

* employment - sustainable
enterprises

Strategy 4 A New Energy Future

Energy Actions - Outcomes

Efficiency Drive

Measurement

Transport
Rail, Buses

Going Beyond Basix

Strategy 3 Nurturing a Culture of Sustainability

Actions

- * Support Leadership Networks sustainability shifters - champions
- * building community awareness / social capacity
- * engaging people - participatory decision-making
- * creative industry initiatives
- * Space for Youth Face Book - Festivals
- * Youth Training - Mentoring
- * Eco-Youth Awards

energy audits
meters

Trigen for Hospital
Community Owned
Renewable Power
Company

Adam Blakestaer - Paradigm Play

Micheal O'Loughlin Evolveris