



KARUAH AND DISTRICT RSL INC.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

2024

**Alistair Third
President**

**C. Fraser
General Manager**

**T. Davies
Vice President**

**S. Brock
Director**

**J. Henderson
Director**

**O. Hurtsfield
Director**

**C. Stevens
Director**

Dated: 08 October 2024

Note: This document is released as a “Live Plan” and may therefore be amended to meet unforeseen changes. If this occurs, the amended plan will be signed by the amending Directors and show the date of amendment.

Contents:

Background -----	Page 3
SWOT Analysis -----	Page 4
Mission Statement -----	Page 5
Vision Statement -----	Page 6
Values -----	Page 6
Sub Goals and Pathway-----	Page 8
Sub Goal Analysis-----	Page 8
Timelines-----	Page 9
Conclusion-----	Page 9
Annexes-----	Page 10
A. Quick Reference Guide – Plan on a Page. -----	Page

BACKGROUND

The Karuah and District RSL Club Limited ACN 000 882 931 (The Club) is a NSW Registered Club under the Registered Clubs Act NSW. The Club has historical links to the Karuah RSL Sub Branch of the NSW RSL which originally constructed the (first of many versions of) The Club and from which The Club still retains the title of being an “RSL Club”. These formal links were changed in 1975 when the original liquor licence, ownership and management of The Club was handed to the newly formed and constituted Karuah and District RSL Club Limited, its elected Board of management and its original General Manager and Licensee. That 1975 structure continued up to 2022 when a structural review was conducted and a more function-based structure was adopted by the Board of Directors in Oct 2022. The new 2022 structure is on display on the Clubs website [STRUCTURE-OF-THE-KARUAH-RSL-CLUB-.pdf \(karuahrsl.com.au\)](https://www.karuahrsl.com.au/STRUCTURE-OF-THE-KARUAH-RSL-CLUB-.pdf). The original 1975 constitution was rewritten and modernised so as to comply with the evolved compliance requirements of the NSW Clubs Act in 2018 and has been added to with By Laws where these were necessary. The Club constitution and by-laws are also on the Clubs website. Today The Club maintains an excellent lawn bowling green and fosters The Karuah Lawn Bowls Club as a separate Sub Club which operates under its own (sub club) constitution as an element of the RSL Club. The RSL Sub Branch of the NSW RSL remains as a sponsored group within the Club and although an element of the NSW Returned Services League, it retains a constitutional obligation to provide 5 members of the Board of Directors, including a President and a Vice President on The Clubs Board. The Sub Branch also retains a right to veto any constitutional amendments proposed by the Board. The Sub Branch is now a separate entity to The Club.

The Club is situated on the upper banks of the Karuah River and Port Stephens in the centre of the Karuah township and is central to the Karuah District including North Arm Cove, west to Allworth, and south to Swan Bay. The Townships of Medowie, Raymond Terrace, Clarence Town, Buladelah, Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest are all peripheral communities within The Clubs area of influence. The Club has a diverse membership of some 6000 members, with a broad grouping of locals, district locals and (at least) annually visiting holiday makers.

This 2024 review of The Club’s strategic management plan was conducted as part of the biannual review planned to be conducted (either minor or major depending on assessed requirements) every 2 years for the setting of future directions and objectives for all members to strive to achieve during the next 5 to 10 years.

The Club Board of Management considers that this Strategic Plan better represents the wording of the Clubs newly adopted Mission and Vision statements and refines the Clubs Sub Goals which, if met, lead to a pathway of improvement, and which over the period of the plan will achieve the Clubs Vision.

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis has been conducted which identified the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of The Club:

STRENGTHS

- Solid property portfolio.
- Decreasing debt.
- Quality staff.
- Little competition.
- Increasing Membership.
- Diverse member and local demographics.
- Community relationships.
- Prime location within our community.
- Long history and traditions.
- Solid gaming income.
- Courtesy Vehicle fleet.
- Commencement of new community vehicle service involvement.
- Recently accepted new structure provides flexibility and versatility.

WEAKNESSES

- Variety of property ownership and leased land types.
- Overhead power lines.
- Town locals' ownership expectations.
- Traditional local mistrust of and reluctance to change.
- Untidy back of house areas.
- Historical communication failings causing a lack of members understanding of the RSL Club and NSW RSL relationship and regulations and laws that apply separately to each.
- Community expectations and small corps of members always wanting more.
- An apathy in some niches within the Club to the need to plan for the Clubs future.
- Quality of carpark hard standing.
- A perception in some Karuah Groups that the RSL Club is an unlimited source of funds for their projects.
- Aging membership of the Karuah Sub Branch and its potential inability to fill Directorial Positions.
- Board turnover creates numerous "new" untrained members with "sub club" views.
- Lack of formal succession planning or training.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Increasing urban population represents opportunity to attract younger member demographic and families.
- Medowie expansion a member recruitment well.
- Creation of Sub Clubs (Travelling Bowlers, Fishing, Mountain Biking etc).
- Staff training sponsorships (industry, first aid, management, etc).
- Investment strategies can be developed.
- Stage 1 of refurbishment has been completed with stage 2 commenced and is costed.
- Military memorabilia display.
- EBITDA multipliers/Diverse income streams can be developed.

THREATS

- Loss of quality staff to other industries.
- Threats to local oyster, hoofed animal farming and bee keeping industries could impact the Clubs income.
- Possible changes to gaming regulations.
- Diverse customer base not being well defined (lack of data on expectations/visits per period/spend per visit).
- Facility management capable of improvement from a low base.
- Advocates for historic management models appealing to a deeply conservative membership element and the danger of regression to outdated historical models.
- Some anti Change elements within the Club are against ANY change within the Club.

MISSION

The Club's Mission statement, in use since the 2022 Strategic Review, has been: "The Karuah RSL Club is to continue to evolve into a modern, strong, mature, friendly and successful Karuah based Licenced RSL Club, communicating with, retaining and meeting the needs of its increasing membership and its staff while continuing to be a major social element within the community in Karuah and the premium entertainment and social venue in the Karuah district". This Mission Statement has been widely used by the Board and Management team up to the commencement of the 2024 review. It was always recognised as being somewhat "wordy", however it proved to be utilitarian in nature during the earliest stage of Strategic Planning. A consultative process and further review of the plan during 2024 has seen it expanded to include more detail on how the "Mission" is to be achieved and this has added directly to the development of a more succinct mission statement. The amended Mission Statement is now:

"To provide an inviting and enjoyable community entertainment venue that delivers value for money and contributes to the local identity and social capital of the Karuah District, while guided by the values expressed below for the Club Members, Board and Staff."

VISION

The previous Club Vision was “We have an enduring, strong, mature, friendly and successful Karuah RSL Club, retaining and improving and meeting the needs of membership and position within the cultural and social environment in both the Karuah and District and community. The Club moves confidently into the 2030s and beyond in its niche as a community leader “. This previous vision statement has been used as a utilitarian description of a desired medium term end point. Like the Mission Statement. further detail within the 2024 Plan has allowed the refinement into a more succinct longer-term vision. The amended Vision Statement is now:

“We are the leading social institution and entertainment venue in the Karuah District and surrounds, providing exceptional service to our growing membership and supporting a thriving local community via our quality offerings and generous donations”.

VALUES

The various elements of the Club have accepted that they will conduct their activities using the following values as a guide to their behaviour, decisions, and actions. These values and individuals core values should influence decisions regarding all facets of Club business.

BOARD VALUES

The Board of Directors will use the following Values as a guide:

- **Flexibility** – Directors will remain flexible to the economic, social and ever-changing operational environment within our Club, community, and membership. Our members own the Club and have expectations of us to continue to meet their evolving needs.
- **Maturity** – Directors will act with confidence, integrity, and thoughtfulness. They embrace change but do not act rashly. They make decisions based on sound evidence and best practice and always with the best-interests of the club over their own, in mind.
- **Modern** – Directors will not only embrace innovation, they lead it. Directors move with the times and maintain their relevance as the Karuah community and world grows and changes.
- **Representative** – Board Members regardless of their membership category (Ordinary or Ordinary RSL) must serve and represent all Club Members equally with no favour or preference for the needs of any sub club/group or minority element of Members over any others (see Directors Role Description as per Clubs NSW and Federal and State legislation).

- **Consultative** – Board Members must remain accessible to members, their concerns, opinions and suggestions on the Club's future and direction. Board members must never forget that community is at the heart of what we do.
- **Community Minded** – Directors are part of the community, not separate from it. They build community cohesion and culture through their role modelling of friendly and respectful interactions.
- **Service** – Directors accept that they serve their fellow Club members. They do this by contributing to and working at Club activities easing the burden of the staff and providing guidance and leadership where appropriate. All Directors must accept the task of fairly and balanced service as an element of their Directorship.
- **Economic Success** – Directors accept that they are, both personally and as a team, responsible for the ongoing economic success of the Club. Decisions made must take into account the Club's budget and financial viability moving forward.

STAFF VALUES

The staff of the Club will use the following Values as a guide:

- **Respect** - Staff Members will treat patrons with and expect to be treated themselves with respect. They will value and appreciate patrons and other staff regardless of differences.
- **Service Excellence** – Staff will listen, communicate, collaborate with patrons and members to create an amazing service experience.
- **Leadership** – Staff will demonstrate Integrity, honesty, sound decision making, team spirit, flexibility, adaptability and embrace change. As Club Staff they are Leaders within the Club environment.
- **Community Spirit** – Staff should be proud to be part of and support our community. Staff are essential and valuable elements of our Club.
- **Modern** – Staff will not only embrace innovation, they lead it. Staff members move with the times and maintain their relevance as our community and world grows and changes.
- **Support** – Staff accept their role in keeping the Club a safe, modern, clean facility with environmental practices.
- **Family** – Staff make the Club a fun, friendly, family environment. They understand that the Club is a home away from home.

- **Economic Success** – Staff recognise that they are part of the team responsible for the ongoing economic success of the Club. Their actions must take into account the Club’s budget and financial viability moving forward.

CLUB MEMBERS VALUES

All Club Members are expected to use the following values as a guide to their behaviour while within the Club:

- **Enduring** – The Club belongs to all members; it has been in operation in its present form since 1975 and it should remain fulfilling its role and vision for the foreseeable future. Members should encourage and support that future.
- **Evolving and Modern** – Club Members should recognise that both their Club and their community is evolving. We embrace innovative developments and industry best practice to improve and modernise practices both within our Club, our Sub Clubs and associated groups.
- **Friendly** - we never forget that community is at the heart of what we do. We are part of the community, not separate from it. We build community cohesion and culture through our role modelling of friendly, welcoming and respectful interactions.
- **Behaviour** - We recognise that the Club is and must remain a safe place to all who enter it. The Club, its managers, employees, members and visitors must accept that any unsocial, unruly, aggressive, unsafe, sexist or disrespectful behaviour from anyone within it that is prejudicial to the interests of the Club or unbecoming of a member will not be tolerated and appropriate action will be taken.
- **Economic Success** – Members must recognise that as part owners, they are part of the team responsible for the ongoing economic success of the Club. Their actions must take into account the Club’s budget and financial viability moving forward.

VISION PATHWAYS/SUB GOALS

For the Club to develop and evolve from its present 2024 position and meet its vision outcome, it must seek improvement by achieving Sub Goals along the pathway to their vision end state. These Sub Goals have been assessed as being associated with improvements in the following areas. These pathway areas are more fully described at Annex A and their action implications detailed at Annex B:

- Communication,
- Compliance,
- Membership,

- Staff,
- Structure,
- Facilities,
- Industry Partnerships and Supply Chain,
- Major Systems, and
- Financial Planning.

TIMELINES

This Strategic Plan has a short, medium and long-term timeline.

- **Short Term.** The Plan is intended to guide the Club Management team from promulgation. As promulgated it is intended that the Plan be reviewed after each 2-year period (i.e. 2026 and 2028).
- **Medium Term.** It is assessed that with some minor amendments, reflecting unforeseen change, the Plan will not require a major review for 6 years (i.e. 2030).
- **Long Term.** While some elements of the plan may require adjustment following the Medium-Term review, it is intended that major outcomes will remain relevant and be worthy of retention for 10 years (2034).

ANNUAL BUDGET

The planning of the Clubs annual budget is a matter for the Management Team; however, it is accepted that the Club does not have a singular purpose to make ever increasing substantial profits. The community nature of the Club, its Mission and Vision and its values, lead it to a requirement to simply make a large enough profit annually to meet its budgetary needs. This requirement should be reflected in economic strategy including pricing, savings, and sponsorships. The management team must budget to achieve economic responsibility.

CONCLUSION

The Karuah and District RSL, like other medium-sized hospitality businesses in country and coastal NSW, is particularly vulnerable to:

- the challenges of staff shortages in a highly casualised workforce,
- inflation and rising commodity prices,
- changes in discretionary spending habits. and
- Other threats as detailed in the SWOT Analysis above.

Despite these challenges, the club continues to post good financial results: In the 2022-23 financial year, it increased its overall net profit by 12% from the previous year on the back of strong bar trading, significant growth in gaming machine revenue, elements increased TAB and Keno commissions, and growth in membership numbers. With an average EBITDA of 22.2% (over five quarters to the end of the 2022-23 FY), the club is firmly characterised as ‘Solid’ in the club financial viability/distress scale.

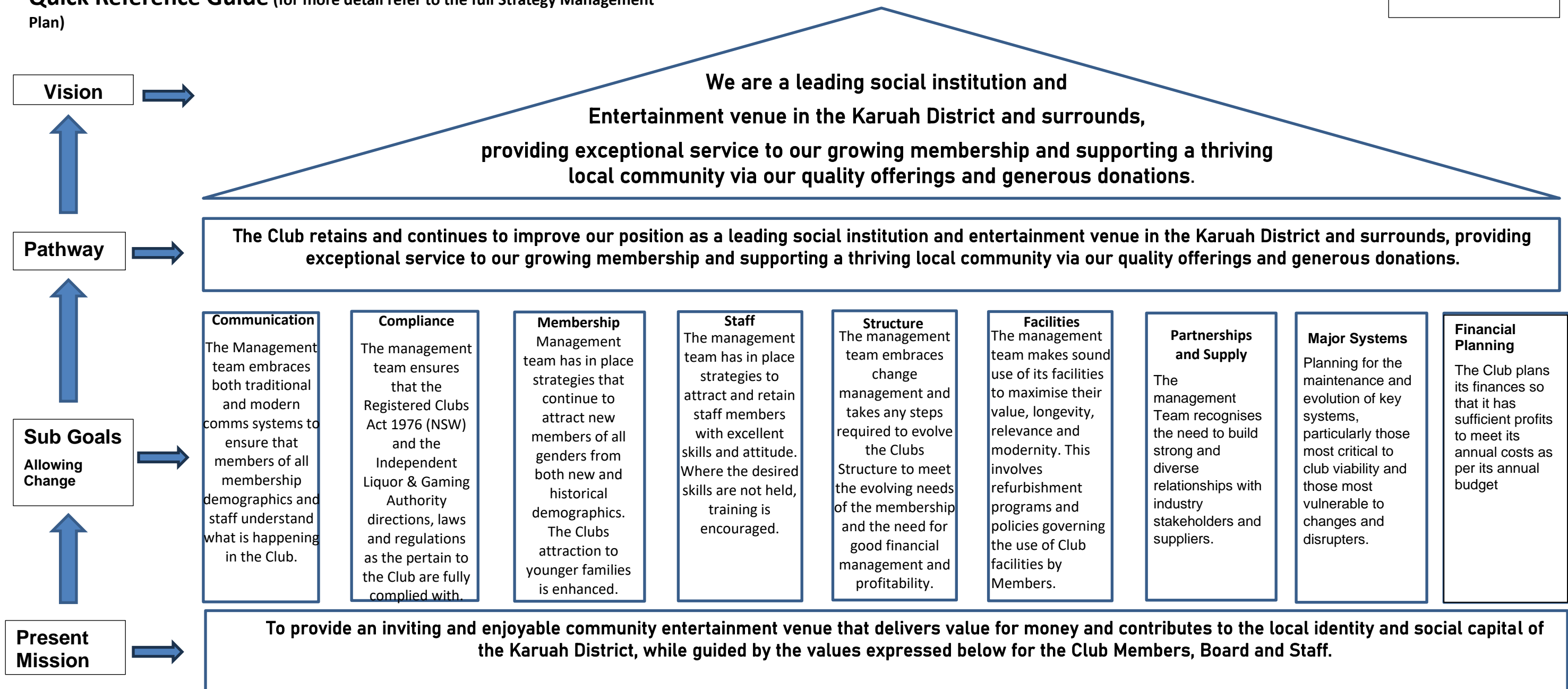
While past performance of the Club is “solid”, challenges, change and other threats represent an uncertain future. This 2024 strategic review and this resultant plan offers a pathway to continued success and a retention or even improvement to its present “solid” results. The Club Management Team, Staff and Members have indicated that come what may, the Club is too valuable to its community to risk by not adopting sound strategic planning and this plan represents a strong future for the Club.

Annexes:

A. Karuah and District RSL Strategy on a Page

Karuah and District RSL Strategy on a Page

Quick Reference Guide (for more detail refer to the full Strategy Management Plan)



References: The primary reference used in the compilation of the Karuah and District RSL Club Incorporated Strategic Plan is the Club's Constitution (ACN 000 882 931 adopted as at 02 Dec 2018). The Club also has numerous By Laws which in addition to the Constitution are available for perusal on the Club Web Site ([Karuah RSL - The Perfect City Escape](#)) .

- Board Values**
- Flexibility
 - Maturity
 - Modernity
 - Representation
 - Consultative
 - Community Mindedness
 - Economic Success
 - Service

- Club Members Values**
- Enduring
 - Evolving
 - Friendly
 - Welcoming
 - Modern
 - Behaviour
 - Economic Success

- Staff Values**
- Respect
 - Service Excellence
 - Leadership
 - Community Spirit
 - Modern
 - Support
 - Family
 - Economic Success

Board, Club and Staff Values are described in detail in the full Club Strategic Management Plan.