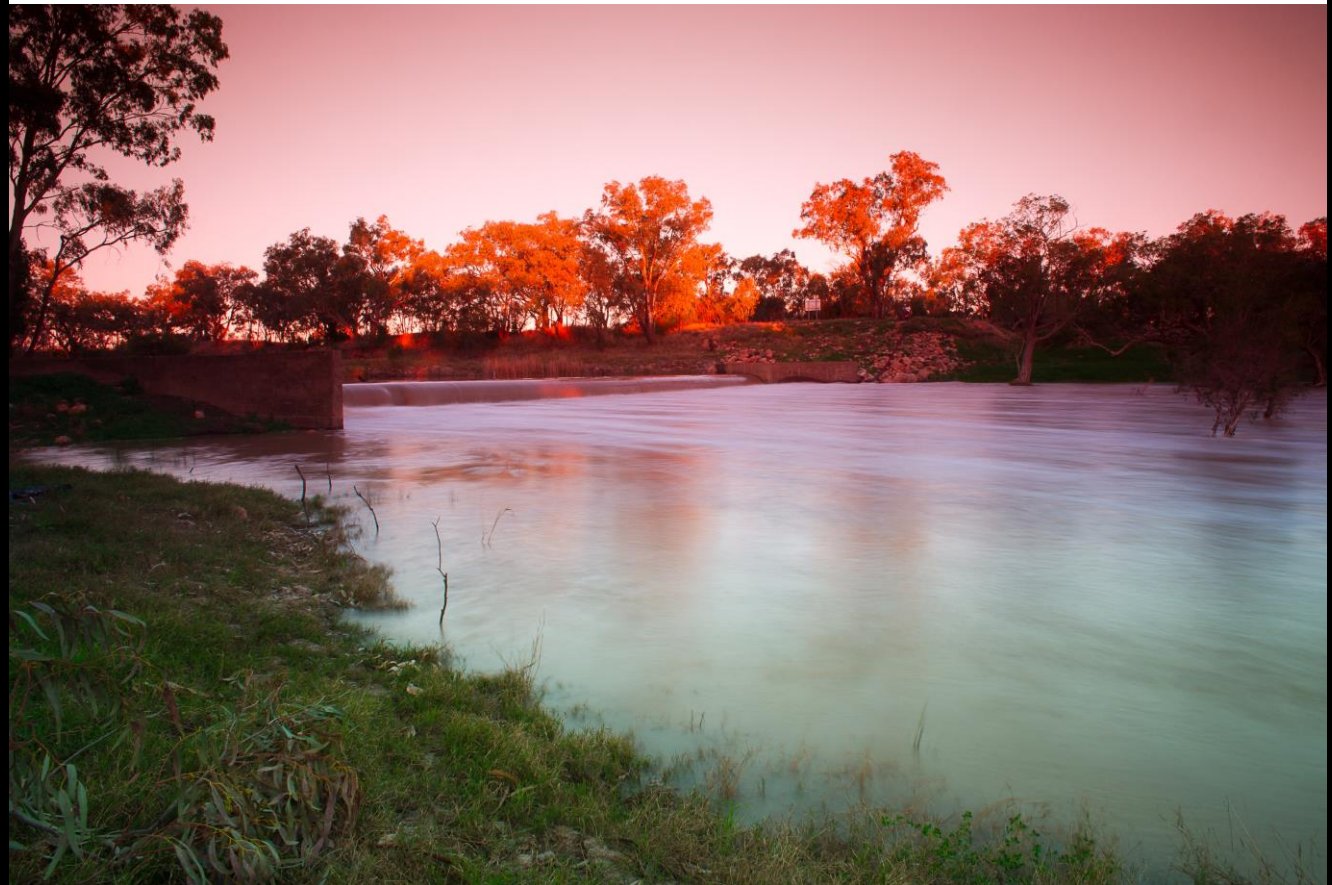


Walgett Shire Community Strategic Plan 2012 – 2022



Reviewed 26/3/13



'engaging our communities'

SPEAK UP!



COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION

Council Offices: Phone (02) 6828 1399
Administration Offices
77 Fox Street, Walgett
Office Hours: 9.00am to 4.30pm

Written Communication: The General Manager
Walgett Shire Council
PO Box 31
WALGETT NSW 2832

Email: admin@walgett.nsw.gov.au

Facsimile: (02) 6826 1608

Website: www.walgett.nsw.gov.au

Council acknowledges the extensive contribution by the Walgett Shire Community to the development of this Community Strategic Plan.

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Walgett Shire Community Strategic Plan 2012 – 2022

Foreword – Mayor G.A. (Bill) Murray

It is my pleasing duty to present the 2012 – 2022 Walgett Shire Community Strategic Plan (CSP) review which has involved extensive engagement with all sections of our local community. A key aspect of the review was the ‘Speak Up’ community engagement campaign which was directed at maximising communities’ participation in the CSP review process.

The new Integrated Planning and Reporting legislation introduced by the State Government in October 2009 recognises that long term strategic planning is an essential process which allows us to identify our future population, asset and community values so that we can respond accordingly to emerging trends and aim for long term sustainability. The Plan focuses on the areas where the community has identified its greatest concerns – the need for road infrastructure, community safety, economic development, youth training and employment, community harmony and respect for our living environment.

When developing our first ten year Strategic Plan, Council intended that it becomes a rolling forward plan that can be regularly reviewed and updated. This is the first review of the plan adopted in 2012. In accordance with the new legislation, Council is also preparing a number of other plans to underpin this Plan. These include a resourcing strategy which involves the preparation of a Long Term (10 Year) Financial Plan, an Asset Management Plan, a Workforce Plan. In turn, these will support a Four Year Delivery Programme and an Annual Operations Plan and Budget.

The Annual Operational Plan and Four Year Delivery Programme will go into greater detail to set out Council’s responsibility realising the Community’s long term aspirations. Both identify that much of Council’s role in achieving these aspirations is by way of facilitating and advocating other tiers of Government including Transport, Health, Police and education for the delivery of services and facilities that are their true responsibility.

In recent years Council has been taking a longer term view with regards its future direction. Through the process of sound financial forecasting, it is trying to balance Community expectations with scarce resources. Whilst our revenue base has been declining in real terms, there is an expectation by the community that the needs of asset maintenance and renewal will continue to be met.

The accounting for depreciation is a major cost to Council and highlights the degree to which major assets are declining in value.

To this end, a number of Asset Management Plans, which will fully identify all Council’s assets, their condition, current valuation and replacement cost, have been

completed with the remaining plan in an advanced stage of development. These Plans are invaluable as a tool for better managing our assets and provide a basis to seek greater levels of funding in a number of areas including roads.

One of Council's main functions is to keep the community advised and aware of its activities. In addition, it must ensure that Council's functions and services are delivered in a timely, efficient and effective manner. The Community Strategic Plan will assist Council to achieve this objective and promote partnerships with other tiers of government as well as the broader community.

I look forward to all residents taking an active role in achieving the various community aspiration set out in this plan.

Clr G A (Bill) Murray
Mayor

Preparation of Plan

Walgett Shire Council's strategic vision is to *maximise opportunities for the community to improve their quality of life whilst embracing their own culture and social diversity for the benefit of all.*

This *Community Strategic Plan* is designed to assist the community of Walgett Shire develop its resilience and improve its quality of life over the next decade. It reflects the view of the community in relation to its identified needs and priorities over the next ten years. It is an overview of how the community can become more vibrant and sustainable through:

- Building relationships between the diverse groups of people who live in the Shire
- Improving the local economy to provide more and better jobs and other opportunities for all in the Shire
- Caring for the environment and keeping it healthy
- Building sound infrastructure that supports our ways of living
- Sound governance.

The plan details the area that Council will focus on under five themes: Community, Sustainable Living, Economic Development, Infrastructure and Governance/Civic Leadership. For each theme it sets out where our community sees itself going, how we will get there and what role the Council will play, either through providing direct services and programs, in partnership with other agencies, or by lobbying other agencies for change.

That the community has had an opportunity to make comment and provide input into the plan during its draft stages. The Draft Strategic Plan adopted by Council will be on public exhibition for a 28 day period with the community able to make further submissions during this period.

The plan draws on material from: the *Walgett Shire Growth Management Study and Strategy (2008)*; the *Walgett Shire Council Social Plan 2007-2010*; the *Namoi Regional State of the Environment Report 2007-2008*; the *Western, Namoi, Border Rivers and Central West Catchment Action Plans* and refers to the *Walgett/Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge Reference Group Action Plans*. It is also based on a strategic planning workshop run for councillors in January 2009 and further workshops conducted during 2010/2011 with councillors and the executive team at a series of Community Forums.

Each of the five themes has background information followed by Community Strategic Action Plan identifying the Community's priority projects.

Original CSP Community Engagement 2012

Council adopted a Community Consultation Procedure at its meeting on 24 November 2009.

The procedure uses a matrix, which Council used to guide all community consultations subsequent to that date. It describes the types of activities to be used dependant on the level of consultation chosen from the matrix. Each consultation has an indication of the level of community contact required and a description of the activities to be undertaken

Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP or the Plan) is its most significant guiding document which requires the highest level of community engagement.

The development of Council's Strategic Plan has occurred over an extended period of time and has included a variety of strategies. Information has been gathered using previous, recent consultations including a community survey, consultations for Council's 2009 Social Plan, Growth Management Strategy consultations and a series of town meetings in Collarenebri, Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Burren Junction, advertised in local newspapers. Written submissions were invited from organizations and individuals across the Shire and Council received 59 written submissions following consultation meetings. Most written submissions were received from Lightning Ridge residents. Letters were sent to Precinct Committees, Ratepayers Association, Community Working Parties and to State agencies working in the Shire requesting input to the Plan.

All current strategies and plans were 'folded' into the CSP with this work providing a sound base for the further Community and Council input into the plan.

In summary the consultation process included:

- Town meetings, based around the strategic plan and social plan
- Requests for input from key organizations and stakeholders
- Staff attending meetings of key organizations
- Community survey distributed to 3,335 residents with a 5.06% return rate
- Personal interactions between staff and community
- Councillor and senior staff consultation workshops and feedback
- Landholders and industry meetings

The Community Engagement process for the 2013 review of the CSP is detailed at P19-33

Original CSP community engagement - 2012

The following groups were consulted as part of the wider community consultation process undertaken for the first Community Strategic Plan which commenced July 2012:

Table 1

Public forums	Lightning Ridge, Walgett, Collarenebri, Burren Junction, Grawin, Carinda and Rowena.
Open agency and service provider forums	Walgett and Lightning Ridge
Agency and community group visits	Walgett Domestic Violence Prevention Legal Service Women's Group Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service Dharriwaa Elders Group Collarenebri Rotary Club Nova Employment/Café 64 Collarenebri Working Party Collarenebri Yarn Up Lightning Ridge Transcultural Council Lightning Ridge Neighbourhood Centre Walgett Interagency Group Lightning Ridge Interagency Group HomeCare Walgett (DADHC) Walgett Community Working Party
Children and young People	Walgett St Joseph's Primary School students Walgett High School students Collarenebri Pre School Lightning Ridge Pre School Walgett Shire Youth Council

2. A community survey was distributed to residents in late 2008 and collated in early 2009. It was the first time such a survey has been used to provide information and feedback to Councillors and staff about Council services and the needs of the community. There were 3,335 surveys distributed and 169 returned. The return rate was disappointing and therefore, provided only minimal input to the process. Developing trust in residents that information would be used to assist Council in its service development is crucial to improving participation in Council's activities. Encouraging residents to view surveys as a useful way of getting their needs and priorities identified (and dealt with) will encourage more people to respond to future efforts.

Original CSP community engagement – 2012

There were seven significant priority action areas identified by respondents which were (in order of concern):

- Crime prevention
- Road Maintenance
- Development of recreational areas
- Youth development
- Street beautification
- Tourism; and
- Education/Literacy improvement.

Approximately 60 surveys identified crime prevention and 10 identified Education/literacy with varying numbers in between. These areas have been targeted in strategies in the Draft Community Strategic Plan.

3. Identified target groups were included in organizational meetings and specific information and ideas sought for the Draft Community Strategic Plan. In addition, some of these groups also participated in the Social Plan consultations and they are included in Table 1 above. The target groups are:

- Youth Council (representatives from around the Shire between 13-18 years of age) and youth centre participants
- Aged groups
- Multicultural groups – peak organizations, LR Transcultural Society
- HACC – service provider for people with disability
- Community Working Parties, peak Aboriginal groups across the Shire (Collarenebri, Lightning Ridge and Walgett)
- Women – Country Women’s Association, Domestic Violence providers
- Aged Services and planning for people with a disability have also been identified within the Draft CSP

4. Council has adopted a range of Strategies and Plans since its election in 2008. Listed below are the Strategies and Plans and the Council meeting date on which each instrument was adopted. Each of these required consultations with the community, some more extensive than others and some targeting specific groups. The Strategies and Plans are:

- Walgett Shire Council Community Plan 2010/2014 – adopted 24 November 2009
- Tourism Strategy 2009/2011 – 24 March 2009
- Tourism Destination Branding Project – 23 March 2010
- Main Street (Walgett) Beautification Concept – 23 March 2010
- Growth Management Strategy – 23 November 2010
- Walgett Shire Youth Development Plan – 23 June 2009

- Aboriginal Community Development Plan – 15 April 2008
5. As a final step in the consultation process a community workshop was held in Walgett on Wednesday 21 March 2012. Participants at the workshop, who represented all sections of the community, worked through the latest draft of the Community Strategic and identified a need for more emphasis on economic development and “hard” infrastructure with a focus on that infrastructure that has been allowed to deteriorate due to ongoing funding constraints including rate pegging.

Interestingly, the significant priority action areas were quite similar to those identified in 2008/2009, although in not the same order of priority. Highest priority was the condition of the local (unsealed) road network where the need for special attention for school bus routes following heavy rains was of great concern.

Following this was the need for a range of community safety measures, the need to promote economic development and in particular the need for support for larger, more imaginative projects such as the Lightning Ridge Australian Opal Centre.

The need to create meaningful employment for local youth, coupled with appropriate training leading to formal qualifications, was considered one of the most pressing issues to be addressed to assure the future of the area.



Executive summary

In 2009 the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework for NSW local government was introduced. As part of this the former Management Plan and Social Plan were replaced by the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) as the peak reference document for Council. To comply with this legislation Council produced a suite of documents overarched by the Walgett Shire Community Strategic Plan.

Under the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) legislation Council is required to review its Community Strategic Plan (CSP) every four years following the election of a new Council. The review process involved extensive community engagement and also sought responses from government and non-government agencies to identify initiatives and issues that relate to the sustainability of our economy, lifestyle and environment.

Between December 2012 and February 2013 a range of engagement options driven by the 'Speak Up' community survey campaign provided the community and other stakeholders with the opportunity to provide feedback on the information contained in the original CSP and to express their views and aspirations as citizens of the Walgett Shire.

This report outlines the process of the CSP review, and details the survey outcomes across the five themes. Importantly it also provided an opportunity for citizens to state what was important to them and areas where they believe improvement is required. The survey findings then formed the basis of the data for reviewing the objectives and strategies directed at meeting community expects from the Council through its operations and projects.

The Community has a further opportunity for input by making a submission during the 28 day period that the Draft CSP will be on public exhibition. The adopted CSP will be the primary source document for the development of the four year delivery program and the 2013/2014 Operational Plan.



Overview

Walgett Shire Strategic Plan: 2012-2022

The first 10 year Walgett Shire Community Strategic Plan was developed in 2012 following an extensive consultation process that included public forums, surveys, submissions, direct feedback and workshops with Council and staff. The Plan detailed the communities needs and aspirations under five key themes;

- Economic Development
- Community
- Sustainable Living
- Governance and Civic Leadership
- Infrastructure

From the community engagement process, objectives and strategies for addressing identified community needs and aspirations were developed under each theme.

Under the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) legislation, Council is required to review its Community Strategic Plan (CSP) every four years following the election of a new Council. The review process involved extensive community engagement and also partnered with government and non-government agencies to identify initiatives and issues that relate to the sustainability of our economy, lifestyle and environment. Underpinning the review process was an extensive community engagement process with its key component being the 'Speak Up' campaign. The outcomes from the survey responses formed the basis of the review of the current CSP.

The purpose of undertaking extensive community engagement was to provide community input into the review of Council's current Strategic Plan 2012-2022. Throughout December 2012 through to February 2013 residents, through promotion of the 'Speak Up' campaign were invited to respond to questions relating to five key themes in the CSP. They were also provided an opportunity to have their say on what they value most about the Shire, what they would like to see improved or changed and what they wanted for the future.

Council's community services team undertook a whole of community approach in first informing and consulting the community and then seeking feedback from individuals, groups, community and stakeholders.

Our community engagement framework

Speak up slogan

The title 'Speak Up' was used as a 'brand' headline for the community engagement component of the CSP review. The 'Speak Up' campaign articulated clearly that the Council wanted to hear from its citizens what they believed was important. It asked the community to speak up, be involved and tell us what they believed made Walgett Shire a special place now and what needed to happen to maintain this for future generations.

Printed media and radio coverage

During the months of December 2012 – February 2013, local and regional radio stations and local newspapers were used to promote to the community information about the CSP review. The General Manager of Walgett Shire undertook several on air interviews with local radio stations promoting and encouraging residents to participate in the CSP 'Speak Up' campaign.

Survey flyer

During the consultation and review processes Council staff consistently displayed flyers (A4 and A3) throughout the communities in high frequently used areas such as shopping centres, post offices, community billboard etc. It outlined the review process, the five key themes of the Strategic Plan, and invited the community to have a say on the future directions of the Shire. A copy of the brochure is provided in appendix A

Council website online survey

The Walgett Shire Council website featured the background and purpose of the 'Speak Up' campaign and offered an online survey link for residents to complete the survey. This is the first time that Council has implemented this form of consultation targeting, informing and engaging residents across the vast demographic and distance between the communities in our Shire.

Posters and display boards

To create awareness amongst our Shires youngest citizens display boards for the CSP were created during library and youth centre workshops by our young people. Each display board incorporated pictures of the key themes to make it easier to understand for people with reading difficulties. Each display board had pictures relevant to the five key themes; Community, Economic Development, Sustainable Living, Infrastructure and Governance and Civic Leadership.

How did we engage with our community?

Council staff facilitated (11) eleven information sessions with key organisations and community groups including youth meetings, Aged Care facilities, Community Working Party meetings, Aboriginal medical services, Trans Cultural Council members, Indigenous villages, and local disability services.

Staff also conducting a 'going to the people' approach by conducting open air discussions and BBQs in the Aboriginal villages across the Shire, set up display tables at local markets and engaged in place with community members throughout the Shire.

The 'Speak Up' Campaign was also bolstered by a first time online survey tool, aiming to offer those hard to reach residents or those who would not normally complete a survey form an opportunity to have their say. Council further supported the campaign by undertaking a broad media campaign with local media and radio and utilised its extensive community contact list with over 300 local emails to residents, organisations, agencies, business owners and land owners receiving information on the CSP review.

Feedback was sought from Government and non-Government Agency staff working throughout our communities regarding how improvements to on the ground outcomes for residents and communities could be identified.

Council also partnered with the Department of Premier and Cabinet to promote participation by local, regional and state levels of Government and non-Government organisations and agencies in the CSP process. Responsive feedback, input and information relating to how their programs and services can better address the communities expressed needs were sought.



Community engage at the Walli



Lightning Ridge aged citizens

Who we consulted

Throughout the communities approximately 1800 survey forms were distributed along with 'Speak Up' pens. Display boards, information and ballot collection boxes were left in frequented locations across our Shire. The Community Services staff facilitated (11) eleven in-place consultation and information events supported by distributed survey form accessibility via the online survey link. Of the 1800 hard copy survey brochures, 344 (19%) were completed. A further 135 surveys were lodged on line refer list below.

In addition to the surveys Council received five written submissions from residents regarding input into CSP review. Council also received three written responses from Government/non-Government organisations who deliver services and programs throughout the communities in the Walgett Shire.

The overall percentage of returned surveys (19%) is a significant increase on the first Community Strategic Plan Survey in 2009/2010 when only 5% of surveys posted out and distributed were return. The consultation framework was designed to maximise opportunities to go out to the community as well as inviting the community to come to Council.

Participants and respondents were asked to list three of the following:

What do you value most about our Shire?

What would you like to see improved or changed?

Participants were then requested to complete the survey form and mark the response most relevant to them from questions within the five themes of the review.

Locations of ballot boxes across the Shire:

- Walgett Shire Chambers
- Lightning Ridge Trans Cultural Council
- Lightning Ridge Neighbourhood Centre
- Walgett Library
- Lightning Ridge Library
- Collarenebri Agency
- Carinda Shop
- Burren Junction Post Office
- Grawin: Club in the Scrub
- Rowena Shop
- Collarenebri Youth Centre

Community Development staff staged 'in place' surveys in the form of attending community based events and gatherings over the period of review. In place community participation was conducted at the Sunday Markets in Walgett, on the streets of Collarenebri and meetings in Lightning Ridge. Councillors were given a presentation focusing on the backgrounds of the CSP and how they as representatives of the people and communities could be involved and support the process. The Indigenous Villages of our communities were provided with an information session in the local parks in each village. NSW Farmers were also contacted and offered information which they could promote amongst local land owners and those residing in more remote areas. Council also offered any services the opportunity to present to their meetings or gatherings including; NSW Farmers, Community Working Parties, Land Councils, Schools, Health Services, agencies and organisations and other groups within our Shire.

Engagement with youth

In line with Council's desire to involve young people in the CSP review the youth services team conducted 'yarn ups' with young people in all three larger communities. Our younger citizens also participated in the CSP by playing key roles in the construction of the six 2m x 2m billboards displayed in the smaller communities across our Shire. The younger people in our Libraries and youth centres cut and pasted relevant pictures around the themes (Community, Sustainable Living, Economic Development, Infrastructure, Governance and Civic Leadership) and workshopped their thoughts and visions of their communities.

Forty two young people were involved in the making of the display boards with the young people involved gaining an increased understanding and awareness of what the CSP is and its importance in community views to Council. Young people were offered info and survey forms to complete at youth centres where 22 surveys were completed. A specific group of young people (14) from Collarenebri, were presented with an in place information session and provided great feedback from a youth perspective.

Engagement with older people

The CSP review process was developed to maximise engagement with residents and in particular target social inclusion and participation. This included providing opportunities for older people engaged in the workshops conducted across the community and presentations at the HACC centre in Lightning Ridge.

The Land Council and Elders groups were offered opportunities to have workshops and presentations facilitated by staff highlighting the CSP and the role it plays in communicating their needs and expectations to the Council.

Engagement with Indigenous and CALD people

Indigenous peoples of Walgett Shire have previously been identified as a group that faces underrepresented in surveys and formal process with Council. To address this Walgett Shire community services team consulted with Elders across the three communities to visit the Indigenous villages and stage 'in-place' information sessions and survey workshops. The Aboriginal villages of Walli (Collarenebri), Namoi and Gingie (Walgett) accepted the invitation, welcoming our staff into their communities and providing valuable input into the CSP review process.

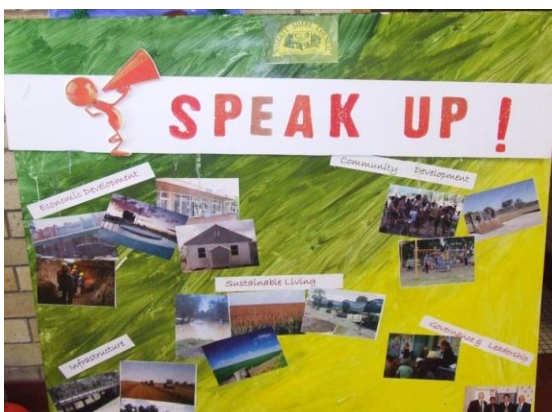
Our teams set up tents and engaged in a BBQ at each centre while residents participated in the survey. Information on why Council is conducting this review, how the review may align with Council Strategic Plans, the role in which a Strategic Plan informs our budget and operational plans and their concerns were offered and listened too. With a high percentage of peoples from CALD background in Lightning Ridge. Contact with this section of the community was undertaken together with the Trans Cultural Council (TCC).

The three most common dialects aside from English, spoken and used are Serbian, Croatian and Hungarian. Council who was appreciative of the assistance of staff from the TCC who transcribed the survey forms for distribution to the CALD people of the Shire. Over 47 surveys were returned, translated back to English then entered into the survey analysis. Feedback for the CALD community was very positive with many stating that this is the first time they have been involved with any council business.

Government & non-Government agency engagement

During the CSP review Government and non-Government service providers working across the Shire were offered the opportunity to have input and feedback to the CSP process. Within the months of December 2012 and February 2013 Walgett Shire Council partnered with Department of Premier and Cabinet to promote and encourage organisations and agencies to participate in the review. An online survey link and promotional material were distributed via email to extensive contacts across agencies with core business within our Shire.

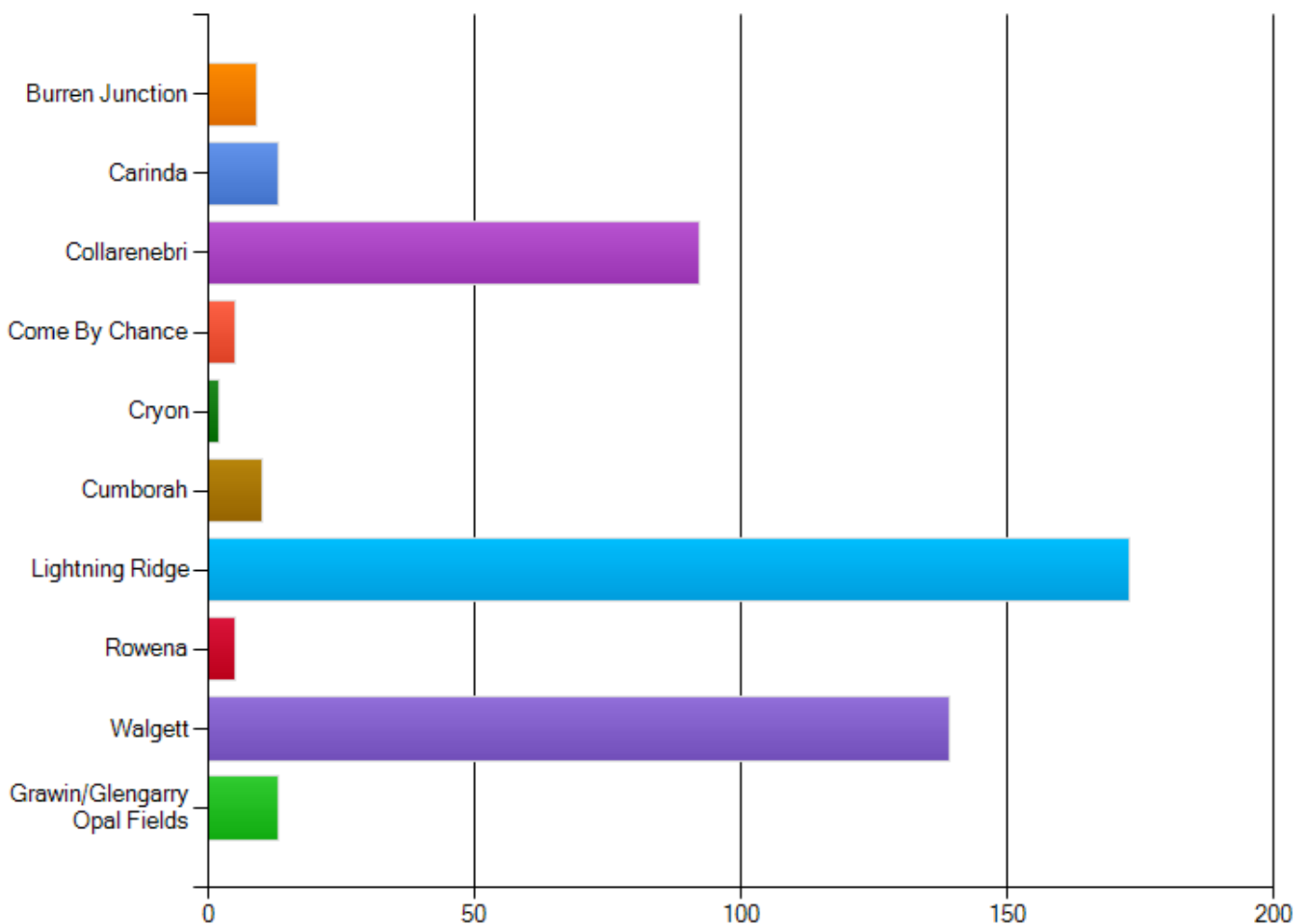
Below: The six (6) 'Speak Up' display boards and numerous ballot boxes were designed by the young people visiting the Libraries and Youth Centres across the Shire.



What did our community tell us?

The community engagement process was extensive across the Shire with the 'Speak Up' survey campaign providing an effective means for the community to provide feedback. The following graph details the response from the separate localities across the Shire.

Please select the closest community where you live



In response to the questions put to the community under each theme in the CSP the following responses were received;

Economic Development

Q. Should the Shire take more of a leading role to promote and support economic development?

- 93% of respondents believed the Shire should take more of a leading role to promote and support economic development

Q. Do you recommend your town to prospective tourists?

- 79% of respondents indicated they would recommend their town to prospective tourists

In response to how the Shire could increase numbers of tourist who visit/stay in the Shire;

- 49% said more cultural based tourism would increase tourism numbers to our Shire
- 38 % indicated an increase in National Promotion would increase tourism numbers
- 38% indicated more RV friendly facilities throughout our communities would Increase tourism and visitor numbers

Community

Q. Are you satisfied with the facilities provided in our parks?

- 67% of those surveyed stated they were not satisfied with our parks and facilities
- 35% stated they were happy with the facilities in our parks

Q. Do the Council's programs and activities meet the needs of the diverse community groups within the Shire?

- 41% of those surveyed believed Council meets the needs of the diverse community groups in the Shire
- 49% believed Council does not meet the needs

In response to the question: *What stops you from joining in community activities or using community facilities?*

- 63% indicated that no awareness the activity was taking place limited their involvement
- 34% indicated accessibility issues where the problem
- 22% stated that the fees of participation where the cause

Sustainable Living

Q. Do you think the Shire should adopt a more leading approach to waste management?

- 86% stated yes they believe Council should take a more leading approach
- 14% believed it was not an issue

Q. Does your local water supply meet your needs and expectations?

- 59% of those surveyed indicated that the water supply does not meet their needs
- 41% stated water supply meet their needs

Survey offered participants three options to the following question:

Q. How important to you is preserving the Shires natural environment?

- 64% indicated that preserving the natural environment is highly important
- 32% indicated it was important
- 4% indicated it was not important to them

Infrastructure

Q. Does your local road network meet your needs?

- 71% of those surveyed indicated the road network did not meet their needs
- 29% stated the road network meet their needs

Q. Do the electricity and communications networks meet your personal and/or business needs?

- 54% of those surveyed indicated that the electricity and communications networks do not meet their needs
- 46% said their electricity and communications networks needs are met

When asked: **What improvement in infrastructure would improve your quality of life the most?**

- 57% indicated that road improvements would improve their quality of life
- 32% indicated quicker internet access was their priority
- 11% indicated more telephone providers would improve their quality of life

Governance & Civic Leadership

Q. Do you think the Council is providing leadership across the broader community?

- 55% stated that they believed Council was not providing leadership
- 45% indicated they believed Council is providing leadership across our Shire

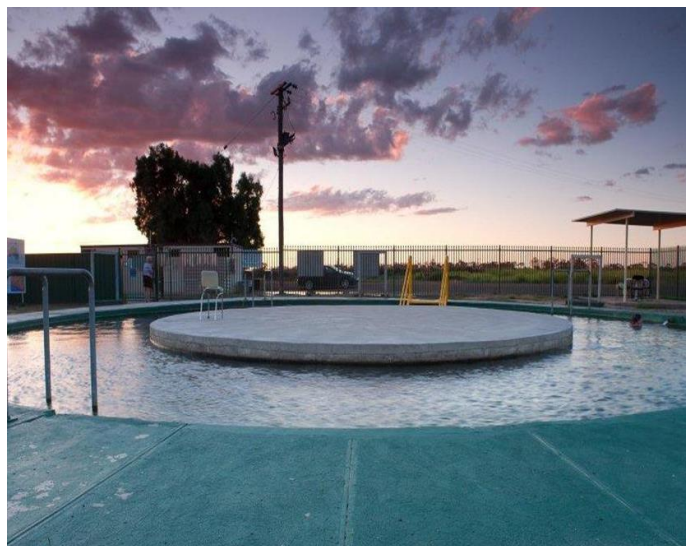
Q. Does the Council provide the community with maximum opportunities for participation in Council decision making?

- 75% stated they believe Council does not provide opportunities for decision making
- 25% believed Council does offer opportunities for decision making

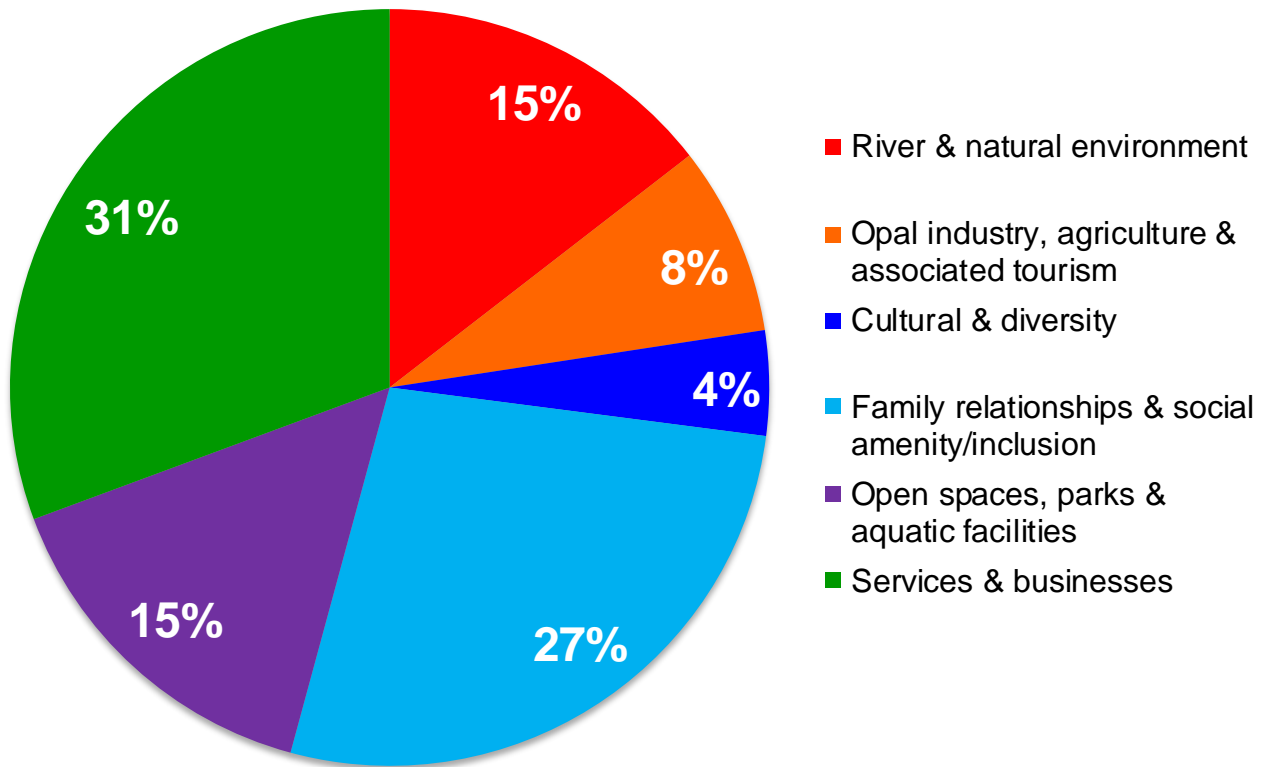
Residents were offered three options relating to the following question:

How do you think Council could further improve its relationship with the community?

- 59% of those surveyed stated that more response to broken facilities etc was most important
- 23% indicated that quicker answers to issues was important
- 18% indicated more published information and an improved website would improve relationships and inclusiveness in Council business.



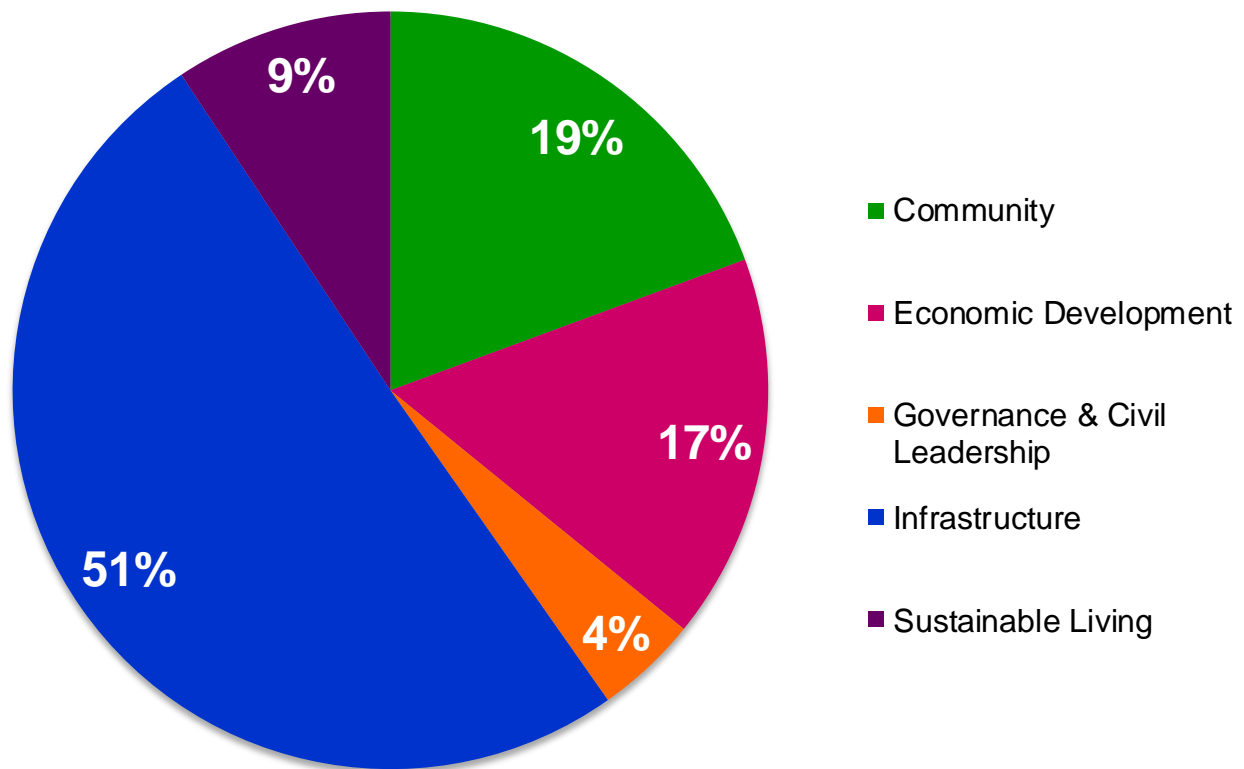
What has our community told us they value most?



There were a variety of aspects across our communities within our Shire as ‘valued’, these include; *note: not in order of preference

- Town pools
- Family
- Bore baths
- Clubs
- Peace & quiet
- Schools & education
- People
- Freedom
- Opal mining
- Volunteers
- Agriculture
- Libraries
- Community events
- Health services
- Community transport
- Shops
- Rivers
- Fishing
- Community spirit
- Cultural diversity
- Youth programs
- Skate parks
- Tourism
- Lifestyle
- History
- Visitor information centres
- Hospitals
- Home care
- Countrylink bus service
- Outback art
- Men’s shed
- Homecare

What has our community told us they most want improved?



Through the CSP review the community has expressed to Council they would most like to improve the following areas within the five key themes;

Economic Development

- Appearance of streets
- Tourist attractions – support and promotion
- More employment opportunities
- National promotion of local industries
- RV friendly towns

Community

- Youth and community centre facilities
- Play grounds and healthy lifestyle options
- Transport options
- Aged care & facilities
- Increased options for the disabled

Sustainable Living

- Water quality/pressure/supply/temperature
- Waste management, recycling bins
- Rivers systems, improvements to weirs and catchments
- Environmental sustainability
- Plant more trees

Infrastructure

- Roads – sealed/maintained/quality
- Sporting facilities and public amenities
- Footpaths, curb and guttering
- Improved disabled accessibility to facilities

Governance & Civil Leadership

- Responsiveness to community issues
- Communication, information
- Law and order
- Crime prevention
- Improved WSC website

Governing Principles

Council Vision Statement

That the community utilise the opportunities that arise from our environment to improve their quality of life whilst embracing its ethnic and social diversity, for the benefit of all.

Mission Statement

The Walgett Shire Community will:

- Provide focused and ethical leadership
- Deliver quality services and effective stewardship of all local infrastructure
- Remain environmentally sustainable, prosperous and vibrant
- Promote the Shire as a great place to live work and visit
- Lobby all levels of government to ensure that appropriate levels of support are provide for health, education, employment, and housing as well as infrastructure development and maintenance
- Co-operate with other bodies and areas in the sharing of specialist resources and facilities

Community Values

Respect

Integrity

Ethical conduct

Courage

Honesty

Accountability

Responsibility

Guiding Principles

The Community's guiding principles consist of the Social Justice Principles as a means and commitment to ensuring;

- There is fairness in the distribution of resources (equity)
- Rights are recognised and promoted (rights)
- People have fairer access to the economic resources and services essential to meet their basic needs and to improve their quality of life (access)
- People have better opportunities for genuine participation and consultation about decisions affecting their lives (participation).

Policy Statement

Cultural Values underpin our sense of locality, country and part of a region with its diversity of people and memories – the cultural values and associated activities and assets stimulate a socially, environmentally and economically prosperous “place”.

Our Area and Demographics

Walgett Shire Local Government Area is located in the far north west of New South Wales and covers an area of 22,007 square kilometres. Walgett Shire borders with Queensland to the north, Moree Plains and Narrabri Councils to the east, Coonamble to the south and Brewarrina to the west.

The Shire is located on Gamilaroi country in the southern and eastern sector and to the north is on Yuwaalaraay country. Acknowledgement of the traditional occupiers of the land is displayed on signs along main roads entering into the Walgett Shire.

The Shire is geographically on the productive black-soil plains of New South Wales, part of which is in the Central Division and part in the Western Division. The North and North West of the Shire is opal bearing country, which is home to NSW state gemstone, the Black Opal.

Walgett Shire comprises thirteen towns, villages and hamlets spread throughout the Shire and the preserved opal fields of Grawin, Glengarry and Sheepland. Each community has its own special identity.

Population Changes (ABS - Place of Usual Residence)

1996	2001	2006	2011
8,144	7,536 (- 7.5%)	6,944 (- 7.9%)	6454 (-7.1%)

The population breakdown for Shire wide population from the 2011 Census was:

Males 3488 (54%)

Females 2966 (46%)

Of those people 1811 or 28.1% identified as Indigenous.

The population of the Shire continues to fall. The Department of Planning's "regional" projections forecast a continuing fall of population within the north western region of the State.

The population of the Shire continues to fall. The Department of Planning will release LGA specific population projections shortly but their "regional" projections forecast a continuing fall of population within the north western region of the State.

Population by Town				
Town	Population	Males	Females	% of shire population
Walgett	1625	824	801	25.2%
Lightning Ridge	1496	782	714	23.2%
Collarenebri	386	193	193	6.0%

The greatest increase in the proportion of the population identifying as indigenous has been in Lightning Ridge.

Indigenous Residents % of Town Population				
Town	Indigenous town population	Males	Females	% of town population
Walgett	821	383	438	50.5%
Lightning Ridge	427	205	222	28.5%
Collarenebri	186	83	103	48.2%

The population of the Shire is ageing quite markedly with a significant increase in the proportion of the population aged over 45 years.

Population by Age and Town													
Town	Total population	0-4	%	5-14	%	15-24	%	25-54	%	55-64	%	65 plus	%
Walgett	1625	174	10.7%	256	15.8%	225	13.8%	541	33.3%	178	10.9%	152	9.4%
Lightning Ridge	1496	111	7.4%	217	14.5%	146	9.7%	517	34.6%	201	13.4%	304	20.3%
Collarenebri	386	32	8.3%	55	14.3%	43	11.1%	137	35.5%	59	15.3%	59	15.3%

Planning and Regulatory Services

Functions carried out under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and Regulations 1979*, include:

- Approving all Building Development and Subdivisions;
- Issuing Planning Certificates;
- Carrying out building inspections;
- Enforcement of provisions for building and development work that had been carried out illegally;
- Serving orders;
- Bushfire and flood planning;
- Ensuring fire safety in public buildings

Activities carried out under the *Local Government Act 1993*, include:

- Issuing approvals for plumbing, drainage, septic tank installation and operation, caravan parks, street trading and amusement devices e.g. show rides;
- Enforcement of orders relating to street numbering, fencing or waterholes, untidy or unhealthy premises, and keeping animals.

Under the *Companion Animals Act 1998*, Council is involved with:

- The lifetime registration and identification of cats and dogs (microchipping);
- Impounding and/or re-homing animals;
- Issuing nuisance and dangerous dog orders;
- Ensuring dogs are properly controlled and their owners clean up after them in public places.

Under the *Protection of the Environment Act 1997*, Council staff:

- Investigate pollution complaints;
- Serve clean up and prevention notices, and noise abatement orders;
- Monitor and report on Council infrastructure e.g. landfills, sewage works;
- Monitor littering and abandoned cars.

Under the *Public Health Act 2010*, Council:

- Monitors public drinking water;
- Monitors public health standards for pools;
- Regulates tattoo shops;
- Is responsible for Legionella control;
- Carries out emergency management in the event of a natural disaster.

Council is a Category B enforcement agency under the *Food Act 2003*, so it:

- Inspects premises which serve food;
- Investigates complaints and outbreaks of food poisoning;
- Enforces the standards of the *Food Act 2003*;
- Assists with food recalls.

Under the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*, Council has delegated to the Castlereagh Macquarie County Council the functions to:

- Inspect properties for noxious weeds;
- Control noxious weeds on roadsides;
- Educate people about noxious weeds.

Under the *Roads Act 1993*, Council's regulatory officers enforce parking regulations

Council's planning and regulatory staff members also carry out functions associated with the *Heritage Act 1977*, the *Swimming Pools Act 1992*, the *Strata Schemes Act 1996* and the *Water Management Act 2000*.

Federal and State Government Context

Council is actively engaged with Federal and State Governments in a number of areas and as such is aligned with its policy direction.

The draft Community strategic Plan further highlights where the focus needs to be into the future: regional economic development, roads infrastructure, transport education and community services.

Federal Government

Council currently works in partnership with the Federal Government in the delivery of the third round of Regional Local Community Infrastructure Projects (RLCIP).

Roads to Recovery is another example of partnership with the Federal Government. Planned maintenance of the Walgett Aerodrome under the Regional Aviation Access Program (RAAP) and the newly introduced Healthy Communities project are further examples.

Council is committed to continue to work in partnership with the Federal Government in line with their policy direction and Council's Community Strategic Plan.

Policy Direction: Regional Development

Council is the lead agency in proposal to establish the G Opal Centre at Lightning Ridge

Policy Direction: Asset Management and Long Term Roads Planning

Council will refine its Asset Management Plans over time in order to support the sourcing of additional funding for roads and allied infrastructure

Policy Direction: Remote Service Delivery - Closing the Gap Programme

Council has been working closely with local community groups and government agencies to deliver positive outcomes for the benefit of the whole community

Policy Direction: Natural Disaster Programmes

Council is committed to working with higher tiers of government to maximise the return to government through implementing "Betterment" principles when ever feasible

State Government Investing in a Better Future - NSW State Plan

Council currently works in partnership with the State Government and receives funding for the functions of weed control, street lighting, and contributions towards infrastructure through the Roads Block Grant.

The Council worked closely with the NSW Dept of Premier and Cabinet to facilitate the participation of State Government Agencies and non-Government Organisations (NGOs) in the 2013 CSP review.

Council is also an active member of:

- Outback Arts
- OROC
- NSW Shires' Association

Examples of other partnerships include:

- Northern regional Library
- State Wide Mutual Insurgence Group
- North West Weight Loads Group
- NSW Rural Fire Service

Councils Strategic Outcomes are in line with the State Plan priorities which are;

Economic Growth - supporting jobs and attracting business development

Transport - safe, accessible and reliable. Council will lobby the State Government to provide additional funding for the regular maintenance of school bus routes

Health - system provides high level care. Council will continue to work with State agencies to enhance public health and well being in major towns

Green State - our energy is clean, our natural environment is protected and a reasonable approach will be taken to climate change. Council will have a greater focus on mining issues as part of the Community Strategic Plan.

High quality of life - Council will continue its commitment to provide an inclusive community environment

Disadvantaged Communities - Council will continue its focus on providing services and community development to disadvantaged sector of the community

Police and justice system - keeping people safe. Council will continue to work with key stakeholders in developing and implementing a Community Safety Plan.

Strategic Objectives and Action Plans

1. Community Objectives

What is the community vision?

The aim for Walgett Shire over the next decade is that after energetically tackling its challenges and maximising its opportunities, Walgett Shire is home to resilient, resourceful, friendly people with a strong education base. They live within diverse cultures and respect each other and their unique outback environment. The community is socially satisfied, with minimal conflict and it provides opportunities for people of all backgrounds. The community is also welcoming to visitors and those passing through.

What is the current state of the community?

Walgett Shire's population in 2006 was 6,944 people with the 2011 census recording a Shire population of 6,454 people. The Shire faces many of the challenges common to small regional and remote communities.

These include:

- A falling population
- An ageing population with a significant increase in persons aged 45+ years
- A significant gender imbalance, with males outnumbering females
- Providing appropriate services that respond to the needs of a significant increase in the Aboriginal population.
- A high rate of socio-economic disadvantage and criminal offences

What are the opportunities for creating a strong community?

Some of the qualities that make Walgett Shire unique and special are:

- It's a friendly place where you know people when you walk down the street
- There's space – you don't need to live on top of each other
- Aboriginal culture
- It's a place where hard work is valued, where people can cooperate to achieve a goal (such as the swimming pool in Lightning Ridge) and where people with good ideas can flourish
- It draws people from around the world. Lightning Ridge, known as the Home of the Black Opal, is home to people from approximately 50 nationalities that work and socialise harmoniously.

What are the challenges to building a strong community?

Walgett Shire remains as one of the most disadvantaged Shires in NSW on measures such as low income, low education, high unemployment and unskilled occupations. Despite these challenges survey responses demonstrate a strong connection to our area and optimism for the future.

Other challenges include:

- Drugs and alcohol misuse Unemployment and lack of entertainment, recreation and sporting activities for young people as key contributors to social issues
- A lack of service organisations and resultant opportunities for people to participate in community activities and sports
- Some young people are not completing school, limiting their learning and career opportunities.

What has Council done already to build a strong community?

- ✓ Adopted the Walgett Shire Growth Management Study and Strategy
- ✓ Adopted an Aboriginal community development and reconciliation plan
- ✓ Ran a 'Butt out Bullying' program across the shire with schools
- ✓ Implemented a variety of youth programs focusing on life skills
- ✓ Ran a Youth Week program which in 2012 which won two of the three categories in the State in which it was nominated
- ✓ Began a mentoring relationship with Gosford City Council
- ✓ Upgraded Youth Centres and planned more youth based programs
- ✓ Continues to support a successful 'Youth Council' which provides young people with decision making opportunities
- ✓ Continues to support the Walgett Festival which in 2012 was a great success
- ✓ Continued to develop and implement a "School to Work" program in association with schools, in 2013 six students are participating in school to work
- ✓ Supported and participated in a range of Federal and State Government programs aimed at improving the welfare of the Aboriginal community.

What are the future strategies for building a strong community?

In the immediate future (2013 – 2014) the Council will:

- Implement the Walgett Shire Growth Management Study and Strategy
- Commence an Aboriginal Heritage Study
- Run ongoing programs including Harmony Day, Youth Week, Children's Week, NAIDOC week, Disability Day, Seniors Week, International Women's Day, World Youth Day, youth programs and vacation care programs

- Extend the opening hours of youth centres and libraries
- Introduce new youth and community programs that focus on healthy lifestyles and education
- Support other agencies to reduce domestic violence, alcohol abuse and gambling through supporting effective programs run by various agencies
- Be a proactive participant in the Walgett Strategic Coordination Group to achieve enhanced on the ground outcomes from programs and services

Over the next ten years the Council will focus on implementing the strategies identified in the Community Strategic Plan through work programs and partnerships with agencies and community organisations:

- Building community capacity within the Shire through strategies set out in the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) under the RSD program
- Supporting government programs that address alcohol and substance abuse by young people
- Continuing the delivery of literacy, numeracy and healthy lifestyle programs conducted in its youth centres and libraries in partnership with other providers
- Working with Schools to expand and develop participation of students in the School to Work program
- Supporting initiatives by the Health and Community Services to recruit family and domestic violence counsellors
- Creating employment and traineeships for local people, including developing an Aboriginal Employment Strategy
- Advocating to relevant government organisations the development of more effective law and order options for offenders.
- Continue to develop youth based programs that provide training, education, sport, and employment opportunities. Improve social skills and self-esteem for young people through the Shire Youth Development Strategy
- Working with Aboriginal Elders (including women) and other Aboriginal organisations to consult, inform and advise each other on ways of supporting the area's Aboriginal communities and especially young Aboriginal people
- Contribute to ensuring that Aboriginal culture and identity are respected and acknowledged through being taught in schools, through cultural awareness training in local organisations and agencies and through consultation with Aboriginal community members on issues relating to land and cultural and natural heritage
- Developing new and innovative 'blue sky' ideas and strategies, and adopting programs that have worked in other rural and remote communities.

Who else will be involved in building a strong community?

State and Federal Government Departments, Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service, MacKillop Rural Services, Community Transport, Walgett/Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge Reference Groups, Community Working Party, Walgett Shire schools, Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Aboriginal Elder Groups, the Murdi Paaki Regional Employment Corporation, Transcultural Community Council, Yawarra Meamai group Reconnect, Mission Australia, Walgett Men's Group, Aboriginal Land Councils, Women's Legal Services, Namoi House Inc, PCYC, TAFE, Skillshare and numerous other community organisations across the Shire.

How will we measure success in building a strong community?

The Walgett Shire Growth Management Study and Strategy (2008) and the Walgett Shire Social Plan contain a detailed breakdown of strategies, actions, timelines and areas of responsibility for achieving the Shire's community goals. The implementation plans for these two programs are a blueprint for cross checking progress in building a strong community. The assessment of outcomes from implementing the CSP strategies will be the primary method of assessment over the 10 year life of the plan.

Table 1: Community – Strategic Action Plan

Ref	Objectives	Strategy	Outcomes	Year	WSC Role	Other agencies
C 1.1	Develop a connected, informed and resilient community	Support, resource and initiate a range of local activities and projects with that increase community participation, capacity and build community connections for all age sectors	The local community recognises our shire for its quality of life and well being	1-4	Facilitator Advocate Provider	Federal and State Agencies Relevant community groups
C 1.2	Increase participation in administering and supporting recreational and cultural activities, particularly those that cater for the younger and older members of the community	Develop a range of initiatives which expand and enhance services and facilities for both youth and aged recreational and cultural pursuits.	Increased volunteer participation and involvement from all sectors of the community in youth and aged activities and services	1-10	Advocate Facilitator	Walgett Community
C 1.3	To create a community that values and recognises the contribution of aged people in our communities	Develop and implement a planning process that effectively identifies and responds to the needs of the Aged Community.	Increased participation and enhanced community outcomes for aged persons	1-10	Facilitator Advocate	Federal and State Agencies Relevant community groups
C 1.4	To continue the reconciliation process; to recognise and value the contribution that indigenous residents bring to the community	Work in collaboration with agencies and community groups to address existing and emerging issues specific to the Aboriginal community	An inclusive community that shows it cares about indigenous people and cultural needs Enhanced opportunities for participation and decision making in cultural and community activities and projects	1-10	Facilitator Advocate	Indigenous community groups Various State Agencies
C 1.5	Increase the accountability of various State and Federal Agencies to address a wide range of issues and required outcomes	Develop an effective interagency network with State and federal agencies that maximises local service delivery through outcome driven activities and initiatives and a high level of interagency co-operation	A low level of community dissatisfaction with community issues by more visible 'on the ground' community outcomes	1-4	Advocate Facilitator	Federal and State Agencies Relevant community groups

Ref	Objectives	Strategy	Outcomes	Year	WSC Role	Other agencies
C 1.6	To continue to support, recognise and value the contribution that people from CALD residents bring to the community	Work in collaboration with agencies and community groups to address existing and emerging issues specific to the CALD community	Enhanced opportunities for participation and decision making in cultural and communities activities and projects	1-10	Facilitator	CALD community groups Various State Agencies
C 1.7	A community that has a low perception of fear of crime	Development of a community safety plan in conjunction with key stakeholders	A community that has a reduced perception of fear of crime	2-3	Facilitator	State and Federal governments and agencies NGO
C 1.8	Enhanced health & social outcomes	Support agencies and local organisations to address the availability of emergency services, affordable housing, disability and aged services and employment for people with disabilities	Enhanced wellbeing options for disadvantaged and marginalised community members	1-4	Facilitator Advocate	State and Federal governments and agencies NGOs
C 1.9	A network of parks and open spaces that provides recreational opportunities and increased participation in active lifestyle options	To develop a long term parks improvement program that responds to community expectations and identified asset management outcomes	Increased utilisation of parks and open spaces by the community	2-10	Facilitator	State and Federal governments and agencies NGOs
C 1.10	A community with access to an appropriate range of cultural, sporting and recreational activities	Develop a wide range of community arts, leisure, sports and recreation activities that respond to identified community needs and aspirations and are linked to positive social outcomes	Increase in sporting opportunities, cultural opportunities and recreational activities	1-4	Facilitator Advocate Provider	State and Federal governments and agencies NGOs
C 1.11	A community that enjoys access to quality educational and life long learning opportunities	Support the development of programs which offer alternative education programs and lifelong learning opportunities that meet the needs of specific community sectors	The community has a wide variety of choices for further education and enhanced access to higher education	1-4	Facilitator Advocate	Federal and State Agencies NGOs

2. Economic Development Objectives

What are the goals for Walgett Shires economic development?

Walgett Shire is developing a more vibrant, sustainable and diversified economic life that supports residents of all ages, offers them education and employment opportunities, access to services and capitalises on the region's unique features. The regional community is growing and viable.

What is the current state of the Shire's economic development?

Increasing the rate of employment participation and average household incomes are key economic objectives

The CSP details strategies directed at expanding the scope and diversity of employment opportunities across the Shire.

The Shire's economic drivers are agriculture, opal mining, tourism, and Government services particularly in health, education and community services. Agricultural production generates the greatest revenue and accounts for a significant proportion of employment. Agricultural industries produce wheat, wool, beef, cattle, cotton and sheep meat. The requirements of the farming, grazing and opal mining sectors provide business opportunities for several machinery suppliers, transporters and logistics management suppliers as well as steel fabrication works. The retail sector of Lightning Ridge relies on opal-based tourism, and the tourism industry is an integral part of Walgett Shire's economy.

What are the opportunities for building a stronger Shire economy?

The Shire's Growth Strategy identifies options that the Council could pursue:

- Encourage a diversity of employment opportunities which capitalise on the Shire's economic strengths
- Develop strategies to retain and expand existing businesses
- Support and work in partnership with industry sectors that have been identified as drivers of the economy
- Work with schools and service providers to target job opportunities and education that supports the retention of young people in the community
- Identify opportunities for expanding employment and tourist related development.

The unique features of the Shire that support economic initiatives are:

- Plentiful and cheap land available for development
- Availability of an untapped workforce
- Potential to greatly improve tourism through a comprehensive tourism plan and strategy, including sourcing external grants and putting Council resources into promoting the Shire
- Potential to develop and redevelop tourism attractions including Aboriginal cultural opportunities, significant fossil sites, geological parks and the proposed Australian Opal Centre
- The Shire being the world's only significant source of black opals
- Wild game meat processing
- Promotion and further development of sustainable agriculture and irrigation agriculture
- Potential to increase value-adding to agricultural products

- Potential to improve the region's economy through Council's own employment and investment
- Development of training programs (including Shire apprenticeships) that build skills and expertise and lead to increased employment of residents and young people

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What are the challenges facing the economy?

People in the Shire are generally older, less educated, less wealthy and have less access to health services than in coastal or urban areas. The Shire is relatively small in population and large in area, with high unemployment and currently limited career opportunities. The cost of infrastructure remains a barrier to tourism. While employment in agriculture has remained constant, mining has dramatically declined. Employment growth has been in the areas of public administration and safety, education and training, health care and social assistance.

Further challenges include:

- Improved roads which are adequate to cater for tourism and agribusiness transportation
- A lack of an RPT air service to the Shire
- Unseasonal weather patterns such as prolonged dry times and floods
- The shifting of responsibilities from state and federal governments to local governments without commensurate funding.

What has Council done already to build a functional economy?

- ✓ Prioritised tourism promotion through attending industry workshops, shows and conferences; developing merchandise for the visitor's centre, developing and updating tourism brochures, auditing signage and beginning signage upgrades, supporting web promotion of the shire as a tourism destination and participated in joint promotions with other areas and organisations
- ✓ Supported applications for Federal Government funding to progress the development of the Australian Opal Centre at Lightning Ridge.

What are the future strategies for building a functional economy?

In the immediate future (2013 - 2014) the Council will:

- Continue to improve its own governance procedures and financial management through quarterly budget reviews, achievable works programs and intensive debt recovery procedures to maintain outstanding rates and charges below 9% ensuring the Council can meet its debts and obligations
- Increase its own commitment towards staff training and development to increase local employment (for example by increasing the number of apprentices in the Shire, particularly those working in infrastructure)
- Apply for a 3% increase in its 2013/2014 rate income to be allocated to Council share of road betterment funding

Over the next ten years the Council will focus on:

- Improving road infrastructure under the Federal Government's funding programs and proactive lobbying for betterment funding
- Developing a plan for long term asset financial management
- Developing a detailed tourism strategy for the Shire
- Working to become an employer of choice in the region

- Lobbying governments to ensure that appropriate levels of support are provided for health, education, law and order, employment, housing and infrastructure development and maintenance
- Developing new and innovative ‘blue sky’ ideas and strategies, and adopting programs that have worked in other rural and remote communities
- Improving the appearance of the main streets in the Shire’s three towns through main street upgrade programs
- Improving tourism infrastructure and promotion of the Shires natural attractions
- Developing the next stage of the Shire Tourism Strategy to stimulate tourism growth across the Shire, empower local organisations, provide Council with clear direction on the actions needed to ensure sustainable tourism growth and promote Walgett Shire as a unique outback destination.

Who else will be involved in building a functional economy?

Federal and state government departments, Regional Business Enterprise services, employment services, Chambers of Commerce, Precinct Committees, local miners’ associations, existing businesses (large and small), the health sector, the police, education and training organisations, the Aboriginal communities and Community Working Parties and other state and federal government programs/agencies.

How will we measure success in building a functional economy?

The Walgett Shire Growth Management Study and Strategy (2008) contains a detailed breakdown of strategies, actions, timelines and areas of responsibility for achieving the Shire’s economic goals. The implementation plans for this program is a blueprint for cross checking progress in building a functional economy.

Table 2: Economic Development – Strategic Action Plan

Ref	Objectives	Strategy	Outcomes	Year	WSC Role	Other agencies
E 2.1	A strong and diverse economic base that supports employment, industry and lifestyle opportunities for residents	Develop and implement an economic development strategy which Identifies potential projects and/ or industries that build on the Shire's attributes and/or natural resources	The area attracts ongoing growth and development	1-10	Provider Facilitator Advocate	Federal and State Governments Private Developers Local tourist operators Other local business houses
E 2.2	To increase the contribution of tourism to the area by increasing the number of visitors and the associated level of tourism spending	1. Develop and implement a Tourism Marketing Plan that identifies opportunities to value add existing initiatives and provides a framework to partner with stakeholders to develop new initiatives	Increased visitor numbers and growth in businesses and employment that support and benefit from tourism	1-4	Provider Facilitator Advocate	Federal and State Governments Private Developers Local tourist operators Other local business houses
E 2.3	To provide increased employment opportunities that supports local industries and the local economy	Develop an employment strategy	An increase in percentage of local people in employment that supports and develops the Shire economy	2-4	Provider Facilitator Advocate	Federal and State Governments Private Developers Local tourist operators Other local business houses
E 2.4	To improve the level of amenity in the Shires towns and villages and present a welcoming and safe environment for visitors and residents	Develop and undertake main street improvement programs	An enhanced level of amenity in the Shires towns and villages	1-4	Provider Facilitator	Federal and State Governments Local training organisations Local employers

Ref	Objectives	Strategy	Outcomes	Year	WSC Role	Other agencies
E 2.5	Increase the profile of Walgett Shire at State and National level	Develop and source opportunities for wider promotion of Walgett Shire through effective utilisation of media and multimedia	Enhanced profile for Walgett Shire as a location to visit or reside	1-4	Provider Facilitator Advocate	Federal and State Governments Tourism NSW Local tourist operators Other local business houses
E 2.6	Promotion of the Shire as an RV friendly location	Provision of RV support facilities and inclusion in marketing strategies	Significant increase in RV visitation	2-4	Provider Facilitator Advocate	Federal and State Governments Tourism NSW Local tourist operators Other local business houses NGOs

3. Sustainable Living Objectives

What is the vision for Walgett's environment?

Walgett's community recognises the special role that the environment plays in the achievement of its cultural, social and economic needs and aspirations

What is the current state of the Shire's environment?

Walgett Shire lies on the boundary of four catchments - the Western, Border Rivers, Central West and Namoi Catchments. The current state of the Shire's environment has been extensively documented in the State of the Environment Report and natural resource management issues and targets have been outlined in the Catchment Action Plans. These plans outline specific environmental goals, strategies and investment priorities and ensure they are coordinated with other regional, state, national and international plans.

The Council is a contributor and partner in the goals of the Catchment Action Plans. The Council's areas of influence include its statutory role in land use planning and development, water use efficiency, resource monitoring and mapping and community awareness of issues.

Fifteen percent (15%) of survey respondents identified the Shire's rivers and natural environment as aspects of living in the Shire that they most valued.

What are the opportunities to build a robust environment?

The Council has an important role to play in supporting the Catchment Action Plan and being part of the team working to achieve improved and sustainable natural resource management. The Council has developed the Walgett Shire Growth Management Study and Strategy, in preparation for the Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan.

According to the growth strategy, the Council's role specifically includes:

- Ensuring the quality of surrounding waterways is not adversely affected by development
- Ensuring the ecological integrity of all land within the Shire are enhanced and maintained
- Ensuring development has a minimal impact on the landscape of Walgett Shire
- Preserve the heritage and culture of Walgett Shire
- Recognising the impact of natural hazards (bushfires, floods) on future land use and settlement.

The unique features of the area's environment and some resulting opportunities for environmental improvement include:

- Promotion and further development of sustainable agriculture
- Potential for developing a significant biodiesel industry.

What are the challenges facing the environment?

As identified in the State of the Environment report and the Catchment Action Plans, major threats to the health of natural resources in the Shire include declining surface water quality, increasing demands on water quantity, declining health and abundance of native vegetation, invasive weeds, degradation of riparian and wetland ecosystems, declining biodiversity, deterioration of the soil resource and climate change. Research into the impact of climate change on the Namoi Catchment has found that although average changes in temperature, rainfall and

evaporation will have long-term consequences for the catchment, the impacts of climate change are more likely to be felt through extreme weather events.¹

What has Council done already to support a robust environment?

- ✓ Implemented user pays water billing from October 2012
- ✓ Increased its efforts to educate the community on matters relative to waste management
- ✓ Developed the Walgett Shire Growth Management Study and Strategy. This document outlines a series of land use planning related strategies including establishing zones under a Local Environmental Plan to make it clearer what land uses are permissible in certain areas and what uses are not.

What are the future strategies for supporting a robust environment?

In the future the Council will:

- Implement a liquid trade waste charging structure
- Implement its adopted Trade Waste Policy
- Consult the community and increase efforts to reduce solid waste through the Solid Waste Management Plan
- Develop a comprehensive Water Management Plan to set the direction for providing service level requirements to the community
- Improve the Drought Management Plan to focus on Water Minimisation Strategy
- Develop a Local Environmental Plan which facilitates appropriate development in suitable zones while restricting inappropriate development.

Over the next ten years the Council will:

- Develop and implement a Solid Waste Management Plan to monitor landfill use, recycling, solid waste reduction, refuse collection and waste minimisation
- Continue to work with CMAs and other natural resource management organisations to achieve the goals of the Catchment Action Plans
- Implement water consumption minimisation strategies
- Implement strategies to reduce its own carbon footprint in conjunction with the introduction of a national carbon trading scheme
- Implement and then review the Local Environment Plan on a five year cycle
- Introduce water meters in all towns and villages which have water supply schemes in operation and introduce a user pays system
- Implement a comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan
- With the community, develop new and innovative 'blue sky' ideas and strategies, and adopting programs that have worked in other rural and remote communities.

Who else will be involved in building a robust environment?

A key feature of the Catchment Action Plans is working with industry, Landcare and environmental groups, research organisations, Local Government and the Aboriginal community, as well as individuals. The Namoi Local Government Group (NLGG) is an integral component in

working towards the achievement of the CAP Targets. The appointment of a Local Government Officer within the Namoi CMA provides a pro-active link through the Namoi Local Government Group to encourage integration of State and Local Government planning instruments with the natural resource management plan.

How will we measure success in supporting a robust environment?

State of Environment (SOE) reporting is the most important way of measuring efforts across the region to create and support a robust environment. The aim is to allow trends in the condition of the environment to be analysed and provide a sound basis for determining whether or not policies and programs implemented are successfully achieving environmental goals. Councils are required to carry out comprehensive SOE reporting every four years with supplementary reports annually.

The Catchment Action Plans, with their targets and strategies, are the most important mechanism for carrying out environmental management and repair on a catchment scale. They will be reviewed regularly in light of evaluation of programs and projects, changes in science and knowledge, or the legislative and regulatory framework.

Each of the Council's plans relating to environmental matters (such as the Solid Waste Management Plan and the Water Management Plan) has their own specific goals and evaluation processes. Overall progress will be evaluated by assessing progress within each plan. Strategies will also be assessed through the Walgett Shire Growth Management Study and Strategy (2008) implementation plan.

Table 3: Sustainable Living – Strategic Action Plan

Ref	Objectives	Strategy	Outcomes	Year	WSC Role	Other Agencies
SL 3.1	To operate an urban waste management system that meets community expectations and environmental standards	Develop and implement a Solid Waste Management Plan which includes the feasibility of recycling	A solid waste management plan is developed that addresses solid waste disposal and recycling opportunities	2-4	Provider	State Government
SL 3.2	To provide potable and raw water supply systems that meet community expectations and health standards	Develop and enhance water supply infrastructure through an asset management framework	Works programmes developed and implemented through asset management process	1-10	Provider	State Government
SL 3.3	Adequate land is available within appropriate zones for commercial, industrial, residential, rural residential and recreational needs	Apply the Walgett Shire Growth Management Strategy to guide sustainable development and implement a Local Environmental Plan which reflects the intent of the strategy	Develop and implement new Local Environmental Plan 1. Supplement water/sewerage Management Strategy	1-4	Provider Provider	State Government Walgett Shire Council
SL 3.4	To provide public infrastructure that ensures enhanced water security, social, commercial and recreational opportunities	Research and review the options for developing new and existing infrastructure	Further community consultation undertaken to identify projects and priorities	1-4	Facilitator Advocate	State and Federal Governments
SL 3.5	A sustainable environment that recognises our rivers, natural environment, ecological systems and biodiversity	Promote and educate the community and liaise with relevant government agencies and NGOs	An informed community that recognises and values, the natural environment, ecological sustainability and biodiversity	2-10	Facilitator Advocate	Federal and State Governments NGOs

4. Infrastructure Objectives

What is the vision for Walgett's infrastructure?

Walgett Shire will construct, maintain and operate infrastructure that supports the social and economic life of the shire residents and visitors.

Walgett Shire will advocate on behalf of its residents for the provision of effective and reliable utility and communications services and infrastructure.

What is the current state of the Shire's infrastructure?

The provision of a reliable road network that meets the social and business needs of the communities throughout Walgett Shire remains a priority with over 50 % of survey respondents identifying road infrastructure as a main issue. Walgett Shire Council manages roads and paths (sealed and unsealed), aerodromes, water supply, wastewater disposal, stormwater/flooding control structures, solid waste collection and landfills, gravel pits, buildings, swimming pools, cemeteries, urban streetscape, parks and sporting fields, plant and vehicles, radio communication facilities and reserves. The Council operates its main works depot in Walgett, incorporating a store and workshop. It owns a fleet of vehicles and plant including roadwork machinery. The Council often must operate its own equipment because of the availability and cost of having plant brought to a remote area.

What are the opportunities for Walgett Shire to build a sound infrastructure?

- Completed Wagan Creek Pre Cast Concrete Box Culvert
- Completed 9.3 km reconstruction and sealing work in Come By Chance Road
- Completed 3 km reconstruction and sealing work in Cryon Road
- Completed 700 m replacement of Kerb & Guttering in Pitt Street
- Completed 700 m reconstruction and sealing work in Pitt Street
- Completed asphaltic work, fencing, new poles and new line marking in Lightning Ridge Netball court
- Completed 30 km gravel sheeting on Kurrajong Road
- Completed 8.36 km gravel work including new pipes and grid on Lorne Road
- Completed gravel work in Carinda, Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge Cemetery access
- Completed drainage rehabilitation work in Shaw Street in Rowena
- Completed the rehabilitation of Pagan Creek Bridge
- Complete evaporation pond in Burren Junction
- Completed primitive camping area in Collarenebri and Walgett
- Completed the refurbishment of facilities in Lightning Ridge Bore bath

What are the challenges facing the infrastructure of Walgett Shire?

Walgett Shire has a small population spread over a very large area, with a population density of only 0.3 people per square kilometre. Water supply and road conditions are two major infrastructure issues for the future. Other issues include town appearance, the need for beautification programs, the lack of sports facilities and the existence of unsupervised waste management facilities, which have low recycling levels and rubbish being dispersed by wind and dumping. The standard of some rural roads is poor, particularly on the flood plains in the central and southern parts of the Shire, where the roads are impassable after rain. Public transport services within the Shire are virtually non-existent.

Some of the Shire's infrastructure is aging and require replacement and upgrading in the medium term, which will require additional resources to be sourced. In order to facilitate the management of resources and the allocation of work, infrastructure has been divided into rural and urban infrastructure needs. This structure has resulted in some inefficiency across Council operations and it is proposed to bring both departments together into one engineering section.

What has Council done already to build a sound infrastructure?

- ✓ Completed one stage of significant road upgrading project on the Carinda-Walgett Road
- ✓ Completed 25km of road upgrades on the Collarenebri - Mungindi road
- ✓ Oversaw improvement works along the three State Highways within Walgett Shire to the value of approximately \$4 million
- ✓ Gained funding from the Commonwealth Government's AusLink Programme to work on upgrading its regional roads network
- ✓ Allocated funds for a new works depot
- ✓ Upgraded Carinda community hall, Collarenebri Showground grandstand and Walgett Showground kitchen
- ✓ Completed Lightning Ridge HACCC facility building stage

What are the future strategies for building sound infrastructure?

- Walgett Airport Runway resealing work
- Bridges on Brewon Road
- Box Culvert on Merrywinebone Road (RR329)
- Continuous re construction and sealing works on all Regional Roads

Who else will be involved in building a sound infrastructure?

Walgett Shire Council will continue to work with the state and federal governments to raise funds for infrastructure programs.

How will we measure success in building and maintaining a sound infrastructure?

Strategies will be assessed through the Walgett Shire Growth Management Study and Strategy (2008) implementation plan.

Table 4 – Infrastructure – Strategic Action Plan

Ref	Objectives	Strategy	Outcomes	Year	WSC Role	Other Agencies
I 4.1	Provide and maintain an effective local road network that meets community expectations and needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Review and implement opportunities to improve roads and bridges as part of the asset renewal process (b) Develop a local road enhancement programme that improves transport options during extreme weather events (c) An effective complaints management process that effectively responds to residents issues regarding roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) A local road networks which meets the needs and expectations of the community (b) Reduced closure times for roads following extreme weather events (c) An improved response to customer complaints in line with accepted customer standards 	1-4	Provider Facilitator	State Government
I 4.2	A Regional and State Road network that is appropriately supported and resourced by other levels of Government	Maintain an effective operational relationship with the RMS	Regional and State road networks which meets the needs and expectations of the community	1-4	Provider Facilitator Advocate	State Government
I 4.3	To expand and improve infrastructure that provides enhanced recreational and economic outcomes	Research and review the options for developing new and existing infrastructure	Further community consultation undertaken to identify projects and priorities	1-10	Facilitator Advocate	Federal and State Governments

Ref	Objectives	Strategy	Outcomes	Year	WSC Role	Other Agencies
I 4.4	The provision of effective and reliable utility and communications services and infrastructure that meet the community and economic expectations of local residents.	Advocate to utility and communication providers regarding the capacity and reliability of infrastructure across the Shire	Enhanced utility and communication networks that meet community expectations	2-10	Advocate	Utility and telecommunication service providers Federal and State Governments
I 4.5	To maintain and improve Council's property assets to an optimal level	Develop and implement an Asset Management Plan that makes due provision for the maintenance and improvement of Council's property assets	Properties managed in accordance with Councils Asset Management Plan	1-4	Provider	Federal and State Governments

5. Governance and Civic Leadership Objectives

Trust exists between Council and the Community; the Walgett Shire area maintains its autonomy as a Local Government Area and Council successfully advocates for the needs of the whole community.

It will further develop sound policies that promote community partnerships through consultation processes that encourage and facilitate involvement and maximise participation.

In the future pursuit of improving the quality of Shire governance, the Council will:

- Ensure comprehensive training for new Councillors
- Promote and support community Precinct Committees
- Develop a corporate training program for Council staff
- Consult widely with the community
- Keep the community informed of Council actions and plans via a regular newsletter provided to all households
- Conduct Council meetings in the towns and villages of the Shire
- Support regional Local Government initiatives and partnerships
- Promote community involvement in Local Government including promoting resident enrolment on the Electoral Roll
- Conduct regular community surveys to gain a better perspective of the level of community satisfaction.

Lobbying, Advocacy and Facilitation are all roles Council must play at various stages in the delivery of community programmes.

The current Local Government Review Panel process is currently looking at a range of structural options to improve local government governance efficiencies and Walgett Shire Council is committed to playing a pro-active role in this process.

Table 5: Governance and Civic Leadership – Strategic Action Plan

Ref	Objectives	Strategy	Outcomes	Year	WSC Role	Other Agencies
G 5.1	Implement governance and financial management process that support the effective administration of the Council	Implement process that ensure that legislative and financial standards are actioned in a timely manner	All legislative requirements met	1-10	Provider	State Government
G 5.2	Work to become an ‘Employer of Choice’ in the western region	Implement effective recruitment and training processes	Increased response to job opportunities with Council	1-4	Provider	Educational and training providers
G 5.3	Develop regional Local Government initiatives and partnerships with a view to improving the social, economic and cultural life in the region	Participate in, and make visible contributions to, regional forums such as OROC, C Division and Western Division LGSA regularly	Increase in positive outcomes from participation at a regional level	1-10	Advocate Facilitator	OROC, C Division and Western Division LGSA
G 5.4	Promote community involvement in government decision making	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with the community through effective consultation and communication processes Develop and implement a web based community feedback portal that provides for community consultation on Council projects and activities 	<p>An open consultation and communication framework is established with the local community</p> <p>Increased level of community input in Council decision making</p>	1-10	Provider Facilitator Advocate	State Government

Resourcing Strategy

As well as the resourcing and strategies outlined in this document the *Walgett Shire Growth Management Study and Strategy (2008)* contains a detailed breakdown of additional strategies, actions, timelines and areas of responsibility for achieving the Shire's goals in some of the areas covered by this document. The implementation plans form the blueprint for cross checking progress in building a cohesive community, a functional economy, a robust environment, sound infrastructure and good governance.

The final updated version of the Growth Management Study and Strategy will need to be approved by the NSW Department of Planning. In addition, the Council will make every effort to source state and federal government funds and any other resources that will benefit the residents of the Shire.

Workforce plan – 4 years – to be inserted here when adopted.

Long term Financial Plan – 10 years to be inserted here when adopted.

Asset Management Plan – 10 years to be inserted here when adopted.

Delivery Plan – Four Years 2012 – 2016

To be inserted here when adopted

Operational Plan - One Year - 2012 -2013

To be inserted here when adopted

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- Walgett Shire Growth Management Study and Strategy (2008) [http://www.walgett.nsw.gov.au/files/17183/File/Walgett_Growth_Mangt_Study_and_Strategy_Oct_2008.pdf]
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- NSW Bureau of Crime statistics.

Economic Development



Community Development



Sustainable Living



Infrastructure



Governance & Leadership



YOUR SAY...



*Please list the 3 things
You value most in the Shire:*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

*Please list 3 things
You would like to improve
in the Shire:*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Other comments:

THANK YOU

www.walgettshirecouncil.com.au



SPEAK UP!

Walgett Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan reflects where the Shire's communities would like to be in 10 years time, it then directs and informs us on how we may get there.

We are currently reviewing these goals and we invite and encourage all residents to tell us what you would like your community to be like in the future.

What is important to YOU?

Please take the opportunity to fill in our community surveys and let us know what you value in your community.

Also if you have an idea you think Council could help with LET US KNOW. The Only reason we are here is because you are, so let us work for you.

Together we can continue to:

'Utilise the opportunities that arise from the environment to improve our quality of life whilst embracing our ethnic and social diversity, for the benefit of all'

WALGETT SHIRE COUNCIL

PAVING THE WAY TO OUR FUTURE

Economic Development

jobs • local business • your future

Do you know...

Approximately 3000 people are employed across the Shire with the main industries being agriculture, wool/sheep, opal mining, service providers and tourism!

Q. Should the Shire take more of a leading role to promote and support economic development?

YES NO

Q. Do you recommend your town to prospective tourists?

YES NO

Q. What could the Shire improve to attract tourists to come and stay in the Shire?

(please circle one)

1. More cultural based tourism
2. Increase National promotion
3. More RV friendly towns and villages

Community Development

social inclusion • participation • collaborative approach

Do you know...

There are 14 different sports played within the Walgett Shire AND that Walgett Shire Council is a recognised as a leading provider in NSW of services to youth and young people!

Q. Are you satisfied with the facilities provided in our parks?

YES NO

Q. Do the Council's programs and activities meet the needs of the diverse community groups within the Shire?

YES NO

Q. What stops you from joining in community activities or using community facilities?

(please circle one)

1. Awareness that activity is taking place
2. Fees
3. Accessibility

Sustainable Living

natural resources • environment

Do you know...

Approximately 51,480m³ of Domestic Waste taken to Walgett & Lightning Ridge landfills over 10 years AND that water restrictions have been in place 60% of that time!

Q. Do you think the Shire should adopt a more leading approach to waste management?

YES NO

Q. Does your local water supply meet your needs and expectations?

YES NO

Q. How important to you is preserving the Shires natural environment?

(please circle one)

1. Highly Important
2. Important
3. Not important

Infrastructure

telecommunications • roads • bridges • electrical grids

Do you know...

That there are 775.5kms of sealed roads in the Shire (including Shire, Regional and State Highways) AND that there are 80 bridges within the Walgett Shire!

Q. Does your local road network meet your needs?

YES NO

Q. Do the electricity and communications networks meet your personal and/or business needs?

YES NO

Q. What improvement in infrastructure would improve your quality of life the most?

(please circle one)

1. Quicker internet access
2. More all weather roads
3. More choice of telephone providers

Governance & Leadership

management • policies • role modelling • guidance

Do you know...

Council is a substantial employer of Shire residents including the running of innovative youth employment programs AND that Council currently partners with approximately 100 organisations to deliver social, economic and cultural life in the Shire.

Q. Do you think the Council is providing leadership across the broader community?

YES NO

Q. Does the Council provide the community with maximum opportunities for participation in Council decision making?

YES NO

Q. How do you think Council could further improve its relationship with the community?

(please circle one)

1. Improved Website/More published information
2. More responsive to issues in the community eg. broken facilities
3. Get answers more quickly

Please select the closest community where you live

Burren Junction

Cumborah

Carinda

Lightning Ridge

Collarenebri

Rowena

Come By Chance

Walgett

Cryon

Grawin/Glengarry Opal Fields

OPTIONAL - For further correspondence if required:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Please turn to the back page for two more questions

Resolution Reference	Adoption Date	Progress	Next Review Date	Authorised Person
6/2012/15	27/3/12	Adopted	26/3/13	Steve Holland
6/2012/19	22/5/12	Amendments – Australian Opal Centre	26/3/18	Steve Holland
6/2013/3	26/3/13	Reviewed	26/3/18	Steve Holland