

# Walgett Shire Crime Prevention & Community Safety Plan

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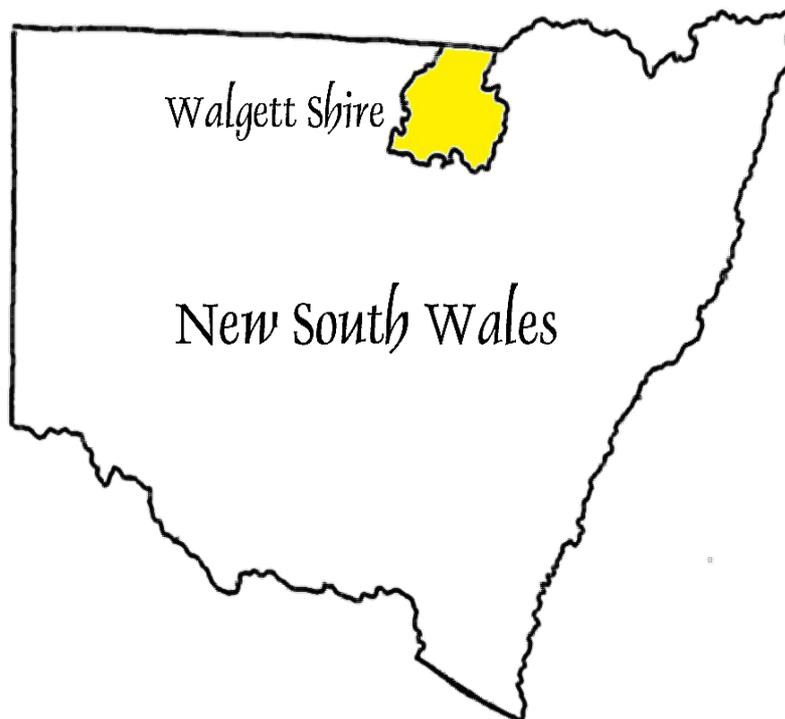
**2016 - 2020**

# OUR SPACE

Walgett Local Government Area

Population: 7,500

Area: 22,500sq kilometer's



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## Forward from Mayor



I am pleased to present the *Walgett Crime Prevention and Community Safety Plan*.

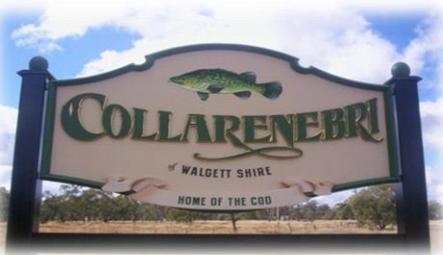
Walgett Shire Council is committed to safety and amenity for all people that live in, work in or visit the Walgett Shire. This commitment is reflected in our Strategic Vision:

***‘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’.***

The *Walgett Shire Crime Prevention and Community Safety Plan* has been developed to guide the work of Council, Police and our community partners to ensure that our community safety program reflects the priorities and aspirations of our communities. Our goal is a community that is safe and proud, that supports healthy families and thriving business and provides positive opportunities for everyone that lives in, works in or visits the Walgett Shire.

I thank the many community members, business owners and service providers across the Walgett Shire that gave their time to help develop the *Walgett Shire Crime Prevention and Community Safety Plan*

**TOWNS & VILLAGES IN THE WALGETT SHIRE**



## 1. Introduction

The *Walgett Community Strategic Plan 2012 – 2022* was informed by an extensive community consultation process designed to inform Council of the community's vision and priorities for their Shire. Through our '**Speak Up**' community consultation process, community members identified Crime Prevention as number one among seven key priorities identified by our community.



The *Walgett Crime Prevention and Community Safety Plan* was developed to guide the work of Council and our community partners in our efforts to prevent crime and to improve perceptions of the Walgett Shire as a safe place to live in, work in and visit.

While it is no secret that Walgett has on occasion been stigmatised by negative media reports about crime, people who live and work in the Walgett Shire who were consulted for this plan indicated they feel very safe in their community. Like all communities, opportunities were identified to improve the perception of Walgett as a safe place where children and families can thrive, where businesses can prosper, where visitors choose to return and where people with a diverse skill base choose to settle.

Thanks to the people who participated in the consultations, with special thanks to George McCormick, Janet Mason and Steve Ruttley from Council's Community Development Team who coordinated community input in the development of the plan.

## 2. Methodology

Initial meetings were held with Council Executives and senior Police to gain their insights into crime and safety priorities and suggestions for community stakeholders to be engaged in the community safety consultation process.

Key local documents, such as the *Walgett Shire Community Strategic Plan 2012 – 2022*, the *Walgett Shire Youth Strategy* and *Walgett Shire Community Directory* were reviewed to get insight into community strengths and opportunities and to identify key services with a vested interest in community safety.

Council's *Community Development Team* then developed a community consultation plan. Discussion guides were developed to support qualitative consultations. Transcripts of those consultations were then analysed to identify common themes and priorities identified by stakeholders in the three key communities of Collarenebri, Lightning Ridge and Walgett.

Further consultation then occurred with key service providers to ascertain willingness to participate in strategic partnerships designed to achieve the community's crime prevention and safety objectives within the service structures and resources available within the Walgett Shire.



### **3. Community Consultation**

Sixty-eight community members and services providers participated in consultations held in Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri.

Consultations were promoted on radio and in the Walgett Spectator, via email networks and Council's website. Elected Councillor's were also invited to talk one-on-one with the consultants.



#### **3.1 Walgett**

Thirty community members and service providers participated in community safety consultations in the town of Walgett, including six young people.

In addition to community members and business owners, consultation engaged representatives from agencies and networks including Police, Dharriwaa Elders, Walgett Aboriginal Medical Services (WAMS), Walgett Community College, the Aboriginal Legal Service, Thiyama-Li Family Violence Prevention Legal Service, Local Aboriginal Land Council, PCYC, the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Walgett Local Court and Council. In addition, Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service canvassed their staff and provided a submission related to perceptions of safety and priorities for improving those perceptions.



There were mixed perceptions about service provision in Walgett. Community generally identified Council and WAMS as key service providers, with both agencies identified as key partners in any strategies to fill service gaps. While Council were recognised as providing key community services, particularly for children and young people, it was suggested there was potential for Council to provide stronger leadership on social issues. WAMS was positively regarded and accessed by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members, though the need for increased mental health and drug and alcohol capacity was identified across the community, including by WAMS staff. Business owners provided positive feedback on Police responses when they had experienced crime, though some business owners and other community members indicated the frequency with which access to the Police station was locked created a barrier between Police and community.

The turnover in Police staff was cited as a barrier to Police and community relationships, with some community members encouraging Police to participate more in the community. Some stakeholders suggested higher visibility policing in main streets while others suggested a non-Police outreach presence would be more suitable.

Some stakeholders conveyed frustration with the lack of consistency and lack of integration across human service providers, though it was acknowledged that attracting suitably qualified and reliable staff to health and human services is an ongoing challenge. It was evident though that fractures in the community, or 'lateral violence' was an obstacle to genuine collaboration between some services.

Input from consultations is summarised among a number of common themes.



### 3.1.1 Perceptions of Safety

All stakeholders conveyed that they felt safe living in Walgett, though some women indicated they would not feel safe walking around at night due to perceptions of town as unsafe and due to fear of unrestrained dogs. This is consistent with research that finds women report higher levels of fear of crime, which is understandable given there are crimes that women are more likely to experience in both the public and private domain (Grabosky 1995).



A number of community members indicated there had been significant improvements in the appearance of the main street in recent times, with design improvements and more subtle security. The vast majority of consultation participants both in Walgett and in other communities in the Shire conveyed that they felt the presence of bars on businesses in the main street created a perception that town was unsafe, with one community member describing the main street as looking like *'the wild, wild west'*. It is recognised that many services and business owners have experienced repeated incidents of vandalism, particularly smashed windows and lights, and in some instances attempted break and enter. People indicated that lighting was inadequate in some parts of town. Research reinforces that 'incivilities' such as vandalism and design features such as poor lighting make people feel unsafe (Grabosky 1995; Cordner 2010).

Council has supported some businesses to transition from bars to crime resistant mesh screens to improve amenity of the area, but some community members found this less than ideal. A number of people consulted cited the example of Bourke, where bars were removed in favour of rollers that were lowered at night, suggesting this significantly enhanced their perception of Bourke as a safe place while still protecting businesses at night. The transition to less severe security fixtures is one example of 'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design' (CPTED), an approach that has adopted in Walgett after delivery of 'Safer By Design' training by NSW Police in 2015. CPTED principles are designed to make crime 'more difficult, more risky, less rewarding or less excusable' (Sherman et al 2006:242). The training, which was attended by Police and Council staff, should ensure that future design and fixture installation in public spaces are resilient and where possible vandal-resistant. Another example of CPTED in practice is the refurbishment of amenities in Grey Park, which includes design features to reduce the visibility of discarded drug paraphernalia. The visibility of discarded syringes was identified by a number of community members as detrimental to perceptions of safety. Consideration could be given to a City of Sydney program that resulted in a 99% clean-up rate in public housing developments.

A number of people across the community, including residents, business owners and service providers suggested that expansion of Council's CCTV network would not only prevent crime and catch vandals, but it would also encourage more businesses to reconsider security options that were described as some community members as resembling a jail. While research suggests CCTV is not a strong crime deterrent, it can aid detection of crime and can potentially enable intervention in the commission of offences when supplemented by other strategies such as effective lighting, live monitoring, signage and a response capacity (Gill and Spriggs 2005; Welsh and Farrington 2009). This would suggest that a CCTV network in Walgett would require a strong partnership with Police in order to realise its potential.

A number of people suggested strategies to improve amenity of the main street need to be supplemented by social strategies to engage children and young people who hang out at

night, and in some instances engage in vandalism (see *Opportunities for Children and Young People* below).

Another recent initiative that was identified as enhancing perceptions of safety was the introduction of outdoor dining tables at Stone's Throw café on Fox Street, with the presence of people socialising on footpaths promoting the area as safe. This is also consistent with CPTED theory, which encourages 'generating legitimate activity' in public spaces, so that 'legitimate users' of public spaces become the guardians, displacing illegitimate users of the space (Atlas 2013:712).



Concerns were raised about the state of access roads to the Namoi Village and Gingie reserve, particularly in bad weather. This negatively impacts actual and perceived safety.

Some community members and service providers suggested more visibility of police would also enhance perceptions of safety. The turnover of staff at Police, as with other services, was identified as a concern, with a couple of community members suggesting Police should be encouraged to engage more as members of the community in Walgett. It was however also recognised that there are some people in the community who promote negative attitudes towards Police, which can make social participation challenging.

### **3.1.2 Support for Children, Young People and Families**

The wellbeing of children and young people was identified as a key concern across the community. Aside from issues related to poor school attendance and outcomes (see *Education and Employment* below), many community members and service providers raised concerns about the wellbeing of children who are often on the streets late at night. Many people indicated that some children 'hang out' on the streets at night to escape

alcohol and drug abuse and violence at home. Many people conveyed concern about the lack of respect that some children show for Elders, parents, and teachers, with one person provider commenting 'there is no spiritual connection anymore'. Frustration was voiced at a perceived lack of parental accountability and responsibility in some instances.



*Walgett Shire Youth Council reps and Council management/ staff at a forum during Youth Week 2016*

A number of service providers identified the need for supports to break the cycle of intergenerational trauma, with one community member with long-term experience working in the justice system stating that they are now seeing the children and grandchildren of people who were in the system 30 years ago.

Symptoms of inter-generational trauma include alcohol and substance abuse, destructive behavior's, unchecked aggression, emotional and psychological damage, poor educational outcomes, socio-economic disadvantage, promiscuity and difficulty maintaining relationships (van der Kolj 2007; Atkinson et al 2010). Gambling was also identified as a factor that exacerbates financial stress and domestic violence and exacerbates child and family wellbeing.

While it is not easy to engage families who often have not had positive experiences with service providers, some stakeholders suggested that the turnover of government and NGO staff in Walgett undermines the opportunity for families to build trust with services funded to work with them. There is a need for consistent, culturally appropriate, trauma-informed family support initiatives, delivered in the home or the community where families feel safest.



In the context of supporting families, numerous stakeholders identified concerns about the impacts of family violence, citing it as a key factor in most social concerns, including children at risk on the streets at night and poor school engagement. Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research crime data indicates that, in 2015, the Walgett Shire reported the highest rate of domestic violence incidents for all local government areas in New South Wales. This is a significant concern, particularly given that research suggests that more than 70% of women who experience violence don't report it (Mouzos & Makkai 2004).

In order to improve outcomes for children in Walgett, strategies to break the cycle of domestic and family violence are crucial, given evidence from the (former) Australian Domestic Violence Clearinghouse that experiences of violence can negatively impact children's psychological, emotional, social, behavioral and developmental wellbeing.

Some stakeholders attributed the normalisation of violence as a factor in the significant increase among young women fighting in recent years.

A program to work with men who perpetrate violence was identified as an important step in reducing the incidence of domestic violence. It was suggested that expert violence prevention workers support local justice agencies and the Men's Group to establish an evidence-based program for men who perpetrate violence. There is a growing number of programs in which Aboriginal men are engaged in culturally based support to address the factors associated with violence, which is supported by research that indicates culture is the

'critical lens' through which violence must be considered to enable effective outcomes in reducing violence in Aboriginal communities (Horvane 2015).



The ANTS (*Act Now Together Strong*) program, recently implemented in Dubbo as part of a national research project, provides an example of a potentially suitable family strengthening program. The program is delivered by staff of Juvenile Justice and Mission Australia, with staff trained in a problem-solving model, allowing them to go to family homes of children in contact with the justice system and work with families to identify their priority issues and develop strategies to address them. Early outcomes are very promising, and there is potential to seek rollout to the Walgett Shire.

While the youth service was positively regarded, like other services for young people it closes at 5pm. A number of community members and service providers indicated that new service models are needed, with staff employed to support children and young people at the times they need it most. Morning boxing at PCYC was commended, and while programs such as the Ricky Walford Challenge, Ronnie Gibbs Shield and Council Youth development and PCYC run discos are popular, workers emphasised the need for sustained regular programs for young people where they can build trust and access support from workers. There is a need for access to sports for younger children, with football and netball only available for children in their mid teens, but others suggested a need for positive recreation other than sport, such as dance, art and music.

An immediate priority identified by many stakeholders was the need for a safe space where young people can engage in positive recreation with support and supervision. There is potential to draw from local precedents, with Council, Police YLO, PCYC NGO staff and health workers partnering to offer a night-time youth resources center with activities. It was strongly emphasised that this needs to be in town where kids hang out, ideally supported by a vehicle that can provide transport to activities and home or to some other safe place afterwards. A member of the Youth Council also suggested upgrading the basketball court, and providing self-defense classes would be useful for young women.

### 3.1.3 Alcohol and Other Drugs

While associated with concerns about child and family, a number of people identified the need for better support to address alcohol and drug issues in the community. Alcohol is still perceived as the greatest concern, with cannabis recognised as the most commonly used drug. Many people conveyed concerns about drug overdoses in recent years attributed to fentanyl and oxycontin, with increasing concern about the visibility of 'ice' use in the community. As stated, discarded drug paraphernalia undermines perceptions of safety.

Like many regional communities, there is a crucial gap in alcohol and other drug support services in Walgett. There is no detox facility, no rehabilitation services and no halfway house. There is one alcohol and other drug counselor at WAMS but no crisis or after-hours response capacity other than police.

### 3.1.4 Education and Employment

Many people across the community suggested that the key to long-term safety improvements in Walgett is improved education and employment outcomes.

School engagement is arguably the greatest priority for the community of Walgett. The high turnover of leadership in the school was seen as one factor in poor engagement in school by children and families. Media representation of incidents in the school in 2014 is widely perceived to have exacerbated the challenge of restoring balance and harmony within the school community. Research supports the observation that incidents that attract high-level media attention trigger more concern, 'even if they are relatively rare occurrences' (Lupton 1999:20 in Shepherdson 2014). However, concerns were identified that attention to school issues has resulted in what one stakeholder described as a 'power struggle' between political interests, government and community groups, with perceptions that discussion and energies need to be re-focused on empowering the school to restore safety and wellbeing for children and staff and support young people to succeed and realise their potential. A number of service providers raised concerns that some children who remain engaged at school (to some degree) have poor literacy and numeracy skills upon

graduation, suggesting they will not be able to transition into employment. One Councilor emphasised *'We have to nurture the kids because they are the future leaders'*.



That said, the challenge of addressing complex issues, such as intergenerational trauma and the lateral violence that plays out between children, parents and staff in the school community is not understated, particularly given the crucial shortage in access to trauma-informed mental health support for children and families in Walgett. A proposal to introduce trauma-awareness training for school staff is positive step in creating a trauma-sensitive school that can respond to the complex needs of children.

Students also conveyed confusion about roles and responsibilities within the school community, seemingly attributable to the range of players involved in school-based programs, with some school staff employed by the Department, some funded by the Commonwealth and auspiced by Murdi Paaki Regional Enterprises and the PCYC now based on the school ground but under separate administration. Despite the seemingly large number of people employed in the school community, when asked what should be considered in the Crime Prevention and Community Safety Plan, a student responded *'More help with learning in class'*.

While education is key, a number of people identified the need to develop new enterprises and other work opportunities as well as pathways into employment. There is broad concern for farmers in the community who have been impacted by floods and drought in the last decade. For those children who finish school, either in Walgett or at boarding school, there are few employment opportunities to encourage them to remain in Walgett in gainful employment. One initiative that was highly regarded was Council's *'School to Work'* program, though concerns were raised that this has been cut. There is potential for a

broader partnership program to expand access to 'School to Work' across the Shire. There is a need for more innovative programs to transition people out of long-term unemployment. Café 64 provides one example of a successful social enterprise that can succeed.



### 3.2 Lightning Ridge

Eighteen people participated in consultations in Lightning Ridge, including a number of community members and business owners, young people, elected Councilors and representatives from the Community Resource Centre, Mission Australia, the Aboriginal Integrated Child and Family Centre, the Youth Centre, Aboriginal Health Centre, the Community Drug Action Team and the Lightning Ridge Central School Principal.

People in Lightning Ridge overwhelmingly conveyed a sense of safety and pride in their diverse and unique community. There is a strong sense of community cohesion in Lightning Ridge, with many stakeholders commenting on how well integrated the community is. Services were generally described positively, despite identified gaps in mental health support, alcohol and other drugs services and social housing. Some stakeholders conveyed a sense that Lightning Ridge was seen secondary in terms of Council support, though the active participation of volunteers and the community's success at fund-raising to support local initiatives was seen as strength.

Key themes identified in consultation around crime prevention and community safety are summarised below.



### **3.2.1 Property Protection**

A number of people who were consulted reported having been victims of property theft, either home their homes, sheds or yards. It was suggested that many people don't report property theft, in many instances people actually confront the alleged thieves and have property returned. Interestingly many people stated that they don't lock their homes or cars and did not convey knowledge of property protection measures. Given the diverse living circumstances for people in and around Lighting Ridge, there is potential for impact from community education around property protection that draws from research in regional and rural communities.



### **3.2.2 Opportunities for Children and Young People**

While feedback on the Youth Service in Lighting Ridge was positive, it was suggested that the service primarily engages younger children, leaving a gap in service for young people. A visit to the centre confirmed that the premises are not ideal, with an open space that doesn't allow for programs to target different age groups concurrently. The premises are very old and isolated and have been subject to a number of break and enter incidents. With a number of community members encouraging strategies that build on community spirit

and the many community volunteers, there is potential for a Council and community partnership to raise funds to obtain a more suitable youth facility for young people. As in Walgett, the need for youth programs that can be accessed at night was also suggested for Lightning Ridge. Service providers identified a gap in general support services for children and young people aged nine to sixteen years.



In comparison to the youth centre, the Aboriginal Integrated Child and Family Centre has impressive purpose-built facilities targeting different age groups at different times. With limited resources for children and young people in the community, a collaborative approach to developing and mapping a program of activities and supports for children and young people where the two services and other services complement each other without duplicating services could be considered.

It was also noted that Council provide a structured free Vacation Care program throughout the Shire, offering a full (8) weeks holiday programs throughout the year in Walgett, Lightning Ridge, Collarenebri and 4 weeks at Grawin. This program, which provides free food for children, and Council's free 'after school care' programs are designed meet the National Quality Framework guidelines as do the " everyday" after school youth centers offered by the Shire youth and community development team in Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri.

### **3.2.3 Personal safety**

The incidence of violence in Lightning Ridge was highlighted by a number of community members and service providers. A number of people raised concerns about domestic and family violence, identifying that it impacts across the diverse community of the Ridge. The absence of social housing, resulting in overcrowding, was cited as a factor that exacerbated family violence. The challenges faced by some people living in comparative isolation on the camps was identified, in terms of financial uncertainty exacerbating violence but also isolation and the lack of accessible service infrastructure posing a barrier to people who

experience violence. It was also suggested that Lightning Ridge has a recognised drinking culture, with the incidence of domestic violence perceived to have increased since increased police focus on responsible service of alcohol on licensed premises and drink driving. Mental illness was identified as prevalent and related to incidents of domestic and non-domestic violence. Reference was made to a number of assaults where it was perceived that victims were assumed to be in possession of opal or cash.



Family Support and domestic violence workers from Mission Australia conveyed that trauma is an issue for the community of Lightning Ridge, with their service adopting a trauma-informed approach. There is however no mental health service infrastructure in town.

The school, which is highly regarded, does provide access to counselors for children and young people. Mission staff suggested that the impact of strategies such as Love Bites, a violence prevention program for school-aged students, was evident in the months following implementation but that ongoing implementation was needed in order to achieve sustained outcomes.

The Aboriginal Integrated Child and Family Centre have established a practice where children must recite a poem about safety and protective behaviours each time they enter the premises. This is an innovative approach that could be adopted more widely across the Shire.

### **3.2.4 Alcohol and Other Drugs**

As mentioned above, Lightning Ridge is perceived as having a drinking culture, which was linked to incidence of domestic and non-domestic violence and mental health issues. A number of stakeholders also raised concerns about drug use, with service providers suggesting that Lightning Ridge had a bigger issue with drug abuse than Walgett. The recent death of a young man, attributed to 'ice', caused great concern and sadness for a number of community members. Like Walgett, the need for alcohol and other drug services was

seen as crucial, with community initiatives such as the successful Men’s Shed seen as filling a significant gap in support for people who can’t access other social and emotional wellbeing services.



### 3.3 Collarenebri

A total of twenty people participated in community consultations in Collarenebri, including long-term community members including young people, business owners and representatives from Aboriginal Health, the Post Office, the Local Aboriginal Land Council, Mackillop, WAMS, the Youth Centre and local Police, as well as a representative from the Burren Junction community.

Most people in Collarenebri feel very safe, with several people indicating that the only time there is crime in the community is when someone has relatives visiting from elsewhere. People in Collarenebri conveyed real pride in their community, despite concerns about economic prosperity, with the need to build enterprise and job opportunities and develop tourism emphasised across consultations.



### 3.3.1 Community revitalisation

The key issue identified among Collarenebri stakeholders was the need for employment and enterprise and to build tourism. Aside from the impacts of drought on farmers, the flow-on effect of drought on local business has been significant, with local businesses citing significant drops in revenue in recent years. With the local newsagency and other stores closing in recent years, there are fears that many more businesses will shut. While there is a need for community transport in Collarenebri, the impact of community members utilising the bus to buy groceries and other essentials out of town on local business was seen as significant. Aside from the impacts on business owners and their families, the number of boarded-up premises in the main street was described as feeling 'like a ghost town'. There is a need for a strategy to activate the main street, ideally providing attractions that will draw tourists and services that will encourage them to utilise the primitive camping site on the edge of town. One suggestion was to establish an arts project on the open-air theatre site, where tourists could watch artists as they practice as well as buy local artworks, supporting the local community. Outdoor dining was also suggested as a means to activate the main street.

### 3.3.2 Safe children and families

Concerns were raised about the exploitation of young women in the community, by community members who were unaware of how to report concerns and did not have access to child and family workers (see 3.3.3 *Access to information and opportunities*).

There were also concerns about domestic violence, which a number of people mentioned as an issue but which police suggest is under-reported in the community (which is common). There is no safe house for women who experience domestic violence and community members shared stories of women and girls who had nowhere to go when escaping domestic violence.

The school and youth Centre provide opportunities to promote safety to young people via programs such as Love Bites, but there is a need for broader community education and linkage with child and family services. The absence of a safe house for women and children who experience domestic violence was also identified as a priority. Concerns were also raised about the impact of mental health on families, particularly given the relationship between drought and mental health in the community, with concerns raised about the Commonwealth ceasing funding targeted to mental health for people affected by drought.



### **3.3.3 Access to information and opportunities**

Some Collarenebri community members identified the need for to improve access to information related to safety, service provision and job opportunities among other issues. The absence of a community internet hub or kiosk was identified as a barrier for community members who have little access to service providers in an era of increased reliance on internet access. This was identified as a barrier to safety in a number of ways, with people conveying they were unaware of processes to report concerns about child safety and did not know how to access legal advice. People suggested the need for Council and other service providers to promote information and awareness about job opportunities, community events and other services through grass roots channels, such as posters in the main street and shop fronts to promote. Regular community visits from legal services and

courts and child and family services were also suggested. There was also a lack of clarity of how community members in Collarenebri are meant to access crucial services, such as crisis accommodation for women and children experiencing violence and people who are required to attend court.



#### **4. Analysis and recommendations**

Analysis of input from the three key communities identifies a number of common themes as crime prevention and community safety priorities across the shire, as well as priorities unique to each of the three communities.

It is worth noting that overall people feel very safe living in the Walgett Shire and are proud of their community. Interestingly, community members and service providers from all three communities identified concerns about the main street of Walgett as a key priority for the Shire, as it was perceived that negative perceptions impacted the broader Shire. That said, Walgett community members identified a number of improvements in the perceived safety of their community.

Family violence was identified as key concerns across all communities and recognised as a key factor undermining the wellbeing of children and young people, including poor school attendance and children on the streets at night. The impact of trauma, drought and alcohol and drugs were common themes as was the absence of trauma-informed mental health and rehabilitation services.

Vandalism was a key concern in Walgett while property theft was identified as prevalent in Lightning Ridge. Collarenebri was perceived as a safe community but experienced a sense of social isolation and disconnection due to limited service infrastructure.

A number of factors associated with service delivery in Walgett were identified as detrimental to community safety outcomes. There is a crucial gap in trauma-informed therapeutic support to address mental health, alcohol and other drug and family issues. In some instances, fractures within the community undermined potential, and arguably essential collaboration between service providers.

The frequent turnover of staff in services undermines the opportunity to build trust between the community and services that can support them, including crucial services such as schools and Police. Despite a comparatively small population, many service providers conveyed ignorance of the services offered more broadly across the community. Service delivery models, where support for children and families ceases at 5pm and is not accessible on weekends are generally considered outdated and need to be reconsidered.

Strategies in the Walgett Community Safety Action Plan (see Section 6 below) are designed to foster collaboration and enhance accountability across services and to raise awareness at a central government level of the significant gaps in service support which are clearly associated with Walgett Shire's representation in NSW crime statistics.

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## 6. Walgett Shire Community Safety Action Plan

### Goal 1: To improve actual and perceived safety across the Walgett Shire

- Outcomes:**
- Improved perceptions of community safety amongst residents and visitors to Walgett Shire
  - A measurable reduction in key offence categories
  - Increased tourism and business

**Strategic Plan links:** - Infrastructure; Economic Development; Governance and Civil Leadership

Action	Performance Measure/s	Partner/s	Resourcing	Timeframes
1. Actively encourage local businesses to install security equipment that does not impact negatively on perceptions of community safety (this includes removing bars on windows and replacing them with visually permeable security options such as Crim Mesh and Roller Doors)	1.1 The number of businesses that transition to community-friendly security options to protect their businesses	Walgett Shire Council (WSC)  Walgett business owners  Service providers	Council could potentially partner with local business to support applications to the NSW Community Safety Fund and/or the Commonwealth Safer Streets Programme to supplement Council's existing commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Immediate</i> <i>Funding sought for CCTV in hot spots</i></li> <li>• <i>Review annually 2018-2019</i></li> </ul>
2. Expand CCTV in the main street of Walgett. This needs to include live monitoring of the CCTV footage by Walgett Police to maximise opportunities to intervene and prevent the commission of offences	2.1 An increase in the identification and subsequent arrest rate of offenders that commit street offences in Walgett due to the use of CCTV technology as intelligence gathering and evidence	Walgett Shire Council  Walgett Police	As above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Immediate</i></li> </ul>

	<p>2.2 A reduction in vandalism and other public offences due to improved surveillance of public spaces and swift Police intervention</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Review with Police statistics as a measure</i></li> <li>• <i>2018/19</i></li> </ul>
<p>3. Introduce vandal resistant street lighting across the Walgett Shire, including in the main streets of Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri (consider the placement of sensor lighting where appropriate)</p>	<p>3.1 Residents have an increased perception of community safety at night</p> <p>3.2 Lighting is vandal resistant and therefore repairs and maintenance costs are reduced</p> <p>3.3 There is more natural surveillance due to an increase in pedestrian thoroughfare in the main streets at night</p>	<p>Walgett Shire Council</p>	<p>As above - local businesses and services should be encouraged to adopt vandal resistant lights within their infrastructure budgets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Initial feasibility study and review to take place 2018/19</i></li> </ul>

	3.4 CCTV surveillance quality is enhanced			
4. Review the location of syringe disposal facilities in Walgett and Lightning Ridge as well as increasing community education about the importance of correctly disposing of syringes	<p>4.1 An increase in the number and rate of syringes that are disposed of correctly and safely</p> <p>4.2 Improved public perceptions of safety due to a decrease in the number of syringes that are located in public places</p>	<p>Walgett Shire Council</p> <p>NSW Health</p>	<p>Costs associated with the installation of new bins in hot spot locations</p> <p>Costs associated with servicing the bins</p> <p>Costs associated with developing and disseminating the educational material and signage (WSC to approach Health about a jointly funded approach)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ongoing: Raised at Health meetings Awaiting feedback from NSW Health in regards to options</i></li> <li>• <i>Ongoing – review 2018</i></li> </ul>
5. Encourage outdoor dining to generate increased social activity in Walgett and Collarenebri Main Streets, to increase perceptions of safety and to increase natural surveillance of public spaces	<p>5.1 An increase in the use of public spaces for pro-social activities</p> <p>5.2 Increased appeal for tourists and visitors of the Shire to contribute to the local economy</p>	<p>Walgett Shire Council</p> <p>EDO</p> <p>Local restaurant and cafe owners and food Retailers</p>	<p>Minimal costs - businesses to expand their dealings to outdoor trading</p> <p>Authority and approval from WSC should not be cost prohibitive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ongoing</i></li> <li><i>2020</i></li> </ul>
6. Promote good practice regional and rural property protection information and education across the Shire (particularly in	6.1 An increase in community education and awareness of	<p>Walgett Shire Council</p> <p>Walgett Police</p>	Resources are freely available and can be distributed via existing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>2019 / 2020</i></li> </ul>



Lightning Ridge)	<p>practical measures that can be adopted to reduce the likelihood of victimisation</p> <p>6.2 A decrease in the vulnerability of rural property owners becoming victims of opportunistic theft</p>	NSW Farmers Local Land Services	community information sharing means	
7. Increase Police visibility at priority offence times but also at key community events to strengthen relationships and enhance perceptions of safety	<p>7.1 An increase in public confidence and perceptions of safety</p> <p>7.2 An increase in positive and proactive dealings between Walgett Police and the local community</p> <p>7.3 Increased Police capacity to deter opportunistic offending</p>	Walgett Police	Re-deployment of manpower as required	• 2019 / 20
8. Investment in a tailored local Induction Program for new Police (and other new service providers) that includes a specific cultural competency component that actively involves Dharriwaa Elders in its delivery	8.1 An increase in Police awareness of local family groups, cultural protocols and the role of Aboriginal Community Leaders	Walgett Police  Dharriwaa Elders Group  Walgett Aboriginal Land Council	Costs for the development and delivery of the Induction Training	• 2019 / 20

	8.2 Improved rapport, communication and understanding between local Police and the Aboriginal community			
9. Repair the roads to Ningi and Namoi missions as a means of improving actual and perceived safety	9.1 An increase in pride and accessibility to the local Aboriginal missions	Walgett Aboriginal Land Council  Dept Aboriginal Affairs  Walgett Shire Council	Costs for repairs and maintenance of the roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ongoing</i></li> </ul>
10. Build on community strength's and ownership of their community and reporting crime as it happens within their individual communities	10.1 Promote community neighbour-hood watch groups	All community services/ agencies	Fund through organisation community promotion/ development funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>In development stages</i></li> <li>• <i>Ongoing Review 2018-2019</i></li> </ul>

**Goal 2:** To nurture young people to realise their potential

- Outcomes:**
- Young people in Walgett Shire are directly involved in decision making processes and priority setting for youth issues
  - The needs of young people in Walgett Shire are accurately identified and responded to in planning processes
  - Young people’s health and education needs are addressed and they can realize their potential as future leaders

**Strategic Plan links:** - Community; Governance and Civil Leadership

Action	Performance Measure/s	Partner/s	Funding required	Timeframes
1. Establish an integrated youth resource centre on Friday and/or Saturday nights and other nights during school holidays in the main street of Walgett	<p>1.1 A safe, supported youth resource centre is accessible on key nights when young people are on the streets</p> <p>1.2 There is an increase in young people positively engaged in structured and supervised activities</p> <p>1.3 There is a decrease in young people frequenting on the street at night engaging in opportunistic</p>	<p>( Collaboration of services)</p> <p>Walgett Shire Council</p> <p>Mission Australia</p> <p>WAMS</p> <p>PCYC</p> <p>Police Youth Liaison Officer</p> <p>Local services and organisations ( NGO / Non NGO) funded to address well-being community/ youth</p>	<p>Jointly funded through partnership contributions (additional funding may be accessible)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Initial funding opportunities identified and services to collaborate. 2018-19</i></li> <li>• <i>Ongoing – to be monitored /reviewed.</i></li> <li>• <i>2018-19 Ongoing Compare to police statistics</i></li> </ul>



	<p>offending behaviours</p> <p>1.4 Relationships are nurtured between young people, Police, health workers and other key workers who can improve their wellbeing</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Immediate and review annually.</i></li> <li>• <i>Establishment of wrap around youth service model. 2018-19</i></li> </ul>
<p>2. Explore a community fundraising partnership to upgrade facilities at the Lightning Ridge Youth Centre</p>	<p>2.1 A new or enhanced youth facility that provides opportunities for children and young people of different ages concurrently</p> <p>2.2 Improved attendance and participation from a diverse range of young people in youth centre activities</p>	<p>Walgett Shire Council</p>	<p>Funding is generated by fundraising activities and supplemented by Council and other funding sources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Immediate-2019 Investigate and submit funding submissions where available</i></li> <li>• <i>Reviewed annually 2018</i></li> </ul>

<p>3. Support health service providers to lobby NSW Health to highlight the urgent need for Headspace or other professional, consistent, accessible trauma informed therapeutic service for young people</p>	<p>3.1 Young people gain access to much needed professional and tailored support services to assist them to deal with trauma and to promote effective healing</p> <p>3.2 Service gaps are identified and effectively addressed</p>	<p>Walgett Shire Council</p> <p>NSW Health</p>	<p>Funding commitment is required from NSW Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ongoing 2019-2020</i></li> <li>• <i>2019</i></li> </ul>
<p>4. Explore options to extend the hours of youth services and programs for young people across Walgett Shire</p>	<p>4.1 Young people are participating in supervised activities instead of frequenting on the street late at night</p> <p>4.2 There is a reduction in street offences during the times that the youth services are open and providing extended services</p>	<p>Walgett Shire Council</p> <p>PCYC</p>	<p>Funding needs to be sourced to extend the hours of operation.</p> <p>Re-prioritisation of existing hours of operation should be considered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>2018-19</i></li> <li>• <i>Initial Friday night program run by PCYC</i></li> <li>• <i>Youth services (WSC) to look to support and offer diversionary activities for younger children</i></li> </ul>
<p>5. Re-visit mapping of all programs, services and recreation opportunities for children and young people across the Shire with a view to minimising duplication and establishing collaborative partnership arrangements</p>	<p>5.1 Duplication of services is identified and resources are re-prioritised and consolidated to address gaps</p>	<p>Walgett Shire Council</p> <p>PCYC (Walgett)</p> <p>Aboriginal Integrated Child and Family Centre (Lightning Ridge)</p>	<p>To be led by Community Development Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>2019-2020</i></li> </ul>

	5.2 Services are more collaborative in their approach rather than competing for the same bundle of resources to affect the same outcomes	Services and agencies focused on youth		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Work towards ongoing</i></li> <li>• <i>Review annually</i></li> </ul>
6. Seek support to sustain and expand access to the 'School to Work Program' to provide career pathways and incentives	6.1 The School to Work program is sustained	Walgett Shire Council Murdi Paaki Regional Enterprise Corporation Job networks Schools and TAFE Other partners as required	Funding is required to sustain the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Immediate</i></li> <li>• <i>Job employment Initiative developed Out Town-Our Future</i></li> <li>• <i>Review bi-annually</i></li> </ul>
7. Work with the Walgett Shire Youth Council to progress young people's recommendations such as revitalising the basketball court and conducting self-defence classes for young women	7.1 Future leaders are supported to benefit the community and to increase Council's capacity to respond to the needs of young people	Walgett Shire Council Walgett Shire Youth Council Other partners as required	Costs for agreed initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Youth Council to drive 2019/20</i></li> </ul>
8. Support and encourage further increase of youth employment opportunities within the Shire, training and up skilling our local youth for job readiness.	8.1 Local service and agencies, local business owners implement a plan of employment for local youth and young people.	Local service and organisations Job service providers	Funding is required to implement and sustain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Immediate</i></li> <li>• <i>Job employment Initiative developed</i></li> </ul>

<p>9. Busy youth means engaged youth. Creating aspirations and supported to reach their full potential contributing to society and our LGA in positive ways.</p> <p>10. Development of Employment Industries with encompassing partnerships with all levels of government and the private sector.</p>	<p>9.1 A reduction in youth crime with youth engaged and working, having input into their community, contributing to the broader community and role modelling for younger siblings.</p> <p>10.1 Number of new businesses commenced in the Shire</p>	<p>Walgett Shire Council</p> <p>EDO</p> <p>Regional Development AUS ( RDA)</p> <p>Private enterprises</p> <p>Walgett Shire Council RDA State and Federal Government private enterprise</p>	<p>Joint funding from Governments and private sectors</p>	<p><i>Out Town-Our Future</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Review bi-annually</i></li> <li>• <i>Input required from all parties 2019/20</i></li> </ul>
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**Goal 3:** To Support healthy, happy, successful families

- Outcomes:**
- A measurable decrease in Domestic Violence Related Assault
  - Inter-generational trauma is dealt with via responsive and targeted service delivery that promotes healing
  - Increased parental capacity and accountability for children’s wellbeing

**Strategic Plan links:** - Community

Action	Performance Measure/s	Partner/s	Funding required	Timeframes
1. Develop an evidence-based, culturally secure, trauma-informed men’s behaviour change program for perpetrators of Domestic Violence.	<p>1.1 Men receive professional support in a culturally appropriate environment</p> <p>1.2 A reduction in recidivism for men that participate in the program</p> <p>1.3 An increase in men that seek support to deal with underlying factors that drive their offending behaviours</p>	<p>Walgett Men’s Group</p> <p>Thiyamali</p> <p>Aboriginal Legal Service</p> <p>Mission Australia</p> <p>Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service</p> <p>Walgett Police</p> <p>NSW Department of Justice</p>	<p>Joint funding required to support the Men’s Group</p>	<p>• <i>2019/20 Initial planning meeting with stakeholders required – lead agency identified and to be driven by that group /supported by others</i></p>
2. Support and establish the ‘Moving Forward to a Healthier Community Strategy’ that is currently being initiated by Dharriwaa Elders Group and Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service	<p>2.1 The ‘Moving Forward to a Healthier Community Strategy’ is developed and implemented</p>	<p>Dharriwaa Elders Group</p> <p>Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service</p> <p>Walgett Shire Council</p>	<p>Funding to be negotiated between Project Partners</p> <p>Grant opportunities to be identified</p>	<p>• <i>2019/20 Initial planning meeting with stakeholders required - lead agency identified and to be driven by that group</i></p>



				<i>/supported by others -</i>
3. Seek support from the Department of Families and Community Services, Juvenile Justice and Mission Australia to explore the development of appropriate trauma informed family support programs, targeting families whose children are not engaged in school and in or at risk of criminal justice system contact	3.1 Vulnerable families receive much needed trauma related support services to assist them with healing  3.2 There is an improvement in school attendance rates for young people whose families are serviced	NSW Department of Family and Community Services  Juvenile Justice  Walgett Central School  NSW Department of Education (Connected Communities)	Funding is required to establish the services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>2019/20 Initial planning meeting with stakeholders required lead agency identified and to be driven by that group /supported by others-</i></li> </ul>
4. Make representations to NSW Health regarding the establishment of appropriate and responsive mental health and drug and alcohol services that are available locally	4.1 A critical service gap is filled to properly deal with drug and alcohol abuse and mental health associated illness within the local community	NSW Health  Walgett Shire Council  Walgett Police  Walgett Central School	Funding is required to establish these essential services locally so that they are accessible and utilised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>2019/20 Initial planning meeting with stakeholders required and to be driven by that group</i></li> </ul>
5. Seek support to establish safe house alternatives for women in Collarenebri to access safe crisis accommodation when required	5.1 Women in Collarenebri receive access to crisis accommodation when required	NSW Department of Families and Community Services	Funding is required to source appropriate safe accommodation options or transport to access them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>2019/20 Initial planning meeting with stakeholders required lead agency identified and to be driven by that group /supported by others</i></li> </ul>

6. Promote access to gambling support services for local residents	6.1 Provide access to free counselling support and professional services that assists problem gamblers	Mission Australia Walgett Sports Club Lightning Ridge Club Collarenebri Club Other clubs and pubs offering gambling to patrons Walgett RSL Club NSW Liquor Gaming and Racing	Options need to be considered to increase access to free expert counselling for problem gamblers as this was identified as a primary factor for family breakdown and associated violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>2019/20 Initial planning meeting with stakeholders required and to be driven by that group</i></li> </ul>
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**Goal 4:** To ensure access to information and opportunities for the community of Collarenebri

- Outcomes:**
- Increased employment opportunities for the Collarenebri community
  - Increased mobility for Collarenebri residents and an increase in service accessibility
  - A reduction in isolation for Collarenebri residents

**Strategic Plan links:** - Community; Governance and Civil Leadership

Action	Performance Measure/s	Partner/s	Funding required	Timeframes
1. Explore options for the establishment of a technology hub in Collarenebri to allow residents to access important information, essential services and job opportunities	1.1 A decrease in local unemployment  1.2 Improved social connectivity to Collarenebri residents	Walgett Shire Council  Other partners as required	Funding to establish the hub and costs for equipment and staff supervision and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>On going Review 2018</i></li> </ul>



<p>2. Identify and promote transport options for Collarenebri residents to access essential services (particularly for the elderly and vulnerable members of the community that require frequent travel to Walgett and Moree to access essential health services).</p>	<p>2.1 Residents receive access to essential services at an affordable cost</p> <p>2.2 Vulnerable community members receive access to essential human services that could not otherwise afford it due to transport deficiencies</p>	<p>Walgett Shire Council</p> <p>NSW Ministry of Transport</p> <p>Community Transport Providers</p>	<p>Costs for establishing quality, subsidised and affordable transport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Review by 2018</i></li> </ul>
<p>3. Work with the Interagency to develop a rotating roster of outreach support services to the Collarenebri Community</p>	<p>3.1 Collarenebri residents receive access to essential services within their own community on a scheduled basis</p>	<p>Walgett / Lightning Ridge Interagency</p> <p>Other partners as required</p>	<p>Nil</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ongoing- initial conversations in place</i></li> <li>• <i>Review 2018</i></li> </ul>
<p>4. Seek support from the NSW Department of Families and Community Support Services to have a greater service presence in Collarenebri in response to allegations of exploitation of young people and child abuse</p>	<p>4.1 Local mandatory reporters are actively encouraged to report incidents</p> <p>4.2 The local community have confidence that relevant services will respond timely and appropriately upon</p>	<p>Walgett Shire Council</p> <p>NSW Department of Family and Community Services</p>	<p>Nil</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Immediate</i></li> <li>• <i>2019-2020</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Measure through statistics –</i></p>

	reporting an incident			<i>community feedback</i>
	4.3 Young victims are protected and provided with immediate crisis support			