

2016/2017 Annual Report







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To the Ratepayers and Residents of the Walgett Shire,

We have reached the end of another year where continued progress has been made in upgrading and replacement of Council's various plant and built assets.

We continue to fight to remain a stand-alone Council, and to this end have had a range of meetings with the representatives of State agencies as well as members of State Parliament including our local member for Barwon, Kevin Humphries as well as the State Premier and Deputy Premier. Whilst we are assured that the Far Western Initiative has been scrapped we still have to receive formal confirmation of this.

We continue to push to be allowed to remain as a member of the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils rather than an organisation centred around Broken Hill. In the coming months it is anticipated that Joint Organisation legislation will be passed by State Parliament and this will enable us to gain a clear understanding of the future direction for local government right across NSW.

We have had another good year financially and have received advice of additional funding from a range of programmes including Fixing Country Roads and Safer and Secure Water. However, we will never have enough funds to maintain and upgrade our road network to the standard we would like. We are in the throes of preparing an application for a special rate variation in 2018/19 and will be making a case for somewhere in the vicinity of 5% to 15% for IPART to consider.

The State Government has announced a new funding programme of \$1.3B and Council has made application for the funding of several projects under the Stronger Country Communities element of this programme which will allow major improvements to proceed including the beautification of Lightning Ridge's main street, the Walgett Cemetery as well as parks and gardens facilities across the Shire.

Thanking You

Clr Ian Woodcock OAM

Mayor, Walgett Shire Council



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## **Your Council**



Mayor

Ian Woodcock

LIGHTNING RIDGE



Deputy Mayor

Manual Martinez

LIGHTNGING RIDGE



Councillor

Jane Keir OAM

COME BY CHANCE



Councillor

Kelly Smith

COLLARENEBRI



Councillor

Bill (Gustavus) Murray

WALGETT



Councillor
Tanya Cameron
ROWENA



Councillor

Michael Taylor

LIGHTNING RIDGE



Councillor

Robbie Turnbull

LIGHTNING RIDGE



Councillor

Lawrence Walford

LIGHTNING RIDGE





General Manager

Don Ramsland



Chief Financial Officer

Michael Urquhart



Director Environmental Services

Jessica McDonald



Director Engineering/Technical Service
Sylvester Otieno



### **COMMUNITY, COUNCIL AND MAYOR**

#### **GENERAL MANAGER**

- Mayoral Support
- Councillors Training & Support
- Council Business—Agenda & Action
- Inter Governmental Relations
- Inter Council Relations
- Community Relations
- Corporate Leadership & Direction
- Organisational Structure & Performance Management
- Economic Development
- Human Resources Management
- Work Health & Safety
- Tourism & Visitor Information
- Community Working Party

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

- Building Services
- Development Approvals
- Development Compliance
- Onsite Wastewater Management
- Environmental & Health Compliance
- State of the Environment Report
- Land Use & Environment Strategies
- Development Control Plans
- Local Environment Plans
- Section 149 Certificates
- GIS Management
- Animal Control
- By Laws
- Main Street Program
- Heritage
- Solid Waste & Recycling Services including New Landfill Development
- Building Maintenance

#### **CORPORATE SERVICES**

- Youth Services
- Property Services
- Property Register
- Childcare Services
- Financial Services
- Aboriginal Services
- Information Technology
- Swimming Pool Management Arrangements
- Budget & Management Plan
- Arts & Cultural Services
- Records Management
- Public Officer Services
- Legal Services
- Libraries
- Caravan Parks
- Leases & Licences
- Infrastructure Asset Register
- Corporate & Strategic Planning
- Policy & Delegations
- Delegate to External Bodies

#### **ENGINEERING SERVICES**

- Water Services
- Waste Water Services
- Urban Storm Water
   Management
- Urban Streetscape and Cleansing
- Parks and Reserves
   Maintenance
- Bore Baths Maintenance and Management
- Urban Flood Mitigation including Levy Bank
- Airfields
- Road & Bridge Construction
- Road& Bridge Maintenance
- Quarries & Construction Material Storage & Supply

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- Plant & Fleet Management
- New Depot Development
- Workshop & Stores
- Emergency Services



- Preparation of Pedestrian Active Movement Plan for Lightning Ridge, Walgett and Collarenebri Townships
- 2017 NSW Local Government— Outright Winner—NSW Best Small Council with the most Outstanding Youth Week Program
- Construction of Grawin Bore
- Commencement of Walgett Library Access Ramp
- Upgrade of flood lights at Walgett No.3 Sporting Oval
- Reconstruction of 10.7km of regional roads
- Formal adoption of Disability Inclusion and Access Plan 2017—2021
- Upgrade of perimeter security fencing at Lightning Ridge Aerodrome
- Completion of Walgett Emergency Water Supply—Drought Funding Cooling Tower
- Upgrade of turf surface at Ricky Walford Oval, Walgett in conjunction with Hogs for the Homeless
- Installation of public toilet at Come—By— Chance
- Commencement of Burren Junction Hall refurbishment
- Completion of Long Jump pit at Ricky Walford Oval, Walgett
- Installation of CCTV System Walgett CBD and mobile unit
- Commencement of Lightning Ridge Airport Upgrade
- Replacement of 4 x Crew Cab Trucks, 1 x single Can Truck and 1 x Mini Excavator



Serious Local Government reform in NSW began with the Integrated Planning and Reform process which was introduced by legislation in 2009. This legislation, provided for Councils throughout NSW to prepare a ten year community strategic plan, a four year works programme and an annual operational plan. These documents were underpinned by a long term (ten year) financial plan, a ten year asset management plan and a four year workforce plan.

In August, 2011, the then Department of Local Government convened its Destination 2036 workshop in Dubbo. Arising from this workshop was the establishment of the Independent Local Government Review Panel (ILGRP) which conducted an extensive consultation process before preparing a final report containing sixty four recommendations in October, 2013 which were finally released for public comment in early 2014.

During the ILGRP consultation process as the result of apparent political intervention, the Panel was tasked with undertaking a more detailed review of what were termed the "Western Rivers Councils" – the Shires of Bourke, Brewarrina, Central Darling and Walgett. Later, this focus was extended by the Panel to include Broken Hill City, the Shires of Cobar, Balranald and Wentworth as well as the Unicorporated Area.

Running parallel to this process has been the Local Government Acts Taskforce which was given the task of reviewing and updating the somewhat dated 1993 Local Government Act and subsidiary legislation.

In 2011 Walgett Shire Council initiated discussions with the neighboring shires of Bourke and Brewarrina and this process led to the formation of what was initially known as the Barwon Darling Co-ordination Group but later became the Outback Shires Alliance (OSA) in response to issues raised by the ILGRP recommendations.

The entire local government reform process has now been embraced by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Office of Local Government's "Fit for the Future" reform which all Councils in NSW were required to submit a case outlining how the believe they will be "Fit for the Future". Eight western division Councils including Walgett Shire have been exempted from this process and instead had to consider the establishment of the 'Far West Initiative'. The concept of the Far West Initiative was to develop a new whole of government service delivery and governance model for all services delivered in Far West NSW. The incorporated Council areas of Balranald, Bourke, Brewarrina, Broken Hill Central Darling, Cobar, Walgett and Wentworth as well as the NSW Unincorporated Area.

The NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet was been leading the Far West Initiative together with the Office of Local Government. The initiative formed part of the Government's response to the Final Report of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel. The Panel recommended systemic and sustainable change in the way the region is administered.



In its response, the NSW Government supported the principle of a new governance model to ensure the needs of these remote communities can be met into the future.

Council's financial position was reviewed by T-Corp in 2012 when it was an FSR rating of "moderate" but a long term outlook of "negative". Council has been investigating how the T-Corp ratings are arrived at with a view to being able to improve its standing to one where it is able to substantiate its long term viability as a stand alone local government undertaking in participating in an appropriate level of resource sharing with neighbouring Councils.

In the 2016/17-2025/26 long term financial plan council meets four of the five T-Corp ratios and would meet the own source operating revenue ratio if the FAGs Grant were to be included in these calculations

As such Walgett Shire Council now meets short, medium and longer term financial viability and ongoing sustainability issue plagued across all the Western Division Council's in the ILGRP's additional report on these council's.

The Far West Initiative Advisory Committee met several times since its inception in October 2015. Various approaches to a new governance model have been canvassed through the committee and the preferred model, a "Joint Organisation on Steroids" is the subject of a consultation paper which was on public exhibition in September/October 2016.

However, the consultation paper fails to address adequately the whole of government service delivery issue that was the second major issue identified as part of the Independent Local Government Reform panel's report on the Far West Councils.

At this point in time only limited input has been made by State Government agencies and there has been next to nothing proposed at a Commonwealth Government Level.

One of the main problems the FWI was supposed to address was economic reforms. The report correctly identifies the higher levels of unemployment in the Indigenous and Youth including Walgett, but the State and Commonwealth Governments continue to pump funds into the welfare system propping up the unemployed negating the need for them to seek employment. Why would anyone go looking for work when the State/Commonwealth Government should be addressing this issue directly instead of duping the general public into thinking that it is the governance of Local Councils that is letting them down.

One of the most identified decisions for the incoming council will be to adequately address the Local Government Reform process in a meaningful way for the lasting benefit of the whole community.

Council is currently awaiting the outcome of the proposed 'Joint Organisation" legislation before deciding what future action it should take in this matter.

Local Government Act Section 428 (4)(a)

A copy of the Council's audited financial reports.

See attachment (A): Draft Financial Statements

Local Government Act Section 428 (1)

A report on the Council's actual performance of its Principal Activities during 2016/2017 against the Actions detailed in the Delivery Program.

See attachment (B): 2016/2017 Principal Activities Delivery Program



Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 Clause 132

Rates and Charges written off by Walgett Shire Council during 2016/2017.

	Description	Amount
Rates - Pension Rebates		\$181,361.65
(S 356 Local Government Act 1993)		
Rates - Donations		\$15,880.75
(S 356 Local Government Act 1993)		
	Total	\$197,242.40



Local Government Act Section 428 (4)(b)

Local Government (General)
Regulation 2005 Clause 217 (1)(a)

Details (including the purpose) of overseas visits undertaken during the year by Councillors, Council Staff or other persons representing the Council (including visits sponsored by other organisations).

No overseas travel was undertaken during 2016/2017 by Councillors, Council Staff or persons representing Council.

Local Government (General)
Regulation Clauses 217 (i)(a1)(i-viii)

A statement of the total amount of money expended during the year on Mayoral fees and Councillor fees, the Council policy on the provision of facilities for use by Councillors and the payment of Councillor's expenses, together with a statement of the total amount of money expended during the year on the provision of such facilities and the payment of such expenses for the 12 month period 1 July 2016 to 30 July 2017.

In addition it is necessary to provide separate details of the total cost of;

- Dedicated office equipment allocated to Councillors
- Telephone calls made by Councillors
- Attendance at conferences and seminars by Councillors
- Training of Councillors and provision of skill development
- Interstate visits by Councillors (including transport, accommodation and out of pocket expenses)
- Overseas visits by Councillors (including transport, accommodation and out of pocket expenses)
- Expenses of any spouse or partner who accompanied a Councillor
- Expenses involved in the provision of childcare for a Councillor or immediate family member

Councillor	Mayoral/Councillor Allowance	Office Expenses	Accommodation & Travel	Interstate Visits	Total for each Councillor
Clr Ian Woodcock Mayor from Sept 16-Current	\$25,144.29	\$1,050.00	\$6,619.98	-	\$32,814.27
Clr David Lane Mayor July 16—Sept 16	\$6,346.59	\$230.29	\$369.34	-	\$6,946.22
Clr Manual Martinez Deputy Mayor Sept 16-Current	\$15,775.86	\$1,071.82	\$640.61	-	\$17,488.29
Clr Jane Keir Deputy Mayor July 16—Sept 16	\$12,602.98	\$1,134.40	\$530.40	-	\$14,267.78
Clr Tanya Cameron Sept 16—Current	\$9,408.30	\$900.00	\$2,173.28	-	\$12,481.58
Clr Kelly Smith Sept 16—Current	\$9,408.30	\$900.00	\$1,668.72	-	\$11,977.02
Clr Michael Taylor	\$11,289.96	\$1050.00	\$138.80	-	\$12,478.76
Clr Bill Murray	\$11,289.96	\$1,080.00	\$2,189.60	-	\$14,559.56
Clr Robbie Turnball Sept 16—Current	\$9,408.30	\$870.00	\$1,682.40	-	\$11,960.70
Clr Lawrence Walford	\$11,289.96	\$1,080.00	\$108.80	-	\$12,478.76
Clr Robert Greenaway July 16—Sept 16	\$2,407.49	\$230.29	\$244.80	-	\$2,882.58
Clr Darryl Cooper July 16—Sept 16	\$2,407.49	\$230.29	-	-	\$2,637.78
Total for each Category	\$126,779.48	\$9,827.09	\$15,726.12	-	\$159,973.30



Council meetings are predominately held in Walgett with one meeting each year held in Lightning Ridge, Collarenebri, Carinda, Rowena and Burren Junction. A total of 11 ordinary meetings were held in 2016/2017.

Councillors also attended committee meetings of which they are a member with Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor Woodcock also attending conferences.

The Mayor is an ex-officio member of all committees.

Councillor	Ordinary Council Meetings	Extra-Ordinary Council Meetings	Conferences	Committee Meetings
Clr Ian Woodcock Mayor—Sept 17	10	0	3	14
Clr Manual Martinez Deputy Mayor—Sept 17	9	0	1	6
Clr Jane Keir Deputy Mayor July—Sept 17	8	0	0	1
Clr Tanya Cameron	8	0	0	0
Clr Michael Taylor	9	0	0	2
Clr Kelly Smith	8	0	0	3
Clr Robbie Turnball	9	0	0	0
Clr Bill Murray	10	0	0	4
Clr Lawrence Walford	9	0	0	0
Councillors July 17 to September 17				
Clr David Lane <i>Mayor July—Sept 17</i>	1	0	0	0
Clr Darryl Cooper	0	0	0	0
Clr Robert Greenaway	1	0	0	0

Local Government (General)
Regulation 2005 Clause 132

Details of each contract awarded by the Council during 2016/2017 (whether as a result of a tender or otherwise), other than;

- a. Employment contracts (that is, contracts of service but not contracts for service), and
- b. Contracts for less than \$150,000.00 or such other amount as may be prescribed by the regulations for the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017

Included is the name of the contractor, the nature of the goods or services supplied by the contractor and the total amount payable to the contractor.

Name of Contractor	Goods/Services	Contract Amount Awarded	Amount Paid in 2016/17
Murray Constructions	Wanouries, Harris & Blacks Bridge Upgrade	\$2,198,360.00	\$18,480.00
Allkerb Pty Ltd	Kerb & Gutter Works in Walgett	\$580,841.00	\$411,519.90
LRE	Lightning Ridge Aerodrome Lighting Upgrade	\$409,405.00	\$438,733.25
JSB Fencing	Lightning Ridge Aerodrome Fencing	\$235,483.00	\$218,048.44



Local Government (General)
Regulation 2005 Clause 217 (1)(a3)

A summary of the amount by the Council during 2016/2017 in relation to legal proceedings taken by or against the Council (including amounts, costs and expenses paid or received by way of court settlements, other than those the terms of which are not to be disclosed) and a summary of the state of progress of each legal proceeding (if it has been finalized) the result, for the 12 monthly period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.

Council incurred \$187,578 in legal costs in 2016/2017, comprising \$153,991 for rates collection which is recoverable as a charge on the rateable property. The balance of \$33,587 involved general legal costs for such matters as contract preparation, purchase of property and internal process investigation.



Local Government Act Section 67(3)
Local Government (General) Regulation Clause 217 (1)(a4)

Details of a summary of resolutions made during 2016/2017 under Section 67 concerning work carried out on private land and details or summary of such works if the cost of the work has been fully or partly subsidised by the Council, together with a statement of the total amount by which the Council has subsidised any such work during 2016/2017.

Council received \$5,312 (incl. GST) for private works carried out in 2016/2017, with an expenditure of \$1,837 (incl. GST).

Local Government (General)
Regulation 2005 Clause 217 (1)(a5)

The total amount contributed or otherwise granted under Section 356.

Council contributed a total of \$423,710.75 under Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993. The expenditure is listed in the table below;

Organisation	Donation
Glengarry Grawin Sheepyards Miners Association	\$30,510.00
Lightning Ridge Pool Complex	\$358,750.0
Lightning Ridge Jewellery Design Award	\$3,500.00
Fees & Charges Rebates, Local Churches	\$15,880.75
Barwon Group CWA Medical Scholarship Scheme	\$3,270.00
Clr Geoffrey 'Dick' Colless Scholarship	\$11,800.00
Total	\$423,710.75

Council also contributed a further \$7,950.00 of grants under its Community Assistance Scheme to another 7 organisations listed below;

Organisation	Donation
Burren Junction P & C Association	\$500.00
Lightning Ridge Tourism Association	\$2,000.00
Lightning Ridge Pony Club	\$1,000.00
Lightning Ridge Gun Club	\$2,000.00
Lightning Ridge Community Radio	\$1,100.00
Lightning Ridge Arts & Crafts	\$550.00
David Bowie Tribute Committee	\$500.00
Other Donations	
Collarenebri Lions Club	\$150.00
Cricket NSW	\$150.00
Total	\$7,950.00

Local Government (General) Regulation Clause 217 (1)(a6)

A statement of all external bodies (such as County Councils) that during 2016/2017 exercised functions delegated by the Council.

Castlereagh Macquarie County Council has been delegated the responsibility for the management of noxious weeds within the Walgett Shire Council Local Government Area. Walgett Shire Council contributed \$101,309 (ex GST) to the County Council for its services.

Local Government (General)
Regulation 2005 Clause 217 (1)(a7)

A statement of all companies in which the Council (whether alone or in conjunction with other Councils) held a controlling interest during 2016/2017.

Walgett Shire Council held no controlling interest in any company during 2016/2017.



Local Government (General)
Regulation 2005 Clause 217 (1)(a8)

A statement of all corporations partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies to which the Council participated during 2016/2017.

Council was involved in the following joint ventures:

- Big Sky Libraries—Cooperative Library Service
- Statewide Mutual Insurance Group
- Northwest Weight of Loads Group
- Rural Fire Service NSW
- Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC)
- Namoi Local Government Group (NLGG)
- Hunter Councils Inc. Regional Procurement Initiative
- Western Division and "C" Division of NSW Shire Association
- Netwaste
- Outback Shires Alliance
- Castlereagh Macquarie County Council
- Walgett Local Emergency Management Committee
- Lower Macquarie Water Utilities Alliance—Water Management

Local Government (General)
Regulation 2005 Clause 217 (1)(a9)

A statement of the activities undertaken by the Council during 2016/2017 to implement its Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan.

Activities undertaken during the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 to ensure Council continues to apply the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity legislation;

- Continual review of Job Descriptions, Policies and Induction programs
- Monitoring of advertisements and selection criteria by General Manager to ensure advertising is non-discriminatory
- School to Work Programs to assist student transition into the workforce
- Provide assistance to employees and supervisors regarding EEO issues and grievances through Council's Human Resources Manager
- Continuation of Council's Employee Assistance Program through Converge International
- Engagement of professionals to provide counselling, support and/or mediation to staff if required
- Creation of apprentice and trainee opportunities to provide career paths in Local Government.

Local Government (General)
Regulation Clause 217 (b)
Clause 217 (1)(b)(i-iv)
Clause 217 (1)(c)
And Clause 217 (1)(c)(i-iv)

A statement of the number of Senior Staff employed by the Council during 2016/2017, together with a statement of the total amount of money payable in respect of the employment of Senior Staff, including money payable for salary, for the provision of fringe benefits and for all other on-costs connected with their employment.

Council employs three (3) senior staff as defined under the requirements of the Local Government Act with these being the General Manager, the Chief Financial Officer and the Director of Engineering/Technical Services.

The total amount spent on employing these senior staff was \$698,230.00. This amount includes salaries, fringe benefits tax, private use of a Council vehicle and employer's superannuation contributions.

Senior staff positions and salary;

Position	Salary	House Rent (non-cash)	Motor Vehicle (non-cash)	Other	Superannu- ation	Fringe Benefits Tax	Total
General Manager	\$170,413.00	\$13,780.00	\$22,582.00	\$963.00	\$16,189.00	\$12,902.00	\$236,829.00
Senior Staff	\$376,791.00	\$16,515.00	\$21,280.00	Nil	\$29,116.00	\$17,699.00	\$461,401.00

Local Government Act Section 428A (1)

#### State of the Environment Report

A report as to the State of the Environment in the area, and in particular in relation to the following environment sectors;

- (i) Land
- (ii) Air
- (iii) Water
- (iv) Biodiversity
- (v) Waste
- (vi) Noise
- (vii) Aboriginal Heritage
- (viii) Non-Aboriginal Heritage

With particular reference, with regard to each such environmental sector to;

- (ix) Management plans relating to the environment
- (x) Speed Council projects relating to the environment
- (xi) The environment impact of Council activities

See attachment (C): Draft 2017 State of the Environment Report



with Special Variations Approved Conditions

Local Government Act Section 508 (2) and Section 508A

No applications for Special Rate Variations were made by Walgett Shire Council for the 2016/2017 financial year.



Local Government (General)
Regulation 2005 Clause 217 (1)(f)
And Companion Animal Guidelines

Statement on activities relating to enforcing and ensuring compliance with the Companion Animals Act and Regulations (including information on pound data, data relating to dog attached, funding spent on companion animal management and activities, community education programs, strategies to promote the de-sexing of dogs and cats, strategies to comply with Section 64 to seek alternatives to euthanasia for unclaimed animals, off leash areas provided by Council area and detailed financial information on the use of companion animals fund money).

#### Companion Animals Act and Regulation

Council lodges an annual return with the Department of Local Government which shows the numbers of impounded companion animals. Key aspects of this year's return include:

- 308 dogs and 109 cats were seized, with 37 dogs and 0 cats returned to their owners.
- 133 dogs and 0 cats were surrendered
- 28 dogs were released to their owners and 248 were re-homed
- 16 cats were released to their owners and 77 were re-homed
- 27 dogs and 183 cats were euthanased

Council spent \$185,966 on companion animal management related activities during 2016/2017, including the employment of a Regulatory Officer. Council participated in the RSPCA Companion Animal Welfare Scheme (CAWS) again, which was very well received and attended. The scheme includes a de-sexing and micro-chipping program for dogs.

The vast majority of companion animals surrendered to, or seized by, Council were rehomed by volunteers from Riverina Rescue who undertook regular visits to the Walgett pound to retrieve and re-home unclaimed dogs.

Council did not access any money from the Companion Animals Fund during the period.



Public Access Act 2009

**Government Information (Public Access) Act** 2009 S125 (1)

Authorised proactive release of Government Information.

An agency must, at intervals of not more than 12 months, review its program for the release of Government Information to identify the kinds of Government Information held by the agency that should in the public interest be made publicly available without imposing unreasonable additional costs on the agency.

Walgett Shire Council's program for proactive release of information involves;

- Progression of the systems and mechanisms utilised by the organisation to increase the effective access by members of the public to information that they have a right to view, download or copy (where applicable)
- Working towards ensuing all government information is available to the public on the Council website
- Ensuring that if information is not available on the Council website that it may be accessed by other means
- Reviewing the types of information requested via Formal Access applications and via customer contact with Council's Customer Service Centre and deciding if the information should be made readily available to all members of the public.

For the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, Council received 1 Formal Application of which access in full was granted.

# **Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979**

Planning agreements under the Environmental Planning Assessment Act 1979

Details of compliance with and effect of planning agreements in force during the year.

No planning agreements were entered into by Council during 2016/2017.

A report on the condition of public works (including public buildings, public roads and water, sewerage and drainage works) under the control of the Council as at the end of 2016/2017 together with;

- a. An estimate (at current values) of the amount of money required to bring the works up to a satisfactory standard
- b. An estimate (at currents values) of the annual expense of maintaining the works at that standard and
- c. The Council's program of maintenance for that year in respect of the works.

#### **Public Buildings**

Council owned or controlled buildings have been fully assessed in relation to the funding required to bring them up to a satisfactory standard. Comprehensive building condition reports are being prepared.

#### **Public Roads**

Council maintains a network of 2375km local and regional roads, which are made up of regional (558km), local (1817km) and urban (86km) roads. There are 426.66km of classified roads, which Council maintains on behalf of the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS). The urban network consists of 25.70 km of footpath and 77km of sealed roads. The length of sealed and unsealed roads in the Shire is 447km and 1928km respectively. Council maintains 47 concrete bridges, 4 timber bridges, 10 box culverts and 1 pipe culvert.

Council's maintenance programme for 2016/2017 totalled \$2.52million at an average cost of \$1,650 per kilometre.

The cost of improvement works estimated to bring the road assets to a satisfactory condition is \$5.11 million. Kerb and gutters are considered to be in a satisfactory condition and it is estimated that it will cost \$3.87m per annum to maintain the roads in satisfactory condition.

The roads assets replacement value and written down value at 30 June 2017 was;

Assets	Replacement Value	Written Down Value
Roads	\$184,536,279	\$138,015,904
Footpaths	\$4,800,755	\$2,470,957
Bridges and Culverts	\$37,207,966	\$19,370,000

A report on the bush fire hazard reduction activities of the Council during 2016/2017 that include activities carried out under the Bush Fire Management Plan approved under the Rural Fires Act 1997.

#### Bushfire hazard reduction programs

The Bush Fire Management Committee held two meetings during 2016/2017. At these meetings, Section 52 plan, land management and reports from various agencies were discussed. Council also attended 4 Service Level Agreement meetings during 2016/2017.

The NSW Rural Fire Service provides up to \$35,000 to assist Council with road side vegetation management and hazard reduction through vegetation slashing.

In 2016/2017 a total of \$31,328.00 was expended in relation to Bushfire Hazard Reduction Programs with the reduced amount primarily resulting from reduced vegetation growth during the current drought conditions.

	2016/2017 Fire Hazard Reduction Works	
Location		Total
Burren Junction		\$7,192.00
Collarenebri		\$3,038.00
Carinda		\$5,360.00
Lightning Ridge		Nil
Rowena		\$1,488.00
Walgett		\$12,010.00
Shire Roads Slashing		\$2,240.00
Rur	ral Fire Service Contribution	\$31,328.00



Economic Development activities 2016/2017:

#### **Business Advisory Dinner**

Tafe NSW in conjunction with the Walgett Shire Council hosted the event on the 16/3/2017. The evening informed businesses and organisations within the region about Apprenticeships, Employment Services, School to Work programs, Training Opportunities, Work for the Dole, NSW Government Procurement and E-tendering Processes. 50 people travelled from Carinda, Collarenebri, Lightning Ridge and Walgett to attend. Feedback was very positive and it proved to be a great opportunity for businesses to network.

#### **Councils Facebook Page**

The official Walgett Shire Council Facebook page went live on January 12 2017. Administrator, Peta Schiller updates content on a regular basis which includes job vacancies, events and media releases associated with the Walgett Shire. Posts are shared with numerous other Facebook pages including the Walgett Area Noticeboard, Collarenebri Swap Sell Buy, Lightning Ridge Buy Sell Swap Wanted, Love the Life we Live and 2WEB to gain maximum exposure. 58 posts from January 2017 – June 2017 received a total of 78,268 views.

#### Hogs for the Homeless, No. 1 Oval Project.

Initiated by the charity "Hogs for the Homeless" and coordinated by Walgett Shire Council, the No.1 Oval at Walgett was re-turfed and renamed the Ricky Walford Oval on the 22/02/2017. The project was valued at approximately \$150,000 and will benefit all users of the sportsground. It was supported by numerous businesses, organisations, sponsors and residents. Council revised its policy for the use of all Sporting Fields within the Shire.

#### **Meet & Greet Nights**

Each year these evenings offer newcomers to the region a chance to meet with local business owners, community groups and government representatives.

Walgett: On the 8/2/2017 50 people attended the event at the Historical Museum.

Lightning Ridge: 25 guests were received at the Visitor Information Centre on the 13/2/2017.

Collarenebri: The Collarenebri Club hosted an event on 15/2/2017 for 40 guests.

Welcome Packs were provided to any new people to the district. Over 30 people subscribed to receive the online Weekly Bulletin.

#### 2016 Walgett Bulldust to Bitumen Festival

Held from July 30 to August 7 the 2016 Walgett Bulldust to Bitumen Festival was a great success.

A nine day celebration consisting of sixteen activities, eleven workshops and three art exhibitions.

Participation rates for the majority of the workshops exceeded all expectations. Six new activities and seven new workshops were introduced to the itinerary. Neworking with the local businesses, schools, community and sporting groups has proved to be very successful, particularly in relation to the Walgett Community College and Walgett Tafe Campus.



Economic Development activities 2016/2017 Cont'd:

#### **Walgett Outdoor Markets**

Quarterly Markets were held at Apex Park on the 17/9/2016, 3/12/2016, 12/3/2017 and the 18/6/2017. Sites are free but all Stall Holders must have their own Public Liability Insurance. The Markets tend to attract between 10 to 20 Stalls – Wet weather has an impact on attendance. Regular vendors travelling from Carinda, Coonamble, Lightning Ridge, Moree, Narrabri and Walgett.

#### **Walgett Shire Newsletters**

Newsletters continue to be distributed throughout the Walgett Shire on a quarterly basis. All Departments are required to provide content for the Newsletter. 3000 x copies are printed and mailed to all residents within the region. The document is uploaded to the Council website, online Weekly Bulletin and Facebook page.

### Collarenebri and Walgett - Work for the Dole Program

In early 2017, Council entered into an agreement with Sureway and Best Employment to provide work experience programs for Collarenebri and Walgett. Council were informed by Sureway that there were ample participants in both locations. Council insisted on screening all applicants before works commenced. Unfortunately, Best Employment was unable to provide suitable Work for the Dole participants and the agreement was terminated before the project could begin.

#### **Community Interaction**

Economic Development Officer, Peta Schiller has arranged or been involved with a wide range of forums, events, and meetings during the 2016/2017 period including:

- A variety of Community Consultations.
- Collarenebri and Walgett Christmas Street Parties.
- Dollar for Dollar Native Fish Stocking Program.
- Meetings to discuss infrastructure projects with Engineering and Planning Departments.

## **Cultural and Linguistic Promotions**

Details of programs undertaken by the Council during 2016/2017 to promote services and access for people with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Culture and diversity is considered strength of our Local Government Area and Council continues to focus on these strengths in delivery of initiatives, celebrations, awareness and recognition to our residents from all backgrounds. The 2016/2017 year has again seen many events and opportunities well attended with community members engaged in meaningful ways. Council demonstrates an understanding of the issues faced by minority and marginalised groups in regards to access and inclusion and endeavours to include ALL residents in programs and promotional events and initiatives. Council's community development department, libraries and youth development staff again implemented a best practice delivery model in allowing opportunities for services and people to have input into events and decisions that affect them with the forming of "working groups" for each specific events/ program across the Shire.

Programs and initiatives aligned with Councils overarching *Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027* (CSP) and the suite of strategies and plans underpinning the CSP.

Harmony Day celebrations across three communities again coincided with the United Nations International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination and a day of cultural respect for all who call Australia home. Many local people across all communities participated in the events which promoted living in Harmony and working together for common goals. Hundreds of people engaged at events staged in all three communities across the Shire.

Promotion of events continues to be challenging due to the demographics of our Shire and distances between communities. Our teams utilise all forms of media, regular email updates and bulletins and Councils Web Page. With our Council playing a pivotal role in most things "community focused" we also rely on our extensive email lists to promote to the broader community.

The 2017 NAIDOC week was celebrated and acknowledged in the Walgett Shire recently with the local community NAIDOC working group committees planning events and recognition ceremonies throughout the Shire. This year's Theme: "Our Languages Matter" was addressed in events offered throughout the Shire with performers and guest speakers recognising the importance, significance and revival of Aboriginal languages across our communities

Council and its community development staff placed an emphasis on inclusion of all residents in delivery of the above programs and also supported, planned and delivered in partnership, numerous other awareness, and promotional, interventional, educational and diversionary programs to community.

Council work in collaboration to deliver to community and have again received outstanding participation numbers and engagement of our residents during the year.

Programs and events delivered successfully throughout the year include, Seniors Week Events, International Women's Day, Youth Week, NAIDOC Week International Harmony Day events an all three larger communities. Statistically information gathered indicates a marked increase again in attendance at all events in 2017 by community members, services and agencies.



A statement of the Human Resource activities undertaken by Council during 2016/2017.

The major human resource related activities undertaken within the Organisation during the 2016/2017 period included:

- Industrial and Employee Relations
- Recruitment, Selection and Induction
- School to Work Program
- Consultative Committee Administration
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Training and Development Programs
- Salary Administration and Job Evaluation
- Work Health and Safety
- Workers Compensation, Injury Management and Rehabilitation

#### Workforce Health and Safety

The major Work Health and Safety related activates undertaken within the organisation between 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 included:

- Reviewed and updates a number of WH& S policies and manuals including, WH&S Safety Manual.
   Emergency Management Policy, Drug & Alcohol Policy, First Aid Policy and WH&S Committee Constitution
- Organised and facilitated 'Skin Patrol' for administration of flu shots and skin examinations
- Conducted inspections at various Council owned and maintained properties
- Facilitated First Aid Training Course
- Applied successfully for Grave Shoring Grant through StateCover Ltd
- Identified, actioned and resolved various 'in-house' risks

#### Workers Compensation, Injury Management and Rehabilitation

The Work Health and Safety Officer and Rehabilitation Coordinator, in conjunction with the Human Resources Manager, provides advice, guidance and support to managers, supervisors and employees to help prevent injury or illness related to work activities. Where injury or illness did occur assistance was given to assist in a timely and safe return to pre-injury duties.

Appropriate controls were actioned to return injured employees to the workplace and to prevent further injury.

Where injury resulted in a claim for Workers Compensation the claims were proactively managed in line with Council's obligations under the legislation.

Medical providers contributed to the management of workplace injuries and illness through the provision of expert medical advice and, pre-employment health assessments.

#### **Industrial Relations**

Support and guidance was provided to managers, supervisors and employees during performance management, disciplinary and industrial matters to ensure procedural fairness and effective outcomes were achieved. Advice and guidance was provided to managers, supervisors and employees in regard to the Local Government (State) Award and legislation surrounding employment.

#### **Health and Safety Committee**

The Health and Safety Committee is representative of the broader workforce and considers issues relating to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. The Committee met on (eight) 8 occasions during the 2016/2017 financial year.

#### **Consultative Committee**

The Consultative Committee is representative of the broader workforce and considers issues relating to the Local Government (State) Award 2010. The Committee met on two (2) occasions during the 2016/2017 financial year.

#### Recruitment, Selection and Induction

The turnover rate for the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 was 19% using the 'all in approach', down by 11% from the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016. Council continues to implement flexible working conditions, training and development opportunities, corporate uniform, salary packaging and subsidised housing rental to support the recruitment, retention and development of suitable staff.

Recruitment activity for the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 totalled 39 new appointments. Council continues to recruit, develop and train employees engaged through the trainees and apprenticeship employment options. Council has three (3) trainees completing qualifications in Business Administration, Accounting, Plant Operator and Horticulture and two (2) apprentice mechanics.

In managing recruitment, selection and induction processes, Council was cognizant of the application of fair and equitable processes and maintenance of the principles of merit and Equal Employment Opportunity.

#### School to Work Program

Walgett Shire Council continued the School to Work program in partnership with Walgett Community College, Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge High Schools. This program was introduced to assist students in choosing a career path within Local Government. Students are assigned to a 'buddy' to assist them whilst at work and are offered training and development to improve their skills. Four (4) students participated in the program for the 2016/2017 financial year.

#### **Training Programs**

Council continues to encourage employees to participate in training and development. During the period 2016/2017 Council expended \$171,062.52 including outdoor staff wages costs on training, accommodation, travel and registration expenses. An additional amount of \$8,943.28 was expended on conference attendance and travel to assist staff to improve their skills and remain up to date with legislative requirements.



Details of programs undertaken by the Council during 2016/2017 to develop and promote services and programs that provide for the needs of children.

Council community and youth are extremely happy with the outcomes of another year of developing, engaging and creating leadership opportunities for our youth and young people.

The Youth Centres consistently record stable attendance numbers across the Shire. Vacation Care programs which are designed by the young people record outstanding participation in all centres recording on average of 45 young people each day at the Vacation Care programs.

Diversionary and engaging opportunities remains a strong focus on our agenda as our youth development team continue to plan, initiate and deliver services to children and youth across our Shire.

Youth Development staff continues working towards furthering their qualifications which in turn will consistently improve service delivery. The National Quality Framework legislative guidelines for "services to young people" are in place at all centres and is adhered too, supported by each centres quality improvement plans in place ensuring our service delivery to children and youth is of a high standard.

Councils Youth Week 2017 program has again, for an amazing eleventh consecutive year been recognised as the bench mark and best practise in delivery of youth week programs across NSW being nominated as finalists in two categories of NSW Local Government Youth Week Awards 2017.

The categories included, NSW Best Small Council with the most outstanding youth week program, Council with the most on-going commitment to Youth Week NSW 2017. Council were awarded outright winner of

#### Best Small Council with the most outstanding Youth Week program in 2017.

The programs across the three larger communities of Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri featured some amazing opportunities for our youth and young people and include, Youth and Community Connect Festivals, featuring live band and performers, artists, performers, Aboriginal Art and workshops, fitness workshops, forums, excursions, sexual health info sessions.

Other inclusive and successful initiatives offered to our young people included cooking and healthy eating workshops all supported by the visiting Emmanuel Team from Sydney with the traditional drumming performances, dance and Tae Kwon Do workshops and demonstrations, arts and face painting.

A highlight for the year was the Youth Council conversations with local Councillors in which youth put forward issues affecting them and Councillors listened to the young people's concerns and set out actioning their requests.

Our partnership with Walgett PCYC continues to prove invaluable with the service collaboration a natural succession plan for young people transitioning from primary school to high school ages. Our service supports and works closely with our young leaders through PCYC programs and the Walgett Shire Youth Council

Many good things have been achieved by the children and young people of our Shire during 2017 and our teams can measure success by feedback from young people and statistical information through attendance at programs offered, reduction in crime statistics and the general appearance of our communities.

The School 2 Work Program currently has 6 young people participating and more are keen to trial this initiative. Partnerships with schools, services local and regional sees our teams well placed to continue to engage, empower and support young people across our Shire.







The Shire Libraries in both Lightning Ridge and Walgett along with deposit stations in other villages have witnessed a significant increase in patronage and membership taken place during the year.

Our services continue to provide the "hub" for community programs and deliver a range of programs from the Library, supporting the work of the community development team and utilizing the space that the library has to offer.

The recent successful construction of the access ramp at the Walgett Library has proven invaluable to many members who are wheel chair/ mobility scooter bound.

Borrowing and usage of our updated resources and services have proven to be welcomed by community. Beautification development at both centres has improved appearance and offered community and visitors a more welcoming hub for information gathering, utilization of services and social interaction.

Staff have continued to model previous years and deliver many exciting workshops and exhibitions facilitated and hosted at the venues.

The "Big Sky" regional library partnership continues to gain momentum with improved technical services available to patrons and state of the art resources available, promoting technology awareness through Borrow Box to community members helping them download EBooks, E-Magazines and E-Audio which are available through membership from our webpage

Council's partnerships with local services strengthened this year with Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service staging a regular session for 0-5 year olds at the Library. Our teams outreach programs have sustained and continued over the past year providing a valuable link for people in remote areas and maintaining a positive connection to their Library.

The Library services staff work together with Councils community and youth development teams demonstrating an essential link in addressing community issues and delivery information, supporting events, promoting early literacy needs, and partnering and utilizing resources for specific events and acknowledgment opportunities.

During NAIDOC Week 2017 both libraries promoted and gave away books on Aboriginal Australia, story books and early literacy resources to community.

Libraries in both communities report high numbers of young people frequenting the services and promote this to schools and services working with young people that the Libraries are a space they are welcome to attend.

National literacy and educational events are offered to community through the Library services and external groups are encouraged to seek support of the Library staff in relation to space for workshops and information The Knitters and coffee club is well attended by residents and continues to prove a social activity and inclusive program to all.

Other programs which include "Homebound Initiative" – connecting locals with library services is proving a success with those with illness unable to get to town and visit their Libraries. The Walgett Art Group continues to grow in numbers with many members bringing along friends and relatives to engage in the program.

The Library teams support for the Bulldust to Bitumen has again received good outcomes with initiatives offered including Wine with Words, Pottery Class, Stencil & Stitch, Photography competition, Waste to Art competition, Move and Groove for babies, Photography workshop with Sarah Dugan – with participant growth in all workshops and competitions.



#### Health and Wellbeing

Health and Well being is paramount to our residents and Council continues to demonstrate a commitment to these areas of need. Our services to community are focused on a range of areas and we support the intervention aspect of promotion in a bid to drive, support and encourage interventional programs, addressing issues before the onset in relation to drug awareness, sexual health and well being, social, physical and emotional well being programs and initiatives.

Council supports the proactive approach to many areas of heath and awareness campaigns and works closely with services to play a key support role. We work with local and regional services, agencies and organisations supporting, partnering and promoting the wellbeing of our residents within our communities Shire.

Our teams ,Community, Youth, Aboriginal affairs and Library partner with local health , family support, domestic violence, educational, sporting and law and order services across the Shire. Council staff presence on both Walgett and Lightning Ridge Interagency groups ensure we are well informed of issues and gaps and needs across community. Council works with both Community Drug Action Teams in Walgett and Lightning Ridge. Areas of our services to youth and young people take a underlying message of safe and healthy lifestyles, the promotion of this and initiatives developed to create and deliver awareness to these areas.

The development this year of our first ever *Walgett Shire Disability Inclusion and Access Plan 2017-2021* is welcomed by Council and community alike and will play an important role in identification, improvements in areas of access and inclusion for people with disabilities and their carers.

It is a *Plan* we trust will be utilized by services addressing these needs within our Shire and a reference tool in measuring outcomes and delivery of initiatives implemented to the broader community. The consultation process was inclusive to many and the Plan is relevant and reflective of what community said, wanted and expressed concerns about across the Shire. Council and our Youth Council advocated strongly on Violence and Bullying with the commitment and implementation of the "One Million Stars" project to address ending bullying and violence

The initiative has seen many "Star Weave Workshops" take place around the Shire with community groups, schools and individuals participating and recognizing the need to end violence and bullying across our communities.

Involvement from our libraries, youth centers, knitters groups, service providers and regular morning tea "star weaves" resulted in over 11,000 stars being weaved, making a point that we, as a community are saying, "No to Bullying and Violence". The *One Million Stars to End Violence* initiative was a love and peace filled community project with the Walgett Shire seeking to reach a target of 10,000 stars weaved by people, community groups and others to go towards a huge sculpture to be installed at the *Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Game*.

During the year we have delivered in partnership numerous "stand alone" events targeting Domestic Violence, Child Protection, Mental Health, youth employment ethics and readiness, World Aids Awareness Events, Sexual, Emotional and Social Health and Wellbeing, Cultural harmony programs and social inclusion initiatives. Council also implemented special events for International Women's Day, Youth Week Program, Children's Week, Grandparents Day, Seniors Weeks, Carers Week, Suicide Prevention and continues to sustain our support of the health and well being of our residents.

# **Access and Equity**

A report on the Council's performance in relation to access and equity to meet residents needs outlined in Council's Delivery Program undertaken in 2016/2017.

Council recognises the importance to provide all residents with equal access and equity opportunities and activities that meet residents' needs and expectations. Council is committed to be recognised as a listening council and connected to its residents. Council meets these needs by;

- Formally adopting a Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Consulting and communicating decisions effectively through Council's website, media releases and information flow to Precinct Committees and Community Working Parties
- Providing opportunities for the public to address agenda items at Council meetings
- Strengthening and maintaining the community's involvement in the delivery of services through a transparent process of networking and partnerships
- A consultation framework that promotes and values engagement with all community sectors
- Providing opportunities for residents to have input into programs and initiatives facilitated by the youth and community development team
- Ongoing audit and assessment of Council facilities

# Category 1 Business Activities & Statement

A list of the Category 1 Business activities of the Council.

Council's significant business activities are as follows:

• Category 1 (annual sales turnover \$2 million and above)

Walgett Shire Council does not have any Category 1 Business Activities.

A statement of expenses, revenues and assets in relation to each Category 1 business activity.

Council does not have any Category 1 business activities.



## Category 2 Business Activities

Local Government (General)

Regulation 2005

Clause 217 (1)(d)(iii)

A list of the Category 2 business activities of the Council.

The following business activities have been identified as Category 2 Businesses (annual sales turnover less than \$2 million):

Council has two (2) business activities declared as Category 2 business activities with total annual
operating revenue less than \$2 million. These businesses units are Walgett Shire Water Services and
Walgett Shire Sewerage Services as contained Special Purpose Financial Report attached to the Annual report.

A summary of the progress of the Council in implementing the principals of Competitive Neutrality.

The disclosure requirements are reflected in Council's pricing and financial reporting systems and include taxation equivalents, Council subsidies, rate of return on investments in business units and dividends paid.

### Competitive Neutrality Pricing Requirements

A statement as to whether the Competitive Neutrality requirements have or have not been applied to each Category 1 business activity of the Council.

Council does not have any Category 1 Business Activities.

### Complaint Handling Mechanism for Competitive Neutrality

A statement regarding the establishment of a complaints handling mechanism for Competitive Neutrality complaints, and as to the manner in which the Council publicises and makes the mechanism known to the public.

In July 2016 Council implemented a new Customer Action Request system called EnviroCAR. This online service request system allows members of the public and also Council staff to lodge requests/complaints for a variety of service needs such as road maintenance, animals, parks and gardens, building enquiries, rates etc.

With EnviroCAR implemented a new streamline process is now in place with comprehensive workflow and reporting capabilities, customer notifications via SMS, e-mail or letter and integration into Councils existing corporate systems.

Members of the public can access this system by navigating to Councils website at www.walgett.nsw.gov.au and selecting Customer Request from the quick link button on the right hand side of the website or alternatively you can call Council on (02) 6828 1399 and submit one over the telephone.

Council has adopted a Complaints Management Policy which would also respond to complaints in relation to Competitive Neutrality.

### Summary of Competitive Neutrality Complaints

A summary of Competitive Neutrality that have been made against the Council during the year (including details of the number of complaints received and the subject matter or nature of the complaints) and a statement as to the outcome of those complaints (including details as to the number of complaints disposed of during the year and the number still outstanding at the end of the year).

No complaints in relation to Competitive Neutrality have been made against the Council in 2016/2017.



The annual report of each public sector agency must include;

- a. A statement of the action taken by the agency in complying with the requirements of the Act;
- Council has adopted an Internal Reporting Policy under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1994. The Policy details the actions and processes for making a disclosure under this legislation
- b. Statistical details of any review conducted by or on behalf of the agency under Part 5;
- No reviews were undertaken by Council under Part 5 of the Act.