



Walgett Shire Council

2014/2015 Annual Report





Mayor David Lane OAM

Foreword



In last year's report, Bill Murray expressed his concern at the ongoing drought and its severe impact across all sectors of the shire. It is with regret that I have to repeat this sentiment as we near the end of a third year of the most prolonged drought in recorded history. Council is continuing to work with other levels of government to develop and implement both short and longer term responses to assist the community during this period.

Council has received \$1.5m in funding to provide stimulus to the local economy through infrastructure projects that support local businesses and employment. A number of projects that meet program criteria are currently being developed.

The Council's capital works program included a number of smaller projects with a further 3.8km of the Walgett Levee being refurbished at a cost of \$1,363 560.00. A total of 8.3km of resealing and rehabilitation on sections of Merrywinebone, Carinda, Gundabloui and Gingie roads has been completed.

The Council has continued to be concerned at the deterioration in education standards at the Walgett High School and has adopted a position of pro-active engagement with the Minister and Education Department Secretary to develop sustainable solutions.

Hudson Pear continues to pose an immediate and long term threat to our agricultural sector with Council also adopting a pro-active approach to this issue. Grant funding applications have been successful and Council continues to work with landholders and CMCC on this issue.

Council continued to adopt a proactive position in relation to the Local Government Reform process working with neighbouring and regional councils to advocate for structures and outcomes that reflect community preference and needs.

The Council continues to work with the community, other levels of government and agencies through a range of community services initiatives and projects. In particular Council continues to deliver excellent services to youth across the shire culminating in again being awarded the 'Best Small Council' Youth Week Award.

David Lane
Mayor

Statutory Annual Report

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Your Council



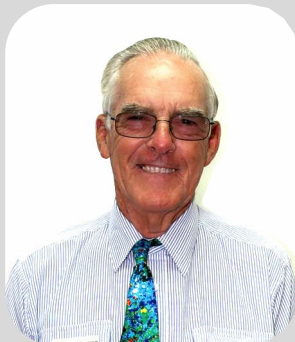
Mayor
David Lane OAM
LIGHTNING RIDGE



Deputy Mayor
Jane Keir OAM
COME BY CHANCE



Councillor
Darryl Cooper
WALGETT



Councillor
Robert Greenaway
ROWENA



Councillor
Bill (Gustavus) Murray
WALGETT



Councillor
Manuel Martinez
LIGHTNING RIDGE



Councillor
Michael Taylor
LIGHTNING RIDGE



Councillor
Ian Woodcock OAM
LIGHTNING RIDGE



Councillor
Lawrence Walford
LIGHTNING RIDGE

Council Senior Management



General Manager
Don Ramsland



Director Corporate Services
Stephen Holland



Director Engineering Services
Raju Ranjit



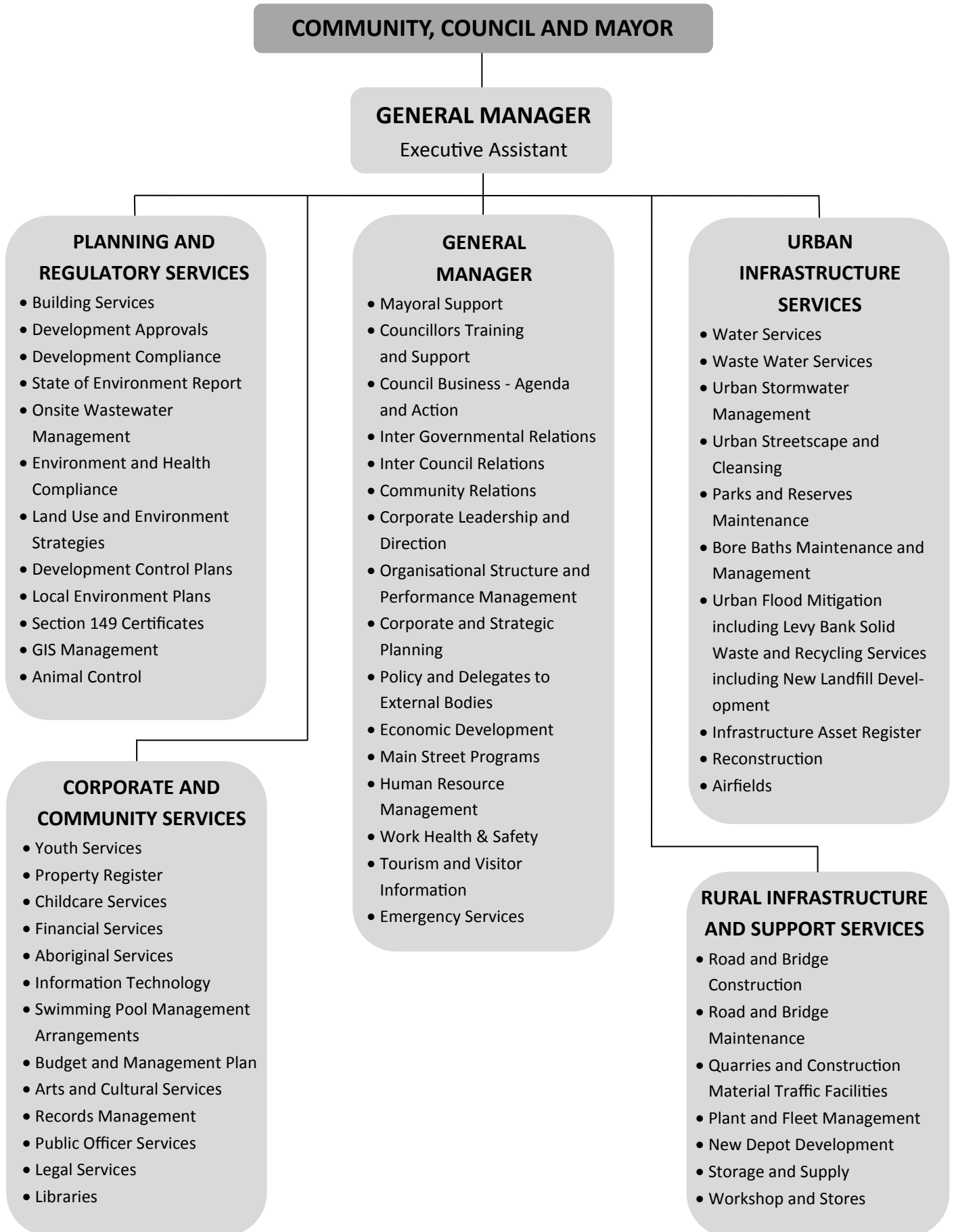
Director Planning &
Regulatory Services
Matthew Goodwin



Acting Director Urban
Infrastructure Services
Prafulla KC



Council Organisational Chart





Snapshot of Significant Achievements

- Refurbishment of the Jockey Amenities Block at the Walgett Showground and Racecourse
- Refurbishment of the Jockey Amenities Block at Lightning Ridge Racecourse
- Completion of Morilla Street improvement and Opal /Pandora Street Intersection upgrade in Lightning Ridge
- Construction of Cumborah Hall completed
- 200m of renewed footpaths in Walgett
- Continued partnership with Riverina Rescue, resulted in an increasing numbers of dogs and cats being rehomed
- Reconstruction and sealing of 4km on Gundabloui Road (RR426)
- Stage 4 of the Walgett Levee Rehabilitation work completed and Stage 5 commenced
- Flood Lighting Upgrades at Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge Sporting Ovals
- Installation of underground automatic sprinkler systems at No 2 & 3 Sporting Ovals Walgett
- Commencement of new Water Supply System in Collarenebri
- Commissioning of the new Walgett Water Treatment Plant
- Burren Junction, Collarenebri and Walgett 'RV Friendly Towns' approved by CMCA (Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia)
- NSW Local Government Youth Week Award Winners—*Best Small Council - Most Outstanding Youth Week Program 2015*



Local Government Reform

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 Unincorporated 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 Baron 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 Office of Local Government’s “fit for the Future” reform which all Councils in NSW were required to submit a case outlining how they believe they will be “Fit for the Future”. Eight western division Councils including Walgett Shire have been exempted from this process and will instead have to consider the establishment of the Far West Initiative. The purpose of the Far West Initiative is to develop a new whole of government service delivery and governance model for all services delivered in Far West NSW. The incorporates the 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 is leading the Far West Initiative together with the office of Local Government. The initiative forms 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.



Local Government Reform Cont'd

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.

Later this year Council will be undertaking an ongoing public consultation process with the whole of the Shire's community aimed at keeping the community well informed as the reform process enters the next crucial stage of determining whether the proposed "Far West Initiative" will retain local Councils as they are today, see an expanded local Council model/role in delivering/facilitating state/federal services on a large central authority all of which will obviously have far reaching impacts not only at a Council level but an individual ratepayer level as well.

Financial Information

Local Government Act Section 428 (4)(a)

A copy of the Council's audited financial reports.

Walgett Shire Council's Financial Statements for the financial year ending 30 June 2015 were prepared in accordance with section 413{2}(c) of the Local Government Act 1993, the Office of Local Government's (OLG) Code of Accounting Practice and the Australian Accounting Standards.

The final statements were audited by Council's auditors, Luka Group and were deemed to be materially correct.

The following is a brief summary of some of the matters reported in the statements:

- The consolidated result from continuing operations before capital amounts was a surplus of \$5,696,000 compared to a 2014 deficit of \$3,242,000.
- Rates and annual charges increased by \$228,000 to \$8,283,000.
- User charges and fees decreased by \$4,995,000 to \$5,903,000, largely due to the decrease in RMS charges for the year.
- Interest revenue from investments increased by \$69,000 to \$655,000.
- Operational Grants and Contributions increased by \$3,175,000 due largely to Council receiving all four quarter instalments of the financial assistance grants in the 2015 year where previously half was prepaid in the previous (2014) year.
- Grants and Contributions for capital purposes decreased during the year by \$2,913,000 to \$1,840,000. The completion of the upgrades to water supply plant and the Aboriginal villages in the previous year impacted on this income stream.
- Employee benefits (annual leave, long service leave, etc) and other on-costs decreased by \$1,062,000 while salaries and wages increased by \$338,000. The increase in salaries and wages is due mostly to normal changes in grades and pay rates, while the decrease in benefits paid is due to the reduction in long serving staff retiring recently.
- Workers Compensation costs decreased in 2015 by \$389,000 due to Council's commitment to ongoing improvements to worker safety.
- The cost of Materials and Contracts decreased by \$6,874,000. This movement is consistent with the levels of works carried out during the year and the completion of outstanding repairs to roads from flood damage.

Walgett Shire Council's Statement of Performance Measurement – Indicators (Consolidated) (Note 13a) shows that Council is in a good position compared to the benchmarks as set by OLG at the end of the 2015 financial year.

See attachment (A): Financial Statements



Principal Activities Delivery Program

**Local Government Act Section
428 (1)**

A report on the Council's actual performance of its Principal Activities during 2014/2015 against the Actions detailed in the Delivery Program.

See attachment (B): 2014/2015 Principal Activities Delivery Program

See attachment (D): Walgett Shire Council Delivery Program 2012-2016 Operational Plan 2014/2015



Rates and Charges Written Off

**Local Government (General)
Regulation 2005 Clause 132**

Rates and Charges written off by Walgett Shire Council during 2014/2015.

Description	Amount
Rates - Pension Rebates	
(S 356 Local Government Act 1993)	\$93,180.58
Rates - Donations	
(S 356 Local Government Act 1993)	\$16,003.30
Total	\$109,183.88



Overseas Travel

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 2014/2015 by Councillors, Council Staff or persons representing Council.

Mayoral and Councillor Fees

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 2014 to 30 July 2015.

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 Darryl Cooper	\$10,740.00	\$1,080.00	-	-	-	\$11,820.00
Clr Robert Greenaway	\$10,740.00	\$1,080.00	-	\$1,471.60	-	\$13,291.60
Clr Jane Keir <i>Deputy Mayor from Sept 14</i>	\$15,134.97	\$1,080.00	-	\$1,215.50	-	\$17,430.47
Clr David Lane <i>Deputy Mayor Sept 13—Sept 14</i> <i>Mayor Sept 14—Sept 15</i>	\$25,389.99	\$1,080.00	\$552.27	\$520.00	-	\$27,542.26
Clr Manuel Martinez	\$10,740.00	\$1,080.00	-	\$260.00	-	\$12,080.00
Clr Bill Murray <i>Mayor Sept 13—Sept 14</i>	\$15,135.00	\$1,080.00	\$159.00	\$910.00	-	\$17,284.00
Clr Michael Taylor	\$10,740.00	\$1,080.00	-	\$705.25	-	\$12,525.25
Clr Lawrence Walford	\$10,740.00	\$1,080.00	-	-	-	\$11,820.00
Clr Ian Woodcock	\$10,740.00	\$1,080.00	-	\$1,231.50	-	\$13,051.50
Total for each Category	\$120,099.96	\$9,720.00	\$711.27	\$6,313.85	-	

Mayoral and Councillor Attendance

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 and 2 extra-ordinary meetings were held in 2014/2015.

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
<i>Clr Darryl Cooper</i>	9	2	0	2
<i>Clr Robert Greenaway</i>	11	1	0	2
<i>Clr Jane Keir</i> <i>Deputy Mayor</i>	9	2	7	5
<i>Clr David Lane</i> <i>Mayor</i>	11	2	3	6
<i>Clr Manuel Martinez</i>	10	0	0	3
<i>Clr Bill Murray</i>	10	2	7	0
<i>Clr Michael Taylor</i>	7	1	0	0
<i>Clr Lawrence Walford</i>	8	2	0	0
<i>Clr Ian Woodcock</i>	10	2	7	4

Contracts Awarded

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 Clause 132

Details of each contract awarded by the Council during 2014/2015 (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 2014 to 30 June 2015*

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 2013/14
<i>D & G Lane Earthmoving</i>	Operation of Lightning Ridge Waste Management Centre	\$245,029.79	\$244,896.23
<i>D & G Lane Earthmoving</i>	Operation of Walgett Waste Management Centre	\$253,434.80	\$226,179.33
<i>Central West Civil Pty Ltd</i>	Stage 4 Levee Bank Upgrade	\$1,166,050.45	\$1,337,724.00
<i>Watertreatment Australia</i>	Walgett Water Supply Design and Construction of Water Treatment Plant	\$3,668,797.91	\$1,150,389.40
<i>Earthform Pty Ltd</i>	Duff Street Sewer Rising Main Installation Walgett	\$202,305.61	\$187,585.30
<i>Global Water Group Pty Ltd</i>	Collarenebri Filtration Plant Upgrade	\$401,407.31	\$406,096.39



Legal Proceedings

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

A summary of the amount by the Council during 2014/2015 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 2014 to 30 June 2015.

Council incurred \$31,496.22 in legal costs in 2014/2015, comprising \$30,036.22 for rates collection which is recoverable as a charge on the rateable property. The balance of \$1,460.00 involved general legal costs for such matters as contract preparation.



Private Works

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

Details of a summary of resolutions made during 2014/2015 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 2014/2015.

Council received \$144,452.73 (incl. GST) for private works carried out in 2014/2015, with an expenditure of \$112,563.85 (incl. GST).

Contributions

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

The total amount contributed or otherwise granted under Section 356.

Council contributed a total of \$543,685.12 under Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993. The expenditure is listed in the table below;

Organisation	Donation
<i>Glengarry Grawin Sheepyards Miners Association</i>	\$26,000.00
<i>Burren Junction Pool</i>	\$18,181.82
<i>Lightning Ridge Pool Complex</i>	\$350,000.00
<i>Lightning Ridge Jewellery Design Award</i>	\$3,500.00
<i>Lightning Ridge Visitor Information Centre</i>	\$115,000.00
<i>Fees & Charges Rebates, Local Churches</i>	\$16,003.30
<i>Barwon Group CWA Medical Scholarship Scheme</i>	\$3,250.00
<i>Clr Geoffrey 'Dick' Colless Scholarship</i>	\$11,750.00
Total	\$543,685.12

Council also contributed a further \$15,000.00 of grants under its Community Assistance Scheme to another 14 organisations listed below;

Organisation	Donation
<i>Carinda and District Race Club</i>	\$1,800.00
<i>Walgett Little Athletics</i>	\$500.00
<i>Barwon District Anglican Church</i>	\$1,000.00
<i>Burren Junction Fishing Club</i>	\$1,000.00
<i>Lightning Ridge Pony Club</i>	\$1,000.00
<i>Lightning Ridge Community Radio</i>	\$200.00
<i>Isolated Children's Parents Association</i>	\$250.00
<i>Grawin Glengarry Opal Fields Men's Shed</i>	\$1,000.00
<i>Country Women's Association</i>	\$500.00
<i>Carinda Digger's Memorial Hall</i>	\$750.00
<i>The Ridge Community Resource Centre</i>	\$700.00
Other Donations	
<i>Lightning Ridge District Bowling Club</i>	\$1,000.00
<i>Country Women's Association</i>	\$500.00
<i>The Big Red Run Foundation</i>	\$200.00
<i>Swimming New South Wales—Country Regional Championships</i>	\$5,000.00
Total	\$15,400.00



External Bodies

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

A statement of all external bodies (such as County Councils) that during 2014/2015 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 \$99,518.00 (ex GST) to the County Council for its services.

Hudson Pear

Council received funding of \$10,000.00 under the Public Reserve Management Fund Program for the eradication of Hudson Pear on Crown reserves. The funding was matched by Council (total project \$20,000.00) with Castlereagh Macquarie County Council being contracted to undertake the eradication work.

This work involved the initial spraying of Hudson Pear on five reserves at Lightning Ridge including Lions Park and Gem Gardens, Skate park / Ella Nagy Hall, Sports Ground / Racecourse, Aerodrome and old Sewerage Ponds and then routine monitoring inspections and retreatment as necessary.

It is interesting to note that this treatment and ongoing monitoring approach has now seen the almost total eradication of Hudson Pear across these five reserves. But ongoing monitoring for at least five years will be necessary before it can be assumed any dormant sectors of the plants have been located and treated.



Controlling Interest In Companies

**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 2014/2015.

Walgett Shire Council held no controlling interest in any company during 2014/2015.



Joint Ventures

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 2014/2015.

Council was involved in the following joint ventures:

- North West Slopes and Plains 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
- Far West Initiative Advisory Committee



Equal Employment Opportunity

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

A statement of the activities undertaken by the Council during 2014/2015 to implement its Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan.

Activities undertaken during the period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 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.

Employment of Senior Staff

**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 2014/2015, 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 Director Corporate Services and the Director Engineering Services.

The total amount spent on employing these senior staff was \$584,749.32. This amount includes salaries, fringe benefits tax, private use of a Council vehicle and employer's superannuation contributions.

Senior staff positions and salary;

Position	Employment Cost
General Manager	\$208,696.31
Director Corporate Services	\$189,234.33
Director Engineering Services	\$186,818.68



State of the Environment Report

**Local Government Act Section
428A (1)**

State of the Environment Report

The Local Government Act 1993 (sub-section 428A(1)) requires the annual report of Council to include a "State Environment Report" (SOE) in the year of an ordinary election. The last Council election was in September 2012, hence SOE report was prepared for 2012-2013. The next SOE report is required after Council election, currently scheduled for September 2016.

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): 2012/2013 State of the Environment Report



Statement of Compliance

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 2014/2015 financial year.



Companion Animals and Regulation

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:

- 76 dogs and 86 cats were seized
- 167 dogs and 104 cats were surrendered
- 31 dogs were released to their owners and 182 were re-homed
- 35 dogs and 191 cats were euthanased

Council spent \$119,131.00 on companion animal management related activities during 2014-2015, 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.

Government Information

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 ensuring 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 2014 to 30 June 2015, 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 2014/2015.



Condition of Public Works

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 2014/2015 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 current 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 not been fully assess in relation to the funding required to bring them up to a satisfactory standard. Comprehensive building condition reports are being prepared for each building/facility in 2015/2016.

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 2014/2015 totalled \$1.378 million at an average cost of \$580.00 per kilometre.

The roads assets replacement value and written down value at 30 June 2015 was;

Assets	Replacement Value	Written Down Value
Roads	\$92,207,879.00	\$48,902,439
Footpaths	\$4,800,751.00	\$2,541,177.00
Bridges and Culverts	\$37,160,485.00	\$20,211,672.00

The cost of improvement works estimated to bring the road assets to a satisfactory condition is \$4 million. Kerb and gutters are considered to be in a satisfactory condition and it is estimated that it will cost \$40,000.00 per annum to maintain the satisfactory condition.



Bushfire Hazard Reduction Program

A report on the bush fire hazard reduction activities of the Council during 2014/2015 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 2014/2015. At these meetings, Section 52 plan, land management and reports from various agencies were discussed. Council also attended 4 Service Level Agreement meetings during 2014/2015.

The NSW Rural Fire Service provides up to \$35,000.00 to assist Council with road side vegetation management and hazard reduction through vegetation slashing.

In 2014/2015 a total of \$14,838.64 was expended in relation to Bushfire Hazard Reduction Programs with the reduced amount primarily resulting from reduced vegetation growth during the current drought conditions.

2014/2015 Fire Hazard Reduction Works

Location	Total
Burren Junction	\$4,107.88
Collarenebri	\$3,029.50
Carinda	\$1,350.00
Lightning Ridge	\$2,272.72
Rowena	\$1,932.50
Walgett	\$1,621.04
Shire Roads Slashing	\$525.00
Rural Fire Service Contribution	\$14,838.64



Tourism and Economic Development

Economic Development activities 2014/2015:

Markets

Quarterly markets held at Apex Park on 12th July 2014, 13th September 2014, 13th December 2014 and 14th March 2015 with a variety of stallholders from the surrounding region. The markets were well attended by locals.

Christmas Party

Inaugural Walgett Christmas Street Party was held on Thursday 11 December 2014 from 5—8pm. Fox Street was closed to vehicles to allow for Christmas festivity events including late night shopping, present dash, games, parade, Gingerbread decorating and a visit from Santa. The event was a huge success, with local community and business support.

Walgett Bulldust to Bitumen Festival 3– 10 August 2014

Events included: Walgett Antiques Roadshow, Family Tree Workshops, Cooking Demonstrations, BellYoga, Fun Run, Cupcake Decorating Workshop, Chickpea Cooking Competition, Waste to Art Competition, Photography Competition, High Tea, Wine with Words, Art Workshops, Dinner Under the Stars, Big Day out, The Walgett Voice and Carp Fishing Competition

The Festival attracted approximately 800 people over the five days.

Welcome to the Community Events

Staged in Walgett, Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge during February/March 2015. These are scheduled to be an annual event.

In 2014/15 Tourism Activities

- Regular attendance at Destination Management meetings with the cluster of Walgett, Brewarrina, Bourke, Cobar and Bogan Shires, along with National Parks and Wildlife Service
- New 'Walgett Region' tourism products
- Advertising in The Wanderer (Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia magazine), Go55s Seniors Newspaper and other neighbouring Shires' Visitor Guides (Balonne, QLD, and Narrabri)
- Active participation in the tourism promotional groups: Great Inland Way, Kamilaroi Highway and Macquarie Marshes
- Development of new Shire tourism Maps and Directory
- Updated all local town brochures including Opal Fields, Collarenebri and Walgett Shire Bore Baths
- Participation in New Regional Tourism Websites including 'Travel In' and 'Tru Blu' Travelling Website

Cultural and Linguistic Promotions

Details of programs undertaken by the Council during 2014/2015 to promote services and access for people with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Council recognises that people from culturally diverse backgrounds may face issues in relation to access to services and participating in the wider community and is committed to providing equitable, accessible services, facilities and activities for the whole community. Council's Community Development team facilitated several community focused events and supported initiatives by the community services team.

The 50th Anniversary of the 1965 Aboriginal Freedom Rides, protesting against racial discrimination was staged throughout NSW with the town of Walgett playing a significant role in that movement. Council worked in partnership with NSW State Aboriginal Land Council and Sydney University supporting the event.

The Community Services teams again played a lead role in the 2015 NAIDOC celebrations and recognition events throughout our Shire. These events embraced the NAIDOC theme "We All Stand on Sacred Ground" at the three principal locations (Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri) recording high attendance by the wider community.

Council recognises the significance of cultural events in building social capital and strengthening relationships within a diverse community incorporating people from CALD backgrounds. Council supported and partnered with local services in the successful delivery of Harmony Day events in the principal locations during the year and supported services and programs targeting our CALD residents. International Women's Day continues to get bigger and better each year. Council, through the Community Services department liaise and consult with Aboriginal groups and representatives from culturally diverse backgrounds on a regular basis in the strengthening of relationships in building a better community for all.



LEFT: Walgett Shire Councillors Lawrence Walford and Ian Woodcock carry the Aboriginal Flag and lead the Aboriginal Freedom Ride 50th Celebration Street March, February 2015.

RIGHT: School Students perform Aboriginal dance at the Community Freedom Ride Event in Walgett.



Human Resource Activities

A statement of the Human Resource activities undertaken by Council during 2014/2015.

The major human resource related activities undertaken within the Organisation during the 2014/2015 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 activities undertaken within the organisation between 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 included:

- Organised and facilitated 'Skin Patrol' for administration of flu shots and skin examinations
- Review of Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Developed Needlestick training package
- Commenced Chemical Register
- Conducted inspections at various Council owned and maintained properties
- Facilitated First Aid Training Course
- 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 2014/2015 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 three (3) occasions during the 2014/2015 financial year.

Recruitment, Selection and Induction

The turnover rate for the period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 was 20.29% using the 'all in approach', down by 2.46% from the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014. 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 2014 to 30 June 2015 totalled 24 new appointments. Council continues to recruit, develop and train employees engaged through the trainees and apprenticeship employment options retaining all positions. Two new trainees were recruited in the 2014/2015 year.

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. The program for the 2014-2015 year has stalled due to a lack of interest by potential School participants.

Training Programs

Council continues to encourage employees to participate in training and development. During the period 2014/2015 Council expended \$129,885.13 including outdoor staff wages costs on training, accommodation, travel and registration expenses. An additional amount of \$12,042.47 was expended on conference attendance and travel to assist staff to improve their skills and remain up to date with legislative requirements.



Children's Services

Details of programs undertaken by the Council during 2014/2015 to develop and promote services and programs that provide for the needs of children.

Council places a high level of importance on activities and programs that engage with our young people. Our community and youth development sections focus on building the capacity of our residents and maximising opportunities for their personal development to improve their quality of life whilst embracing their own culture and social diversity. Council continued to demonstrate best practice with high participation numbers at Youth Centres and Vacation Care Service offered by Council across the Shire.

Council's 2015 Youth Week Programs were, for the ninth consecutive year, nominated as top five finalists in three categories relating to the 2015 NSW Youth Week.

The categories included; 2015 NSW Best Small Council with the Most Outstanding Youth Week Program, Council with the Best ON-Going Commitment to Local Youth Week Programs and NSW Health's Play Safe Sexual Health Project Award.

Walgett Shire was named winner of Best Small Council - Most Outstanding Youth Week Program 2015, demonstrating ongoing quality delivery of youth week programs and commitment to engaging young people in meaningful ways.

The Youth Council continues to play a vital role in offering our young people opportunities to have an effective voice that is supported by Council and the Youth and Community Development team. Membership this year of the youth council decreased slightly with twenty-eight youth members attending meetings and planned sessions. Programs targeting positive engagement of young people through diversionary, leadership and empowerment opportunities were highlights of another very rewarding year in the delivery of youth services.

Council was successful in obtaining several external grants for youth programs and the broader community which supported engagement, awareness and information programs across the Shire.

Council supported several Seniors Week events across the Shire and visiting services including Senior's movie events and morning teas, Memory Van visits, Harmony and International Women's Day.



Library Services

Library service development and participation continued to grow with memberships and borrowing of collections increasing substantially. Library refurbishments have contributed to a significant increase in families with young children visiting the libraries and the number of young people participating in activities. Council's outreach programs continue to provide the link between people in remote areas and their connection to Libraries and resources. Enhanced programs for Seniors have been well supported with the library continuing to be a well utilised resource.

Library space has allowed continuous use for workshops, exhibitions, evening functions and meetings. Lightning Ridge Library has been through a beautification/refurbishment program, which now includes an outdoor area.

The recent rebranding of our regional service to "Big Sky Libraries" has added interest from residents and should prove invaluable with a collaboration of Library branches across our North West supporting each other. New technology has been introduced into our libraries with staff assisting with eBooks, iPad and iPhone. Library staff continue to work towards introducing more technology supporting member with online web based platforms. New policies introduced modified borrowing controls to safeguard collections.

Council is an active participant in the NSW and Regional Library service, working with other member Councils to provide a service that responds to the communities needs and interests.



Top Left: Adult Workshop at the Walgett Library

Top Right: Wine with Words Evening in the new garden area in Lightning Ridge

Bottom Left and Right : Lightning Ridge youth design and paint new signage for the Lightning Ridge Library





Health and Wellbeing

Health and Wellbeing

Council is committed to addressing and advocating for the health and wellbeing of its residents and supports a wide variety of programs and initiatives in collaboration with service providers throughout the Shire. Council promotes healthy options at all its youth centres, supplying food and beverages that are approved within the National Quality Framework for young people.

Council participation at local Interagency of Walgett and Lightning Ridge have assisted in the formation and continued support through the Australian Drug Foundation to maintain local level CDATS (Community Drug Action Teams).

Council works with local health services in promotion of healthy lifestyles and wellbeing on a regular basis. Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service and NSW Health partner in many youth and community focused initiatives, striving to improve health outcomes of our residents.

In 2014/15 Council supported local organisations in securing funding for infrastructure projects relating to sports and physical exercise options for its residents. Maintenance and programs developed around outdoor gym equipment in three (3) communities, Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri, support efforts of services and implementation of sustainable health programs.



Participants across the Shire engage in Tare Kwon Do lessons as part of Youth Week Activities



Access and Equity

A report on the Council's performance in relation to access and equity to meet residents needs outlined in Council's 2013/2014 Management Plan and undertaken by Council in 2014/2015.

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;

- Consulting and communicating decisions effectively through Council's website and media releases
- 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

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 photograph of a construction site with a rainbow in the sky. The scene shows a dirt area with several large piles of light-colored material, possibly gravel or sand. In the background, there are some trees and a yellow excavator. A yellow truck is parked in the middle ground. The sky is dark and cloudy, with a bright rainbow arching across it. The overall tone is somewhat somber due to the dark sky, but the rainbow adds a touch of hope or beauty.

Statement

Expenses • Revenue • Assets - Category 1

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 this report.



Implementation of Competitive Neutrality

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.

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 2014/2015.



Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act

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.