



Walgett Shire

'RIVERS, PLAINS AND OPALS' NEWSLETTER

WINTER 21



The last few months have been extremely busy for Council and the community.

In March we received above average rainfall both locally and in the upper catchment, which led to moderate flooding across the shire. The Rowena to Burren Junction area was the worst affected with major flooding and many properties isolated for weeks, many roads in the area are flood affected and require major rehabilitation works.

My fellow Councillors and I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all the emergency services staff, volunteers and Council staff that have taken time to support and assist the Walgett Shire communities during the flood event. We are so lucky to have such kind and caring people willing to work long hours toward the protection of our communities. Preparedness is so important and the SES volunteers in particular have put in a mammoth effort monitoring weather forecasts, river systems, roads and preparing sand bags in readiness of flood water inundation of properties.

On a lighter note, local business houses certainly benefitted during this time having such a large contingent of emergency services personnel stay in the Walgett and Collarenebri communities.

On the 25th April the community celebrated ANZAC Day with a good turn-out reported at all memorial services held in the shire. Anzac day is an important day on the calendar for all Australians, it's a time to remember the sacrifices men and women have made to protect our wonderful country.

On Sunday 23rd May around 35 Rural Aid volunteers descended on Walgett to undertake a number of town improvement projects including the painting of seating, purchase and erection of seating at Trevallion Park, garden beds at Apex Park and completion of the WAMS Community Garden. On behalf of Council and the community, a big thank you to all involved, including the local committee, your efforts are appreciated.

Ian Woodcock OAM,
Mayor - Walgett Shire Council

WALGETT LGA APPROVED DEVELOPMENT VALUE

Walgett Shire is currently experiencing a higher number of development applications and enquiries than is normal. With over \$20 million dollars of new development either planned or currently under construction within the Walgett Shire. This not only affects Councils' ability to deliver development services but also the capacity of local trades and suppliers.

2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
\$22,456,320	\$213,457	\$1,903,423	\$1,650,960	\$285,540

Year to date comparison, for the Financial Year

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO NSW PLANNING REGULATIONS

The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is proposing to simplify the planning process and approval pathways for those who wish to do small business activities, such as agritourism, and low-impact agricultural development on NSW farms.

The proposed amendments will make it easier for farmers and graziers to establish new complementary businesses on their land, including:

- supporting more farm stays by:
 - amending the existing definition of 'farm stay accommodation' in the Standard Instrument LEP Order, and
 - introducing an optional clause that councils can choose to adopt in their local plans to manage any impacts
- enabling events on farms by introducing a new definition for 'farm events'
- facilitating farm gate businesses by introducing:
 - a new definition for 'farm gate activities', and
 - an optional clause that councils can choose to adopt in their local plans
- introducing fast-track approval pathways, known as exempt and complying development, for these types of agritourism, provided certain development standards are met
- allowing other low impact agricultural activities as exempt or complying development, such as small processing plants where certain development standards are met
- making minor changes to existing planning controls to make them more effective, such as increasing the separation required for rural dwellings from intensive livestock agriculture, if carried out as complying development.

The amendments were developed in response to recommendations from stakeholders, including the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI). The agri-tourism amendments were developed in collaboration with the NSW Small Business Commission.



FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Council has approved a number of tenders in the past two (2) months including:

- Refurbishment of the Collarenebri Showground Grandstand, awarded to Gletan Group
- Economic Development Program for Collarenebri, awarded to ORANA RDA.
- Construction of footpaths and K&G along Fox Street between Montkeila and Warrena Street, awarded to PW Concrete.
- Installation of Solar Systems at the Walgett Administration Building and the Walgett Water Treatment Plant, awarded to Large Solar Installs

Council at its April 2021 meeting formally resolved to support the introduction of a heavy vehicle permit system for opal mining in New South Wales. I have written to both the State and Federal Members seeking their support for a system and any other legislative changes necessary to facilitate the use of heavy motor vehicles by miners in the opal fields.

At its May 25th meeting Council endorsed the action of the General Manager in signing off on the funding agreement with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for a grant of \$431,952 for construction of an "Everyone Can Play" park in Pandora Street Lightning Ridge. Council also approved a co-contribution of \$79,975 to the project and this is included in the 2021/2022 budget.

At the budget meeting on Tuesday 25th May Councillors resolved to put the Operational Plan 2021/2022 on display for 28 days to the 23rd June 2021. The public can make submission on the operational plan during this time.

The budget parameters for the forthcoming year include:

- A 2% increase on general rates as per IPART's decision.
- Fees and charges increased by 2.5% to 3%.
- Domestic Waste Management Charges increased by 3% to \$535 from \$510.
- Water charges increased by \$50 per assessment.
- Water usage charges increased by 5%.
- Sewer Service Charges also increased by 3%.

Council's general fund is budgeting for a cash deficit of \$121,208 after capital income and expenditure movements.

The 21/22 year is looking very busy with plenty of new programs for the shire:

- Town and Village beautification program for flower beds, waste bins, flags and bollards.
- Tourism signage for parks include the Banjo Patterson poem theme in Walgett.
- Improvements to Alex Trevallion Park Walgett.
- Investigation for a recreation area and bird hide in Lightning Ridge.
- Development of a wetlands recreation area in Lightning Ridge.
- Walgett town beautification and cultural garden.
- Improvements to Burren Junction Sportsground amenities.
- Refurbishment of the Carinda swimming pool amenities.
- Walgett swimming pool drainage works.
- Construction of a new works depot in Walgett.
- Increased allocation for unsealed roads maintenance.
- Reconstruction of the Come By Chance Road.
- Drainage works for Collarenebri.
- Upgrade of the Gundabloui Road.
- Footpath works in Carinda, Walgett and Lightning Ridge.

I would like to remind business houses about the following Council "Main Street Beautification" programs that are currently open

to all businesses in Walgett, Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge:

1. Removal of bars from shop windows and doors and installation of appropriate crim safe, or like security doors and window covers. Under this program Council will reimburse to a maximum of \$4,000 per premise upon completion and presentation of receipts.
2. Shop front painting program whereby Council will reimburse the owner to a maximum of \$1,000 per premise toward the purchase of paint. Labour and other costs related to painting the shop fronts is the responsibility of the owner.

It's great to hear favourable comment from residents and tourists that our towns and villages look great. Many residents are making a big effort to maintain their yards and adjoining nature strips, well done everyone.

The main street gardens, parks and sporting grounds are a credit to the Council staff, they too are making sure the towns are presentable and inviting. I am delighted to see the transformation of Trevallion Park with additional seating and new flower beds, the area will look great in spring.

Last but not least, congratulations to the Walgett Show Society for yet another highly successful annual show, well done.

Michael Urquhart, General Manager

APRIL COUNCIL MEETING SNIPPETS

- o Council resolved to support the introduction of a heavy vehicle permit system for opal mining in New South Wales and to write to both State and Federal Members seeking their backing for the introduction of a heavy vehicle permit system for opal miners in New South Wales, and other legislative change as necessary to facilitate the use of heavy motor vehicles by miners in the opal fields. A similar system operates in South Australia.
- o As at 1st April 2021 the Walgett LGA approved estimate development value is \$22,456,320 for the financial year.
- o Council accepted the tender for the installation of solar systems at the Council Administration building and Walgett water treatment works.
- o Council accepted the tender from Orana RDA and to enter into a contract for consultancy services to fulfil the Murray Darling Basin Authority project scope of works.
- o Council accepted the tender from Gletan Group for the refurbish of the grandstand at Collarenebri Race Track.
- o That Council accepted the tender for the Construction of footpaths, Kerb /gutter in Walgett along Fox Street from Warrena Street to Montkeila Street from PW Concrete.
- o Walgett is currently on bore water and the reverse osmosis (RO) plant is not in operation because of the reduced capacity in the sewerage effluent ponds to hold waste water from the reverse osmosis plant.
- o Council has lodged an application to register interest in a grant of \$50,000 for assistance in implementing the new Regional Planning Portal. The portal is a digital space where community, industry and government can access a range of services and information that supports effective planning and decision making in NSW.

What's On

JUNE

Narran Lake Nature Reserve Open Day 11-12 June 2021	Walgett Outdoor Community Markets Saturday 19 June	Walgett Races Saturday 19 June
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JULY

NAIDOC Week 4-9 July	Carinda Races 17 July	Walgett Rams Ladies Day 17 July
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Walgett Floral Affair Long Lunch Sunday 18 July	Lightning Ridge Opal Festival 28 - 31 July
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AUGUST

Local Government Week 2 - 8 August	Walgett Outdoor Community Markets Saturday 14 August	Walgett Rodeo & Campdraft 20 -22 August	Colly Cod Classic & Carp Muster 27-29 August
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SEPTEMBER

Collarenebri Races Saturday 11 September	Rowena Show & Shine 18 September	Come By Chance Races 25 September
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SENIORS & MULTI-CULTURAL SERVICES

Partnerships with local services will again be encouraged for the series of events and celebrations as we head into 2021. Councils community development staff continually work with the community, organizations and agencies to support and facilitate events, educational opportunities and capacity building initiatives across the Shire. Through collaboration and partnerships Council has sustained its support for implementation of 2021 Harmony Day, International Women's Day events and celebrations and recognizes our diverse communities through genuine participation and initiating engaging opportunities. Seniors Week included morning teas and games days, visits to Aged care facilities by youth centre kids and techno info sessions.



CONGRATULATIONS ON 35 YEAR'S SERVICE: GEOFFREY ELLIS & TONY FULLER

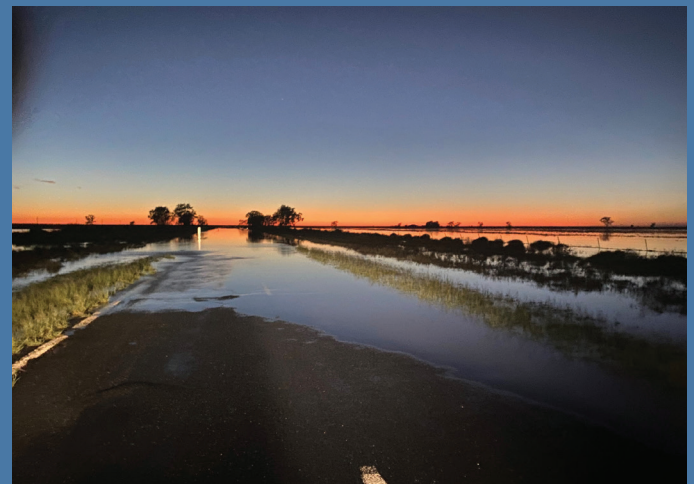


Tony Fuller.

Geoffrey Ellis.

On behalf of the Walgett Shire Councillors & Staff, I wish to extend congratulations to you both on reaching this important service milestone with Walgett Shire Council. Your loyalty, professionalism and commitment to the success of Walgett Shire over the last 35 years has not gone unnoticed. Again, thank you for your hard work and dedication and look forward to your ongoing contributions to Walgett Shire Council.

THE ROAD TO RECOVERY FOR WALGETT SHIRE



While the main flood peak has passed through the Collarenebri and Walgett, both sealed and unsealed roads have sustained serious widespread flood damage during the recent flood event, and are in need of extensive repair. Council staff had been working tirelessly assessing roads for damage and undertaking emergency repairs on many of the shire roads and highways. Council has since lodged a claim with Transport NSW to access funding for the road repairs who in-turn will visit the Shire to inspect the road network in accordance with Council's flood damage claim. Extensive road repairs of gravel re-sheeting, heavy patching and resealing are done as part of the continuing works program.

ENGINEERING UPDATE - RETURN & EARN



The Return and Earn bulk collection centre at Walgett has reopened, "This is good news for local residents and we want to thank people for their patience during its closure". Said Council's Landfill attendant; Joshua Ruttley

The day of re-opening saw over 20 individuals bring in hundreds to thousands of cans, bottles and glass getting them out of peoples yards and from around the street saving them from being dumped in local landfill.

"As people start to see the real impact the scheme is having on litter reduction and landfill, we expect more and more people to embrace it from an environmental perspective, in addition to the 10-cent refund opportunity," Mr Ruttley said.

With Walgett's Return & Earn opening 3 days/week everyone has an incentive to do the right thing and reduce litter in our parks, streets, and waterways by returning an eligible drink container to an approved return point for a 10-cent refund.

A cleaner recycling stream goes hand in hand with Return and Earn's goal of reducing litter in NSW by 40 per cent by 2020 and keeping the state clean. Many of the beverage containers recovered end up as bottles and cans again in a closed loop recycling process.

Council would like to remind residents of the great "return and earn" facilities now operating in both Walgett and Lightning Ridge.

Return and Earn provides a unique fundraising opportunity for charities, schools, community and sporting groups. These groups can seek donations of eligible drink containers from the community and redeem them for a refund at a return point

The Walgett Return & Earn Centre is open Thursday & Friday from 10am to 4pm and Saturday 8am-12pm. For direct enquiries contact: Trevor Murray 0428636237.



COUNCIL'S NEW TOWN PLANNER

Name: Caitlin Mahony

Role: Town Planner.

Previous Experience: I worked for 2 years at a land and development Consultancy on the South Coast in Nowra. I project managed a vast array of projects including large subdivisions, dual occupancies and dwelling houses and boundary adjustments (to name a few!).

Education: I have a Bachelors of Urban Planning and a Masters of Urban Management and Planning of which I completed last year whilst working full time. I completed both degrees at Western Sydney University.

Home Base: The South Coast, in a little regional suburb called Worrigeer.

Why Walgett?: Why not!!! I have always wanted to live in the Country, and this opportunity showed up! Working for a rural Council provides many opportunities that you don't otherwise get in regional or city Councils.

Fun Fact: I'm a massive fan of the AFL!! I was brought up going to games as often as we could! – GO THE SWANNIES!!!



GOVERNMENT SERVICES— CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

A local service can help you with Centrelink, Medicare and other government programs and services. Walgett Shire Council's Lightning Ridge Office is a Services Australia Agent.

Using their computers, you can log in to your myGov account and do your business on the spot. If you don't have a myGov account, the Agent staff will help you to set one up. There are phones for you to access phone self service or speak to one of their service officers.

If you'd rather use your mobile phone or tablet, they've got free Wi-Fi available 24/7. You don't need a password so you can get online straight away.

You can also use the Wi-Fi to download and install the Express Plus mobile apps.

The Agent staff can help you set up your digital services if you're not sure what to do. You can also lodge forms, get your identity documents certified and pick up brochures. So next time you need to do some government business, drop in to Lightning Ridge Office. There are open from 9am-12pm & 1pm -4pm Monday to Friday at Suite 4, 12 Opal St Lightning Ridge NSW 2834. Phone 02 6828 6191

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

Community development and support staff and teams focus on listening and delivering when capacity allows, to what community aspire to and align this with our Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027. Communities throughout the Shire have engaged and participated in a range of social, educational, awareness and Information opportunities over the past period including International Women's Day programs, Harmony Day initiatives, Seniors Week and a massive National Youth Week 2021. Along with these annual initiatives the day to day commitments to Youth Centres, Library's and community capacity building continues. In these time post the COVID-19 impact community and its residents have displayed a keenness and energy to get involved and participate in the programs and opportunities Councils teams, with the support of services strive to deliver. Partnerships and collaboration of services has again been evidenced as best practice with participation numbers of residents the highest on record attending and engaging in events offered. Several large scale events including the International Women's Day rollout of events, National Youth Week 2021, Seniors Week, WAMS 35th celebrations, PCYC sod Turn, the near completion of the Lightning Ridge Youth and Community hub and externally funded initiatives at local pools and parks has reignited community connection and social opportunities across the Shire.



YOUTH WEEK 2021

The three week program sought to not only engage young people in positive ways but to offer opportunities to participate in a multitude of programs, workshops, events and also created opportunities for our own youth and young people to perform, dance and sing and showcase their talents in front of their own family and friends.

Our National Youth Week 2021 theme was "Together more than ever" and Councils team with support of many service providers and partners rolled out 43 different programs and initiatives across communities recording the highest number of youth participation to date with the 2021 program recorded 2,865 participants an average of 66 youth and young people attending initiatives. Under the direction of the young people attending our centers and input from Youth Council representative's fresh and new ideas has allowed for these outstanding outcomes with support by Councils Youth and Community Development teams, Libraries, local, regional and state organisations, agencies and individuals. The events staged include dance parties, cook ups, minute to win it competitions, music and talent workshops, wood art, repurposing, sporting events, competitions, traditional Korean dance and martial arts performances (troop of 31 members) and three "Spirit of Place Performers in the Parks Festivals". The partnership event with WAMS 35th year anniversary recorded huge numbers of participants and offered a broad variety of entertainment, information and opportunities. Renowned performers entertained youth and community to fun filled events featuring 'JustUs', acclaimed rapper Dobby, Kelsey Iris, PCYC girls dance group, Roger Knox, Loren Ryan, Didge from the Ridge (Josh McCormick), Under the Weather, Chris Hunt and our long-time supporters the Korean JITA youth church group also performed throughout the Shire.

Contact: Sandra Bladen, Youth Development Officer 6828 6126 or youth-development@walgett.nsw.gov.au



ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS:



LIBRARY REPORT

Libraries at Walgett and Lightning Ridge continue to develop their extensive collection of books with a large range of DVD's Magazines, Audio Books, Westerns, Fiction and Non Fiction complimented by a great children's collection. The Shire Library services currently have 1097 active members.

Services and programs engaging the community include:

- Free Internet and Wi-Fi connection.
- Community space for exhibitions and meetings.
- After school programs for young children 10 years and older.
- Young Adult afternoons.
- Books and Babies targeting 0-5 years and carers.
- Art Across the Ages workshops for Seniors.
- Holiday programs and activities
- Webpage offering EBooks, EAudio and EMagazines.
- Monthly Book Club.

Library service participation develops with increased memberships due to availability of new technology and patrons can now book out their own materials with our new Self-Serve platform.

Walgett Shire Council Library Staff encourages children to use the libraries after school and during school holidays but children aged 0-10 must have a supervisor with them at all times.

Opening hours are: Walgett 9 – 5pm Mon to Friday.

LR Monday closed: Tues 9am – 5pm: Wed 1:30pm – 5:30pm: Thurs 1:30pm – 5:30pm: Fri 9am – 2pm: Sat 9:30am – 1:30am

Contact Senior Library Officer Cath Hiscox, 6828 3104 or chiscox@walgett.nsw.gov.au



Councils Community Development department, through its Aboriginal Liaison & Community Development Officer (ALCDO), continues to make positive impacts across communities in the Shire. Our Aboriginal Liaison and Community Development Officer has been proactive in getting out and about meeting community groups and supporting local services and initiatives addressing a range of needs of our residents, strengthening relationships with the whole of community and assisting to build capacity of community. The ALCDO is proving a key player in Councils team of youth/ community practitioners and works alongside both youth and community officers and managers. She has participated and supported in a range of activities including the youth & community focused Beat the Heat initiatives, International Women's Day 2021, Harmony Day 2021 events, Spirit of Place Festivals and the Smash n Splash series of events.

