



Walgett Shire Council Social Plan 2007-2010



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary 4

 1.1 Walgett Shire Council Vision Statement..... 4

 1.2 Executive Summary 4

2. COMMUNITY PROFILE 6

 2.1 Population Profile 7

 2.2 Walgett Shire Population of Towns and Villages Demographic Summary 8

SECTION A - mandatory target groups 9

3. CHILDREN..... 9

 3.1 Demographics 9

 3.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire 9

 3.3 Walgett Shire Council operated services 12

 3.4 Recommendations 13

4. YOUNG PEOPLE 14

 4.1 Demographics 14

 4.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire 14

 4.3 Walgett Shire Council operated services 17

 4.4 Recommendations 19

5. WOMEN 20

 5.1 Demographics 20

 5.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire 20

 5.4 Recommendations 21

6. OLDER PEOPLE 22

 6.1 Demographics 22

 6.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire 22

 6.3 WALGETT SHIRE COUNCIL OPERATED SERVICES 25

 6.4 Recommendations 25

7. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES 26

 7.1 Demographics 26

 7.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire 26

 7.3 Walgett Shire Council Operated Services 27

 7.4 Recommendations 27

8. ABORIGINAL PEOPLE 28

 8.1 Demographics 28

 8.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire 29

 8.3 Walgett Shire Council Operated Services 30

 8.4 Recommendations 31

9. PEOPLE FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS 32

 9.1 Demographics 32

 9.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire 32

 9.3 Walgett Shire Council Operated Services 33

 9.4 Recommendations 33

10. ACCESS AND TRANSPORT 34

 10.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire 34

 10.2 Recommendations 35

11. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT 36

 11.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire 36

12. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT 37

 12.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire 37

13. HEALTH 39

 13.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire 39



14. RURAL	41
14.1 Demographics	41
14.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire	41
15. HOUSING	42
16. ARTS AND CULTURE	44
16.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire	44
16.2 walgett shire council operated servicES.....	45
17. LIBRARY SERVICES	46
17.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire	46
17.2 Walgett Shire Council Operated Services	46
18. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	48
18.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire	48
19. LEGAL AND SAFETY	49
19.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire	49
20. RECREATION	50
20.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire	50



1. Executive Summary

1.1 Walgett Shire Council Vision Statement

That the community be able to utilise the opportunities that arise within our environment, to improve their quality of life, while embracing their own culture and social diversity to the benefit of all.

1.2 Executive Summary

The Walgett Shire Community Plan 2007 - 2010 is an update of the 2003 - 2006 Walgett Shire Community Plan/Profile.

This plan was developed by Walgett Shire Council in consultation with community groups who were invited to submit comments.

These community groups were given the opportunity to raise concerns regarding community strengths and issues and to explore meaningful and appropriate solutions.

The following organisations provided comments:-

- *Walgett Community College.*
- *Lightning Ridge Community Facilitator.*
- *Walgett Community Working Party.*
- *Lightning Ridge Home and Community Care.*

This document has been prepared with reference to the "Release of the Social/Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines", Circular 98/41 released by the Department of Local Government on 20 May 1998.

The Plan aims to recognise and build on the existing Council efforts to promote the well-being of all community members and meet their needs through effective social planning.

Social/community planning is a vital corporate tool to help Councils increase their accountability, guide the future of their communities and develop effective planning partnerships with other government and non-government agencies.

Walgett Shire Council is committed to co-operating with the Murdi Paaki Regional Council, Community Working Parties and Interagency Structures within the Council of Australian Government (COAG) Trial. The COAG Trial is an agreement, signed by Federal, State and Local Governments, to work in partnership by setting a workable structure to address local issues. The COAG Trial is due to end on 30th November, 2007. It is anticipated these partnerships will continue working within the established structures.

Social or Community Planning is an evolving process. It involves continual updates, assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and review. The Plan will regularly be updated as social objectives are achieved, new strategies emerge and as the community evolves and changes.



The mandatory target groups for Council's Social Plan are as follows:-

- Children
- Young People
- Women
- Older People
- People with Disabilities
- Aboriginal People
- People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (CALD)



2. COMMUNITY PROFILE

Walgett Shire Local Government Area is located in the far north west of New South Wales and covers an area of 22,007 square kilometres.

Walgett Shire borders with Queensland to the North, Moree Plains and Narrabri to the East, Coonamble to the South and Brewarrina to the West.

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

The Shire is geographically on the productive black-soil plains of New South Wales, part of which is in the Central Division and part in the Western Division. In the north and north west of the Shire is opal bearing country.

Council's Administrative Building is located in Walgett, on the Castlereagh Highway, 275 kilometres north of Dubbo. Walgett township is situated near the junction of the Namoi and Barwon Rivers.

Walgett Shire comprises of thirteen towns / villages / hamlets spread throughout the Shire. There are seven villages and two rural divisions and the preserved opal fields of Grawin, Glengarry and Sheepyard. Each community has its own identity, through cultural expression, cultural diversity and economic structures and development.

Income is derived from traditional farming and grazing activities, together with cotton and other irrigated crop production. Opal mining, tourism, and service industries are other sources of income for residents of the Shire.

The drought has had an impact on the Shire over these years, as it has on other areas in remote and rural Australia. This has certainly affected employment opportunities within and around the Shire.



2.1 Population Profile

The population of the Shire is very difficult to collate due to the high number of people in the mining areas and the Aboriginal communities who chose not to complete the census. There are also a number of people who reside in the mining areas for different periods of the year but whose main residence is in other Local Government Areas.

The ABS Postal Area Population Estimate in 2006 showed the Walgett Local Government Area population to be 7503.

All statistics below are collated from the 2006 Census QuickStats - Postal Area.

TOWN	AGE 0-14	% 0-14	AGE 15-24	% 15-24	AGE-over 55	% over 55	Population
Walgett	611	22.9	308	11.1	624	22.4	2782
Lightning Ridge	528	20.3	204	7.8	897	34.5	2602
Collarenebri	254	25.7	101	10.2	236	23.9	988
Carinda	157	21.6	82	11.3	184	25.3	728
Rowena	51	18.7	25	9.2	48	17.6	273
Burren Junction	27	20.7	10	7.7	37	28.5	130
TOTALS	1628	21.5	883	11.5	2026	27.0	7503

All statistics below are collated from the 2006 Census QuickStats- Postal Area.

TOWN	MALE	%	FEMALE	%
Walgett	1537	55.2	1245	44.8
Lightning Ridge	1474	56.6	1128	43.4
Collarenebri	528	53.4	460	46.6
Carinda	378	51.9	350	48.1
Rowena	167	61.2	106	38.8
Burren Junction	68	52.3	62	47.7
TOTALS	4152		3351	

Statistics below are collated from the 2006 Census Quick Stats – Postal Area.

Indigenous persons (comprises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders)

TOWN	PERSONS	POPULATION %
Walgett	990	35.6
Lightning Ridge	554	21.3
Collarenebri	374	37.9
Carinda	249	34.2
Rowena	17	6.2
Burren Junction	20	15.4
TOTAL	2204	

Total persons	1991	1996	2001	2006
Male	4596	4843	4678	4152
Female	3612	3707	3632	3351
Persons	8208	8550	8310	7503



2.2 Walgett Shire Population of Towns and Villages Demographic Summary

Statistics below are taken from the 2006 Census QuickStats – Postal Area.

Principal Towns	Population Summary
Walgett	1537
Lightning Ridge (including residents on opal fields adjoining the town)	1474
Collarenebri	527
Villages	
Burren Junction	20
Carinda	249
Come By Chance	n/a
Pokataroo	n/a
Cumborah	n/a
Rowena	29
Hamlet of Cryon	n/a
Grawin	Itinerant - mining village –n/a
Glengarry	Itinerant – mining village –n/a
Sheepyard	Itinerant - mining village –n/a



SECTION A - mandatory target groups

3. CHILDREN

3.1 Demographics

The Australian Bureau of Statistics group children as being aged 0-14.

Statistics are taken from the 2006 Census QuickStats - Postal Area.

Collated statistics show 22.8% of the population or 1628 people are aged between 0-14 years.

3.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire

Education

Education Facilities in the Walgett Shire include:-

Burren Junction Primary School	Kindergarten to year 6
Carinda Primary School	Kindergarten to year 6
Collarenebri Central School	Kindergarten to year 12
Lightning Ridge Central School	Kindergarten to year 12
Rowena Public School	Kindergarten to year 6
Walgett St Joseph's Primary School	Kindergarten to year 6
Walgett Community College	
• Primary School	Kindergarten to year 6
• High School	Years 7-12
• Distance Education Centres	Kindergarten to year 12

Data collected in May 2007 from the schools in the towns in the Shire showed enrolment as:

Burren Junction	41
Carinda	14
Collarenebri	120
Lightning Ridge	423
Rowena	28
Walgett Primary	100
Walgett Primary Distance Education	50
Walgett High School	126
Walgett High Distance Education	30
Walgett St. Joseph's Catholic School	183
Walgett High Distance Education	30

Health Services

Health Services in the Walgett Shire include:-

Collarenebri Health Service
 Lightning Ridge Health Service
 Walgett Health Service
 Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service
 Outback Division of General Practitioners



Long Day Care Centres

Long Day Care Centres are based in Walgett and Lightning Ridge. Coolabah Kids, the Walgett Pre School and Long Day Care Centre, opened in February 2007 and is a community owned centre that provides care for children 6 weeks to 12 years. Childcare is available from 8.00am-6.00pm week-days only

For further information contact the Director of Coolabah Kids on 68283387

Little Diggers Child Care Centre is a privately owned centre operated in Lightning Ridge and offers Pre School for children aged 3 to 5 years and a day care centre for children aged 2 to 5 years. Childcare is available 8.30a.m.-6.30pm week days only

For further information contact the Director of Little Diggers Child Care Centre on 68292929

Pre-Schools

Pre schools operate in Burren Junction, Collarenebri, Lightning Ridge and Walgett for children aged 3-5 years.

- Burren Junction Pre School is open Wednesday and Friday from 9am to 3.30pm.

For further information please contact the Director of Burren Junction Pre School on 6796 1245

- Collarenebri Pre-School is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9.30am to 3pm.

For further information please contact the Director of Collarenebri Pre School on 6756 2093

- Lightning Ridge Pre- School is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 3.30pm.

For further information please contact the Director of Lightning Ridge Pre School on 6829 0626

- Coolabah Kids Pre School in Walgett is open Monday to Friday from 8.45am. to 2.45pm

For further information please contact the Director of Coolabah Kids on 6828 3387

- Koolyangara Pre School in Walgett is open Monday to Friday from 8.0am to 4.15am

For further information please contact the Director of Koolyangara Pre School on 6828 1759

- Birraleegal Goondi in Walgett is open Monday to Thursday from 9am to 3pm

For further information please contact the Director of Birraleegal Goondi on 6828 2841

Vacation Care

Vacation Care in Walgett is provided by Goonimoo Children's Services at the Walgett Youth Centre.

For further information please contact the Director of Goonimoo Children's Services at the Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service on 6828 1611



Playgroup

Playgroup sessions are organised in a voluntary capacity by parents in towns and villages across the Shire for children aged 0-5 years.

Mission Australia's McKillop Rural Community Services

McKillop Rural Community Services offer support for children and their families in Walgett and Lightning Ridge. Their services currently include the following programs:

Brighter Futures

This program offers Early Intervention support, referral and brokerage for families with children aged 0-5 years in Walgett and Lightning Ridge.

REACH Early Intervention

REACH Early Intervention offers support and referral for children with learning difficulties 0-5 years across the Shire. Activities such as playgroups involving families are organised on a regular basis.

Re-connect Program

This program is directed at children in years 6, 7 & 8 who are experiencing difficulties at school in Collarenebri, Lightning Ridge and Walgett.

For further information contact McKillop Rural Services on 6882 5949.

Department of Community Services

Department of Community Services are based in Walgett and offers support and a referral service across the Shire for families with children aged 0-16 who are at risk and children with disabilities.

Domestic Violence Refuges

Domestic Violence Refuges for women and young children are located in Lightning Ridge and Walgett.

Walgett: Barwon Cottage
Lightning Ridge: Coorcoron Cottage



3.3 Walgett Shire Council operated services

Youth Centres

Youth Centres are located in Walgett, Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge and offer after school care with planned activities for children aged 5 to 17 years.

For further information contact the Youth Development Officer on 6828 6126

Vacation Care

Vacation Care is available in Lightning Ridge, Collarenebri and Grawin during the school holiday periods for children aged 5 to 12 years. The locations are-

Collarenebri: Town Hall
Grawin: Club in the Scrub
Lightning Ridge: Youth Centre -Ella Nagy Hall

For further information contact the Youth Development Officer on 6828 6126

Family Day Care

Family Day Care offers home based childcare in Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri for children aged 0-12 years and is the only recognised home based service in the Shire.

The service is licensed through the Department of Community Services. Children's services advisors visit from the Department on a regular basis and the service undergoes the process of accreditation with the National Childcare Accreditation Council on an annual basis.

Vacancies are occasioned by a lack of Carers rather than the lack of children. Ongoing advertising campaigns are necessary to continue to recruit additional Carers.

The Family Day Care Cottage is located at 45 Pitt Street Walgett.

For further information contact the Co-ordinator of Walgett Shire Family Day Care on : 6828 6189

Library Services

Libraries are located in Walgett and Lightning Ridge.

These services are utilised by members of our community. Both libraries have designated children's areas with books and other resources available. Story time is held in both libraries at regular intervals. Visits to the libraries for planned activities can be organised with the relevant library officers. Both libraries are open 15 hours per week.

For further information contact:

<i>Lightning Ridge Library:</i>	<i>6829 0005</i>
<i>Walgett Library:</i>	<i>6828 6103</i>



Library deposit stations are located in:

- Burren Junction Post Office, Alma Street, Burren Junction.
- Carinda General Store, Colin Street, Carinda.
- Collarenebri C.W.A. Rooms, Wilson Street, Collarenebri.

3.4 Recommendations

- 3.1.1 That Walgett Shire Council continue to ensure that children residing in and visiting the Shire have access to a range of quality care, educational and social facilities and services.
- 3.1.2 That Council support the Family Day Care Service to establish in-home care services. Council continue to seek family day carers, and ensure that information regarding the New Carer's grant for assistance in the set up costs for family day care is promoted and made available for prospective carers
- 3.1.3 That Council prepare a cost analysis and undertake a feasibility study for establishing a centre based child care service at the Family Day Care Cottage located in Pitt Street.
- 3.1.4 That Council investigate the opportunities for work based placements at the Long Day Care Centre to assist in attracting and retaining skilled staff.
- 3.1.5 That Council pursue opportunities for available grants and subsidies to improve facilities and further activities at our Youth Centres.
- 3.1.6 That Council continue to maintain and provide facilities, including playground equipment, that meet Australian Standards for all the community



4. YOUNG PEOPLE

4.1 Demographics

Young people are defined as people aged between 15 and 24 years who have individual needs requiring support and assistance in the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Statistics are from the 2006 Census QuickStats –Postal Area.
Collated statistics show 11.5% of the population or 883 people are aged between 15 and 24 years.

Young people are a diverse group and include high school students, those who are dependent on the family, those living independently and those who are establishing families.

Accurate enrolment figures are difficult to collate due to the transience of some community families.

4.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire

Education

Education Facilities for young people in the Walgett Shire include:-

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| • Collarenebri Central School | Kindergarten to year 12 |
| • Lightning Ridge Central School | Kindergarten to year 12 |
| • Walgett Community College High School | Years 7-12 |

'School to Work' programs is currently in progress with five students in partnership with the Walgett Community College to assist young people to gain employment at a local level when they complete their formal education.

TAFE also offers further education opportunities at campuses located at Lightning Ridge and Walgett. Courses can be structured according to demand.

For further information contact TAFE on 6828 1911

Activities

Police Citizen's Youth Club

The PCYC currently operate a pilot program from a van equipped with play stations, TV screens, sporting equipment and BBQ in Walgett on a fortnightly basis and also travel to Collarenebri and Goodooga during the school holiday period. Council has allocated \$40,000 per annum commencing 1st July 2007 to assist PCYC remaining in the Shire on a permanent basis and expand their service provision to all towns and villages in the Shire. Further funding is being sought to allow the employment of a permanent PCYC co-ordinator for the Castlereagh Local Area Command and to allow the van to visit other locations in the Castlereagh Local Area Command at regular intervals. The PCYC staff are supported by Council staff at activities each fortnight, and also by the Sport and Recreation Officer and various volunteers.

For further information contact the Chairman of the PCYC committee on 6828 3763



Department of Sport and Recreation

The Department of Sport and Recreation employs a project officer who is based in the township of Walgett. Programs are offered for youth in Walgett and Lightning Ridge. Council has formed a partnership with the Department of Sport and Recreation to offer sports related activities and training opportunities for youth and volunteers in the Shire

For further information contact the Sport and Recreation Project Officer on 6828 3763

Youth Off The Streets

YOTS recently received funding from FACSIA to establish programs for youth aged 14-24 years over a two year period. Two YOTS youth support workers will be located in Walgett. It is planned that the youth support workers will work with existing service providers and commence activities in July 2007. Council has budgeted an amount of \$15,000 to support YOTS commencing in Walgett.

Blue Light Discos

Blue Light Discos are a police initiative and are held regularly in the township of Lightning Ridge. These are organised by the local police and volunteers and are held at the Lightning Ridge Bowling Club for young people.

For further information contact the Lightning Ridge Police Force on 6829 9799

Blue Reelers

Blue Reelers are a police initiative and show recently released films at no cost in all towns throughout the Shire on a regular basis for families and children

For further information contact the Walgett Police Force on 6828 6899

Volunteer Activities

There are a number of volunteer activities for youth that operate throughout the Shire. These include Little Athletics, Junior Football, Basketball, Netball, Soccer, Cricket, Tennis, Swimming and Pony Clubs.

Lightning Ridge Community Church

The Lightning Ridge Community Church provides occasional holiday activities including music and singing for young people in Lightning Ridge.

Murdi Paaki Program

The Murdi Paaki Program provides holiday activities for youth in Collarenebri during the school holiday period. This is run in conjunction with the Vacation Care Program and with the Council Youth workers.



Sporting Clubs and Facilities include tennis courts, squash courts, golf course, bowls, netball, cricket, rugby union

Collarenebri Golf Club	Manages and maintains the golf course
Collarenebri Club	Manages and maintains the bowling greens
Lightning Ridge Bowling Club	Manages and maintains the bowling greens
Lightning Ridge Golf Club	Manages and maintains the golf course
Walgett Returned Soldiers League Club	Manages and maintains the squash courts
Walgett Sporting Club	Manages and maintains the golf, bowling, tennis and netball facilities
Walgett Rugby Union Club	Situated adjacent to No. 2 oval
Cricket Clubs	Cricket competitions occur each summer in each town and village
Burren Junction, Carinda, Grawin, Rowena	Facilities established by volunteers include golf and tennis

These facilities are generally able to be accessed by school groups and other youth organisations by contacting the relevant club management.

Bore Baths, Swimming Pool and Theme Parks

Bore Baths are located in Lightning Ridge, Walgett and Burren Junction and are maintained by Council. These services are provided free of charge.

Swimming Pools located in Walgett and Collarenebri are currently contracted to private contractors and are maintained under Council's management.

Swimming Pools located in Carinda and Burren Junction are maintained by Council and managed by volunteers and community groups.

Lightning Ridge Swimming Pool and Theme Park is privately operated and subsidised by Walgett Shire Council.

Swimming Clubs offer training opportunities for young people at the pools each summer. The schools in each town access the pools for sports days and carnivals.

The pools are used as venues for providing activities for young people during the hot summer months with an extension of opening hours until the end of April due to climate change.

Department of Juvenile Justice

Juvenile Justice works with children who are on Court Orders. Youth Justice Conferencing facilitators are also available to work with young offenders

For further information please contact the Walgett Juvenile Justice office on 68282010

Centrelink

Centrelink offices are located in Lightning Ridge and Walgett and offer support for young people living in the Shire.



Greater Western Health Area Service (GWAHS)

Health Services are located in Collarenebri, Lightning Ridge and Walgett. Young people are able to access community health and specialist services from these locations. Outreach community health is offered at Carinda on a regular basis.

GWAHS offer varying health related programs focussing on young people.

For further information please contact the Health Services at:

<i>Collarenebri</i>	<i>6756 4888</i>
<i>Lightning Ridge</i>	<i>6829 9900</i>
<i>Walgett</i>	<i>6828 6000</i>

Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service (WAMS)

Community Health Staff offer varying health care programs for young people living in the Shire.

For further information please contact WAMS on 6828 1611

4.3 Walgett Shire Council operated services

Parks, Playing Fields and Ovals, Race Courses and Show Grounds

Council owns and maintains parks, playing fields, ovals in each town and village in the Shire. It is responsible for managing and maintaining the race courses and/or show grounds in Carinda, Collarenebri, Lightning Ridge, and Walgett. Council is currently reviewing the number of parks and open spaces within the Shire with a plan to upgrade the standard of some parks whilst reducing the overall number of parks by reason of limited use throughout the Shire.

Council is committed to maintaining all sporting ovals taking into account the harsh weather conditions and Council's available resources.

Council is currently in the process of auditing all playground equipment in the Shire. A five year replacement program is currently within the Council's Management Plan for 2007/2008-2011/2012 to replace all playground equipment in the Shire that currently does not meet Australian Standards (AS 4685).

Funding is regularly sought by Council for specific projects relating to parks and playing fields.

Funding will be sought through grant applications to assist with a replacement program for equipment established for parks and playing fields throughout the Shire.

These above facilities are able to be booked by contacting:

Council's Customer Service Officer – Lands on 6828 6117



Youth Development Officer

Council employs a Youth Development Officer who is responsible for co-ordinating staff and overseeing all activities and programs organised for the young people at the Youth Centres, Vacation Care Programs, Youth Week, Youth Harmony Days, and other relevant activities. The Youth Development Officer also works with other organisations such as Sport and Recreation, Mission Australia, Murdi Paaki, Youth off the Streets, Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service, Primary and High Schools, PCYC and the local Police to provide quality programs and activities for the youth in the Shire.

The Youth Development Officer pursues funding opportunities for any activities or services associated with Youth across the Walgett Shire.

For further information please contact the Youth Development Officer on 6828 6126

Youth Centres - located in Walgett, Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge

After school activities are organised by Council youth workers for children aged between 5-17 years of age. Activities include sport, cultural, music, film, dance, art and craft. Other youth orientated and visiting organisations and artists also work with the youth at the youth centres. Vacation Care programs are also located at the Youth Centres.

- The Youth Centre in Walgett operates from 3-6pm Monday to Thursday.
- The Youth Centres in Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge operate from 3-6pm Monday to Thursday during school terms and provide vacation care during the school holidays from 9am-1pm and

Structured programs are coordinated at the Youth Centres and partnerships with organisations such as Department of Sport and Recreation, Murdi Paaki and Community Churches have been established. In addition, BEST Employment coordinates workplace training from the Walgett Youth Centre.

Walgett Youth Centre is currently investigating a "No School –No- Youth Centre" policy that will assist in addressing school truancy issues.

Library Services

Libraries are located in Walgett and Lightning Ridge

These services are utilised by young people of all ages and have Information Technology available for research purposes.

For further information please contact:

Lightning Ridge Library: 68290 0005

Walgett Library: 6828 6103

Deposit stations are located in Burren Junction, Carinda and Collarenebri and have a range of books available for young people. The deposit stations are operated by volunteers.



4.4 Recommendations

- 4.1.1 Council continues to support services for young people aged 14-24 years.
- 4.1.2 Council support programs initiated by Government agencies that address alcohol and substance abuse by young people.
- 4.1.3 Council support the establishment of 'drop in' centres with in the Shire for young people where they can avail themselves of information, encouragement and support.
- 4.1.4 Council with the support of Education staff encourage students to participate in the School to Work program.
- 4.1.5 Council promote and implement the 'School to Work' Program to all businesses in the Shire, through it's Economic Development Officer, Aboriginal Liaison Officer and the Community Liaison Officer.



5. WOMEN

5.1 Demographics

Statistics are taken from the 2006 census QuickStats – Postal Area. Collated statistics show 44.8% of the population or 2251 people were female.

By contrast 55.2% of the population or 4152 were males.

Social indicators demonstrate that women not only have lower socio-economic status, but have less employment and educational opportunities, lower incomes, are poorly represented in high status occupations and high income brackets and are over represented in part-time and casual work.

For many women, lack of accessible and affordable child care restricts their opportunities to gain employment.

5.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire

There are very few women specific services in Walgett Shire. Some services offered include:

Health Services

Walgett and Lightning Ridge Health Services offer:

- Women's Health Nurse
- Sexual Assault Nurse

General Practitioner

A female General Practitioner visits Walgett and Lightning Ridge for appointments at regular intervals.

Appointments can be made by contacting:

<i>Walgett Aboriginal Medical Services -</i>	<i>6828 1611</i>
<i>Walgett Medical Practice-</i>	<i>6828 2133</i>

Women's Safe Houses

- Barwon Cottage, Walgett
- Coocoran Cottage, Lightning Ridge

Yawarra Meamei Women's Group

Yawarra Meamei Women's Group, Lightning Ridge provide information, advice, referral, court support and host a women's group in conjunction with the Lightning Ridge and Regional Trans Cultural Centre once per month.

For further information contact the Co-ordinator on 6829 2014



Domestic Violence Organisations

- Walanbaa Yinnar Vharoo – The Walgett Violence Prevention Unit provides legal advice, support and assistance to women.
- A Domestic Violence Counselor visits Walgett at monthly intervals for referrals and appointments.

For further information contact the Co-ordinator on 6828 3143

Country Women's Association

The Country Women's Association has members across the Shire and holds monthly meetings in Collarenebri, Lightning Ridge and Walgett. The CWA holds fund raising activities, supports drought relief programs and offers scholarships to local medical students.

5.4 Recommendations

- 5.1.1 Shire Council support initiatives by the Health Services to recruit family and domestic violence counsellors.
- 5.1.2 Council continue to support proposals to increase the availability of accessible and affordable child care throughout the Shire.



6. OLDER PEOPLE

6.1 Demographics

Statistics are taken from the 2006 Census QuickStats – Postal Area. Collated statistics show 27% of the population or 2026 people were aged 55 years or over.

The average age of Australians is increasing and the with the retirement of the ‘baby boomers’ ageing of the population is forecast to increase even further over the coming years.

The ‘aged’, ‘older persons’, ‘senior citizens’, ‘elderly’ are all terms used by society to describe people judged by society to be advanced in years in comparison with others.

These terms are influenced by government references when attempting to categorise people for retirement incomes, pensions, and concession rates for government services.

6.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire

There are many services for the older residents of Walgett Shire. These services are usually Home and Community Care funded and concentrate on people who are frail aged and/or disabled.

Health Service Care

Acute health care, community health care, palliative care, emergency care and ambulance services are located at Collarenebri, Lightning Ridge and Walgett Health Services. The three Health Services all offer periods of respite care for people who are frail/aged and people with disabilities.

For further information please call:

<i>Collarenebri Health Service</i>	<i>6756 4888</i>
<i>Lightning Ridge Health Service</i>	<i>6829 9900</i>
<i>Walgett Health Service</i>	<i>6828 6000</i>

Community Health

Walgett and Lightning Ridge Health Services provide domiciliary and palliative care nursing to clients in all towns and most villages in the Shire.

The Greater Western Area Health Service's Mental Health Team provides support, information and referrals for people with Mental Health disabilities.

For further information please contact:

<i>Walgett Health Service</i>	<i>6828 6000</i>
<i>Lightning Ridge Health Service</i>	<i>6829 9900</i>



Home Care

- Home Care Service of NSW has offices in Walgett, Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge and service provision is offered across the Shire.

For further information please contact the Co-ordinators on:

<i>Collarenebri and Walgett</i>	<i>6828 1338</i>
<i>Lightning Ridge</i>	<i>6829 0711</i>

- North West Area Community Options have offices Walgett, Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge and provides case management to clients across the Shire.

For further information please contact the North West Community Options Co-ordinator on 6756 2547.

- Ngangana Aboriginal Home Care are available in Walgett, Lightning Ride and Collarenebri.
- Ngangana, Aboriginal Community Options provides case management to aboriginal people in the communities of Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Goodooga.

For further information please contact the Ngangana Aboriginal Home Care Co-ordinator on 6828 1212.

Hostels for the Aged

- Kookaburra Court Aged Accommodation Hostel offers full time supported accommodation for 8 residents. When accommodation is available respite care may also be offered.
- Wallengulla Aged Care Units in Lightning Ridge provide accommodation for up to 12 people who are aged.
- Earls Court in Collarenebri consists of 4 single units and 4 double units and is available for Aboriginal people who are aged.

ACAT Nurse

An Aged Care Assessment Team nurse works across the Shire from the Walgett Health Service and provides nursing home and hostel assessment and support for families in the Shire with ageing members.

For further information please contact the Walgett Health Service on 6828 6000.



Day Care Services / Social Club

Day Care offers centre based activities, information, support and outings for people who are aged and/or disabled in the community

- Balyarta Day Care Centre is attached to Walgett Hospital/Health Services. Different age groups meet at Balyarta on different days. The Coordinator also visits Collarenebri and Burren Junction regularly to offer Day Care services.
- A Seniors Social Club meets in Balyarta weekly.
- The Day Care Centre in Lightning Ridge is auspiced by the Home Care of NSW, and operates from the Lightning Ridge Bowling Club.

For further information please contact:

<i>Walgett</i>	<i>The Co-ordinator</i>	<i>6828 6000</i>
<i>Lightning Ridge</i>	<i>The Co-ordinator</i>	<i>6829 0711</i>

Meals on Wheels Services

Meals on Wheels (Mobile Food Services) are available in Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri. Frozen meals are also available for aged residents across the Shire.

For further information please contact the Community Options Co-ordinator on 6756 2247

Ngangana Aboriginal Meals on Wheels Services provides Meals on Wheels to aboriginal people who live in Collarenebri, Lightning Ridge and Walgett.

For further information please contact the Co-ordinator on 6828 1212

Community Transport

Community Transport offers limited service provision for shopping in Walgett and Lightning Ridge and limited health related transport from Walgett and Lightning only to major centres.

For further information please contact the Co-ordinator on 6829 1309

Care Services

- Yarrabin Outreach offers respite care in Walgett, Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge.
- Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service provide primary health care, community health care, health promotion, health education and health related transport to their clients.
- Outback Division of General Practice provides general health care, promotion and physical activities such as aqua-aerobics.
- Legacy (and local legatees) provide support to widows and children of war veterans in Walgett and Lightning Ridge.
- Returned Soldiers League provides support and referral advice to Returned Service Men and their families across the Shire.



Aboriginal Elders

Walgett Dharriwaa Elders Group promotes Aboriginal culture and understanding in the Walgett Community

For further information please contact the Elders Group on 6828 2619

Clubs

A number of Clubs throughout the Shire offer activities for older people. These include:

- RSL Clubs in Collarenebri, Lightning Ridge and Walgett
- Lightning Ridge Bowling Club
- Walgett Sporting Club

6.3 WALGETT SHIRE COUNCIL OPERATED SERVICES

While Council does not operate services for Older People, the services that are available in the Walgett Shire are supported by Council.

6.4 Recommendations

- 6.1.1 Council support initiatives to meet the demand for facilities and services in aged care including housing, personal care, transport and recreational needs.
- 6.1.2 Council support proposals to increase service provision of programmes aimed at the 'well' aged to assist them to remain at home in order that they can continue to self-care.
- 6.1.3 Council support funding submissions by organisations and agencies for Independent Living Unit Accommodation.
- 6.4.4. Council support proposals for increased mental and general health care agencies for ageing people through the State and Commonwealth Government for residents of the Shire.



7. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

7.1 Demographics

Community Profile Information from the 2006 ABS Census will not be available until the end of October 2007.

Disabled Support Pension Recipients 1995-2000	1995	1996	1997	2000
Disabled Support Pension Recipients	462	465	487	493
Child Disability Allowance				66
Care Payment				40
TOTAL				599

Source: - Department of Social Security / Note: 2001 Data Centrelink 2000 Qtr 2

The high growth rate of older age groups has created a corresponding increase in demand for community support, medical, hospital, and geriatric services and nursing home and hostel accommodation.

Additional pressure is placed on families, friends, and neighbours to provide care to people whose functional abilities have diminished as a result of ageing.

Government funding now supports people to remain in their own homes in the community for as long as possible and recognizes that provision of community support services is less costly than providing supported accommodation.

7.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire

There are many services for the residents of Walgett Shire who are frail aged and/or disabled.

For further information please refer to services listed in this document for Older People

Children with Disabilities

- There are approximately 25 disabled children who are clients of the Department of Community Services. These children are from Walgett, Lightning Ridge, Collarenebri and Coonamble
- NOVA Employment is a Commonwealth funded program that provides employment opportunities and training for people with disabilities in the hospitality industry in CAFÉ 64 located in Wee Waa Street, Walgett.

For further information please contact the Manager of NOVA Employment on 6828 3440.



- REACH Early Intervention provides information, support and referral for families of children with disabilities in the Shire

For further information please contact McKillop Rural Services on 68825949

- Mission Australia's Housing and Supported Information –level 2 - program provides support and referral for people with mental health issues in Walgett and Lightning Ridge.

For further information please contact the Co-ordinator on 6882 5949

7.3 Walgett Shire Council Operated Services

While Council does not operate services for People with Disabilities, the services that are available in the Walgett Shire are supported by Council.

7.4 Recommendations

- 7.1.1 Council support agencies seeking funding possibilities that will enable the opportunity to increase health related transport across the Shire.
- 7.1.2 Council support organisations and agencies to increase Allied Health, Mental Health and Therapy Service provision across the Shire.
- 7.1.3 Council develop, as a priority, a Disability Action Plan through a process of consultation with people with disabilities, service providers and the community to enable compliance with planning needs.
- 7.1.4 Council provide disabled access to all Council owned buildings.
- 7.1.5 Council support and give encouragement to people with disabilities so that they are aware of available staff training opportunities



8. ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

8.1 Demographics

Walgett Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Aboriginal people of the Shire.

By striving towards a common sense of purpose, working together through issues and sharing experiences, we believe that reconciliation will be advanced at the local level. The community, as a whole, will then be better informed about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspirations and concerns.

Reconciliation activity at the local level is essential to the future of a better society. Change for the better comes about when local communities have an opportunity to participate in change. We need to identify the common ground and develop with quality the nature of our relationship.

Statistics collated from the 2006 Census QuickStats - Postal Area show that 2204 Aboriginal people live in the Shire. This is 29.37% of the total population.

ABS 2006 data indicates there is a continuing increase in the number of indigenous people who live in the Walgett Shire. The Australian Bureau of Statistics suggests that the increase in population counts is partly due to an increasing willingness to self-identify and to report all members of the household as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI).

Statistics below are taken from the 2006 Census Quick Stats – Postal Area
Indigenous persons (comprises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders)

TOWN	PERSONS	POPULATION %
Walgett	990	35.6
Lightning Ridge	554	21.3
Collarenebri	374	37.9
Carinda	249	34.2
Rowena	17	6.2
Burren Junction	20	15.4
TOTAL	2204	29.37

Walgett GLA ATSI Demographic Summary

ATSI	1991	1996	2001	2006	%Change 1996-2006
Persons	1513	1764	1781	2204	36.29
ATSI as % of Population	18.4	20.6	21.4	29.37	34.04

The age distribution of the indigenous population and total population differ in that the indigenous population is much younger. This reflects the high birth rate and mortality rates of the indigenous population who are considered to be 'old' at the age of 45 years.



There appears to be a consensus amongst Government departments and service providers that the Aboriginal people are represented by larger numbers in Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri than those actually identified in the 2006 Census Collection. Walgett has the largest Aboriginal community in the Shire.

Aboriginal Strategy

Strategies are to be developed in consultation with the Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri Community Working Parties, the Community Action Plan and the employment of the Community Facilitators (until 2008) whose roles are to implement the Community Action Plans under the Murdi Paaki Partnership Program. These strategies will include improving education, housing, health and employment opportunities, and reducing the level of alcohol and substance abuse, gambling and anti social behavior.

8.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire

While the main aim of services in the Walgett Shire is to help the Aboriginal communities, non-Aboriginal people are also welcome to access the services. In many cases, both formal and informal partnerships are evident for events and services.

Murdi Paaki Partnership Program Community Facilitators, Walgett / Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge/Goodooga

The facilitators of the programs are primarily responsible for facilitating the implementation of initiatives and strategies to assist in the resolution of social and economic issues in the Walgett Local Government Area of NSW as part of the Murdi Paaki Partnership Program.

One of the objectives is to build on the strong working relationship between Walgett Shire Council, the Community Working Parties in each town, the business Communities as well as State and Commonwealth Government and the Shire Community in general.

For further information please contact the facilitators on:

Collarenebri/Walgett 6828 3533
Goodooga/Lightning Ridge 6829 1888

Networking and Community Consultation with Aboriginal Communities

The Community Facilitators, Interagency and Community Working Parties are the main conduits for consultation between the Aboriginal communities and Government agencies. There are in the main, three groups of Aboriginal people in the Shire with many sub-groupings that are variable. Variations can occur according to the issue under discussion, the state of inter-family relationships and the fluidity of internal community politics. Extensive community consultations are important with each issue raised.

Community Working Parties

Since 2001 Council has supported the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Trial by working closely with actively networking with the Community Working Parties. It is planned that Council will maintain ongoing networking relationships with the Community Working Parties.



Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service Co-operative Limited (WAMS)

Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service (WAMS) provides a comprehensive Health Service and Healthy Living Programs for Aboriginal people and other members of the Shire Community.

Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service also provides outreach service to Collarenebri and other locations in the Shire.

WAMS Services include:-

General practitioner, dental, community nursing, health screening, health education, referrals, advocacy and crisis intervention, transport.

For further information please contact WAMS on 6828 1611

A summary of services available in Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri include the following:-

WALGETT	LIGHTNING RIDGE	COLLARENEBRI
Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service	Barriekneal Housing Limited	Collarenebri Land Council
Walgett Land Council	Lightning Ridge Land Council	Aboriginal Community Enterprise Service
Walgett Community Working Party	Lightning Ridge CDEP	Mangankali CDEP
Western Aboriginal Legal Service	Ngangana Home Care Service of New South Wales	Ngangana Home Care Service of New South Wales
Walginnam CDEP	Ngangana North West Area Community Options	Ngangana North West Area Community Options
Murdi Paaki Partnership Program	Lightning Ridge Working Party	Collarenebri Working Party
Ngangana Home Care Service	Yawarra Meamei	Murdi Paaki Partnership Program
Ngangana North West Area Community Options	Lightning Ridge Community Working Party	
Koolyangarra Pre School	Murdi Paaki Partnership Program	
Walanbaa Yinnar Wharoo		
Dharriwaa Elders Group		

8.3 Walgett Shire Council Operated Services

While Council does not operate services for Aboriginal People, the services that are available in the Walgett Shire are supported by Council.



8.4 Recommendations

- 8.4.1 Council continue to support and encourage employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.
- 8.4.2 Council continues its efforts to encourage better understanding of cultural awareness and sharing of differences by liaising and communicating with the community.
- 8.4.3 Council support programs initiated by Governments and Aboriginal Organisations to improve accommodation for Aboriginal people.
- 8.4.4 Council support programs that allow for educational opportunities within the Shire to enhance cultural and diversity awareness.



9. PEOPLE FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

9.1 Demographics

Currently Walgett Shire residents represent some 65 different countries. The Shire's largest Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community is in Lightning Ridge where over 55 different nationalities have been counted.

Prior to the 1996 census, residents of the Lightning Ridge CALD community organised a publicity campaign so that the ethnic community would be accurately represented in the data gathered.

Unfortunately, many people chose not to participate and consequently census figures do not accurately represent the ethnic diversity or accurate population of Lightning Ridge.

9.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire

Lightning Ridge and Regional Transcultural Community Council

The Lightning Ridge and Region Transcultural Community Council Inc. (TCC) started operating in Lightning Ridge in January 1996 with State and Federal Funding for the employment of one worker.

The service operates from the Neighbourhood Centre and is available to migrants, service providers, and general community for information and referral service assistance also providing information for the access of Translator Interpreter Services (TIS).

The Migrant Information and Referral Service (MIRS) worker is available on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

The TCC continues to play a very proactive role in the community, working towards cultural harmony and better understanding of cultural differences.

TCC Migrant Information and Referral services are available to all communities in the Shire on a needs basis.

For further information please contact the co-ordinator on 6829 2014

Outcomes from Local Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (LEAPS)

Walgett Shire Council's LEAPS aims to achieve the following outcomes over the next 3 years:

- People from the wider community and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Walgett Shire will enjoy mutual respect for each other.
- The Walgett Shire community will value and respect the cultural diversity and the similarities of its people.
- Council services will be better able to meet the needs of the people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will be better able to meet their own needs.



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- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will be more aware of and able to access Council's services and facilities

9.3 Walgett Shire Council Operated Services

While Council does not operate services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the services that are available in the Walgett Shire are supported by Council.

9.4 Recommendations

- 9.4.1 Due to the ageing of CALD residents Walgett Shire Council support service providers seeking to secure additional hostel and nursing home beds, especially for people with dementia.
- 9.4.2 Walgett Shire Council continually review LEAPS with the view to the ongoing education of staff when dealing with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- 9.4.3 Walgett Shire Council continue staff training sessions for better understanding and compliance with EAPS guidelines.
- 9.4.4 Walgett Shire Council ensure people from diverse cultural backgrounds have equitable access to services.



10. ACCESS AND TRANSPORT

10.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire

Public transport in the Walgett Shire is limited to air and road.

Air

Walgett and Lightning Ridge have airstrips provided by Walgett Shire Council and regulated by the Australian Government's Civil Aviation Safety Authority. Burren Junction, Carinda and Collarenebri have Aircraft landing Areas which are not regulated.

The Air Ambulance Services also use these strips when patients have to be flown out to larger medical centres. In times of emergencies, the strips at Walgett and Lightning Ridge are of a suitable standard for large fixed wing aircraft to land. Walgett Shire Council has also provided several wider stretches of road between Walgett and Brewarrina that are designed to be used by aircraft in emergencies.

Charter flights are common from all towns in the Shire and some individuals either have their own plane or hire a plane from the Aero Club in Walgett. Hangers are provided for lease at Walgett. In Lightning Ridge, privately owned hangars are built on land purchased from Council.

Air Link provides a week day service from Dubbo to Coonamble, Walgett and Lightning Ridge and return. Passengers change aircraft in Dubbo to continue their journeys elsewhere.

Road

The majority of roads in the Walgett Shire are a combination of black soil and bitumen with some red soil and gravel in the northern part of the Shire. Walgett Shire Council continues to seal roads as funding becomes available. Black soil roads become impassable in wet weather.

Walgett township has two major highways in N.S.W. crossing each other in the centre of the town. The Kamileroi Highway passes through the Shire from east to west. The Castlereagh Highway passes through the Shire from north to south. Approximately 15km north of Walgett, the Gwydir Highway joins the Castlereagh Highway. The Gwydir Highway travels north east through Collarenebri to Moree and beyond.

A return daily coach service operates between Lightning Ridge, Walgett and Dubbo, stopping at all towns between Dubbo and Lightning Ridge so that passengers can connect with the XPT to Sydney. The coach departs Lightning Ridge and then Walgett in the early morning 2 days per week to allow people time in Dubbo if they need to access specialist and other appointments in Dubbo and return home the same day.

Collarenebri has no public transport but has a community bus which travels to Moree one day per week.

Access in towns and Villages

Council recognises the need to continue to upgrade and/or develop footpaths, curbing and guttering in towns and villages to allow ease of pedestrian access for residents across the Shire.



10.2 Recommendations

- 10.1.1 Council support proposals to provide and improve transport services between towns and outlying villages in the Shire and to regional centres.
- 10.1.2 Council continue to audit the condition of footpaths in the central business districts of towns and prioritise areas in greatest need of replacement and up grading to allow ease of access for residents.
- 10.1.3 Council, through it's Engineering Department, lobby for additional funding to upgrade footways throughout the major towns within the Shire and outlying villages.
- 10.1.4 Council provide in kind and support to service providers who are endeavouring to seek funding to improve transport and access for residents within the Shire.



11. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

11.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire

Throughout the Shire, individuals in organisations are working to develop the communities by helping people to achieve for themselves rather than solving a problem for them.

Murdi Paaki Partnership Project

The Murdi Paaki Partnership Project has appointed two community facilitators, one for the Lightning Ridge/Goodooga communities and one for the Walgett/Collarenebri communities.

Community Working Parties working under the Council of Australian Government's Murdi Paaki Region Trial operates in Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri. NSW Premier's Department oversees Interagency meetings held monthly in Lightning Ridge and Walgett for all Service Providers.

Neighbourhood Centre Lightning Ridge

The Neighbourhood Centre in Lightning Ridge is the only formal centre of its type in the Walgett Shire and is mainly operated by volunteers.

Funding from Department of Community Services and the Department of Transport pays for the services of 1.5 staff. Non Government Organisation funding pays for two ethnic advisory officers who work from the Neighbourhood Centre. A range of services includes issuing emergency relief vouchers, transporting frail aged and disabled people to specialists' appointments out of town and to functions in town, acting as a referral point for the community and assisting elderly people living in camps on the opal fields with a range of services that allow the person to remain independent and to retain dignity.

Community Organisations

Community organisations, clubs and associations exist throughout the Shire. Each community organisations has a particular focus and consists of members with similar interests or beliefs. While each organisation, club and association is contributing to the social infrastructure of the community, it is suggested that more interaction and communication would reduce the duplication of services and polarisation of individuals.

Many informal local networks exist between service providers who refer clients to the most appropriate avenue of assistance. Lightning Ridge Service providers and Walgett Service Providers hold regular meetings. These networks offer opportunities for information sharing, a networking communal approach to planning and lobbying for services, advocacy and support.

In order to sustain effectiveness, these networks need to continually self evaluate their direction and purpose.

Community Halls

Walgett Shire Council owns Community Halls in Collarenebri, Rowena and Carinda, which are available for community purposes.

For further information please contact the Customer Service Officer – Lands on 6828 6117



12. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

12.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire

Education

Education provides the opportunities for our children, youth and individuals at large, to have the opportunity to have equal bargaining power, to enter the labour force with equity.

A wide variety of school environments exist across the Shire. It is important that education is seen as a lifetime job and that acquisition of skills, formally or informally acquired, is conducive to an improved quality of life.

The Council strives to provide adequate facilities and works with other agencies to encourage all families to maximise their educational potential.

Available educational facilities:

Burren Junction Primary School	Kindergarten to year 6
Carinda Primary School	Kindergarten to year
Collarenebri Central School	Kindergarten to year 12
Lightning Ridge Central School	Kindergarten to year 12
Rowena Primary School	Kindergarten to year 6
Walgett St. Joseph's Primary School	Kindergarten to year 6
Walgett Community College High School	Years 7-12
Walgett Community College Primary School	Kindergarten to year 6
TAFE Campuses are located at Lightning Ridge and Walgett	

Many children in Walgett Shire travel long distances by bus to attend school and for those for whom this is not possible, Distance Education is available. Distance Education is offered by the Community College - Public School (through the Bourke Campus), and Walgett Community College -High School

After completing Primary School, some young people leave to attend Boarding Schools for High School education. The reasons given for this are family tradition, better education and broader curriculum available at larger schools. This can then impact on the overall results of the High Schools in the Shire.

Educationalists find it difficult to convince many students that formal educational qualifications are important because of the lack of local employment opportunities and the belief that opal mining and other labouring employment opportunities do not need formal qualifications.

To gain tertiary qualifications and some trades, students have to go to a city or larger towns. Many students do not have the necessary financial and familial support to take up education, training and employment opportunities outside the Shire. This means that the students who remain in the Shire must be educated to live a better quality of life within their community environment.

Both Walgett Community College and Lightning Ridge Central School offer programs and opportunities to encourage young mothers and mature age students to further their education.

Best Employment assist job seekers to find work and that helps employers find suitable staff.



The Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business is located in Orange. The Walgett Aboriginal Education Unit a part of this department.

Barwon Darling Alliance was born out of a desire of the Murdi Paaki Regional Council of ATSIC and the Shires of Bourke, Brewarrina, Central Darling, Coonamble, Moree Plains and Walgett to address their common regional concerns regarding high unemployment and serious quality of life issues including education. The Alliance includes 24 towns and covers almost 20 per cent of NSW



13. HEALTH

13.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire

Health Services in Walgett Shire are part of the Castlereagh Sector of the Greater Western West Area Health Service. The administration for the Castlereagh Sector is in Coonabarabran.

The area is subdivided into sectors for management purposes.

Walgett Hospital and Health Service

The Walgett Health Service is the major Health Service in the Shire and Walgett District Hospital is a second schedule hospital under the provisions of the Public Hospitals Act 1992. The Service provides health care for all residents and visitors in the Shire with most patients coming from Walgett and the surrounding districts. When necessary, the hospital accepts referrals and patients from the Lightning Ridge, Collarenebri and Goodooga Health Services.

Walgett Health Service Comprises of 31 beds, 23 acute and 8 aged care (Peg Cross Nursing Home). Other services provided are general medical, pathology, radiology, paediatrics, midwifery, palliative, respite, 24 hour accident and emergency and a 3 bed high dependency unit. The Walgett Hospital and Health Service includes an operating theatre that is used by visiting specialists for minor surgery. Nursing staff care for patients in both aged and community areas.

For further information please contact the Walgett Health Service on 6828 6000

Lightning Ridge Multi Purpose Centre and Health Service

2006 saw the completion of a multipurpose service facility in Lightning Ridge under the Rural Hospitals and Health Services Program with 24 beds – meeting acute care, aged care and respite needs.

There are 4 holding beds for patients being transferred to a referral centre. Emergency patients currently are transferred to Walgett for minor conditions, and usually to Dubbo if further treatment is required. The Emergency Department operates from the Multi Purpose Centre and is open from 7.30 to 10.30 with a call out service provided after hours.

For further information please contact the Lightning Ridge Health Service on 6829 9900

Goodooga (which is situated in the Brewarrina Shire) has its own community health service and low level hospital. However its residents access Walgett and Lightning Ridge Health Services for specialist and other services.

Visiting medical specialist services including ophthalmologist, surgeon, gynaecologist, obstetrician, podiatrist, physiotherapist, pathologist, occupational therapist are provided on a regular basis at both Walgett and Lightning Ridge



Collarenebri Multi Purpose Centre and Health Service

2006 saw the completion of a multipurpose service and facility under the Rural Hospital and Health Service Program, incorporating acute, aged care and allied health, outpatients, emergency, community and Aboriginal Health Services. There is usually one medical officer in town who provides a general practice and on call services. Radiology services are provided by licensed registered nurses. Regular visiting health staff come from Walgett, Dubbo, Lightning Ridge and Moree.

For further information please contact the Collarenebri Health Service on 6756 4888

The Villages of Burren Junction, Rowena, Pokataroo, Carinda, Come By Chance, Cumborah, and opal mining areas of Grawin, Glengarry, Sheeppark are communities within the Shire who access services in the larger centres or have access to visiting Community Health Services.

Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service (WAMS)

WAMS is a community controlled organisation Members vote for the nine directors annually. WAMS charter is to provide high quality pro-active health care in includes Post Natal Clinics, General Practitioner Clinics, Dental, Eye, Family, Ear, Men's, Public, Mental, Sexual, Diabetes Health and Drug and Alcohol Counselling. WAMS has an Aboriginal Health Workers based in Collarenebri, operates the Goonimoo Mobil Children Services, Vacation Care Programs and manages the Brewarrina Aboriginal Medical Health Service. Many of these services are provided on an outreach basis to more remote towns and villages. Specific program funded services also travel to other locations beyond the Walgett Shire

For further information please contact WAMS on 6828 1611

Outback Division of General Practice

Outback Division of General Practice offers support to service providers in the Walgett Shire through general health promotion and exercise activities for residents to attend.

For further information please contact the Division's office on 6828 2133

Rural and Remote Medical Services and Ochre Health Services provide and support medical practitioners who work in Collarenebri, Lightning Ridge and Walgett.



14. RURAL

14.1 Demographics

Walgett Shire is recognised as a major grain growing area in Australia. In good seasons it can be the biggest chick pea growing region in the world and have the largest grain receival sites in the Southern Hemisphere. Cattle feedlots, and to a lesser extent, sheep feed lots also operate in the Shire. Walgett Shire has suffered ongoing drought conditions for the past six years which has caused economic, physical and mental health issues in all communities in the Shire.

When detailing the problems and lifestyle difficulties that are faced by a rural and remote community, the people who live out of town on properties need to be included. These people contribute as much to the whole community as do the people in town though their problems and requirements may differ.

Walgett Shire Council Rate Assessments show that currently there are 903 rural properties in the Walgett Shire that usually contribute approximately \$2,822.462 in general rate revenue i.e.72.30 % of total general rates.

Agricultural activities have historically been the major income producer in the Shire. However, the ongoing drought has severely reduced all agricultural activities and potential income.

14.2 Current Services in Walgett Shire

There are numerous rural agencies located in the three major towns offering service provision and information across the Shire. These include:

- Grain trading
- Agronomy
- Livestock trading
- Wool Trading
- Shearing and livestock contractors
- Rural Transport
- Cotton related industries
- Rural contractors
- Rural Counsellor
- Machinery Traders and contractors

Government departments include:

- Department of Primary Industries
- Department of Lands
- Western Catchment Management Authority
- Namoi Catchment Management Authority



15. HOUSING

Walgett

Walgett township is situated on a black soil flood plain with the town perimeter a levee bank. Walgett has both public and private housing and includes housing owned by Aboriginal Housing, Aboriginal Land Council and Murdi Paaki Housing.

Private rental accommodation is very scarce. The greatest call on housing in Walgett is in the rental market for local people, transient professionals and employees, other than teachers and police whose housing is owned by their relevant departments and is rarely available for other rental opportunities.

Because such a large percentage of the Walgett population is in receipt of a pension or benefit, many people find it impossible to save the required deposit for the purchase of their own home.

Aboriginal and Murdi Paaki Housing is specifically for Aboriginal people and have funding to purchase or build further houses to relocate Aboriginal people and relieve the overcrowded conditions in which some people live. Namoi Village and Gingie Mission are two Aboriginal communities outside the levee bank.

The Department of Housing has a limited stock of houses that are fully occupied. An officer from the Department visits Walgett every fortnight for the convenience of tenants.

Centrelink now allows people in receipt of pensions and benefits to elect have rent payments automatically deducted from their payments. This has been greatly appreciated by both tenants and landlords.

Lightning Ridge

Housing in Lightning Ridge includes housing in the township with supplied amenities and houses and camps on mining leases with no available running water or electricity. There are no Department of Housing homes in Lightning Ridge.

Private rental accommodation is also scarce and expensive. This adds to the difficulty of attracting professional staff to Lightning Ridge.

Barriekneal Housing Corporation is an Aboriginal owned and controlled housing company that builds and manages housing stock specifically for Aboriginal people.

Providers of human services in Lightning Ridge are anticipating an additional shortage of housing suitable for elderly people in the next few years as individuals who are at present just coping with living independently, will soon no longer be able do so.

Collarenebri

Housing and land in Collarenebri is currently cheaper than in other centres in the Shire. Rental accommodation again is scarce. Services are limited in the town and unless an individual has access to private transport, life can become very restrictive. Wollie, an Aboriginal Reserve is situated one kilometre from Collarenebri.



Other villages

Housing and land are cheaper in all villages than they are in the three major centres in the Shire. Again rental accommodation is very scarce. All services are very limited in villages. Residents need to be able to access private transport to be able to visit other areas.



16. ARTS AND CULTURE

16.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire

Culture and the arts need to be recognised as playing an essential role in the well being of sound communities.

The identification of arts and cultural issues within a community needs to be seen as a key aspect of Walgett Shire Council's responsibility.

Aboriginal Art and Culture is a large feature in the Shire.

The Shire recognises there are many local talented artists and performers living within its boundaries. The people in a culturally diverse rural and remote Shire such as ours would benefit profoundly if the community had an equitable opportunity to participate in arts and crafts. It is recognised that arts and crafts offer a powerful tool in developing self esteem for our geographically as well as culturally isolated community.

The youth in the Shire, in particular, experience cultural isolation, and need to be offered an opportunity to participate in the arts and develop a better awareness of the arts.

Arts and crafts offer people an opportunity to new ways of thinking and expression. The opportunity of self-expression through the arts is very rewarding for individuals, groups and communities and the community as a whole benefit from recognizing the value of arts and culture within it.

The arts and cultural industries are to be defined as including the following activities:

Museums, antiques and collectables, environmental heritage, libraries and archives, literature and print media composition and publishing, theatre, music, visual arts and crafts, design, film, television and other electronic broadcasting and distribution.

Outback Arts Council

Walgett Shire Council makes a contribution to the Outback Arts Council towards the development of arts and culture and the enjoyment of the arts and culture.

Outback Arts Incorporated offers and establishes innovative and operational plans for the continued development of arts and culture in the Walgett Shire.

Art

- Arts and Crafts produced by local people are offered for sale through local businesses and tourist facilities located across the Shire.
- Art Galleries situated in Lightning Ridge offer works of art for sale and viewing.
- Aboriginal Artwork and crafts are for sale in Lightning Ridge while limited sale opportunities exist in Walgett.
- Museums, Historical Societies and libraries are situated in Walgett and Lightning Ridge.
- 'Waste to Art' competitions are conducted in Walgett and Lightning Ridge.



Historical Societies

Museums are located in Lightning Ridge and Walgett and are operated by committees and volunteers.

Lightning Ridge

- The museum is located in Morilla Street
- Opening hours are 10am-4pm - Monday, Friday and Saturday

For further information please contact the Chairman of the Historical Society on 0419 639 120

Walgett

- The museum is located in the Old Council Chambers in Fox Street
- The museum is open limited hours

For further information please contact the Chairman of the Historical Society on 6828 1252

16.2 walgett shire council operated services

Libraries

- Libraries are operated by Council in Lightning Ridge and Walgett
- Library Deposit stations are available in Burren Junction, Carinda and Collarenebri

For further information in Library Services please refer to the next section in the document



17. LIBRARY SERVICES

17.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire

TAFE offer a mobile library service to Grawin up 3 times per year.

17.2 Walgett Shire Council Operated Services

Library Services

The Walgett Shire is a member of the Northern Regional Library and Information Service, located within and managed by Moree Plains Shire Council.

The Northern Regional Library and Information Service provide an informational and recreational resource to the residents of the shires of Brewarrina, Moree Plains, Walgett and Gwydir.

The Northern Regional Library and Information Service (NRL) aims to develop, maintain and conserve a range of collections, resources and services in order to satisfy the Northern Region community, educational, informational and recreational needs. Staff training and expert advice are provided by the Northern Regional Library to Branch Staff, Council Managers and Councillors.

Walgett Shire pays an annual fee to Moree Plains Shire for provision of library related services and resources. However, Walgett Shire employs the library officers and operates and maintains the two library facilities located in Walgett and Lightning Ridge.

The NRL Library Manager and support staff regularly visits the libraries. NRL also provides support for the library officers, by means of phone support, regular book exchanges and IT support. NRL provide activities such as Story Time for children.

The Walgett Library is located in Wolseley House beside the Walgett Visitor Information Centre. The Lightning Ridge Library is situated next door the Arts and Crafts Shop adjacent to the Sporting Complex. These two libraries are open 15 hours per week.

There are also three library deposit stations in the Shire operated with volunteer support.

- Collarenebri Deposit station is situated in the CWA Rooms and is open either Saturday mornings or on request.
- Burren Junction Library Deposit Station is located in the Burren Junction Post office and is open business hours.
- The Carinda Deposit Station is located in the Carinda Store and is open business hours.

The library services aim to provide a high standard and quality library service that adequately meets the needs of all sections of the community.

Strategies for effective community involvement in Libraries:

- Promotion of exciting changes in Library services.
- Literacy programs.
- Relationship with educational institutions
- Promotion of youth and children's programs



For further information please contact:

Lightning Ridge Library 6829 0005
Walgett Library 6868 6103
Walgett Shire Council 6828 1399



18. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

18.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire

Never before has so much information been available to so many people. Print and electronic media can provide information on any subject. Unfortunately many people do not have the skills to access IT information. This may be due to shortcomings in their education or because technology is not available, accessible or affordable.

Four categories cover the main issues, concerns and needs raised by residents of the Shire.

Cooperation and Networking

The amount of information available is so vast that is impossible for any one organisation to know everything. In order to maintain an acceptable level of service provision to local communities it is necessary that cooperation and sharing of resources, collective development and maintenance of community information resources, and strong links to specialised services and between local services be encouraged.

Information Needs of Clients

It is essential that information is given to people in ways that make sense to them. The delivery of information to the community needs to be conducted in appropriate language and documentation that meets the divers communication skills within the community and is easy to understand and is user friendly.

Often people do not access centrally based information services due to:

- barriers to communication.
- fear of stigmatisation and lack of confidence when dealing with accessing particular information.
- not knowing where to look, or whom to approach, for information.
- are too busy to look for the information.

Information Technology and Communication Infrastructure

Most people are endeavouring to modernise their communication system. CDMA and satellite networks now provide mobile phone coverage for most of the Shire, however CDMA will be shut down early 2008 and the NextG network rolled in. Efficient Internet access is limited.

A large percentage of the population of the Shire are denied access to information technology. Reasons for this include:

- computers are too expensive.
- people are computer illiterate.
- people view computers as being 'too complicated' for them to cope with.
- people view the Internet as being too expensive and too complicated.



19. LEGAL AND SAFETY

19.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire

Walgett is the headquarters for the N.S.W. Police Force Local Area Castlereagh Local Area Command. The area covered includes Walgett, Lightning Ridge, Collarenebri, Pilliga, Coonamble, Goodooga, Carinda, Gulargambone, Burren Junction and Gwabegar.

In Walgett Shire, Lightning Ridge and Walgett stations have a larger proportion of officers while one or two officers serve the other sectors of the police command.

Crime statistics show a variation in the type of crime with most of the crime in the Patrol being alcohol related and domestic incidents, juvenile petty crime and traffic offences. There is a lower level of property crime in Walgett compared with Lightning Ridge partially due of the 'ratting' of opal mines in that town. Statistics currently show a lowering level of street, anti social and behaviour offences in Walgett.

Local courts operate in Walgett and Lightning Ridge with the District Court sitting in Coonamble.

Anecdotal evidence suggests Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse as major concerns within the Shire. Unfortunately because of the sensitive nature of these offences, often people are unwilling to report, address or even acknowledge the serious implications arising from these issues. The long slow process of community education and awareness will be the main strategies that help to minimise these social crimes.

Crime Prevention Plans.

A template for Crime Prevention Plans is to be developed by the N.S.W. Attorney General's Department and forwarded to all local governments in N.S.W. for their use in developing new Community Safety Precinct Plans.

Council, in consultation with the N.S.W. Attorney General's Department, the Castlereagh Local Area Command and the Shire Community is to form a Community Safety Precinct Committee who will then develop a Community Safety Precinct Plan for the Shire.

CCTV in Walgett.

The Walgett Crime Prevention Committee believe effective CCTV coverage in areas in Walgett identified by the local Police as potential 'hot spots' should reduce anti-social behaviour and malicious damage and should encourage business house owners to remove the existing bars and grills.

A recent Safety Audit conducted in Walgett by the Walgett Police Force and submitted to Council recommended, in order:

1. Upgrading and expanding the CCTV in identified areas.
2. Upgrading lighting in identified areas.
3. Town beautification.
4. Gradual removal of bars and grills.

As a result of this audit, Walgett Shire Council is currently seeking funding to upgrade and expand the CCTV coverage in Walgett, with the support of both the Police and the community.



20. RECREATION

20.1 Current Services in Walgett Shire

In Walgett Shire, residents have access to a wide variety of recreational activities.

Each town in the Shire has an Olympic size swimming pool, though these are closed between Easter and the October long weekend. Carinda and Burren Junction have smaller public pools. Adjacent to the pool in Lightning Ridge is a water theme park and a yet to be completed diving pool.

Lightning Ridge, Walgett and Burren Junction have hot bore baths. The Lightning Ridge Bore Bath is very popular with members of the northern European countries who use the pool as a place for social gatherings. The Bore Bath in Walgett has a hoist for disabled people. The Burren Junction Bore Bath has recently been upgraded.

The Norman 'Tracker' Walford Walkway in Walgett is wheelchair accessible and follows the river bank. The track is used regularly and enjoyed by all users. The track signage highlights local vegetation and bush tucker.

Recreation facilities for active sports are quite well provided for within the Shire. Ovals in each town are used for winter and summer sports as well as for occasional outdoor entertainment events. Walgett has a show ground/race course with pavilions and grand stands. Lightning Ridge has a Racecourse and a Rodeo Arena. Collarenebri has a Racecourse.

Council also maintains a number of parks throughout the Shire. With the assistance of a grant, Council is currently establishing a Fitness Track with exercise stations in Apex Park in Walgett

Libraries are located in Walgett and Lightning Ridge. Walgett Shire Council is part of the Northern Regional Library & Information Service and pays an annual fee for the service. Book stock is exchanged every month. Libraries are open for limited hours with paid library officers and volunteers also assist in Lightning Ridge. Library deposit stations are situated in Carinda, Burren Junction and Collarenebri.