



WALGETT SHIRE COUNCIL

Walgett Shire Council report to the community
2019/2020 ANNUAL REPORT



MAYOR MANUEL MARTINEZ

Foreword

To the Ratepayers and Residents of Walgett Shire,

Council has completed a busy and prosperous year with progress continuing to be made on the upgrade and replacement of Council's infrastructure, property, plant and equipment.

Council had a successful financial year, with major work being completed on a number of projects and applications being submitted for major grants for roads, buildings and other infrastructure.

Thank you to the Councillors, our community and volunteers together with our dedicated hard-working staff who have supported our endeavours over the past year.

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YOUR COUNCIL



Mayor
Manuel Martinez
LIGHTNING RIDGE



Deputy Mayor
Ian Woodcock OAM
LIGHTNING RIDGE



Councillor
Jane Keir OAM
COME BY CHANCE



Councillor
Kelly Smith
COLLARENEBRI



Councillor
Bill (Gustavus) Murray
WALGETT



Councillor
Tanya Cameron
ROWENA



Councillor
Michael Taylor
LIGHTNING RIDGE



Councillor
Robbie Turnbull
LIGHTNING RIDGE



Councillor
Lawrence Walford
LIGHTNING RIDGE

COUNCIL SENIOR MANAGEMENT



Acting General Manager/Chief Financial Officer
Michael Urquhart



Director Engineering/Technical Service
Raju Ranjit



Director Environmental Services
Jessica McDonald

COUNCIL ORGANISATIONAL CHART



SNAPSHOT OF SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS

- Burren Junction playground & cycle path & BBQ
- Lions and Earl Park Collarenebri, playground upgrade
- Walgett Showground irrigation installation
- Walgett levee stage 4 rectification
- Rowena drainage improvements
- Completion of Shire parks solar lightning programme
- Bugilbone SR103 rehabilitation project complete
- Hare Street, Carinda gravel resheeting
- Brewon Road gravel resheeting
- SR16 Mercadool Road gravel resheeting
- RR426 Bill O'Brien Way widening and sealing
- RR329 Merrywinebone Road heavy patch
- RR457 Gundabloui Road rehabilitation
- Commencement of Walgett weir on the Barwon River
- Installation of a reserve osmosis plant at Walgett
- Completion of Collarenebri emergency bore

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Local Government Act Section
428 (4) (a)

A copy of the Council's audited financial reports.

See attachment (A): Financial Statements

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES DELIVERY PROGRAM

Local Government Act Section
428 (4) (a)

A report on the Council's actual performance of its Principal Activities during 2019/2020 against the Actions detailed in the Delivery Program.

See attachment (B): 2019/2020 Principal Activities Delivery Program

RATES AND CHARGES WRITTEN OFF

Local Government (General)
Regulation 2005 Clause 132

Rates and Charges written off by Walgett Shire Council during 2019/2020

Description	Amount
Rates - Pension Rebates (S 356 Local Government Act 1993)	\$172,902
Rates - Donations (S 356 Local Government Act 1993)	\$18,806
Total	\$191,708

OVERSEAS TRAVEL

Local Government Act Section 428 (4) (b)
Local Government (General)
Regulation 2005 Clause 217 (1) (a)

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

No overseas travel was undertaken during 2019/2020 by Councillors, Council Staff or persons representing Council.

MAYORAL AND COUNCILLOR FEES

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

A statement of the total amount of money expended during the year on Mayoral fees and Councillor fees, the Council policy on the provision of facilities for use by Councillors and the payment of Councillor's expenses, together with a statement of the total amount of money expended during the year on the provision of such facilities and the payment of such expenses for the 12 month period 1 July 2019 to 30 July 2020.

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

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

Councillor	Mayoral/ Councillor Allowance	Office Expenses	Accommodatio n & Travel	Interstate Visits	Total for each Councillor
<i>Clr Manuel Martinez</i>	\$ 32,057	\$1,080	\$ 21,280	-	\$54,417
<i>Clr Ian Woodcock</i>	\$ 18,792	\$1,080	\$ 20, 830	-	\$40,702
<i>Clr Jane Keir</i>	\$ 12,160	\$1,080	\$ 842	-	\$14,082
<i>Clr Tanya Cameron</i>	\$ 12,160	\$1,080	\$ 460	-	\$13,700
<i>Clr Kelly Smith</i>	\$ 12,160	\$1,080	\$ 1,742	-	\$14,985
<i>Clr Michael Taylor</i>	\$ 12,160	\$1,080	\$ 1,942	-	\$15,182
<i>Clr Bill Murray</i>	\$ 12,160	\$1,080	\$ 831	-	\$14,071
<i>Clr Robbie Turnbull</i>	\$ 12,160	\$ 990	\$ 2,546	-	\$15,696
<i>Clr Lawrence Walford</i>	\$ 12,160	\$1,080	-	-	\$13,240
Total for each Category	\$ 135,970	\$9,630	\$50,476	nil	\$196,076

MAYORAL AND COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE

Council meetings monthly expect in January. A total of 11 ordinary meetings were held in 2019/2020.

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

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

Councillor	Ordinary Council Meetings	Extra-Ordinary Council Meetings	Conferences	Committee Meetings
<i>Clr Ian Woodcock</i>	11	1	1	5
<i>Clr Manuel Martinez</i>	9	0	1	4
<i>Clr Jane Keir</i>	9	1	0	2
<i>Clr Tanya Cameron</i>	6	0	0	0
<i>Clr Michael Taylor</i>	10	1	0	2
<i>Clr Kelly Smith</i>	9	1	0	3
<i>Clr Robbie Turnbull</i>	9	0	0	2
<i>Clr Bill Murray</i>	11	1	0	2
<i>Clr Lawrence Walford</i>	10	1	0	0

CONTRACTS AWARDED

Local Government (General)
Regulation 2005 Clause 132

Details of each contract awarded by the Council during 2019/2020 (whether as a result of a tender or otherwise), other than;

- a. Employment contracts (that is, contracts of service but not contracts for service), and
- b. Contracts for less than \$150,000.00 or such other amount as may be prescribed by the regulations for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.

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

Name of Contractor	Goods/Services	Contract Amount Awarded	Amount Paid in 2019/20
<i>Country Wide Asphalt</i>	Reconstruction and sealing - 5km of Gundabloui Rd	1,166,000	1,235,890 inc GST

LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

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

A summary of the amount by the Council during 2019/2020 in relation to legal proceedings taken by or against the Council (including amounts, costs and expenses paid or received by way of court settlements, other than those the terms of which are not to be disclosed) and a summary of the state of progress of each legal proceeding (if it has been finalized) the result, for the 12 monthly period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.

Council incurred \$124,710 in legal costs in 2019/2020, comprising of;

- \$27,040 for rates collection which is recoverable as a charge on the rateable property
- \$9,031 on Human Resources matters
- \$57,339 on Safework matters
- \$30,584 on Legal advice
- \$660 on Property matters

PRIVATE WORKS

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

Details of a summary of resolutions made during 2019/2020 under Section 67 concerning work carried out on private land and details or summary of such works if the cost of the work has been fully or partly subsidised by the Council, together with a statement of the total amount by which the Council has subsidised any such work during 2019/2020.

Council received \$11,867 (exc GST) for private works carried out in 2019/2020, with an expenditure of \$12,134 (exc GST).

CONTRIBUTIONS

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

The total amount contributed or otherwise granted under Section 356.

Council contributed a total of \$1,082,687 under Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993. The expenditure is listed in the table below;

Organisation	Donation
<i>Lightning Ridge Complex - (Olympic pool, theme park, diving pool & sports centre)</i>	\$386,334
<i>Glengarry Grawin Sheepyards Miners Association</i>	\$30,510
<i>Fees & charges rebates, local churches</i>	\$18,806
<i>Lightning Ridge Opal & Fossil Museum</i>	\$625,000
<i>Outback Arts</i>	\$8,659
<i>Barwon Group CWA (Medical Grant)</i>	\$6,778
<i>PCYC Project contribution</i>	\$6,100
<i>Waste to Art Competition</i>	\$500
Total	\$1,082,687

Council also contributed a further \$24,465.00 of grants under its Community Assistance Scheme.

Organisation	Donation
<i>Lightning Ridge Pistol Club</i>	\$3,000
<i>Lightning Ridge Community Radio</i>	\$900
<i>Country Education Foundation</i>	\$2,970
<i>Walgett Little Athletics</i>	\$2,100
<i>Walgett Mud Trials</i>	\$2,500
<i>Walgett jockey Club</i>	\$500
<i>Walgett Charity Bushmens Carnival</i>	\$500
<i>Collarenebri Watersports</i>	\$1,000
<i>Lightning Ridge District Bowling Club</i>	\$500
<i>Walgett School of Distance Education</i>	\$2,495
<i>Rotary Club of Dubbo South</i>	\$2,000
<i>Lets Dance Carinda Tribute Committee</i>	\$3,000
<i>Burren Junction Rescue Squad</i>	\$3,000
Total	\$24,465

Other Donations

Organisation	Donation
<i>Local Heritage Fund - Lightning Ridge Historical Society</i>	\$1,686
<i>Local Heritage Fund - Darius Fund</i>	\$7,000
<i>Hire fees & temp Licence - Yaama Ngunna Baaka</i>	\$360.46
<i>Walgett Showground Rapid Relief</i>	\$269.00

EXTERNAL BODIES

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

A statement of all external bodies (such as County Councils) that during 2019/2020 exercised functions delegated by the Council.

Castlereagh Macquarie County Council

Castlereagh Macquarie County Council has been delegated the responsibility for the management of noxious weeds within the Walgett Shire Council Local Government Area. Walgett Shire Council contributed \$107,823.85 (ex GST) to the County Council for its services.

Regional Library

In 2019/2020 the contribution made by Walgett Shire Council was \$146,141.

Mid-Western Regional Council (OWUA)

In 2019/2020 the contribution made by Walgett Shire Council was \$8,617.34

Far North West Joint Organisation

The Far North West Joint Organisation (FNWJO) is a separately constituted entity pursuant to Part 7 (Sections 400O to 400ZH) of the Local Government Act (NSW) 1993, as amended, and the Local Government (General Regulation 2008).

The Charter of the FNWJO can be found here:

<https://www.farnorthwestjo.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/%24341338%24Far-North-West-JO-Charter.pdf>

The principle purpose of the FNWJO is to establish strategic regional priorities and to provide regional leadership to the geographical area for which it serves, and to identify and take up opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation on matters relating to the joint organisation area.

FNWJO comprises the Councils of the Shires of Bourke, Cobar and Walgett in north western NSW. The Board of the FNWJO comprises 3 voting members being the Mayors of the three member Councils, and non-voting members being the General Managers of the Shires of Bourke and Walgett, as well as 3 appointed members from the State Government and Cabinet (non-voting).

Council's powers of control or influence over the Joint Organisation Walgett Shire Council, as a member of the FNWJO, has a one third voting right in respect to the decisions of the Board. Council's financial obligations to the Joint Organisation In accordance with the Charter each member of the FNWJO contributes annual fees towards the operation of the joint organisation.

In 2019/2020 the contribution made by Walgett Shire Council was \$12,100. Council's liability obligations in relation to the Joint Organisation Members of the FNWJO are indemnified from liability for functions and duties carried out or omitted honestly, in good faith and with due care and diligence.

CONTROLLING INTEREST IN COMPANIES

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

A statement of all companies in which the Council (whether alone or in conjunction with other Councils) held a controlling interest during 2019/2020.

Walgett Shire Council held no controlling interest in any company during 2019/2020.

JOINT VENTURES

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

A statement of all corporations partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies to which the Council participated during 2019/2020.

Council was involved in the following joint ventures:

- Big Sky Libraries—Cooperative Library Service
- Outback Arts Corporation
- Statewide Mutual Insurance Group
- Rural Fire Service NSW
- Western Division of NSW Shire Association
- Netwaste
- Castlereagh Macquarie County Council
- Walgett Local Emergency Management Committee
- Lower Macquarie Water Utilities Alliance—Water Management
- Far North West Joint Organisation

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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

A statement of the activities undertaken by the Council during 2019/2020 to implement its Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan.

Activities undertaken during the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 to ensure Council continues to apply the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity legislation;

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

EMPLOYMENT OF SENIOR STAFF

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

A statement of the number of Senior Staff employed by the Council during 2019/2020, together with a statement of the total amount of money payable in respect of the employment of Senior Staff, including money payable for salary, for the provision of fringe benefits and for all other on-costs connected with their employment.

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

The total amount spent on employing these senior staff was \$672,625. This amount includes salaries, fringe benefits tax, private use of a Council vehicle and employer's superannuation contributions.

Senior staff positions and salary;

Position	Salary	House Rent (non-cash)	Motor Vehicle (non-cash)	Other	Superannuation	Fringe Benefits Tax	Total
General Manager	\$257,791	\$11,337	\$15,143	\$nil	\$24,490	\$14,056	\$322,817
Senior Staff	\$273,231	\$15,400	\$19,431	\$nil	\$25,862	\$16,884	\$349,808

STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Local Government Act Section
428A (1)

State of the Environment Report

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

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

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

- i. Management plans relating to the environment
- ii. Speed Council projects relating to the environment
- iii. The environment impact of Council activities

See attachment (C): State of the Environment Report

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

With Special Variations Approved Conditions

Instrument of Approval Under Section 508(2) of the Local Government Act 1993
 - Special Rate Variation 2013/14 (3% Permanently Retained)
 Compliance Reporting Period: 2013/2014 to 2022/2023 (i.e. over a 10 year period)

Program of Expenditure:

TABLE - WALGETT COUNCIL'S PROGRAM OF EXPENDITURE 2013/2014 TO 2022/2023							
Category	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
School Bus Routes - Rehabilitation				100,000	470,000		
School Bus Routes - Upgrades		140,000	440,000				
Other Road Restoration/Upgrading Works	420,000	290,000				490,000	446,000
Total - Application - Part A - Worksheet 6 (rounded)	420,000	430,000	440,000	460,000	470,000	490,000	446,000
Attributable Actual Expenditure	420,000	430,000	440,000	460,000	470,000	490,000	446,000
SVR Income Component Application - Part A - Worksheet 6 (rounded)	140,000	144,000	149,000	153,000	158,000	163,000	278,600
Other Income Sources Component	280,000	286,000	291,000	307,000	312,000	327,000	446,000

Outcomes Achieved:

The upgrading (includes restoration, rehabilitation) of various rural roads within the Walgett Shire Council local government area.

COMPANION ANIMALS AND REGULATION

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

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

Companion Animals Act and Regulation

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

- 294 dogs and 896 cats were seized, with 12 dogs and 0 cats returned to their owners.
- 152 dogs and 23 cats were surrendered
- 225 Dogs were re-homed
- 15 dangerous dogs and 873 feral cats were euthanized
- 23 cats rehomed

Council spent \$155,909 on companion animal management related activities during 2019/2020, including the employment of a Regulatory Officer and vehicle running costs.

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

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

Public Access Act 2009

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

Authorised proactive release of Government Information.

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

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

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

For the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, Council received two (2) Formal Applications of which access in full was granted.

ENVIRONMENT PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT ACT 1979

Planning agreements under the Environmental Planning Assessment Act 1979

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

No planning agreements were entered into by Council during 2019/2020.

CONDITION OF PUBLIC WORKS

A report on the condition of public works (including public buildings, public roads and water, sewerage and drainage works) under the control of the Council as at the end of 2019/2020 together with;

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

Public Buildings

Work has commenced on maintenance and renewal of Council owned and controlled buildings in line with the condition reports and asset management.

Public Roads

Council maintains a network of 2,375km local and regional roads, which are made up of regional (558km), local (1817km) and urban (86km) roads. There are 427km of classified roads, which Council maintains on behalf of the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS).

The urban network consists of 26 km of footpath and 77km of sealed roads. The length of sealed and unsealed roads in the Shire is 447km and 1,928km respectively. Council maintains 50 concrete bridges, 1 timber bridges, 11 box culverts and 1 pipe culvert.

The cost of improvement works estimated to bring the road assets to a satisfactory condition is \$4 million. It is estimated that it will cost \$3.685 million per annum to maintain the roads in satisfactory condition.

The roads assets replacement value and written down value at 30 June 2020 was;

Assets	Replacement Value	Written Down Value
<i>Roads</i>	\$185,368,220	\$143,026,592
<i>Footpaths</i>	\$6,128,662	\$4,705,647
<i>Bridges and Culverts</i>	\$67,800,000	\$39,310,500
	\$259,296,882	\$187,042,739

BUSHFIRE HAZARD REDUCTION PROGRAM

A report on the bush fire hazard reduction activities of the Council during 2018/2019 that include activities carried out under the Bush Fire Management Plan approved under the Rural Fires Act 1997.

Bushfire hazard reduction programs

The Bush Fire Management Committee held two meetings during 2019/2020. At these meetings, Section 52 plan, land management and reports from various agencies were discussed. Council also attended 4 Service Level Agreement meetings during 2019/2020.

The NSW Rural Fire Service provided an allocation of \$32,000 in 2019/2020 to assist Council with road side vegetation management and hazard reduction through vegetation slashing. A total of \$30,394 was expended in relation to these Bushfire Hazard Reduction Programs.

Hazard reduction works

2019/2020 Fire Hazard Reduction Works

Location	Total
<i>Burren Junction</i>	\$3360
<i>Collarenebri</i>	\$1849
<i>Carinda</i>	\$1365
<i>Lightning Ridge</i>	Nil
<i>Rowena</i>	\$1200
<i>Walgett</i>	Nil
<i>Come By Chance</i>	\$3528
<i>Fire Hazard Reduction on various roads</i>	\$19,092
Rural Fire Service Contribution	\$30,397

TOURISM

Tourism activities 2019/2020:

- Shop Local Pilot Program rolled out Lucky Draw + Gift Guide
- Markets - four (4) per year major growth in 12months
- Weekly Bulletin
- OROC Event
- Events that WSC has organised or been involved in organising:, Quarterly Markets, Hosted Destination NSW familiarisation, Sound walk Sunday (with High School)
- Reestablished Quarterly Newsletter (bit of a stretch lol)
- Huge push in social media follower growth?
- A lot of stuff is just support, communication and promotion
- DIJONES Drought Drive
- Farmers Community Connect Event
- COVID-19 RESPONSE - website page, bulletin, email to business houses, social media communication, Covid directory.
- NSW Small Biz funded Instagram Webinar organization & promotion: 20 participants
- Western NSW Employment Page Creation
- Sound trails Digital Storytelling Workshop 5 participants 5 unable to attend: Council to look at purchasing an audio recording kit max \$1000 to purchase, to hire out: Develop audio experiences to support attractions

ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE PROMOTIONS

Details of programs undertaken by the Council during 2019/2020 to promote services and access for people with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Council is committed to building on the cultural diversity and uniqueness of our Local Government Area and the broad cross section of people who reside within communities. Council understands multi-cultural communities may face issues in relation to accessing services and participating in events across the community. During the last year many challenges and hurdles have tested the resilience of our communities, environment, social and health and well-being during COVID-19.

The Youth and Community Development team continue to lead community events across the shire, teams/staff facilitated meetings, workshops and initiatives addressing community needs, acknowledgments, celebrations and recognition. Encouraging and promoting “community led” events and in collaboration have aimed for success from each event. Council recognizes the importance of cultural events in building social capacity and strengthening relationships within a diverse community incorporating people from different backgrounds with celebrations across the Shire showing increased participation. A range of initiatives and recognition events staged at three different communities recorded significantly high attendance by the wider community.

During Reconciliation Week in 2020, the time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving Reconciliation in Australia. In collaboration with local services, Council’s Aboriginal Liaison Community Development Officer supported by the Community development team organized a colouring competition in a bid to raise awareness and understanding of Reconciliation with the youth and young people.

Council views our diverse population as a strength and utilises the knowledge and understanding of our community members. Council supports inclusivity of all residents by providing accessible services for Aboriginal reserves so that community members can participate in significant events.

The Youth and Community Development team plays a lead role in the 2020 NAIDOC celebrations and recognition events throughout our Shire initiating the formation of working group committees to deliver to community and embrace the theme “ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE”. Recognizing that First Nations Peoples have occupied and cared for this continent for over 65,000 years that they are spiritually and culturally connected to this country, and by acknowledging and celebrating the achievements and culture of Aboriginal people.

HUMAN RESOURCE ACTIVITIES

A statement of the Human Resource activities undertaken by Council during 2019/2020.

The major human resource related activities undertaken within the Organisation during the 2019-2020 period included:

- Industrial and Employee Relations
- Recruitment, selection and induction
- School to Work Program
- Consultative Committee administration
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Training and development programs
- Salary Administration and Job evaluation
- Workplace Health and Safety
- Workers compensation, Injury management and rehabilitation

From March through to June 2020 the Covid -19 pandemic has impacted training, recruitment and staff Council committee meetings.

Work Health and Safety

The major Work Health and Safety related activities undertaken within the organisation from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 included:

- Attained First Place in LG Excellence Awards
- Worked closely with Cormack Dunn, Worldsafe Legal, defending Council against SafeWork charges
- Installed in every village throughout the Shire an AED for the villagers use
- Conducted on-site training for workers in Traffic Control, Risk Assessments, SWMS
- Conducted ticket and licence checks
- Conducted contractor compliance checks
- Conducted worker on foot training on site for workers and contractors
- Conducted induction sessions for workers and contractors
- Conducted Depot yard inspections
- Conducted Site induction training for Water and Sewer team
- Conducted operator assessment on Frontend Loader/Backhoe
- Hosted visits from Statewide Mutual Risk Officer
- Hosted visits from Statecover Mutual WHS Team - Workers compensation case managers
- Hosted visits from Plant Assessor inspector- plant safety and risk
- Completed RBT Training with Alcolizer
- Refreshed Traffic Control qualifications as required
- Attended MANEX meetings when required
- Attended several NIRG meetings
- Reviewed/revised Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Reviewed/renewed Council Smoking Policy and Smoking Procedure
- Reviewed Contractors Induction Package, signed off by G.M
- Renewed Council's EPA licence to sell/possess radioactive apparatus
- Collected and collated evidence for SafeWork NSW investigation
- Worked closely with W&S team to form a strong work group
- Vac truck training attended with W&S team

- Completed required Statecover audits

Policy reviews, safety inspections, risk inspections, attend meetings etc.

This year was a little different in that from March onwards circumstances changed dramatically due to COVID - 19

Workers Compensation, injury management and rehabilitation

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

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

Where injury resulted in a claim for workers Compensation the claims were proactively managed in line with Council's obligations under the legislation. Medical providers contributed to the management of workplace injuries and illness through the provision of expert medical advice and pre-employment health checks.

Industrial Relations

Support and guidance was provided to managers, supervisors and employees during performance management, disciplinary and industrial matters to ensure procedural fairness and effective outcomes were achieved. Advice and guidance was provided to managers, supervisors in regard to the Local Government (State) Award 2017 and legislation surrounding employment.

Health and Safety Committee

The Health and Safety Committee is representative of the broader workforce and considers issues relating to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. The committee met on (2) two occasions during 2019/2020 financial year.

The Consultative Committee

The Consultative Committee is representative of the broader workforce and considers issues relating to the Local Government (State) Award 2017. No meetings were held during the 2019/2020 financial year.

Recruitment, selection and induction

The turnover rate for the period 01 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 was 14.96%, down by 2.18% from the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019. Council continues to implement flexible working conditions, training and development opportunities, corporate uniform, salary packaging and subsidised housing rental to support the recruitment, retention and development of suitable staff.

Recruitment activity for the period 01 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 totalled 23 new appointments. Council continues to recruit, develop and train employees engaged through traineeships and apprenticeship employment options. During the 2019/2020 Council has had three (3) trainees complete qualifications in Business Administration, Horticulture, Water Operations and one (1) Apprentice mechanic.

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

School to Work Program

Walgett Shire Council continued the School to Work Program in partnership with Walgett Community College, Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge High Schools. This program was introduced to assist students in choosing a career path within Local Government. Students are assigned to a 'buddy' to assist them whilst at work and are offered training and development to improve their skills. Five (3) students participated in the program for the 2019/2020 financial year.

Participants have been placed at the Walgett Library, Community Services, Council's Walgett Depot (Store) and Parks and Gardens.

Training Programs

Council continues to encourage employees to participate in training and development. During the period 2019/2020. Council expended \$159, 582.42 including outdoors staff wages costs on training, accommodation, travel and registration expenses. An additional amount of \$4113.22 was expended on conference attendance and travel to assist staff to improve their skills and remain up to date with legislative requirements.

Training included but was not limited to:

- RMS Traffic control tickets - Traffic Controller, Implement Traffic Control Plans, and prepare a work Zone Traffic Management Plan (August 2019 & June 2020)
- Skidsteer/Excavator course
- Certificate IV Accounting (completed)
- Drone pilot licence
- Certificate IV Business Administration (Traineeship completed)
- Certificate III water operations (ongoing)
- Underground Petroleum Storage Systems
- Asset Inspection
- Grey Card (Bridges)
- Local Government Ranger Annual Conference
- Automotive Mechanical Apprenticeship (Completed)
- First Aid
- GST
- Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT)
- Chain of Responsibility (COR) and load restraints
- Certificate III Horticulture (Traineeship completed)
- Work near power lines
- Financial Reporting Workshops
- Certificate III Water Operations (Traineeship - completed)

Salary Administration

The Human Resources Manager administered the salary system on behalf of the entire organisation to ensure compliance with Local Government (State) Award 2017. A number of position descriptions were revised and processed through the Mercer Evaluation System to ensure appropriate grading.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & CHILDREN SERVICES

Details of programs undertaken by the Council during 2019/2020 to develop and promote services and programs that provide for the needs of children.

Our community and youth development teams of Council have delivered to community during a very challenging year. Innovation regarding accessibility during the social distancing times and also youth centre shut-downs has made engagement with youth and young people a challenge. Our key objective however remains to be focused on building the capacity of our residents and maximizing opportunities for the community to improve their quality of life whilst embracing their own culture and social diversity. Council continues to demonstrate its commitment to youth and young people as our future leaders within the LGA.

Due to COVID19 restrictions in place earlier in the year youth development teams were shut down with many of our staff being put on hold until the crisis was over. However WCS Walgett Shire Council youth development team leaders were still in operational during that time with staff taking the opportunity to revitalize, refurbish and update programs for youth and young people. During lock down Youth and Community development staff gathered crisis packages to deliver to youth and young people which included colouring-in pages, colouring-in pencils and resources for youth and young people within the communities. Keeping our young people engaged was essential to youth and young peoples' mental health and wellbeing.

Council, Community, Youth and young people are extremely happy to have all Youth centres back in operational. Youth centres are consistently recording stable numbers of youth and young people attending during holiday programs as well as after school programs. Youth Development staff continue to develop highly engaging activities and opportunities for our youth and young people to participate in.

Annual programs Youth development we're involved in included Children's Week, Youth Education Week, Reconciliation week, NAIDOC week and various 'White Ribbon days' which were rolled out across all communities. The Youth Council is regarded as the "peak body" representing youth and young people in our LGA and unfortunately it was put on hold due to the Covid 19 pandemic however our youth development team have continued to be involved in collaborating and connecting with schools to continue engaging with youth and young people to play a vital role in offering our young people opportunities to have an effective voice that is supported by Council and the youth and community development team. Youth council meetings will commence early in term one 2021 for their (AGM) annual general meeting electing all new representatives.

Youth Development teams within the WSC have produced and been involved in many meetings (Via Zoom) that have engaged the youth and communities at such a time where we all needed to come together for support and guidance. During this time many good things have been achieved from our shire which our teams can measure success by feedback from youth and community with attendance at programs being offered and the general appearance of our communities.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Details of library services provided by the Council during 2019/2020.

The Shire Libraries in both Lightning Ridge and Walgett along with deposit stations in Burren Junction and Collarenebri have had a significant increase in memberships and are valuable centres of information for the entire community and a vital part of our social infrastructure. (Current members 1263)

The COVID-19 outbreak is having a global impact and affecting local communities. Staff are learning the facts about this public health crisis, informing the public and adapting services and programming to meet changing community needs and safety standards. Our libraries are now back to normal opening hours and welcoming groups and gatherings but continue to adhere to contact tracing, social distancing, capacity limitations, disinfecting and purchasing washable keyboards and mice attached to public computers.

Big Sky Libraries are eSmart Libraries offering a wide variety of eLibrary resources available to its members, free of charge 24/7.

These resources include eBooks, eAudio, eMagazine, movies, data bases and State Library resources which can be accessed anywhere, anytime, with an internet connection. Our libraries also offer books, newspapers, magazines and DVD's that reflect the community needs and aspirations and engage the community in shaping library services.

The Library facilities continue to be popular with the youth using the library after school and during the school holidays. During the school holidays we have been running a program called "Kids in the Library" using talented local people to teach workshops. Now that we are open to groups again we look forward to holding more workshops during the upcoming school holidays. So far we have hosted pottery, cupcake decorating, story writing, and water color painting and photography workshops. The knitting and coffee club continues to grow and is a popular social activity for our senior community. They have donated knitted articles to Stewart House, Kookaburra Court aged care Walgett and to the Walgett Women's safe house through Mission Australia. The Walgett Art Group continues to thrive, holding exhibitions, workshops and fundraising for local organisations.

During NAIDOC week both libraries promoted the culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through book displays.

The library provides a free books on wheels delivery service to housebound members of the local community who are physically unable to visit the library. To date we have 12 members in this program who reside at Kookaburra Court aged care home and Walgett Hospital Peg Cross ward.

The Shire Libraries continue to remain the connection hub to many residents across our vast Local Government Area.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Walgett Shire, like many other remote Local Government Areas is committed to the Health and Wellbeing and social welfare of its communities within its boundaries.

The partnerships established with local health services have never been more relevant in the current year we have undertaken. COVID 19 has impacted on many programs and opportunities usually available to community members however Council has supported the broader community in partnership support for numerous health and wellbeing initiatives via ZOOM to community.

Council remains committed to promote healthy options at all our youth centers with snacks and drinks all approved within health and safety guidelines of food for young people and endless supply of fresh drinking water available.

Throughout the year Council has supported the mental health of families with distributed play packs for young people and information sharing for parents during the COVID 19 crisis.

During the closure of Libraries, Youth Centres and community events Councils youth and community teams have planned many new and innovative programs to be rolled out when the COVID restrictions eased. Since then we have already recorded amazing numbers at Pool events and youth opportunities through touch footy and sports options. Our Shire commits to offering a range of programs targeting improved understanding and awareness in relation to health and wellbeing.

Council staff members continued presence at the local Interagency of Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri has assisted in the continued funding support through the Australian Drug Foundation to maintain our local level CDATS (Community Drug Action Teams).

Council works in collaboration with local health services and life style groups in promotion of healthy lifestyles and wellbeing on a regular basis. Walgett PCYC are key partners in delivery of sports and activity focused programs for all community.

Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service and NSW Health partner in many youth and community focused initiatives, striving to improve health outcomes of our residents.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

The year has been challenging for all in our Shire with the COVID and other social factors coming into play however as a whole our communities continue to demonstrate the resilience and support of each other through the tough times.

Community capacity building is about promoting the 'capacity' of local communities to develop, implement and sustain their own solutions to problems in a way that helps them shape and exercise control over their physical, social, economic and cultural environments. Council plays a key role in providing, supporting and encouraging capacity building opportunities throughout the Shire.

Capacity building through engagement, educational and awareness opportunities is essential in building and supporting our community for the better.

Although COVID has been a challenge and a strain on services to our remote communities our teams have managed to engage youth and young people through several innovative ways. House delivery of resources for kids (kids play packs) has, from feedback received, and kept many young people busy and active with activities to complete.

The final signing off of the *Aboriginal Reconciliation & Community Development Plan* is in the hands of *Reconciliation Australia* and is soon to be returned for approval as it has already been adopted by the Council for delivery.

Many events planned for community including senior's events and other community driven initiative had to be postponed due to COVID. We are committed as a team to deliver bigger and better events once restrictions ease off and social distancing, COVID guidelines are lifted.

Memory Van visits to community again recorded high numbers of participants, aiding in Mental Health, promotion of suicide prevention and awareness and staff in key roles on committees has also been in place throughout the year.

Council continues to support, facilitate and promote National recognized events in relation to community health, wellbeing and social inclusion.

The continued formation of community working groups aids in delivery and planning and offers community members genuine input into what is to be delivered to community- for community, building capacity and showcasing the strengths of individuals.

Council, through the Community services department liaise and consult with Aboriginal groups and representatives from culturally diverse backgrounds on a regular basis in the strengthening of relationships in building a better community for all.

ACCESS AND EQUITY

A report on the Council's performance in relation to access and equity to meet residents needs outlined in Council's Delivery Program undertaken in 2019/2020.

Council will remain committed and recognizes the importance to provide all residents with equal access and equity opportunities and activities that meet residents' needs and expectations. Council's community services team are now recognized as a listening council and connected to its residents. Council meets these needs by;

- Working towards outcomes of its adopted Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Informing community of changes, updates and news during the recent COVID 19 situation
- Consulting and communicating decisions effectively through Council's website, media releases and information flow to formed Interagency groups across communities and local Aboriginal Working Parties
- Working with Council driven focus groups relating to issues, events and betterment of the community's welfare and direction
- Providing opportunities for the public to address agenda items at Council meetings
- Strengthening and maintaining the community's involvement in the delivery of services through a transparent process of networking and partnerships
- A consultation framework that promotes and values engagement with all community sectors
- Providing opportunities for residents to have input into programs and initiatives facilitated by the youth and community development team
- Installation of areas for recreation and accessibility for all people across the Shire
- Ongoing audit and assessment of Council facilities

CATEGORY 1 BUSINESS ACTIVITIES & STATEMENT

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

Council's significant business activities are as follows:

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

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

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

Council does not have any Category 1 business activities.

CATEGORY 2 BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

Local Government (General)
Regulation 2005
Clause 217 (1) (d) (iii)

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

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

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

IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETITIVE NEUTRALITY

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

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

Competitive Neutrality Pricing Requirements

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

Council does not have any Category 1 Business Activities.

Complaint Handling Mechanism for Competitive Neutrality

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

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

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

Members of the public can access this system by navigating to Councils website at www.walgett.nsw.gov.au and selecting Customer Request from the quick link button on the right hand side of the website or alternatively you can call Council on (02) 6828 6100 and submit one over the telephone.

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

Summary of Competitive Neutrality Complaints

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

No complaints in relation to Competitive Neutrality have been made against the Council in 2019/2020.

PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT

The annual report of each public sector agency must include;

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