

BINGARA

Town Strategy



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“The Bingara Town Strategy is a twenty year strategy to regenerate Bingara with new energy efficient/affordable housing, to create new work and opportunities for local businesses, and to improve the amenity of the town and its public spaces. The Strategy will improve tourism and visitation through conversion of the town commons into interpretive productive land, enhancement of the waterways and riverfront and by improving walks and trails. The Strategy aims to create a walkable, compact town for an ageing population.

The Bingara Town Strategy is a community collaboration which can form a true platform for regeneration and form an example for other towns in rural Australia.”

About the Bingara Town Strategy

The Bingara Town Strategy aims to provide vision and direction for Bingara for both the long and short term.

Bingara has assets which many towns would dream of having. It has an historic main street with active shopfronts and a walkable shopping area. There is plentiful on-street and off-street parking, and plenty of room for cars and walkers. Broad avenues with pleasant homes still contain clusters of shade trees, and in these places, Bingara is a very attractive town. The river provides a dramatic elevated entry point into the town heart, and its treed banks create a scenic town setting. Bingara's lookout provides panoramic views to the surrounding rural landscape. No wonder people who pass by decide to stay a while.

The patterns of growth, funding and demographics are making it ever more difficult for country towns to stay viable. Towns need to be pro-active to attract workers, businesses and new residents. Strategies have to be built which are grounded in local support and can be actioned by local people. The Bingara Town Strategy is based on ideas that residents and visitors developed during workshops and shopfront consultations. The consultants have built on these ideas and shown how they can be implemented in different parts of the town. There are many things that can be done to make Bingara more robust to change. The important thing is to act. This strategy provides actions to make Bingara a more lively and prosperous town in these uncertain times.



Residents providing ideas into the Bingara Strategy

Bingara in Context



Bingara within the state



Bingara within the region



Bingara within the district



Bingara and its hinterland



Bingara township

The Gwydir region is in north-eastern New South Wales and covers 2.3 % of the total area of the Murray-Darling Basin. The region is based around the Gwydir River. The dominant land use is dryland beef and sheep grazing. Lucerne and pasture are grown on the narrow alluvial floodplains of the upper Gwydir River and dryland crops are grown on the western plains.

Future Proofing Bingara

The Bingara Town Strategy aims to future-proof Bingara from changes affecting both the local and the global neighbourhood. At the town's core are the aspirations of its warm and creative community and the unique qualities of this hidden gem.

Bingara today is a positive town, as evidenced by the hundreds of people who attended our 'set-up shop' consultation at the former Adams Garage on Maitland Street in June 2008, and by community visioning undertaken in 2010. Bingara's community is active and gets things done. Initiatives such as the memorial avenue of orange trees, and the resurrection of an art deco picture theatre into a visitor, entertainment and cultural landmark point to Bingara's capacity for good ideas. The Campervan and Motorhome Association of Australia's annual convention has placed Bingara in the larger spotlight. It is envisaged that this will increase the town's tourist numbers in the long term and perhaps attract people to stay and make their homes in the district.

While Bingara is one of the few rural centres to be experiencing a modest increase in growth the rural population is still ageing. Young people leave for the city and other urban centres and do not come back if there are no jobs or opportunities for the future. The farming sector is facing impacts from drought and loss of small, local properties, and this impacts on rural service towns like Bingara. Petrol will dramatically increase in price within ten years, forcing changes in the way we feed ourselves, do business and how we will live and recreate.

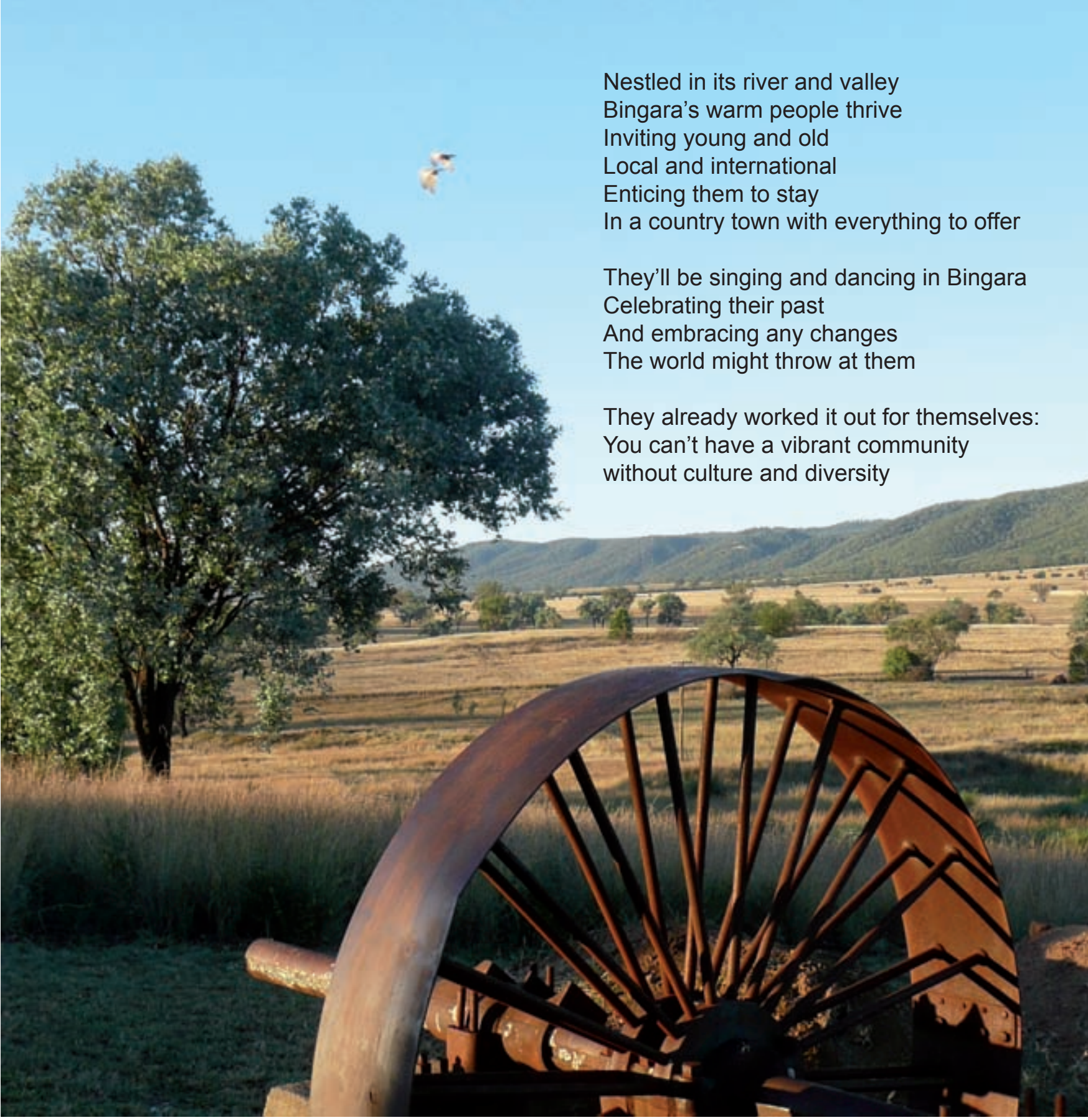
The world is becoming a smaller place because of the digital revolution, but it is set to become even smaller as rural towns such as Bingara face the next fifty years. This will be accelerated with the roll out of the National Broadband Network to rural and remote Australia. By 2050, over half of the Bingara's population could be around retirement age. The Bingara Town Strategy plans for this long timeframe, anticipating key actions to put into place balancing factors that will ensure its prosperity.



Future Proofing Bingara



Town Vision in a Nut Shell



Nestled in its river and valley
Bingara's warm people thrive
Inviting young and old
Local and international
Enticing them to stay
In a country town with everything to offer

They'll be singing and dancing in Bingara
Celebrating their past
And embracing any changes
The world might throw at them

They already worked it out for themselves:
You can't have a vibrant community
without culture and diversity

You can't depend on others to do things
Growing your own food
Creating new work for young folk
Being able to fix things locally
These are things country people
Always had to do in the past
And it's come back round again

It's back to the basics
How can families stay together
How can the fundamentals
of water, power and waste
be dealt with in the home
How can we live more sustainably
So we don't suffer when the oil runs out

How can we take care of the older folk
Without marching them off to distant homes
How can we share our local resources
So we're not dependant on others

Bingara has every chance to be a leader
To show the nation
That the country still works
And that living in a small town
Is a life worth living

The Character of Bingara



Bingara is home to some of Australia's most highly regarded beef cattle studs and a diverse range of livestock breeders including sheep, horses, alpacas, pigs and poultry. The Gwydir River is renowned for its irrigated and dry land cropping, as it produces a soil that is ideal for livestock production and the production of the traditional crops of wheat, barley, sorghum, lucerne and oats.



Bingara is one of Australia's best country towns. It has a dramatic entry through town and over the bridge, which crosses the wonderful Gwydir river as it meanders through town creating a pleasant pastoral landscape.



Bingara is a classic main street oriented town centre. Its wide avenues with trees, diverse housing and sense of history mark Bingara as a great place to live and work.



Bingara is just the kind of place that Australians are looking for when they dream of a 'tree change' to the country from the city.

Bingara in the Past

The traditional owners of this district the Wirrayaraay tribe of the Gamilaraay Nation cared for the land. They hunted and gathered the animals, fish, root crops and fruits in a seasonal cycle. The identity of the Wirrayaraay derived from their spiritual relationship with the land. The Gwydir region was known to some white men before exploration by Allan Cunningham. In 1827 Cunningham explored from the Hunter to the Darling Downs. He passed through what we now know as Bingara (where he saw cattle) and Warialda where he noticed a hut, possibly built by an escaped convict.

Squatter George Hall took up Bingara Station in 1834 after which Bingara is named. This holding occupied the valley named by Cunningham as Stoddart's Valley. Beyond the boundaries of settlement there was no provision to settle disputes between squatters about boundaries, missing or strayed stock, and water rights or to address conflict between white settlers and the Aboriginal people. The most well-known of these incidents was the Myall Creek Massacre. In the subsequent trial and conviction of the white settlers and convicts responsible, the Government Gazette announced the appointment of a magistrate in 1839 for the police post of Warialda. In 1847 Richard Bligh was appointed Commissioner for Crown Lands for the district of Gwydir.

By 1850 the District extended from Pockataroo in the west to the Dividing Range (New England) and from the vicinity of Narrabri to the Macintyre River, which forms part of what is now known as the Queensland-NSW border. The discovery of gold at Upper Bingara in 1852 attracted people & led to the commercial development of the Bingara district. The gold was considered very rich & was carried away in "pint pots". Bingara became an officially recognised village in 1852. There is still evidence of the gold mining industry in the Bingara area. By the 1880s the Bingara region was the largest supplier of diamonds in Australia.

Courtesy of Mandy Pilon - Gwydir Shire Council



Royal Hotel circa late 1920s
A small section of the main building is still in use as a private home



Druids Hall, Maitland Street
This was Harold Batterham's first shop, in the late 1920s and early 1930s



Andersons store Maitland Street, early 1900s
Now site of Whitfeld Place



Elkingtons store circa 1914
Now site of Bingara Medical Centre



Finkernagels garage Maitland street
Now site of Toy Library



Finkernagels store, S/W corner Maitland – Cunningham Streets 1880s. Now café is part of Roxy Theatre complex



MUIOOF Lodge members circa 1909 in front of their Lodge, Cunningham Street. Building is now Scots Presbyterian Church



Bingara Courthouse S/W corner Maitland-Finch Streets, built 1879. Now offices used by various organisations.