

Gwydir Shire Council

ANNUAL REPORT for the year ended 30 June 2014

***“To be the recognised leader in Local Government
through continuous learning and sustainability”***



GWYDIR
SHIRE COUNCIL

GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL'S

VISION STATEMENT

To be the recognised leader in Local Government through continuous learning and sustainability

MISSION

To ensure that the Council's long term role is viable and sustainable by meeting the needs of our residents in a responsible caring way, attract sustainable development while maintaining the traditional rural values, character and culture of our people.

COUNCIL VALUES

1. For Our Community and Visitors

We will provide a safe, clean and healthy environment in which all people have the opportunity to participate in, and share in the Council's services and facilities.

2. For Our Community Committees

We will seek their opinion in relation to the services in which they assist us, offer relevant and timely support, and recognise their valuable contribution.

3. For Our Staff

We will create an atmosphere of team support, which encourages frank and honest communication, and the use of common sense and innovation in a safe and friendly working environment with the aim of efficiency.

4. For Our Councillors

We will treat all Councillors equally and ensure that they are provided with accurate and timely advice and expect that they will treat each other and the staff with due respect.

5. Our Service Values

- To aim to exceed your expectations
- To act on our commitments as quickly as possible
- To evaluate our service, by asking you the customer
- To use your complaints as an opportunity to put things right and to take actions to ensure that the problem does not reoccur
- To value your privacy by treating confidentially all personal information which you give us

Elected Council

During the 2013/14 period, the Council consisted of:

1.7.2013 to 3.9.12

Mayor John Coulton
Deputy Mayor Catherine Egan
Cr. Kerry McDonald
Cr. Angela Doering
Cr. Peter Pankhurst
Cr. Geoff Smith
Cr. David Rose
Cr. Marilyn Dixon
Cr. Stuart Dick

20.11.2013 to 30.6.2014

Mayor John Coulton
Deputy Mayor Catherine Egan
Cr. Kerry McDonald
Cr. Angela Doering
Cr. Peter Pankhurst
Cr. Geoff Smith
Cr. Marilyn Dixon
Cr. Stuart Dick
Cr. James Moore

Council Executive

During the 2013/2014 period, the Council organisation was lead by General Manager, Mr Max Eastcott, Directors Mrs Leeah Daley (Organisation and Community Development), Mr Ron Wood (Corporate Services), Mr Richard Jane (Technical Services) and Manager, Mr Glen Pereira (Building and Environmental Services).

Gwydir Good Life

Gwydir Shire Council was the result of an amalgamation of Bingara Shire Council, Yallaroi Shire Council and part of Barraba Shire Council on the 17th of March 2004.

The Gwydir Shire encompasses a diverse landscape that is both picturesque and productive.

It is 9,122 square kilometres in size and is situated north of Tamworth Regional Council and continues almost to the Queensland border. According to the ABS 2011, Census Gwydir has a population of 4,965.

The southern boundary of the shire is the Nandewar Range where the Gwydir and Namoi Valleys meet. The Horton Valley and Cobbadah District are home to some Australia's most highly regarded beef cattle studs. These enterprising farmers use the latest artificial breeding and agronomic technology to produce beef of the highest quality. Meat sheep and merinos that grow high quality wool are also grazed in this area.

The Gwydir River enters the Gwydir Shire where it spills from the Copeton Dam and meanders in a westerly direction through the towns of Bingara and Gravesend. The Gwydir Valley is well known for irrigated and dry land cropping as well as livestock production. In addition to the traditional crops of wheat, barley, oats and sorghum, there are olive groves, pecan nut plantations and freshwater fish farms in the Gravesend district.

Heading northwest from the timbered surrounds of the town of Warialda and the close-knit community of Coolatai, the countryside opens into an undulating vista of basalt farmland. This area, including the villages of Crooble, Croppa Creek and North Star, is Australia's 'Golden Triangle'.

Farmers using advanced farming techniques, such as minimum tillage and satellite guidance systems, produce a variety of high yielding crops such as wheat, barley sorghum, maize, chick peas, canola and cotton to name just a few.

This area also has several cattle feedlots, which supply grain fed beef to the Australian domestic market and export markets throughout the world. Gwydir Shire residents enjoy excellent medical and health services with medical centres in both Warialda and Bingara. The Shire boasts two new hospitals and aged care facilities have been expanded and are of a very high standard.

Shire residents enjoy a quality and plentiful water supply. As well, residents are provided with open, beautifully maintained streetscapes, parks and sporting facilities.

Our younger citizens enjoy a great range of services and educational opportunities. The Gwydir shire is a strong and socially minded community with many volunteers.

STATUTORY INFORMATION

The Council is required by the provisions of the Local Government Act, 1993 and Regulations to report annually on its achievements with respect to the objectives and performance targets set out in its Management Plan for that year.

Performance against objectives

Gwydir Shire Council has a number of Business Units. These are:

Governance

- Capex Programs
- Donations
- Elected Members
- Information Availability
- Customer Service
- Engineering
 - Asset Operations
 - Emergency Services
 - Engineering Services
- Social Services
 - Disability/Aged Care
 - Social/Cultural Planning
 - Children's Services
 - Capacity Building Services
- Environmental
 - Caravan Parks
 - Land Use and Management
 - Building Control
 - Environment
 - Public Health
 - Animal Management
 - Noxious Weeds
 - Cemeteries
 - Building Maintenance
- Town Services
 - Sewerage Services
 - Water Supplies
 - Parks & Gardens
 - Other Operations
- Organisation Development (ODD)
 - WOW Gymnasium
 - Medical Services
 - Gwydir Learning Region
 - Swimming Pools
 - Human Resources
 - Records
 - Risk Management
 - Economic Development
 - Events & Promotion
 - Roxy Theatre
 - Tourism
 - Cranky Rock
- Corporate Services
 - Financial Services

There are a number of objectives and performance measures, which were achieved by each Business Unit. These are:

To work within budget (*this is subject to Council's Financial Reports*)

To respond to customer requests in a timely manner

To provide monthly financial reports to Council

Consult and liaise with Corporate Services Director on Quarterly Budget reviews

All staff trained in relevant areas

Section 428 also sets out other details, which must be included in the Annual Report. The required information is listed hereunder:

Legal Proceedings — Clause 217(1) (a3)

In this regard, Council advises that legal proceedings have not been taken by or against it during the reporting year. No amounts have been paid or received by way of out of court settlements.

Councillors Fees and Allowances — Clause 217 (1) (a1)

The following amounts were incurred as expenses in 2012/13 in relation to Councillor Fees and expenses:

Councillor Fees and expenses:

Mayoral Allowance	\$ 27,302
Councillors' Fees	\$ 97,749
Councillors' Travel Expenses	\$ 36,749
Councillors' Expenses and Sustenance	\$ 108,695
TOTAL	\$ 270,495

The Council's policy, during the reporting year, was to reimburse Councillors the sum of 76 cents per kilometre for travel from their home to the Council Chamber to attend meetings. Councillors required to attend to Council business are provided with a Council vehicle, where available. The Mayor is provided with a fax machine, a mobile phone and a vehicle in accordance with the Council's relevant Vehicle Use Policy.

Council's Policies are available on Council's website, or by request.

Statement of the total remuneration comprised in the remuneration package of the General Manager — Clause 217 (1) (b)

The all-inclusive remuneration package for the General Manager for the reporting period including salary, superannuation, housing, motor vehicle, professional association fees, residential landline and internet, mobile, and fringe benefit tax was \$253,540.34.

The General Manager's contract was renewed for a further 5 years.

Contracts — Clause 217(1) (a2)

Name of Contractor	Nature of goods or services supplied	Total Value Payable
NSW Spray Seal	Supply and spray of bitumen products	\$691,775

Work on Private Land — Clause 217 (1) (a4)

There were no works carried out on private land by the Council, where the cost of the work was fully or partly subsidised by the Council.

Financial Assistance — Section 356; Clause 217 (1) (a5)

The Council granted a total amount of \$153,861 by way of donations to various community groups and organisations in 2013/2014.

Statement of activities to implement its Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) management plan – Clause 217 (1) (a9)

The following EEO activities were carried out during 2013/14

- The management of staff grievances under the provision of the Grievance Handling Procedure
- Recruitment under the provisions of 'Selection Process Guidelines' which ensures that all current and prospective employees receive fair and equitable treatment when applying for employment or promotion. Staff have been recruited with disabilities and disability support organisations have been engaged to assist council with the recruitment and workplace modifications to accommodate the staff member safely and efficiently.
- Human Resource staff trained by the Anti-Discrimination Board in legislation changes. Staff attended the Employment Law Seminar and other relevant training.
- Various staff are trained as EEO Contact Officers. These key staff are trained to assist with the provision of facilities, equipment and work. Arrangements that assist people with disabilities to access relevant work areas and perform the requirements of their position safely and effectively and to resolve any disability issues or concerns within Council's workplaces.

Delegated Functions — Clause 127 (1) (a6)

External Committees of Council are:

Local Government Border River Project
Joint Weight of Loads Committee
Fossickers' Way Promotion Committee
Traffic Committee

Regional Tourism Committee
Bingara Historical Society
Gravesend Historical Society
Naroo Advisory Committee
Bingara Anglers' Club
Bingara Showground Committee
Warialda Historical Society
Coolatai Sportsgrounds Committee
North Star Hall Committee
Croppa Creek Hall Committee
Yallaroi Hall Committee
Crooble Hall Committee
Bush Fire Liaison (Service Level Agreement) Committee
Border Regional Organisations of Councils
Copeton Dam Trust
Arts North West
B Division

Interests in Companies — Clause 217 (1) (a7)

The Council does not have an interest in any companies either in New South Wales or elsewhere.

Partnerships, Co-operatives and Joint Ventures (including public-private partnerships) — Clause 217 (1) (a8)

The Council is not involved in any partnerships or joint ventures.

The Council is involved in several co-operative arrangements with a non-controlling interest in the following entities:

1. *StateCover Mutual* – A co-operative body providing workers compensation insurance coverage for Council staff
2. *Statewide Mutual* – A co-operative body providing liability and property insurance services to Council
3. *Central Northern Regional Library and Information Service* - A jointly funded relationship with a number of Councils to provide library services throughout the region
4. *NAMOIRoc* - A Regional Organisation of Councils providing a forum for Councils to consider matters of common interest
5. *BorderRoc* – A Regional Organisation of twelve Councils assisting with the development of The Border Integrated Transport Plan
6. *The Fossickers Way Committee* - Providing tourism support and coordinated services to the region

7. The *Copeton Dam Trust* - Administering the operations of the dam and its facilities
8. *B Division of the Shires Association of NSW* - providing a forum for Councils to consider significant regional and State matters affecting local government and their communities
9. Australian Rural Roads Group Inc. – an incorporated association of Councils petitioning for improved local road infrastructure and management

Rates and Charges Written-Off — Clause 132

Total: \$8,514.54

Overseas Visits Funded by Council — Section 428(4) (b)

There were no overseas visits by Councillors or staff during 2013/14 that were funded by or contributed to by the Council in any way

Government Information (Public Access) Act, 2009

Nil

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1994 and Regulations

No disclosures were made during the reporting period. Council's Privacy Management Plan is available at www.gwydirshire.com to view or download.

Compliance with Companion Animals Act 1998

Statement on activities relating to enforcing and ensuring compliance with the Companion Animals Act and Regulation

Includes:

- **Lodgement of pound data collection returns with the Division**
30 released, 8 rehomed, 5 euthanised and 2 stolen/escaped
- **Lodgement of data relating to dog attacks with the Division**
1 dog attack
- **Amount of funding spent on companion animal management and activities**
\$55015
- **Companion animal community education programs carried out**
 - Door to door, companion animal survey

In the period, a companion animal survey was sent out in a reply paid envelope. The data was collated in a spreadsheet and the Ranger went to the houses that did not complete and return the survey and got residents to complete the forms and an opportunity to ask the ranger about companion animals.

- Distribution of companion animal fact sheets
- Free dog and cat microchipping days for residents at 3 locations across the shire
- **Strategies council has in place to promote and assist the desexing of dogs and cats**

To promote desexing of companion animals the Gwydir Shire strongly encourages companion animal owners to desex and educate them on the registration savings and benefits and reduced risk of desexed animals.

- **Strategies in place to comply with the requirement under section 64 of the Act to seek alternatives to euthanasia for unclaimed animals**
 - Advertising of companion animals to be rehomed via various media including social media.
 - Built a relationship with local animal shelter who take any un-rehomed animals that they can accommodate.
- **Off leash areas provided in the council area**

Reserve corner of Long and Mosquito Creek Road (triangle reserve), Warialda and All Nations Hill, Hill Street, Bingara