



Community Strategic Plan 2017 - 2027

Foreword – General Manager



The coming year will represent the first year over the last couple where the threat of amalgamation isn't hanging over the head of the organisation.

The Office of Local Government has accepted that the Council's submitted Improvement

Plan will result in Gwydir Shire remaining a viable organisation.

This, however, doesn't come without challenges as the elected Councillors and staff remain committed to implementing the Improvement Plan and, hopefully, exceeding the targets that we have set for ourselves and the community in general.

This improvement process will not be achieved without pain, some of which has already occurred, but the long term health of our organisation and the community that it serves requires this ongoing commitment to fiscal security.

The Council's aim is to secure operating surpluses over the 10 year life of this new plan. These projected surpluses will achieve two significant outcomes:

Firstly it will ensure that the planning for the Council's assets will be appropriate to ensure that they are maintained, renewed or retired if not fit for purpose and

Secondly it will slowly rebuild the Council's cash reserves to a point where any unanticipated and unbudgeted event can be accommodated without causing any disruption to the Council's operational effectiveness.

A component of this 10 year plan is the implementation of the Council's Circular Economy initiative.

The primary objectives of this program are:

To increase the level of disposal income for circulation within the Shire and

To create sustainable economic growth through developing new industry opportunities.

The proposals cover four main areas:

Behind the Meter scheme
Greenhouse development
Biogas Plant
Poultry Cluster proposals

Overall these initiatives would create 1,000 direct jobs and many more supporting jobs. The planning for these proposals is on track.

The Council has adopted an aspirational target of increasing the Shire's population to 8,000 residents by 2031.

A significant amount of strategic planning has been undertaken to date. This is a fairly challenging but achievable target if the planning to date comes to fruition.

One of the options being explored is opening the shire to migrants and refugees under the Federal and State Governments' resettlement programs.

This resettlement will only be supported by the Council if:

Firstly there is the creation of employment opportunities for both local residents and migrants (Circular Economy initiatives)

There is the creation of suitable housing stock to accommodate new arrivals (State funded social housing)

There is the provision of adequate services that will cater for both existing residents and new arrivals and

The new arrivals are a good cultural fit with the existing demographic makeup of the Shire's existing population.

Buckle up because the next few years may be a very exciting time for Gwydir Shire and its residents.

M Eastcott, General Manager

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Council acknowledges the traditional owners of the land, the Kamilaroi People and pays its respect to Elders both past and present.

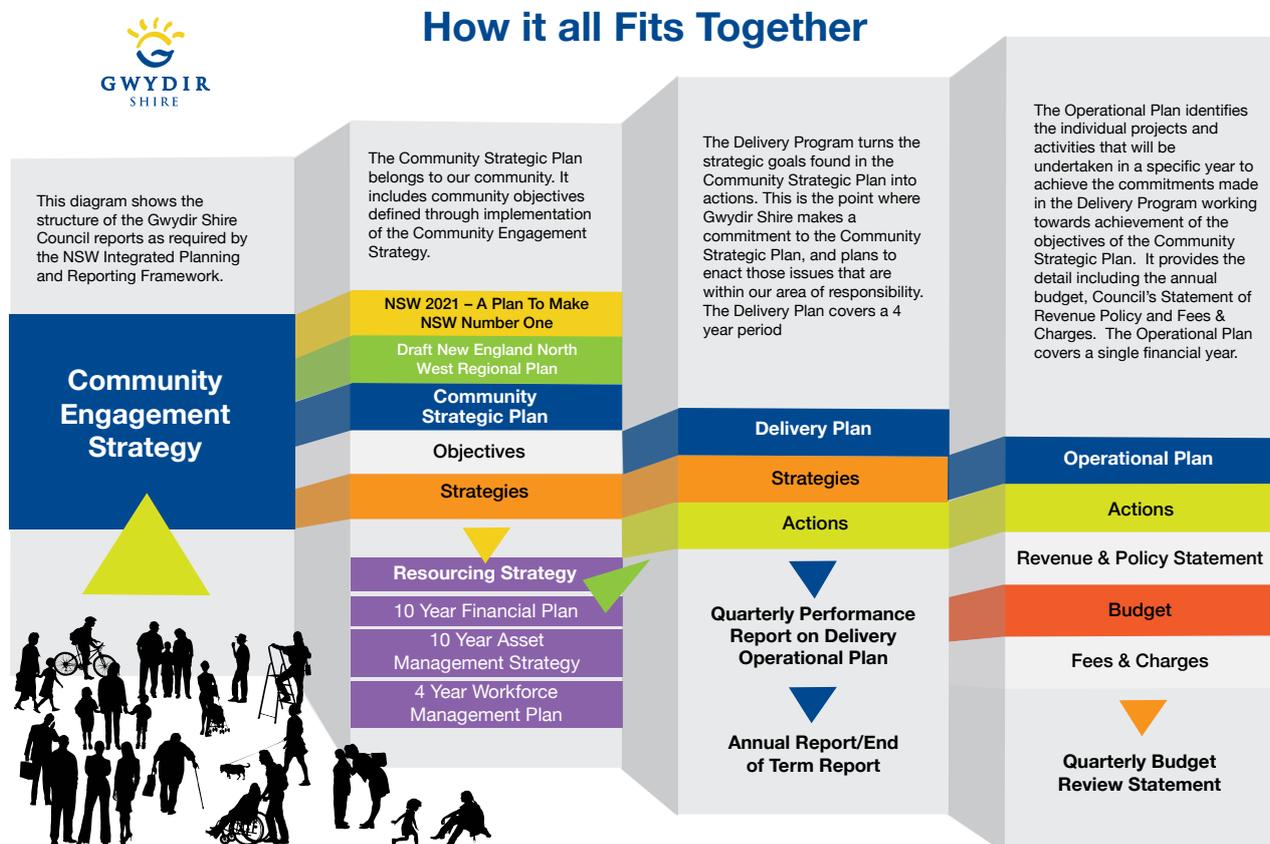
Our Planning Framework

How it all fits together

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework impacting all NSW Councils was introduced by the NSW State Government in 2009. The reforms replaced the former Social and Management Plan structures. All NSW Councils are required to develop a Community Strategic Plan spanning 10 years, a Delivery Program spanning the four year period of the elected council and Operational Plans covering each financial year.

The framework allows Gwydir Shire Council to link all their plans together to get the maximum leverage by planning holistically for the future.

Gwydir Shire Council has been working within the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework since June 2012. The essential elements of the framework, and how they fit together, are shown in the diagram below.



The Community Strategic Plan

The Community Strategic Plan is the highest level plan prepared by Gwydir Shire Council and the community. It spans a period of 10 years. It belongs to the community and reflects the community's main priorities and future aspirations. The Community Strategic Plan is a roadmap for the future. In addition to the community priorities it considers trends, issues and future demands.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the Community Strategic Plan belongs to the Gwydir Shire Community. While Gwydir Shire Council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and maintaining the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of the Gwydir Shire Council Community it is not wholly responsible for its implementation. The long term objectives of the plan will require other partners such as State and Federal agencies and community organisations.

The Community Strategic Plan is based on the Social Justice Principles of access, equity, participation and rights. Our Community Engagement Strategy has been developed around these principles and consultation has been consistent with the provisions of this document.



In addition to the social justice principles, the Local Government Act dictates that the Community Strategic Plan must address the social, environmental, economic and civic leadership considerations, which are the quadruple bottom line considerations.

This plan has five major focus areas the first four are directly aligned with the quadruple bottom line considerations. The final focus area has been introduced to accommodate the community aspiration of future sustainability of Gwydir Shire Council.

In prior models the 'civic leadership' consideration has been described as 'governance'. In the new planning framework the term 'civic leadership' has been chosen to include involvement of community members in delivering objectives. Much consideration was given to these definitions when preparing this plan and it was determined for clarity that we would include Organisational Management (Governance) as an additional goal for our organisation. This goal specifically addresses internal outcomes, strategies and actions that have been developed to address the future sustainability of Gwydir Shire Council.

The Gwydir Shire Council goals and their link with the quadruple bottom line principles and the additional Governance goal are outlined below:



When reading the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan you will be able to clearly identify where it all links back to these goals through the use of the colours and symbols above.

This plan should be read in conjunction with the Delivery Program, Operational Plan and Resourcing Strategy. All of these documents can be found on our website www.gwydirshire.com

How did we gather the information that forms the plan?

During the period of community consultation we have spoken to our community to establish their Community Vision and their strategic objectives. Council staff facilitated the process to ensure that the objectives addressed the social, environmental, economic and civic leadership issues. The community engagement process is outlined fully in *Insert Section Reference* of this document.

In addition to this we have considered and built into our strategic plans objectives included in other initiatives such as NSW Premier's Priorities, State Priorities and the Draft New England North West Regional Plan. These plans are referenced to show the link between our defined path and the objectives of these State and Regional plans. In addition to the State and Draft Regional Plan we have considered requirements of other federal, state and internal plans.

These include:

- Gwydir Local Environmental Plan 2013
- Section 94 Traffic Generating Development
- Destination NSW – Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan
- Regional Development Australia Northern Inland (RDANI) Regional Plan
- Flood Mapping Plans
- Bingara and Wyallda Town Strategies
- North West Transport Plan
- New England North West Climate Adaptation Snapshot
- New England North West Regional Growth
- Circular Economy Draft Business Plan
- NSW Renewable Energy Action Plan
- The Living Classroom Management Plan (Draft)
- Namoi Joint Organisation (JO) Regional Procurement Project Plan
- Namoi JO Strategic Direction Plan
- Namoi JO Investment Prospectus
- Namoi JO Procurement and Tendering Guidelines (Draft)
- Central Northern Regional Library (CNRL) Management Plan (2017-2018)
- Outreach Services Framework and Strategy for CNRL Libraries
- National Youth Strategy for Young Australians 2010 - Australian Government
- The NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2016 – 2019 – Advocate for Children and Young People
- Gwydir Shire Council Asset Management Plans and Strategy
- Targeted Earlier Intervention Program Reform - NSW Government Family and Community Services
- Gwydir River Crown Land Plan of Management
- Waste Management Plan and Northern Inland Regional Waste Strategy and Contract Management Plan
- Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
- Strategic Companion Animal Management Plan
- Gwydir Shire Council Roadside Vegetation Management Plan
- Gwydir Shire Council's Category B enforcement agency appointment under s.111A of the Food Act 2003
- Gwydir Shire Council's Records Improvement Plan
- Best Practice Management Guidelines
- Gwydir Shire Council's Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan
- Water Sharing Plan for Gwydir Regulated River
- Gwydir Shire Council's Draft Destination Plan
- Gwydir Economic Development Plan (Draft)
- Gwydir Shire Council's Business Continuity Plan (Draft)
- Gwydir Shire Council's Risk Management Action Plan
- Gwydir Shire Council's Business Continuity Plan (Draft)
- Gwydir Shire Council's Risk Management Action Plan

The Community Engagement Strategy

The information included in this Plan was obtained through the implementation of the **Community Engagement Strategy**. As required by legislation, Gwydir Shire Council prepared a Community Engagement Strategy based on social justice principles for engagement with the Gwydir Community and implemented elements of this plan that were relevant to the situation. The Community Engagement Strategy can be located on Council's website www.gwydirshire.com



The Community Engagement Strategy is built on the principle that all members of the community have a right, and a responsibility, to contribute to their community's future. Council's consultation goals are:

To provide the community with appropriate information on Council itself, on governance and decision making mechanisms, on Council's services, events and projects and any associated issues

To capture community input on strategic plans, directions, issues, priorities and projects

To work on an ongoing basis with the community to ensure that community ideas, concerns and aspirations are listened to and understood

To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision making process, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution

The Resourcing Strategy

While the Community Strategic Plan expresses the long-term community aspirations they cannot be achieved without sufficient resources. The Resourcing Strategy outlines the time, money, assets and human resources to achieve the long term community aspirations.

The Gwydir Shire Council Resourcing Strategy consists of three elements:

- The Long Term Financial Plan
- The Workforce Management Plan
- The Asset Management Plan

The Resourcing Strategy focuses in detail on matters that are the responsibility of the Council and looks generally at matters that are the responsibility of other entities. Before the Resourcing Strategy is developed, the issues identified in the Community Strategic Plan are considered, and it is determined which of the actions will be the responsibility of Gwydir Shire Council, which actions are the responsibilities of other levels of government and it also involves determining which actions will rely on input from community groups or individuals.

Where are we now?

Gwydir Shire Council 2017

Our Council Area

Gwydir Shire is located on the North West Slopes and Plains of NSW, approximately 400kms north of Sydney, 120kms north of Tamworth, 300kms south west of Brisbane, 40kms west of Inverell and 40kms east of Moree.

The Shire sits at the crossroads of the Fossickers Way, a popular north-south touring route, the Gwydir Highway, a significant east-west route linking the NSW North Coast to Outback NSW and on Nature's Way (State Touring Route 3), which links Narrabri to Inverell via Gwydir Shire. The Bruxner Highway (east-west route) traverses the northern edge of the Shire with links into southern Queensland.

Much of Gwydir Shire lies between the 29°S and 30°S latitudes, placing it mid-way in the realm of arable lands within the Southern Hemisphere. It has a temperate climate with warm to hot summers (25°C – 35°C) and cool to mild winters (10°C – 20°C). The average elevation across the shire is approximately 350m above sea level. The Gwydir Shire lies about 300kms from the Tasman Sea and the north coast of NSW.

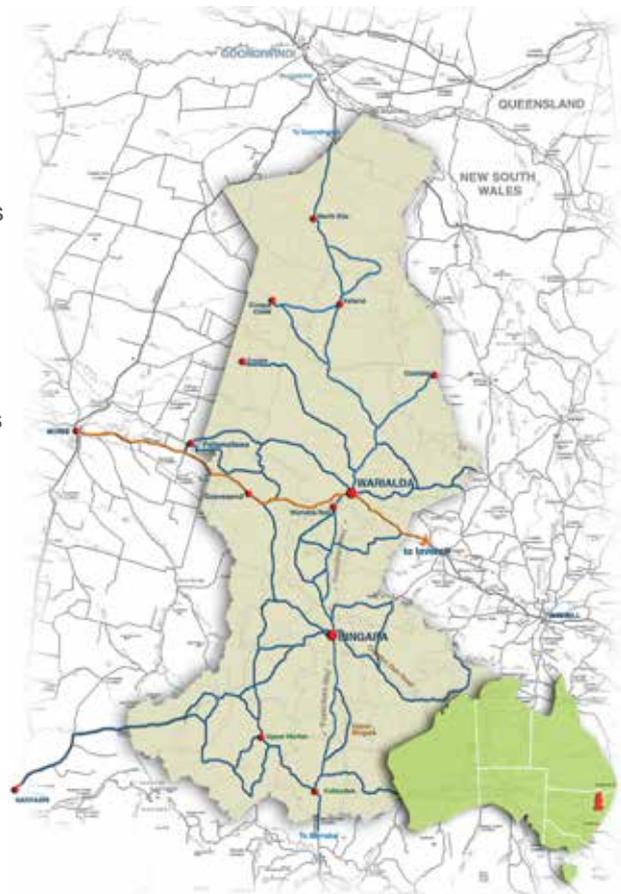
The Shire is part of the New England – North West Region of NSW (also known as the Northern Inland Region) and is bounded by Tamworth Regional Council to the south, Narrabri Shire to the south west, Moree Plains Shire to the west, Inverell Shire to the east and Uralla and Guyra Shires to the south east.

Incorporating an area of 9,122 square kilometres, Gwydir Shire extends from the Nandewar Range in the south and north to close to the Queensland border. The landscapes of the Shire are diverse, and in places, breathtaking.

The southern and central areas of the Shire are located within the Gwydir River catchment area with the Gwydir River flowing through Bingara and Gravesend. The southern areas of the Shire are hilly with pockets of highly fertile river flats along the Gwydir River and its main tributaries.

Mt Kaputar National Park forms the western edge of the Shire, with rugged remnant volcanic peaks and landforms rising above the Gwydir Valley. The northern part of the Shire lies within the 'Golden Triangle'. Built on the black soils from basalt outflows of the New England, it is one of the most productive agricultural areas in Australia.

Agriculture is the primary land use and economic activity within Gwydir Shire. Livestock production dominates in the southern and central areas of the Shire, with the Shire producing prime beef, lamb and pork. The Shire has a collection of beef cattle and sheep properties with a number of renowned beef studs.





Broadacre cropping is undertaken in the northern part of the Shire, with the main crops being wheat, sorghum and barley. Other crops include dryland cotton, other grains (oats, maize, triticale), hay and pasture seeds, pulses (chickpeas, field beans, mung beans, faba beans, lentils) and oilseeds (canola, soybeans and sunflowers).

In June 2015, Gwydir Shire had an estimated population of 5,068. The Shire has two small towns, Bingara and Warialda, located approximately 40km apart. Bingara services the southern part of the Shire. Located on the Gwydir River at the intersection of the Fossickers Way and Nature's Way (State Touring Route 3), Bingara is a popular stop for travellers.

Warialda is located on the Gwydir Highway, midway between Inverell and Moree. The town is a service centre for both the surrounding rural area and Highway travellers.

Both towns have small, vibrant shopping centres, with IGA supermarkets, historic hotels, eateries and shops that meet the day-to-day needs of the community. There are also a few boutiques and some lifestyle and 'quirky' retailers that are always popular with visitors. Both towns are ideal to use as a stop-over base for exploring the Gwydir Shire and surrounding regions.

The Shire has five rural villages – North Star, Croppa Creek, Coolatai and Gravesend in the northern part of the Shire, and Upper Horton in the south. The Shire has 21 rural localities – Boonal, Blue Nobby, Yallaroi, Crooble, (part of) Pallamallawa and Balfours Peak in the northern half of the Shire, and Warialda Rail, Gineroi, Bangheet, Riverview, Elcombe, Pallal, Rocky Creek, Back Creek, Cobbadah, Gundamulda, Dinoga, Gulf Creek, Upper Bingara, Keera and Copeton in the southern half.

Some Gwydir Shire Council Statistics

Our Vision

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

Population 5,080
Median Age 46.7 years
(NSW 37.8 years)

GP Services 122.35 gps per
100,000 residents (NSW 113)

**The Population
to 2036 is
expected to
decrease by
0.5% each year**

The median age
of death is
80.5 years
(NSW 81 years)

4.5% of total population identify
as Aboriginal and/or Torres
Strait Islander, (NSW 2.9%)

23.9% of total population are over
the age of 65 years,
(NSW 15.2%)

20.6% of total population are
0-14 years, (NSW 18.9%)

19.9% of families are single parent
families with children aged
less than 15 years
(NSW 21.2%)

Stats as at 2015

There are 2,135 people in the labour
force in Gwydir Shire. Of these

64.2% were employed full time

24.6% were employed part time

6.9% were unemployed

2.3 people per household on
average

\$726 is the median weekly
household income

\$928 is the median monthly
mortgage repayment

\$100 is the median weekly rent

1.9 motor vehicles on average
per dwelling

57.6% of dwellings had an
internet connection
(NSW 76.3%)

The most common occupations in Gwydir Shire are

34.5% managers

13.4% labourers

10.6% professionals

9.3% technicians and trades
workers

9.3% clerical and administrative
workers

6.9% The unemployment
rate is (NSW 5.8%)

References for statistical information are:
ABS -Census 2011
Population Health Snapshot 2015



Our 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 Core 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.

Our Service Values

- To aim to exceed your expectations
- To act on our commitments as quickly as possible
- To treat you courteously and respectfully, as we ourselves would wish to be treated
- To understand your real needs by listening to what you have to say
- 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 re-occur
- To value your privacy by treating confidentially all personal information which you give us.

The Fit for the Future Assessment

During the consultation process the community were kept well informed of the fact that our council was identified as having a Financial Sustainability Rating (FSR) of 'very weak'. This was determined in the initial assessment process conducted by TCorp under the State Government's Fit for the Future process during 2013. Following this process our council has undertaken a number of initiatives with the aim of improving its operational performance.

As a component of our endeavours to continually improve our financial position we commissioned TCorp to undertake a reassessment of our financial outlook in March 2017. In this assessment we were identified as having a FSR of 'weak' with a neutral outlook. A full report on the Fit for the Future assessment and recommendations is included in the Delivery Program.

While our FSR has improved in a short time we are not going to stop there. We have spoken to our community and have been transparent about the results of our Fit for the Future assessments. We have informed our community of the recommendations that TCorp have made to move Gwydir Shire along the path of sustainability and we continue to work towards strengthening our community through the implementation of the recommendations.

The recommendations from reports referred to above have been communicated to our community at Public Meetings, and the actions for implementation are included in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

TRENDS – What is on the horizon?

Over the next 10 years there will be substantial change in the working environment of Gwydir Shire Council and the community that it serves.

Some of these possible future changes will be able to be managed, but many will occur in a way that can only be accommodated rather than managed.

The areas of impact upon Gwydir Shire and its residents discussed in this strategy are:

- Energy dependence
- Technological advances
- Localism
- Potential climate change adaption
- Population decline
- Social media

Specific actions aligned to addressing the trends outlined in this section of the Community Strategic Plan are included in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Energy dependence

The future reliance of being able to simply switch electricity on and expect it to work may not always remain the case.

Changes to the way baseload power is produced and distributed will result in communities endeavouring to find local solutions to meet its power needs.



In many ways it will be very much ‘back to the future’ as rural communities seek out the best solutions for their communities to meet the possibility of longer lead times to repair outages, together with the possible threat of brownouts on a regular basis, especially during peak demand periods such as summer heat waves.

Gwydir Shire is addressing this issue through its investigation of the ‘Behind the Meter’ scheme. This scheme is designed to encourage and support each dwelling (urban and farmland) and business to fit out their individual property with sufficient solar panels and batteries to be virtually energy self-sufficient. The Council would act as the facilitator of the proposed scheme:

- coordinating the property assessments
- installing the components
- ongoing maintenance
- arranging the finance over an agreed period, up to a 20 year repayment period with the annual repayment being less than the ‘normal’ electricity bills, thus creating additional disposal funds.

The scheme is currently being modelled by the Institute of Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney, and Zen Energy Systems.

This scheme has two benefits for the residents of Gwydir. Firstly the quality of the installed system is guaranteed and secondly, it provides the opportunity for universal inclusion irrespective of a resident’s ability to pay. The current Federal and State Governments’ initiatives rely somewhat on the ability of the household to contribute, which is often not possible for many of the Shire’s residents due to their economic circumstances.

Entry into the scheme is voluntary but, of course, the repayments will then become a debt on the property.

If the take-up is universal, the overall Shire’s potential greenhouse gas saving is quite large and capable of replication across other rural communities.

In order to rationalise its own electricity consumption costs, Council will progressively upgrade all its buildings that can be converted to ‘off grid’ with solar panels and battery storage.

Technological advances

What is simply imagined today will quite possibly become a reality tomorrow.

Dick Tracey was a cartoon character of the 1950’s who communicated through his watch; we now have the I Watch. Who could have imagined your refrigerator keeping track of your refrigerated items so an order could be sent automatically to the supermarket for replenishment?

Technology has had great benefits for our society but it comes at a large cost; the potential loss of jobs in many sectors of our economy. This community has already experienced this aspect of technology to some degree as agricultural activities become more reliant on the available technologies.

The 2011 census revealed that 57% of households within Gwydir Shire had some form of internet access. This is a low penetration rate and will inhibit the learning opportunity for students in homes without access. The roll out of the Federal Government’s National Broadband Network (NBN) initiative within the towns of Bingara and Warialda over the next two years may assist in improving this take-up within households.

Gwydir Shire already has a less than average level of academic achievement and the universal access to the internet is a definite impediment to the Council's objective of promoting lifelong learning through the work of the Gwydir Learning Region.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics notes the following in its report General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2014 (GSS):

LOWER EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT LINKED TO LESS SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

In 2014, people with lower levels of education were less likely to engage in forms of community support, to feel they could have a say, and to participate in social activities. People aged 18 years and over with a qualification below year 12 were less likely than people with a bachelor degree or higher to have done voluntary work in the last 12 months (22% compared with 41%) and less likely to provide help to others living outside their household in the last four weeks (38% compared with 52%). People with a qualification below year 12 were also less likely than those with a bachelor degree or higher to feel they could have a say within the community on important issues (22% compared with 26%), to have participated in sport or recreational physical activity (52% compared with 83%) and to have attended selected cultural venues and events in the last 12 months (71% compared with 96%).

For the first time, the 2014 GSS asked people under the age of 70 years about the level of highest educational qualification of their parents or guardians. These data show that people whose parents or guardians had a bachelor degree or higher were more likely themselves to gain a bachelor degree or higher as their highest qualification, rather than year 12. Parents with high educational attainment may serve as role models for their children, and may be more likely to have the financial resources to provide support for their children while they are studying

(Source <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats%5Cabs@.nsf/0/C6BF68E57D3A308CCA256E21007686F8?Opendocument>)

Dr John Mitchell noted in his report The Gwydir Learning Region Model: An independent evaluation (2006) that:

At a surface level, the Gwydir Learning Region is an example of what public and private organisations and committed individuals can achieve through goodwill, passion and determination in an economically depressed, socially disadvantaged and remote area of NSW.

At a deeper level, sophisticated concepts underpin the Gwydir Learning Region, including concepts of innovation and collective creativity, lifelong learning, personalised learning, learning communities, inclusive leadership, social capital, social harmony, social infrastructure, social justice, ecological community development and sustainable rural development.

From the point of view of individual development, the Gwydir Learning Region provides individuals with opportunities to extend their learning, develop new skills, achieve social and economic goals, and pursue pathways that might not have been available to them previously.

From the point of view of education, the Gwydir Learning Region represents new levels of cooperation between schools and TAFE and ACE, new ways of relating learning to local businesses and communities and new ways of implementing personalised learning – an approach to learning which involves the provision of targeted attention for each student.

From the point of view of local government, the Gwydir Learning Region demonstrates the importance and value of Council involvement in new partnerships and Council involvement with

the social infrastructure of rural and remote communities, where those communities want to build social capital and create their own positive options for the future.

From the point of view of economic and regional development, the Gwydir Learning Region represents an innovative approach to aligning skill development with local employment needs to create a sustainable future in rural NSW.

The Council will continue to increase the level of educational achievement throughout the Shire with its work through the Gwydir Learning Region.

In addition, the Council will incorporate any advantageous technologies that will increase its efficiency in the provision of services to its community.

This may lead to reduced Council employment opportunities in some areas but will, hopefully, be offset against the creation of new employment opportunities as the overall educational achievement of our community is elevated.

The Council will embrace new technologies where appropriate and will not be deterred from being the 'first' if the benefits are perceived to outweigh the dis-benefits following the risk assessment.

Localism

Wikipedia describes localism as “a range of political philosophies which prioritise the local. Generally, localism supports local production and consumption of goods, local control of government, and promotion of local history, local culture and local identity. Localism can be contrasted with regionalism and centralised government”.

There is a definite trend across the world to developing policies that promote localism. This fits into the principle of subsidiarity which states “that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level”.

This is a trend that has not, as yet, been embraced fully within the Australian political framework but it is likely to grow in momentum over the next decade.

The Australian Government's Social Inclusion Board produced a 2011 report entitled *Governance Models for Location Based Initiatives*. Although this report was endeavouring to use localism as a way to focus on the locations of greatest disadvantage by tailoring place-based approaches in partnership with the community, it did also outline the requirements for success.

A positive example cited from the United Kingdom in the report (p14) noted at local level, local Strategic Partnerships “to bring together at local level different parts of the public sector as well as the private, business, voluntary and community sectors” are vital in a good governance model. In the case of Gwydir Shire this could be achieved through the Gwydir Learning Region (GLR) framework.

The report, although talking about the importance of localism, does contain the interesting comment that “Some of the public servants consulted were wary of devolving responsibility to local communities because of the lack of capacity in local institutions to exercise it”. These observations more likely highlight the prejudices of the federal public servants contacted rather than a considered comment about the level of competence exhibited by local authority public servants, although it may well be the case in isolated examples.

The elements required for success include:

- Local 'sovereignty', that is, the local authority makes all the relevant decisions
- Effective governing institutions comprising:
 - o Stable institutions and policies
 - o Fair and effective dispute resolution
 - o Separation of politics from day to day business decisions
 - o A competent bureaucracy
 - o A cultural match between prevailing ideals in community and institutions
- Strategic direction, to focus the direction of development and guide decision making
- Practical decision making

Any increased move to implement the greater application of localism by either the State or Federal Governments will present opportunities but will also carry the risk of cost shifting, which has often occurred in the past.

Potential climate change adaption processes

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines climate change adaptation as: 'The adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climate stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.'

An effective adaptation, planning and implementation program requires strong support, for example, endorsement from a Mayor, majority Council support, or explicit commitments in public documents. Adaptation is an interactive and long-term process which requires strong leadership and ongoing commitment to future outcomes.

Climate change adaptation is a large and multi-faceted challenge which needs to be addressed across sectors. Rather than imposing a top-down approach where a group of climate change experts work in a range of sectors, it is better to build capacity among people already working in each sector by involving them in the planning process. This allows people to use their existing expertise and be exposed to new ideas and parameters in a changing climate.

Capacity building strengthens the commitment people have to the adaptation process. People are generally more committed to, and satisfied with, working on projects they have helped to develop.

As with most Council activities, engaging with the community will be critical to the success of adaptation planning. Informing them about projected local climate impacts and canvassing their views on levels of acceptable risk will develop community understanding of climate change adaptation.

Population decline

The challenge for small rural local government authorities like Gwydir is long term population decline. Often younger resident families and individuals leave and are replaced by older people in their retirement years.

This long term trend of declining population growth will create ongoing governance and service provision issues if not arrested and reversed. Gwydir Shire has adopted an aspirational target of increasing the Shire's population to 8,000 residents by 2031.



A significant amount of strategic planning has been undertaken to date.

This is a fairly challenging but achievable target if the planning to date comes to fruition.

One of the options being explored is opening the Shire to migrants and refugees under the Federal and State Governments' resettlement programs.

This resettlement will only be supported by the Council if:

- Firstly there is the creation of employment opportunities for both local residents and migrants (Circular economy initiatives)

- There is the creation of suitable housing stock to accommodate new arrivals (State funded social housing)

- There is the provision of adequate services that will cater for both existing residents and new arrivals and

- The new arrivals are a good cultural fit with the existing demographic makeup of the Shire's existing population.

Another initiative being explored by the Council is the introduction of a Circular Economy program.

The primary objectives of this program are:

- To increase the level of disposal income for circulation within the Shire and

- To create sustainable economic growth through developing new industry opportunities

The proposals cover four main areas:

- Behind the Meter scheme – finalising proposal

- Greenhouse development – Development Application stage

- Biogas Plant – proposal being refined

- Poultry Cluster – longer term proposal

Overall these initiatives would create 1,000 direct jobs and many more secondary supporting jobs. Obviously there will be a significant boost in the Shire's population if these additional jobs are realised. The planning for these proposals is on track.

Social media

The Oxford Dictionary defines social media as 'Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking'.

Social media has the potential to either be beneficial or destabilising, but it is important to understand that the available research to date highlights that its penetration is not as pervasive as may be perceived.

Not surprisingly, a research paper by the Pew Research Centre (2014) noted that likeminded people are very much inclined to seek out the comments from people with similar views. The extreme ends (both right and left) of the political spectrum tend to dominate, especially the political content on social media sites. This accounts for only 20% of the users but one could be mistaken for thinking that the comments are held by a much larger percentage.

Constructive engagement with the remaining 80% of users is important.

Social media must not become a tool of attempting to manipulate public opinion, but rather a vehicle to put Council's perspective on situations in an open and transparent way. If the Council is always honest and straightforward the outcome will always be better for our organisation in the long run, as our residents will learn that the content can be trusted.

Gwydir Shire Council, as an active local government entity, aspires to be connected with the daily lives of its ratepayers, residents and visitors. Social media will continue to grow as a legitimate source for the transfer of corporate information. Facebook has by far the most online regular users. In addition to Facebook, Council's websites will be reviewed to ensure that they provide a user friendly interface and perform efficiently, both visually and from content prospective. Council information, payment of accounts, newsletters and community information will be included on the appropriate social media platforms to make sure that information can be easily accessed and managed.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) in their paper entitled Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media note 'Social Media allow firms to engage in timely and direct end-consumer contact at relatively low cost and higher levels of efficiency than can be achieved with more traditional communication tools. This makes Social Media not only relevant for large multinational firms, but also for small and medium sized companies, and even non-profit and governmental agencies. Using Social Media is not an easy task and may require new ways of thinking, but the potential gains are far from being negligible'.

When interacting with social media Kaplan and Haenlein suggest the following five points be observed:

Be active

If you want to develop a relationship with someone, it is always advisable to take the lead and to be active. Social Media are all about sharing and interaction, so ensure that your content is always fresh and that you engage in discussions with your customers.

Be interesting

The first step is to listen to your customers. Find out what they would like to hear; what they would like to talk about; what they might find interesting, enjoyable, and valuable. Then, develop and post content that fits those expectations.

Be humble

Never forget that Social Media existed before you decided to engage in them; indeed, in many cases, even before you knew about their existence. In this light, do not expect that you know better how to use them than others who have spent countless hours on Facebook or Second Life, for example. Before you enter any application, first take some time to discover it and to learn about its history and basic rules.

Be unprofessional

Have you ever noticed that in Hollywood blockbuster films, it's not usually the handsome guy who ends up with the girl, but rather the clumsy, charming one? The same goes for Social Media, and firms would be wise to avoid overly-professional content offerings.

Be honest

Last but not least, be honest and respect the rules of the game.



includes a comprehensive outline of all Gwydir Shire Council has achieved towards the achievement of the community goals outlined in the original Community Strategic Plan.

We were committed to engage the community around the role and future of local government, Council's financial sustainability, service levels, infrastructure provision, and meeting the needs of the community.

In May 2015, as part of Council's first Special Rate Variation (SRV) application (which was partially approved) the methods of engagement employed included Shire wide focus groups, a community survey, media release, direct mail, indirect mail via 'To the Householder', Council's website, and an online discussion forum made available via Council's Facebook page.

The IPART determination report considered that the Council had not made the community sufficiently aware of the planned impact on rates in 2015/16, and did not provide enough detail to the community around the cumulative nature of the rate rise. The determination also suggests Council did not respond adequately to key community concerns about the SRV.

So, what did we learn from this process?

Council still values the methods of engagement we have used historically, in particular Mayoral columns, classifieds, placing documents on public display for comment, community meetings, open Council and Committee meetings, 'open door' policy, liaison with, and support of its S355 Committees, close communications with community groups, Councillor representation at community functions and meetings.

However since mid-2015, we have taken additional steps to improve how we engage with our community, for example Council staff have undertaken International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) training and now use these techniques. Council firmly believes that **'any process that involves the community in problem solving or decision making and uses community input to make better decisions'** Definition of Community Engagement (IAP2).

As part of its second SRV application (February 2016) we engaged the Centre for Local Government at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS: CLG) to conduct workshops with Council, a deliberative panel, and a community survey exploring the financial sustainability of Council and future service delivery in the local area.

At around the same time, the community group Bingara and District VISION 20/20, joined the Warialda Chamber of Commerce and engaged with the community as to its future direction. This consultation was a Summit held on 25 November 2015 and was facilitated by Adam Blaster of Starfish Enterprises, Armidale. Specific community members of all ages, groups and interests were invited to participate. They were asked to share such things as 'Why you like living in Gwydir?', 'What are our community values... our strengths, and challenges, what is working well, what isn't'. It was a very positive experience and a great deal of information was recorded. This process allowed Council to start to shape a strategic plan, however it was decided that to fully collaborate with the community we needed to enable our community leaders to become facilitators themselves.

In addition to its historical methods of engagement, Council decided to empower community groups to undertake the consultative process: Bingara and District VISION 20/20 (Vision 20/20), Warialda Rotary (Rotary), Warialda Chamber of Commerce (WCC), and community leaders from various villages. These groups and leaders are approachable, dedicated and effective visionaries. Council supported and guided them through the engagement process with the provision of a community



space, information, administration support and advice. All groups chosen have in place strategic planning documents (Bingara and District VISION 20/20, Warialda Chamber of Commerce Population Policy), skilled volunteers and a willingness to listen.

Therefore, in March 2016 we recruited Amanda Cahill of the Centre for Social Change, Queensland to conduct workshops with high school students and community volunteers. These workshops not only captured more information but also expanded the attendees' skill set to communicate, facilitate and lead effectively.

Council now had the positive benefit of having staff and community leaders trained in community engagement methodology. Council decided that through **COLLABORATION** with key stakeholders it could find strategies, areas of concern, and subsequently solutions or alternatives.

Given Gwydir Shire Council is a small community, it has the advantage of most people knowing 'someone' on a committee; this creates an air of familiarity and a space for more people to be open and willing to share their individual aspirations and needs. These flexible hours also allow more people to come forward and express their wants and ideas over a cup of tea or even a beer.

The community driven engagement involved planning sessions, shopfronts in Bingara and Warialda over several weekends during the months of August, September and November 2016. These shopfronts concluded with strategic planning sessions led by community leaders. Council staff and Councillors were partners in this unique process.

During this period, local government elections were held. Gwydir Shire Council saw three Councillors retire, welcomed their replacements and saw the six remaining Councillors re-elected in September 2016. The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) legislation requires a new Council to review its planning documents.

Following their induction, the newly elected Councillors participated in a planning workshop facilitated by consultants Blackadder Associates. By utilising an external consultant, the Councillors worked through Council's existing services and goals objectively without staff influence. The Councillors also had the benefit of being presented with many ideas, projects, solutions and strategies which had been gathered through many different methods of community engagement. It should be noted that the Councillors were also heavily involved in the shopfronts as volunteers.

Historically, Council has been able to connect relatively easily with older residents, however struggles to reach younger residents. Through the use of Facebook and its website Council has started to bridge this gap. Similarly, Council is forming a Youth Council and continues with its Civics and Citizenship courses with local high schools.

Using all of these avenues Council staff have drafted the IP&R planning documents. The Community Strategic Plan is a living document which complements the community's aspirations and future direction.

Whether we believe that we are 'future makers or future takers' the future will happen, but how much can people create and influence their own future and that of their communities?

External forces are important; terms of trade, weather and government policy influence everybody every day, BUT conversely some external forces can be influenced by us.

Our identity is our choice. VISION 2030

What our General Community Told Us

On assessment of the community aspirations (wants and needs) it was determined that the already defined strategic direction outlined in the Community Strategic Plan adopted in July 2012 was still applicable. The broad categories of feedback included roads and other assets, the appearances of our towns and villages, tourism, economic development, specifically increasing our population. It was recognised that we could improve on our previous consultation process during the production of the last Community Strategic Plan. With this in mind, we conducted additional consultation with individuals in the Aged and Youth demographics.

Bike shed Gravesend • Water refilling stations • Vacant land for development
• Friends of Naroo • Naroo Sustainability • Improve medical services
• North Bingara sewerage expansion • Communication • More volunteers
• Strategic relationships • Circular Economy • Population growth
• Expanded tourism • Economic Development • Gwydir Learning
Region • The Living Classroom • Fit For The Future • Domestic
Waste Collection • Financial stability • Review of service levels

Warialda Rail Water Supply • Two Pools? • Naroo development
• Extension of Gravesend Club • Independent living units Naroo
• Roxy Theatre - events/shows • Vacant land for sale
• Foreshore Management • Optimum Road Network
• Asset Management Plans • Petition Other Levels of Government
• Behind the Meter Scheme • Park Irrigation systems

Cranky Rock • Focus on Arts • Cost savings - Community Halls • Review
standard of ramps • Self Help (Roads) • Greenhouse & Poultry • Redevelopment
Bingara Civic Centre • Roxy Café • Reduce levels of service for parks and
gardens • Fossickers' Paradise • Attract more Grey Nomads to stay longer
• Regional conferencing • Biolinks projects • North Star water upgrade
• Gravesend water supply • Sewerage treatment - pipe relining programs
• Development of town water bore Croppa Creek • Warialda water supply
• Friends of Myall Creek Committee • Regular welcome new
residents/visitors • Development of Myall Creek Massacre Memorial Site
• ePlanning • Directional signage improved • Mongard's town strategy roll
out • Review of staff salaries and numbers • Small community events
• Review our staff literacy and numeracy levels

Upper Horton - mobile phone tower • Inland Rail project • Improve mobile coverage
• Museums • Biodigester • Sand mine opportunities • Divert tourist traffic
• Warialda geological walks • Redevelopment Bingara Council Depot • Gwydir River
cold water pollution • Noxious weeds programs • Recognition of local heroes
• Gwydir - geological centre of excellence • Coolatai Rock • Migrant resettlement
• Bingara - bypass • Coolatai - RV friendly accreditation

"Riley the Hairy One" • Warialda Pop up Gallery • Expand visitor accommodation
• NBN Opportunities • Warialda Food Bank • Biodegradable coffins • Winding down in Warialda
Festival • Warialda Amateur Dramatic Society • GSC plastic free zone
• Find fee free pathway for ESL students • Warialda Triathlon • Diner en Blanc Warialda
• Warialda - Bingara marathon • Gwydir Shire - Centre for Adventure • Public Art
• Reedy Creek - mud run • Companion Animals' Welfare • Warialda Community Garden
• Quirky Festival • Wellness Centre of the North West • Discos for kids at Gravesend
Develop Reedy Creek • Paint Bingara bridge • Coolatai Art Show
• Coolatai - improved RV sites ie dump sites

What our Youth Told Us

The NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People states their goal as “Children and young people are safe, connected, respected, healthy and well, with opportunities to thrive and have their voice heard in their communities”. The Plan also highlights the need for localisation when developing programs for young people: “Localisation harnesses and builds on the strengths, knowledge and opportunities that exist within local communities. It recognises that context matters: different communities will have different priorities, what works in one location may not work in another, and local communities are best placed to design, develop and deliver the solutions that will work for them”.

With this in mind, we conducted comprehensive consultation with young people in the Shire which included surveys, focus groups and one-on-one conversations. The results were very much in line with the outcomes of the Advocate for Children and Young People Plan. The young people of Gwydir Shire are concerned about their education and health, with a strong focus on the need for community activities to be inclusive and age appropriate to encourage participation by all ages.

Young people want more opportunities to be employed and access to higher education as well as traineeships and apprenticeships. The need for acceptance and respect from the community is significant and feeling safe in their community was of particular importance. Most respondents indicated that they enjoy living in rural NSW because of the “natural environment” and the “friendly people” but that they would like to see more activities and programs specifically designed for young people.

Gwydir Shire Council is in the process of bringing together a Youth Council so that the young people of the Shire will have a voice when it comes to planning and implementing programs and events for their communities. This will empower and engage young people across the Shire with the vision of a strong and vibrant community that they have contributed to through consultation and planning.

Over 10% of the Gwydir Shire Council Youth population completed the survey. They told us.....



By completing this survey you are helping to develop the future plans and direction of Gwydir Shire Council. All information collected is confidential. Thank you for participating.

Age: 11-13 14-16 17-19 20-24

Gender: Female Male

Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? Yes No

Location: Warialda Bingara Crooble
 Croppa Creek Gravesend North Star
 Upper Horton Upper Bingara Yallaro
 Other: _____

Do you live at home? Yes No

If No, who do you live with? Friends Grandparents Other relatives Independent

Reason for not living at home: _____

Have you ever been bullied? Yes No

If yes, what type of bullying have you experienced? Online text/mobile
 at school social occasions

Do you have a Part time job? Yes No

What our Older People Told Us

While the Aged in our community did not embrace the survey created by Council as enthusiastically as the Youth, we were still able to establish from results received, the specific aspirations of our aged persons. We will continue to circulate this survey at gatherings and appropriate events to ensure that we can gather more information for the creation of the Gwydir Shire Council Aging Strategy which will be completed during the period covered by the Delivery Program.



- They enjoyed the services currently offered by Council
- There was interest in development of Independent Living Accommodation at Naroo
- The appearance of our town streets was a concern to them
- Access is a problem in some businesses
- The Community Home Support bus in Warialda is not fit for purpose



The ageing of Australia's population, attributable to increased longevity, falls in fertility and the maturing of the baby boomer generation, will present significant challenges in relation to the build environment—the buildings, structures and spaces in which we live, work and play.

Have you considered your needs in the future for Aged care?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
And if so do you intend to remain within the Gwydir shire?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are you currently caring for someone?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Would you consider independent living units?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If so what would be your expectations with the buildings and support available?		
What would you want to be able to access within the community to improve your quality of life as an Aged resident within the Gwydir Shire.		

By completing this survey you are helping to develop the future plans and direction of Gwydir Shire Council Aged Care. All information collected is confidential. Thank you for participating.

What did we do with this information?

After the information was gathered we then needed to consider which of the community aspirations needed to be planned for and resourced by Council. The information needed to be refined to provide opportunity for Council to plan to meet the objectives of the Community Strategic Plan through the Delivery Program.

So what did we do after we gathered the information from our community?

We had more workshops with a panel of people representative of our population, our Executive Team and our Councillors.

A small deliberative panel of community members representative of the Council population were brought together to consider the community aspirations gathered during the Community Engagement Process.

Each of the community objectives were considered by the group who worked through them with representatives of Gwydir Shire Council senior management team. The group was asked to consider if the objectives fell within the Local Government Charter.

The Local Government Act includes the Charter, which identifies the areas councils need to consider when carrying out their responsibilities. The Charter indicates that councils have a range of roles. These roles include leadership, service provision, regulation, facilitation, advocacy and education.

Participants were asked to consider three areas:

- 1) what Gwydir Shire Council can control
- 2) what Gwydir Shire Council can influence
- 3) what should concern Gwydir Shire Council

This technique is adapted from *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey, Simon & Schuster 1992 and was chosen because it is a technique for separating out priorities and gaining ownership for action.

The 'Circle of Concern' (the outer circle) encompasses the three levels and represents everything that matters to the Gwydir Community. It includes aspects that Gwydir Shire Council can control and influence, however the 'Circle of Concern' will always contain many things outside the control or influence of Gwydir Shire Council e.g. increased energy costs, extreme weather events.

The 'Circle of Control' lies within the 'Circle of Concern' and represents actions that Gwydir Shire Council can directly control. Control relates to what Gwydir Shire Council can make happen through decision making without the involvement of other entities such as other levels of government.

The 'Circle of Influence' represents the objectives within the 'Circle of Concern' that can be achieved through building productive relationships with external entities. A current Gwydir Shire Council example of actions within the 'Circle of Influence' is the formation of the Rural Roads Group with Moree Plains Shire Council to lobby for more rural road funding.



For the community aspirations that fell within the areas of Influence and Control the group was then asked to consider where these aspirations fitted with the Gwydir Shire Council strategic planning hierarchy. Consideration was given to the fit within the existing strategic direction of existing plans.

How are we going to get there?

Our Strategic Direction

The following section of the Plan provides the detail of the Community Strategic Plan. It includes the five goals and the related Outcomes and Strategies. The first section shows the Goals and Outcomes which are coded to visually demonstrate how they are linked throughout the suite of documents.

The second section expands to include descriptions that are related to the Goals and Activities and aligned with the community vision. The strategies, which are a group of actions that describe what will be done to work towards achieving the Outcomes and Goals, are included in the relevant sections along with the role of the community, the role of the Council and partnerships.



A healthy and cohesive community

- Outcome 1.1 We have healthy and inviting spaces and places**
- Outcome 1.2 Our community is an inviting and vibrant place to live**

What we heard our community say...

We heard you say that that your water supplies and the quality of water are important. We heard you say that you want us to investigate the possibility of a water supply in Warialda Rail.

We heard you say that water refilling stations in Warialda and Bingara are a community aspiration.

We heard you say that in Gravesend the streetscape is a priority and that the Gravesend Club and Hall require attention.

We heard you say that you are concerned about our Ageing population and want us to continue to provide our services for the aged and disabled. You also want us to investigate the establishment of Independent Living units in Warialda. You said that the sustainability of our Aged Care facilities such as Naroo and Touriandi are a community priority. We heard you say that you are going to form a 'Friends of Naroo' committee.

We heard you say that children's and youth services are important to you.

We heard you say that cultural activities are important to you. You want us to investigate our cultural heritage and focus on the arts more.

We heard you say that we need to work with the community and service providers to address issues with the current delivery of medical services in our local government area.

We heard you say that mobile phone service, or lack of, is a concern to you.

We heard you say that the progression of the Inland Rail project is of interest to you.

We listened to you, our community; and we have aligned our goals, strategies and actions with what you told us.



Building the business base

Outcome 2.1 Our economy is growing and supported

Outcome 2.2 We are skilled and have access to excellent educational opportunities

What we heard our community say...

We heard you say that you need us to make more land available for sale and development.

We heard you say in Croppa Creek that your village needs to expand to accommodate future housing development.

We heard you say that roads are important to business. You want us to continue with strategic relationships like the Australian Rural Roads Group. You made us aware of roads that you believed needed upgrading. You were interested in further roll out of the Self Help Program. You told us that ramps on roads were a concern.

We heard you say that you are very interested in the progression of the Circular Economy initiatives.

We heard you say that one of the biggest issues for you is our declining population. You said jobs and Economic Development should be a priority for Council.

We heard you say that Tourism and the development of tourism infrastructure are important to you.

We heard you say that education is a priority and that the Gwydir Learning Region initiatives should continue to be developed and promoted.

We listened to you, our community; and we have aligned our goals, strategies and actions with what you told us.

An environmentally responsible shire

Outcome 3.1 Our community understands and embraces environmental change

Outcome 3.2 We use and manage our natural resources wisely

What we heard our community say....

We heard you say that the environment is important to you.

We heard you say that alternative energy options should be investigated.

We heard you say that water and in particular water quality is of continued concern for you.

We heard you say that noxious weeds in our local government area are of concern to you.

We heard you say that the health of the Gwydir River is of concern to you. You said that implementation of foreshore management is important.

We heard you say that waste disposal remains a concern and that you are interested in further recycling initiatives and the operation of our landfills.

We listened to you, our community; and we have aligned our goals, strategies and actions with what you told us.



Proactive regional and local leadership

Outcome 4.1 We are an engaged and connected community

Outcome 4.2 We work together to achieve our goals

What we heard our community say...

We heard you say that our heritage needs to be resourced and referenced.

We heard you say in Warialda that you were going to undertake actions to acknowledge our local heroes.

We heard you say that you wanted to volunteer and that we need to establish volunteering programs and promote them.

We heard you say that we need to welcome our new residents.

We heard you say that our signage needs to be improved throughout the Shire area, particularly tourism signage.

You told us that you want the Town Strategies rolled out in Bingara and Warialda.

We listened to you, our community; and we have aligned our goals, strategies and actions with what you told us.



Organisational management

Outcome 5.1 Corporate Management

What we heard our community say...

We heard you say that you want your Council to be financially sustainable.

We heard you say that Council donations are important to our community groups.

We listened to you, our community; and we have aligned our goals, strategies and actions with what you told us.

How our plans are linked to State and Regional Plans

Gwydir Shire Council is an Optimalist local government body. We continually value add to projects, we are successful as we use our initiative, are innovative and we form strong, positive relationships through collaboration and networking.

Gwydir Shire Council cannot work in isolation. We rely on working well with our community, other levels of government and businesses. Examples of our successful partnerships are the Australian Rural Roads Group (ARRG), Gwydir Learning Region (GLR), Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils (Namoi JO), and Regional Development Australia Northern Inland (RDANI).

Our Community Strategic Plan must also be in line with the strategies and direction of other levels of government and their agencies. As such, the below tables illustrate how the key priorities of the RDANI, NSW Government and regional plans link to our Community Strategic Plan.

Source	CSP Outcome Link								
	1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	5.1
RDA Northern Inland Regional Plan 2016-2019									
Regional community regeneration and sustainable population growth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Industry diversification, job creation, capacity building, resource efficiency and job creation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Investment in regional infrastructure, education and skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source	Activity	CSP Outcome Link								
		1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	5.1
Premier's Priorities	1. Building infrastructure		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
	2. Creating jobs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
	3. Driving public sector diversity		✓						✓	✓
	4. Faster housing approvals						✓			✓
	5. Improving education results	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
	6. Improving government services							✓	✓	✓
	7. Improving service levels in hospitals	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
	8. Keeping our environment clean	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	9. Protecting our kids	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
	10. Reducing domestic violence	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
	11. Reducing youth homelessness	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
	12. Tackling childhood obesity	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	

Source	Activity	CSP Outcome Link								
		1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	5.1
State Priorities	1. Making it easier to start a business	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	2. Encouraging business investment	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	3. Boosting apprenticeships	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	4. Accelerating major project assessment									
	5. Protecting our credit rating									
	6. Delivering strong budgets							✓	✓	✓
	7. Improving road travel reliability			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
	8. Increasing housing supply	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	9. Transitioning to the National Disability Insurance Scheme	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
	10. Creating sustainable social housing	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
	11. Improving Aboriginal education outcomes	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
	12. Better government digital services							✓	✓	✓
	13. Cutting wait times for planned surgeries	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
	14. Increasing cultural participation	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓

15. Ensure on-time running for public transport									
16. Reducing violent crime	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
17. Reducing adult reoffending	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
18. Reducing road fatalities	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source	CSP Outcome Link								
	1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	5.1
Draft New England North West Regional Plan									
A growing and diversified agricultural sector	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A diverse economy through the management of mineral and energy resources including renewable energy generation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Communities resilient to change with housing choice and services that meet shifting needs and lifestyles	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prosperous urban centres with job opportunities									
Protected water environment and heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source	CSP Outcome Link								
	1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	5.1
Namoi Investment Prospectus North West NSW									
Strong agricultural employment and support services			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Namoi Region: A great place to live	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
Unique, diverse, clean and green					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Renewable energy				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transport logistics offending			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Reducing road fatalities	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Gwydir Goals and Outcomes

1. A healthy and cohesive community



Outcome 1.1 We have healthy and inviting spaces and places

Outcome 1.2 Our community is an inviting and vibrant place to live

A liveable community has pride of place, ease of access, community harmony, a mobile and healthy population that participates in community life, a feeling of safety and security, a strong vibrant cultural base and places to relax, study and play.

Outcome 1.1 We have healthy and inviting spaces and places

We have access to a range of high quality health care services. All residents are supported in living a healthy and active life through the opportunity to participate in recreation activities.

Strategies to get there

- 1.1.1. Improve local access to health services
- 1.1.2. Encourage and enable healthy lifestyle choices
- 1.1.3. Provide the right places, spaces and activities

Council Role

- Work with service providers to improve access to health services
- Provide Community Home Support (CHSP) services
- Promote health lifestyle choices for staff and the community
- Support local sporting groups and sporting clubs
- Provide fit for purpose recreation infrastructure
- Investigate recreation opportunities to address the needs of the community
- Assist recreation providers

Community Role

- Be physically active
- Embrace a healthy lifestyle and encourage others to do as well
- Monitor your health – have regular medical check ups
- Maintain a good work/life balance
- Enjoy your parks, sportsgrounds and recreation facilities

Our Partners

Partners who can help achieve our objectives will include Federal and State Government Agencies, service providers and community groups such as:

- Primary Health Networks
- Department of Education and Communities
- Department of Family and Community Services
- Peak industry bodies and local sporting groups

Outcome 1.2 Our community is an inviting and vibrant place to live

Our community is strong, safe and connected with equal access to the services and facilities that ensure a great quality of life for all ages. Community pride and a sense of belonging are fostered through having a caring and connected community, with suitable programs and activities for all ages and abilities. Our residents' lives are enriched through access to lifelong learning opportunities as well as activities and events that celebrate our culture and encourage participation.



Strategies to get there

- 1.2.1 Enable accessible and affordable lifestyle options
- 1.2.2 A shared responsibility for community safety
- 1.2.3 Celebrate our creativity and cultural expression

Council Role

- Advocate and plan for improved social, health and transport outcomes
- Deliver programs and services that support the community through all stages of life
- Monitor and regulate environmental and food safety standards
- Promote responsible animal ownership
- Promote and plan for improved road safety
- Deliver community programs
- Conduct citizenship ceremonies
- Support community events and festivals
- Conduct NAIDOC Week activities
- Provide library services
- Coordinate and promote events and tourism

Community Role

- Report criminal activity and antisocial behaviour
- Support community safety programs
- Be a responsible pet owner
- Report unsafe conditions on roads
- Promote positive youth role models
- Respect the rights of others
- Be a responsible driver
- Participate in celebrations and events
- Visit a library
- Volunteer

Our Partners

Partners who can help achieve our objectives will include Federal and State Government Agencies, service providers and community groups such as:

- Department of Education and Learning Communities
- Arts North West
- Department of Family and Community Services
- Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services
- Roads and Maritime Services
- Police and Emergency Services
- Peak industry bodies and local sporting groups

2. Building the business base

- Outcome 2.1** Our economy is growing and supported.
Outcome 2.2 We are skilled and have access to excellent educational opportunities



A productive community provides people with positive choices for investment, employment and study. An innovative, diverse and resilient economy requires collaboration between local people and other levels of government to ensure that funding for infrastructure and economic development exists to support market strength and diversity.

Outcome 2.1 Our economy is growing and supported

Our business community is prepared for future growth and challenges. We welcome new business development opportunities and work with private enterprise to establish strategic partnerships aligned to the creation of employment and industry in our community. Tourism is embraced by all facets of our community and Gwydir Shire Council is seen as a destination of choice for travellers.

Strategies to get there

- 2.1.1 Plan for and develop the right assets and infrastructure
- 2.1.2 Support the growth of our business community.
- 2.1.3 Promote our community as the place to visit, live, work and invest

Council Role

- Promote and support business investment and employment growth
- Provide visitor information services
- Advocate for better internet access
- Partner with business and industry to attract funding and investment
- Develop and promote tourism
- Provide and maintain our road network
- Advocate for funding for major projects
- Provide and maintain public infrastructure

Community Role

- Support local businesses
- Use local and regional service providers
- Promote the Gwydir Shire as a great place to live, visit and explore
- Promote Gwydir Shire Council as a place to set up a business
- Participate in tourism events
- Enjoy local entertainment options
- Report problems with infrastructure
- Employ local people
- Pursue business skills and learning opportunities where possible

Our Partners

Partners who can help achieve our objectives will include Federal and State Government Agencies, service providers and community groups such as:

- Regional Development Australia (RDA)
- Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services
- Roads and Maritime Services
- Chambers of Commerce and Businesses/Vision 2020
- Destination NSW

Outcome 2.2 We are skilled and have access to excellent educational opportunities



Our lives are enriched through access to quality education which enables the development of a skilled workforce and the uptake of local job opportunities.

Strategies to get there

- 2.2.1 Increase the range of opportunities to work locally
- 2.2.2 Build on our quality education and training opportunities

Council Role

- Support and advocate for the expansion of the Gwydir Learning Region
- Partner with business and industry to develop and explore opportunities for job growth within the region
- Provide opportunities for traineeships, apprenticeships and work experience within Council
- Provide quality education for our youngest learners (Preschool)

Community Role

- Think local when looking for work opportunities
- Create opportunities for trainees, apprenticeships and work experience
- Undertake education and vocational training

Our Partners

Partners who can help achieve our objectives will include Federal and State Government Agencies, service providers and community groups such as:

- Regional Development Australia (RDA)
- Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services
- Department of Education and Communities
- Commonwealth Department of Education
- Chambers of Commerce/Vision 2020 and Businesses
- Local education providers

3. An environmentally responsible shire

Outcome 3.1 Our community understands and embraces environmental change

Outcome 3.2 We use and manage our natural resources wisely



A sustainable community is characterised by our appreciation of natural surroundings and biodiversity. This is supported by responsible planning and management practices and the lifestyle actions we agree to, to reduce our impact on the natural environment and to conserve valuable resources.

Outcome 3.1 Our community understands and embraces environmental change

We respect and value our natural environment, understand the effects of our actions and make wise decisions to retain balance. We endeavour to use all our natural resources wisely with a view to minimising the impact on our natural environment.

Strategies to get there

- 3.1.1 Encourage respectful planning, balanced growth and good design
- 3.1.2 Respond to our changing environment
- 3.1.3 Value, protect and enhance our natural environment

Council Role

- Ensure planning is responsive to the environment and community needs
- Encourage sustainable land use
- Plan for the impacts of natural disasters and support local emergency services
- Undertake regeneration
- Support environmental volunteers
- Deliver environmental education programs
- Undertake bushfire hazard reduction

Community Role

- Get involved in activities and events that assist to enhance the environment
- Take ownership of the natural environment.
- Use water and energy wisely
- Compost
- Plant a tree
- Know what to do in an emergency

Our Partners

Partners who can help achieve our objectives will include Federal and State Government Agencies, service providers and community groups such as:

- Local Land Services
- Department of Planning and Infrastructure
- Office of Environment and Heritage
- Landcare Groups
- Department of Primary Industries

Outcome 3.2 We use and manage our natural resources wisely

We take responsibility for the management and consumption of our valuable resources and recognise the impact that our actions have both today and on future generations.



Strategies to get there

- 3.2.1 Develop a clean energy future
- 3.2.2 Use our water wisely
- 3.2.3 Reduce, reuse and recover waste
- 3.2.4 Identify and make best use of our land resource

Council Role

- Provide water and sewer services
- Undertake waste minimisation and education programs
- Provide and promote initiatives to reduce water, energy and waste
- Provide waste and recycling services
- Support the protection of our land through long term planning
- Plan community spaces wisely

Community Role

- Reduce, reuse and recycle
- Use water thoughtfully
- Choose energy efficient appliances
- Compost kitchen and garden waste
- Be responsible in the disposal of waste
- Take note of what goes down the drain
- Use environmentally friendly products
- Install energy and water saving options in your home
- Use recyclable bags and say no to plastic
- Carpool, ride a bike or walk
- Employ sustainable farming and grazing practices

Our Partners

Partners who can help achieve our objectives will include Federal and State Government Agencies, service providers and community groups such as:

- Department of Planning and Infrastructure
- Office of Environment and Heritage
- Department of Primary Industries

4. Proactive regional and local leadership

- Outcome 4.1 We are an engaged and connected community
Outcome 4.2 We work together to achieve our goals



A collaborative community is informed, has responsible decision making and a sound financial position supported by capable leaders, functional assets and efficient operations to meet the changing needs of the community.

Outcome 4.1 We are an engaged and connected community

Our thoughts and ideas are valued; we are empowered with the knowledge and have the opportunity to participate. The Council provides the community with timely information about local issues and includes opportunities for the community to participate in initiatives. Community consultation continues throughout the period of the Community Strategic Plan to ensure that residents are engaged and connected.

Strategies to get there

- 4.1.1 Encourage an informed community
- 4.1.2 Enable broad, rich and meaningful engagement to occur
- 4.1.3 Build on our sense of community

Council Role

- Provide open clear lines of communication with the community
- Provide quality customer service
- Encourage community participation in planning and policy development
- Provide a diverse range of opportunities for the community to be involved and engaged
- Value, consider and report on feedback
- Support community groups and organisations

Community Role

- Visit Council's website www.gwydirshire.com
- Check out Council's Facebook site
- Read Council's annual report
- Attend a Council meeting
- Discuss your ideas and suggestions for the future with a Councillor
- Encourage others to actively participate in their community
- Be proactive in assisting your neighbours
- Get involved in a community group or organisation
- Volunteer your spare time
- Share your knowledge
- Respond to surveys and provide comment on issues that concern you
- Attend industry forums

Other Partners

Partners who can help achieve our objectives will include Federal and State Government Agencies, service providers and community groups such as:

- Border Regional Organisation of Councils (BROC)
- Office of Local Government
- Progress and community associations
- Chambers of Commerce/Vision 2020
- Namoi Joint Regional Organisation

Outcome 4.2 We work together to achieve our goals

We respect our community leaders who listen to and act on our behalf, and value our community's knowledge, experience and ideas which help us implement our vision for the future together.



Strategies to get there

- 4.2.1 Build strong relationships and shared responsibilities
- 4.2.2 Work in partnership to plan for the future

Council Role

- Work in partnership with Federal and State Government, other councils and regional organisations
- Support Mayor and Councillors in their role
- Continue support for Australian Rural Roads Group (ARRG)
- Conduct Council business in an open and transparent manner and in accordance with legislative and statutory requirements
- Act with the wider community in mind
- Be responsive to new information
- Manage expectations
- Be an employer of choice
- Ensure the needs of our Shire and community are reflected in state and regional plans
- Seek sources of funding to implement our community vision

Community Role

- Join a Council committee
- Get involved in a community group or organisation
- Provide feedback to Council
- Get to know our Council and how it supports our community
- Be an active part of our community
- Keep an open mind

Our Partners

Partners who can help achieve our objectives will include Federal and State Government Agencies, service providers and community groups such as:

- Border Regional Organisation of Councils (BROC)
- Office of Local Government
- Community associations
- Chambers of Commerce/Vision 2020

5 Organisational management

Outcome 5.1 Corporate Management



The main objective of organisational management is to ensure maximum outputs within minimum resources and effort. Effective organisational management ensures smooth and coordinated functioning of the Council bringing additional benefit to the community, staff and Councillors.

Outcome 5.1 Corporate management

Good corporate management is about having the right processes for making and implementing strategic decisions.

Strategies to get there

- 5.1.1 Financial Management and accountability systems
- 5.1.2 Information Management Systems
- 5.1.3 Administrative and support functions
- 5.1.4 Workforce Planning
- 5.1.5 Provision of responsible internal governance

Council Role

- Support Mayor and Councillors in their role
- Conduct Council business in an open and transparent manner and in accordance with legislative and statutory requirements
- Provide and maintain efficient and effective internal systems to ensure that all legislative and organisational needs are met

Community Role

- Participate in community consultation initiatives
- Review and comment on documentation placed on public display

Our Partners

Partners who can help achieve our objectives will include Federal and State Government Agencies, service providers and community groups such as:

- Border Regional Organisation of Councils (BROC)
- Office of Local Government
- Community associations
- Chambers of Commerce/Vision 2020

What Resources are needed to get there?

In response to the community aspirations identified through community consultation, the Council is required to identify strategies and objectives to advance in the direction indicated by the community. These strategies need to be resourced by people, assets and finance. The NSW State and Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) process requires that Council develops a Resource Strategy that covers the period of the Community Strategic Plan. The resourcing strategy includes the Long Term Financial Plan, Workforce Management Plan and Asset Management Plans.

Resourcing Strategy

Long Term Financial Plan

The Long Term Financial Plan has been used to inform decision making during the finalisation of the Community Strategic Plan and Development of the Delivery Program. It covers a period of 10 years however it will be updated annually through the development of each Operational Plan. The Long Term Financial Plan will also be reviewed in detail as part of the development of the next Delivery Program.

Workforce Management Plan

The Workforce Management Plan has been developed as part of the IPR process. It spans a period of four years however, like the Long Term Financial Plan, it will be reviewed on an annual basis. The plan not only addresses the human resourcing requirements of the Delivery Plan, it also provides a snapshot of Gwydir Shire Council's workforce.

Asset Management Plans

Gwydir Shire Council has developed an Asset Management Strategy and Asset Management Plans considering all the existing assets under its ownership, and any proposed new assets. The Asset Management Strategy and Asset Management Plans support the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program. The Plans encompass all the assets under Gwydir Shire Council's control, identify service standards and contain long term projections of asset maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement costs.



How will we know when we get there?

Monitoring Progress

A report on the progress of the implementation of the Community Strategic Plan will be drafted to be presented at the final meeting of the outgoing Council. The community will have the chance to review the Community Strategic Plan every four years when the new Council is elected. If something significant happens in the life of the plan, amendments may also be made to accommodate the associated changes to the strategic direction of the Council and community.

Specific deliverables in the form of actions are included in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan. These will be monitored and reported on each year before the upcoming Operational Plan is drafted. In addition to the annual reporting, both the Delivery Plan and Operational Plan will include actions and measures aligned with the strategic initiatives in the Community Strategic Plan. Progress of these actions will be included in quarterly performance reports to the elected Council and will be included in staff performance contracts.



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of the Community Strategic Plan. This Plan belongs to you, the community. Without your dedication, interest and commitment to this planning process, the production of this Community Strategic Plan would not have been possible. It is an exciting time to be living and working in Gwydir Shire Council.

Contact Details

We welcome feedback on the Gwydir Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2017 - 2027. This feedback will be considered as part of our review process. Submissions should be made in writing to:

The General Manager
Locked Bag 5
BINGARA NSW 2404

Email mail@gwydir.nsw.gov.au