



GWYDIR
SHIRE COUNCIL



Community Strategic Plan
2014 - 2024
'Growing our Community'

Adopted 11 February 2015
and revised February 2016

GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

GROWING OUR COMMUNITY

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Community Strategic Plan welcome



Mayor
John Coulton

It is our pleasure to present you with Council's updated Community Strategic plan 2014-2024. The Community Strategic Plan is the community's plan with Council as custodian; it will guide future decisions which will benefit our community as a whole and is a vision for both Council and our community.

Development of this plan has been inspired by consultation with you, our community, and by changes in legislation which offer new scope to local governments in planning for the future.

In line with Council's Community Engagement Strategy and as part of Council's recent consultation and review process for this plan, public comment was sought regarding the current level of services through avenues including focus group meetings, a shire wide community survey, as well as information provided to all rate payers regarding a proposed special rate variation. Council will continue to review and update our planning and operational activities annually while we strive to achieve the desired outcomes and exceed our community's expectations.

The main service delivery priorities in this Community Strategic Plan are:

A healthy and cohesive community (Social);

Building the business base (Economy);

An environmentally responsible shire (Environment); and

Proactive Regional and local leadership (Organisation)

These strategic outcomes provide a focus for action and are a set of integrated themes that provide for a socially and economically sustainable Gwydir Shire community.

In September, 2014 the NSW State Government announced guidelines with a view to strengthening communities and ensuring all NSW councils are "Fit for the Future". (FFTF). The proposed package includes a new Local Government Act to be phased in from 2016-17 that will focus on integrated planning and reporting; a new role for the NSW Auditor-General; a review of the rating system; a review of the regulatory burden on councils; a recognition that flexible structures should be available; legislative provision for Joint Organisations; and Financial Assistance Grants distribution.

Gwydir Shire Council sees this reform as an opportunity. We are known as a small rural council that is continually 'punching above its weight'. We will continue to work to meet the needs of our community, while maintaining awareness of the impact of future changes in the industry.

We have great pleasure in presenting the Gwydir Shire council 2024 Community Strategic Plan.



General Manager
Max Eastcott

ABOUT THIS PLAN

Why do we plan?

All councils are required to develop short, medium and long term plans under the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) Framework. The Community Strategic Plan is the highest order plan within this hierarchy that a council and its community will prepare. Its purpose is to identify the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future, and to plan strategies for achieving these goals. In doing this, the planning process considers the issues and pressures that may affect the community, and the level of resources that will realistically be available to achieve its aspirations.

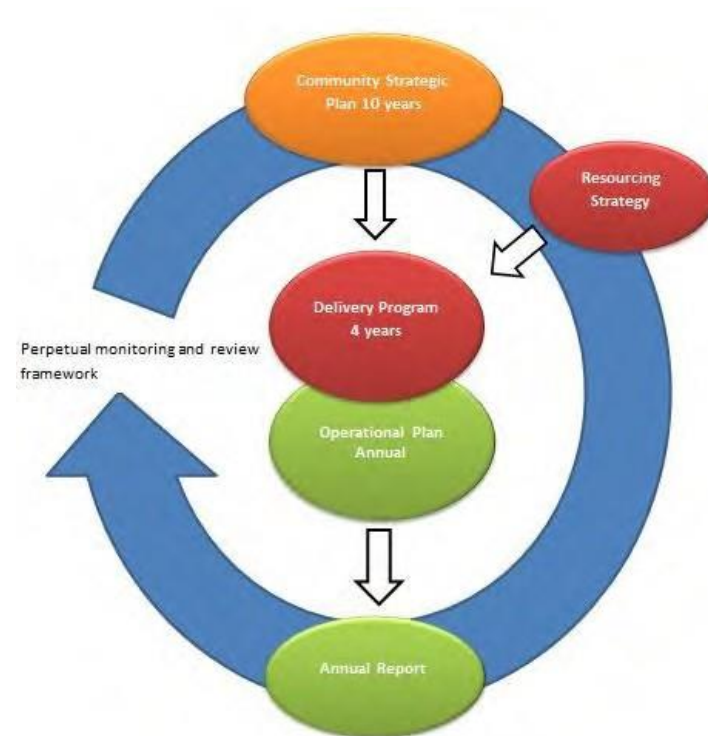
The Community Strategic Plan is supported by subordinate plans: a Resourcing Strategy that includes an Asset Management Strategy, Long Term Financial Plan and Workforce Management Plan. As well as a Delivery Program and Operational Plan which outline activities that are the responsibility of council in achieving our community vision.

While council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and maintaining the plan on behalf of the community, it is not wholly responsible for its implementation. Other partners, such as Federal and State Agencies, and community groups are also responsible for the delivery of the plan. The aim of the plan is to encourage council, the community and other agencies to work together to deliver on our vision for the future.

Council commenced developing this CSP in 2014 with an internal audit of current service levels. Council's Community Engagement Strategy was reviewed in readiness for community consultation where particular emphasis was made to engage hard to reach communities and demographic profiles. Council then held a round of Focus Groups aimed at covering the various demographic profiles in our shire. The themes for the Focus Groups included:

- Special Rate Variation
- Fees and Charges
- Service delivery

In addition to the Focus Groups, Council developed a community survey which was distributed to 2,200 households in the shire and made available via Council's webpage and Facebook page. A letter outlining Council's proposed rate variation was also distributed to all ratepayers seeking feedback.



REVIEWING THE PLAN

This version of the Community Strategic Plan is an update of our original Community Strategic Plan which was first adopted by council in June 2012. In September 2012, the Gwydir Shire Council elections were held and, in accordance with IPR legislation, a review of the adopted plan was required.

It was important that the review process be respectful to, and build upon, the community input to date and to ensure that the plan remains current and representative.

Process timeline – How did we get here?

Provide an overview of the direction local government has been moved in?

2011 Destination 2036 – Councils came together to plan how local government could meet the challenges of the future

2012 TCorp Sustainability Review – Conducted a comprehensive, independent analysis into the financial sustainability of every Council in NSW

2012 Local Government Infrastructure Audit – Provided information in relation to the Infrastructure backlog in NSW and identified infrastructure needs by area and asset type.

2012-14 Independent Local Government Review – Conducted wide consultation to develop key recommendations regarding local government structures, governance models and boundary changes.

2012-14 Local Governments Acts Taskforce – Looked at ways to modernise legislation, to ensure that it would meet the future needs of councils and communities.

2014 Fit For The Future – Local Government – Will lay the foundations for a stronger system of local government and stronger local communities

Our community often calls for more action in the areas of health, community safety, education, transport and drought management. Delivering on community expectations in these areas however, cannot occur in isolation and must recognise a broader regional, national and global context. This means understanding our role and networks with other communities, industries and state wide partners.

The State Government has developed a State Plan – NSW 2021, which has a series of strategic goals that will assist with the delivery of community expectations at a state and regional level, while enabling coordination and alignment at a local level.

The Community Strategic Plan has been developed with regard to the State Plan and associated Regional Plans.

PLANNING PARTNERS

**NSW 2021
State Plan
Goals**

**Rebuild the
economy**

**Return
Quality
Services**

**Strengthen
our local
environment and
communities**

**Restore
accountability
to government**

**New
England
North West
NSW

Regional
Action Plan
Priorities**

**Support
sustainable
economic
growth**

**Deliver
Quality
integrated
health
services
Deliver
Integrated
and coordi-
nated human
services**

**Invest in
regional and
local
infrastructure

Support
strong safe
communities**

**Improve
Education
pathways
for young
people**

**Community
Strategic Plan
Objectives**

**Our economy is
growing and
supported**

**We are skilled
and have access to
excellent
educational
opportunities**

**We have healthy
spaces and
places**

**Our community is
an inviting and
vibrant place to
live**

**Our community
understands
and embraces
environmental
change**

**We use and
manage our
resources
wisely**

**We are engaged
and connected
with our
community**

**We are regional
leaders in service
delivery and
community
development**

Monitoring the success of this plan

The purpose of planning in this way is to bring about positive change within our community. It is therefore important to regularly check whether or not council, and all our partners including the community is making progress towards achieving the goals set in our Community Strategic Plan.

We will be regularly asking these questions:

Are we achieving results and improvements within timeframes?

Are our partners accountable and doing what they said they would do?

What can we do better?

To do this, council will monitor the effectiveness of the Community Strategic Plan through continued focus group consultations and feedback through social media and the Council website. This will help to measure issues of relevance to our community regardless of whether council has direct responsibility for them.

The success of implementing the plan is reported every four years in an end of council term report that shows our progress towards fulfilling the needs of our community. The plan is also fully reviewed and endorsed every four years in line with local government elections to ensure it remains relevant to our community's changing circumstances.

Councils role in making the plan work?

Council has multiple roles to play in delivering the Community Strategic Plan. Specific activities that council will undertake are listed in its Delivery Program and Operational Plan. Broadly councils role includes being:

A **leader**: to plan and provide direction through policy and practices.

A **provider**: of physical infrastructure and essential services.

A **regulator**: of development, community health and safety, and the environment.

A **partner**: with community, private and government organisations.

A **supporter**: to support and advocate for the community it represents.

A **promoter**: of the Gwydir Shire as a place to live, visit and invest.



OUR COMMUNITY PROFILE



PEOPLE 4,965
MALE 2,512
FEMALE 2,453
MEDIAN AGE 45

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 AND 5.0% WERE UNEMPLOYED.



FAMILIES 1,393
AVERAGE CHILDREN PER FAMILY 1.9

THE MOST COMMON OCCUPATIONS IN GWYDIR SHIRE ARE

MANAGERS 34.5%,
LABOURERS 13.4%,
PROFESSIONALS 10.6%,
TECHNICIANS AND TRADES WORKERS 9.3%,
CLERICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORKERS 9.3%



ALL PRIVATE DWELLINGS 2,683
AVERAGE PEOPLE PER HOUSEHOLD 2.3
MEDIAN WEEKLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME \$726
MEDIAN MONTHLY MORTGAGE REPAYMENTS \$928
MEDIAN WEEKLY RENT \$100
AVERAGE MOTOR VEHICLES PER DWELLING 1.9

OF THE EMPLOYED PEOPLE IN GWYDIR 33.6% WORKED IN SHEEP, BEEF CATTLE AND GRAIN FARMING. SCHOOL EDUCATION 6.1%, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION 6.0%, RESIDENTIAL CARE SERVICES 2.7%



IN GWYDIR SHIRE 23.9% OF PEOPLE ATTEND AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION. OF THESE, 34.7% WERE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL, 24.1% IN SECONDARY SCHOOL AND 10.5% IN A TERTIARY OR TECHNICAL INSTITUTION

Primary Focus of the Community – where do we want to be?

The issues and priorities identified by the community during the consultation period have assisted to inform the major directions of our strategic plan.

A healthy and cohesive community

OBJECTIVE 1:

WE HAVE HEALTHY SPACES AND PLACES

- 1.1 Improve local access to health services
- 1.2 Encourage and enable healthy lifestyle choices
- 1.3 Provide the right places, spaces and activities

OBJECTIVE 2:

OUR COMMUNITY IS AN INVITING AND VIBRANT PLACE TO LIVE

- 2.1 Enable accessible and affordable lifestyle options
- 2.2 A shared responsibility for community safety
- 2.3 Celebrate our creativity and cultural expression

An Environmentally Responsible Shire

OBJECTIVE 5:

OUR COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDS AND EMBRACES ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

- 5.1 Encourage respectful planning, balanced growth and good design
- 5.2 Respond to our changing environment
- 5.3 Value, protect and enhance our natural environment

OBJECTIVE 6:

WE USE & MANAGE OUR RESOURCES WISELY

- 6.1 Develop a clean energy future
- 6.2 Use our water wisely
- 6.3 Reduce, reuse and recover waste
- 6.4 Identify and make best use of our resource land

Building the business base

OBJECTIVE 3:

OUR ECONOMY IS GROWING AND SUPPORTED

- 3.1 Plan for and develop the right assets and infrastructure
- 3.2 Support the growth of our business community
- 3.3 Promote our community as the place to visit, live, work and invest

OBJECTIVE 4:

WE ARE SKILLED AND HAVE ACCESS TO EXCELLENT EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 4.1 Increase the range of opportunities to work locally
- 4.2 Build on our quality education and training opportunities through the GLR

Proactive Regional and Local Leadership

OBJECTIVE 7:

WE ARE AN ENGAGED & CONNECTED COMMUNITY

- 7.1 Encourage an informed community
- 7.2 Enable broad, rich and meaningful engagement to occur
- 7.3 Build on our sense of community

OBJECTIVE 8:

WE WORK TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS

- 8.1 Build strong relationships and shared responsibilities
- 8.2 Work in partnership to plan for the future
- 8.3 Provide representative, responsive and accountable community governance





A healthy and cohesive community

OBJECTIVE 1 :

WE HAVE HEALTHY SPACES AND PLACES

OBJECTIVE 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.

OBJECTIVE 1:

WE HAVE HEALTHY SPACES AND PLACES

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

1.1 Provide local access to health services

1.2 Facilitate and encourage healthy lifestyle choices

1.3 Provide for a healthy and active future

Council Role

- Ensure local access to health services
- Provide home and community care services
- Promote healthy lifestyle choices to staff and the community
- Support local sporting groups and clubs
- Ensure recreation opportunities and facilities to meet changing needs
- Attract and assist recreation providers

Community Role

- Be physically active – walk, cycle or play a sport
- Embrace a healthy lifestyle and encourage others to do as well
- Have regular medical check-ups
- Have a good work/life balance
- Increase your knowledge on healthy living
- Enjoy your local park, sportsground or recreational facility.

Our Partners

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

- Medicare Local
- Department of Education and Communities
- Department of Family and Community Services
- Peak industry bodies and local sporting groups





OBJECTIVE 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.

2.1 Enable accessible and affordable lifestyle options

2.2 A shared responsibility for community safety

2.3 Promote our unique position in the region

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 anti-social 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
- Enrol in a special interest group

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 Family and Community Services
- Department of Education and Communities
- Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services
- Roads and Maritime Services



Building the business base

OBJECTIVE 3:

OUR ECONOMY IS GROWING AND SUPPORTED

OBJECTIVE 4:

**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.

OBJECTIVE 3:

OUR ECONOMY IS GROWING AND SUPPORTED

Our business and industry sector is smart, innovative, and resilient and is supported and prepared for future growth and challenges.

3.1 Plan for and develop the right assets and infrastructure

3.2 Encourage economic development

3.3 Promote our community as the place to visit, live, work and invest

Council Role

- Provide and maintain our road network
- Advocate for funding for major projects
- Provide and maintain public infrastructure
- 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

Community Role

- Shop locally
- Use local and regional service providers
- Promote the Gwydir Shire as a great place to live, visit and explore
- 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





OBJECTIVE 4:

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.

4.1 Increase the range of local training opportunities

4.2 Build on our quality education and training programs - The Gwydir Learning Region

Council Role

- Support and advocate for the expansion of the GLR
- 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



An Environmentally Sustainable Shire

OBJECTIVE 5:

**OUR COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDS AND EMBRACES
ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE**

OBJECTIVE 6:

WE USE AND MANAGE OUR 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.

OBJECTIVE 5:

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.

5.1 Encourage respectful planning, balanced growth and good design

5.2 Respond to our changing environment

5.3 Value, protect and enhance our natural environment

Council Role

- Encourage growth and development
- Ensure planning is responsive to the environment and community needs
- Encourage sustainable land use
- Plan for the impacts of drought
- Undertake bush and riverside regeneration
- Support Landcare volunteers
- Deliver environment education programs
- Support local emergency services
- Undertake bushfire hazard reduction

Community Role

- Get involved in activities and events that assist to enhance the environment
- Take ownership of the natural environment.
- Plant local species on private land
- 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





OBJECTIVE 6:

WE USE AND MANAGE OUR 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.

6.1 Develop a clean energy future

6.2 Use our water wisely

6.3 Reduce, reuse and recover waste

6.4 Identify and make best use of our land

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, 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



Proactive Regional and Local Leadership

OBJECTIVE 7:

WE ARE ENGAGED AND CONNECTED WITH OUR COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVE 8:

WE ARE REGIONAL LEADERS IN SERVICE DELIVERY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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.

OBJECTIVE 7:

WE ARE ENGAGED AND CONNECTED WITH OUR COMMUNITY

Our thoughts and ideas are valued, we are empowered with the knowledge and have the opportunity to participate.

7.1 Encourage an informed community

7.2 Enable broad, rich and meaningful engagement to occur

7.3 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 and consider feedback
- Support community groups and organisations

Who else can help us get there?

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 Regional Joint Organisation

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





OBJECTIVE 8:

WE ARE REGIONAL LEADERS IN SERVICE DELIVERY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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.

8.1 Build strong relationships and shared responsibilities

8.2 Work in partnership to plan for the future

8.3 Provide representative, responsive and accountable community governance

Council Role

- Work in partnership with Federal and State Government, other councils and regional organisations
- Support Mayor and Councillor's 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

For more information about the Gwydir Shire Community Strategic Plan go to www.gwydirshire.com

Access to Information

The best way to find out information about council is to read the meeting agenda papers, subscribe to the online community newsletter and read Council notices in the local papers, visit the website, drop into a library in Bingara or Wialda, or visit the council administration buildings.

Community Information is also made freely available in council's Community Services Directory, an online directory of services groups, sporting and other interest groups that is available on council's website.

www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au

How to contact us

Bingara Council Office:
33 Maitland Street
Bingara NSW 2404

Postal Address:
Locked Bag 5
Bingara NSW 2404
Australia

email: mail@gwydir.nsw.gov.au

Ph: 02 6724 2000
Fax: 02 6724 1771

<http://www.bingara.nsw.au>

Wialda Council Office:
54 Hope Street,
Wialda NSW 2402

Postal Address:
Locked Bag 5
Bingara NSW 2404
Australia

email: mail@gwydir.nsw.gov.au

Ph: 02 6724 2000
Fax: 02 6729 1400

<http://www.wialdansw.com.au>

