



**GWYDIR SHIRE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
2017-2020**



CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	GWYDIR SHIRE	4
3	STRATEGIC CONTEXT	25
4	DRIVERS OF CHANGE	31
5	BUILDING THE GWYDIR SHIRE ECONOMY	37
6	PRIORITIES & STRATEGIES	57
7	MONITORING OUR PROGRESS	74
8	GWYDIR SHIRE CONTACTS	75
A1	RETAILING IN SMALL RURAL TOWNS	76
A2	BUILDING CAPACITY IN THE VILLAGES	77
	REFERENCES	81
	PHOTOGRAPHS	83



GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL

www.gwydirshire.com

Email: mail@gwydir.gwydir.nsw.gov.au

Telephone: (02) 6724 2000

Locked Bag 5, Bingara NSW 2404

Bingara Office: 33 Maitland Street, Bingara NSW 2404

Warialda Office: 52 Hope Street, Warialda NSW 2402

GWYDIR SHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2017 - 2020

Prepared by:

JENNY RAND & ASSOCIATES

www.jennyrand.com.au

Disclaimer:

Any representation, statement, opinion or advice, expressed or implied, in this document is made in good faith, on the basis that Jenny Rand and Associates, Gwydir Shire Council or its employees are not liable (whether by reason of negligence, lack of care or otherwise) to any person or organisation for any damage or loss whatsoever, which has occurred or may occur in relation to that person or organisation taking action in respect to any representation, statement or advice referred to in the Gwydir Shire Economic Development Strategy and associated documents.

1. INTRODUCTION

‘Growing our community’ is a priority for Gwydir Shire Council. We are an innovative rural Shire, with highly productive agricultural land, significant natural assets and strong, resilient and vibrant communities. We are a pro-active, environmentally responsible Shire with a strong focus on sustainability. We offer a quality, affordable lifestyle, with access to a good range of facilities and services.

At Council, we are committed to working with our Shire community to grow and diversify our economic base and to continue to build our sustainability and resilience. Our core strategic directions and objectives, articulated in the Gwydir Shire Community Strategic Plan, are:

A Healthy and Cohesive Community

Objective 1: We have healthy spaces and places

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

Objective 2: Our community is an inviting and vibrant place to live

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

Building the Business Base

Objective 3: Our economy is growing and supported

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

Objective 4: We are skilled and have access to excellent education opportunities

- Increase the range of opportunities to work locally
- Build on our quality education and training opportunities through the Gwydir Learning Area (GLA)

An Environmentally Responsible Shire

Objective 5: Our community understands and embraces environmental change

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

Objective 6: We use and manage our resources wisely

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

Proactive Regional and Local Leadership

Objective 7: We are an engaged and connected community

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

Objective 8: We work together to achieve our goals

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

In facilitating economic growth Council is seeking to:

- Grow our population base
- Position Gwydir Shire as a place where people wish to live, work, visit and invest.
- Support, retain, strengthen and grow local businesses.
- Attract new investment that is sustainable and compatible with community aspirations and the Shire's environment.
- Support the creation of employment opportunities and a skilled workforce.
- Upgrade existing infrastructure and secure enabling infrastructure.
- Ensure responsible stewardship of resources.

Economic growth will be achieved by strengthening local businesses; capitalising on opportunities arising from Government's increasing focus on agricultural production, agri-business, freight logistics, and renewable energy; growing visitation to the Shire; and attracting new residents, businesses and investment. Preparing this Economic Development Strategy is one of the actions being taken by Council to provide a strong foundation for stimulating and driving growth.

Economic development is the process of improving the economic wellbeing of the community, through efforts focused on strengthening local businesses, attracting investment and creating jobs.

1.1 Purpose of the Economic Development Strategy

The Economic Development Strategy provides the direction and framework for encouraging, supporting and facilitating economic development within Gwydir Shire. It aims to:

- Ensure the foundations are in place to take our economy forward and realise emerging opportunities.
- Guide Council's actions, policies, regulations and resource and funding allocations to 'deliver' a positive investment environment.
- Inform Government agencies and service providers of the potential and needs of Gwydir Shire, including its infrastructure needs.
- Encourage development and investment, including expansion, diversification and retention of existing businesses, attraction of new businesses, residents and investment into the Shire and creation of employment and wealth.



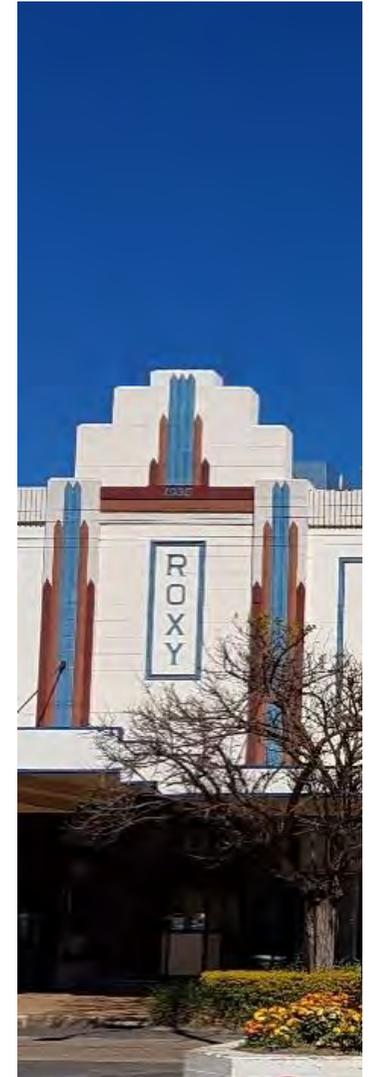
1.2 Stakeholders

Economic development in Gwydir Shire will require collaboration with and support and investment from a diverse range of stakeholders including:

- Federal and State Government Agencies
- Infrastructure and Service Providers
- Regional Agencies and Authorities
- Gwydir Shire Council, working both individually and in cooperation with other Councils within the surrounding region and along the main access corridors to the Shire
- Private sector – including local businesses
- Business and community groups
- Our Shire community

In preparing this Strategy, input was sought from a diversity of stakeholders drawn from the Shire and regional communities. The main priorities identified by our stakeholders were to:

- Grow the population of the Shire to increase the viability of local businesses and to ensure that services are retained.
- Diversify the Shire's economy to reduce the dependence on traditional (broadacre cropping and livestock grazing) agriculture. Growing the tourism sector and attracting manufacturing / processing activities were identified as prime opportunities for the Shire.
- Address skill shortages within the Shire, with positions across all sectors being difficult to fill. Allied to this is the need to improve education outcomes, provide access to training and provide employment that offers career paths and prospects.
- Bring new businesses into Bingara and Warialda, in particular, retail businesses into the shopping centres.
- Assist the villages in improving their infrastructure and facilities to enable them to attract and service visitors and host and grow events.
- Protect and enhance the lifestyle, and continue to improve the liveability of the Shire.
- Protect the natural environment and scenic assets, and ensure sustainable and environmentally responsible use of resources.
- Improve the Shire's roads, particularly the local roads that carry high volumes of trucks and farming equipment.
- Improve telecommunications including increasing the reliability, speed and affordability of the internet and increasing mobile phone coverage.



2. GWYDIR SHIRE

2.1 Our Shire

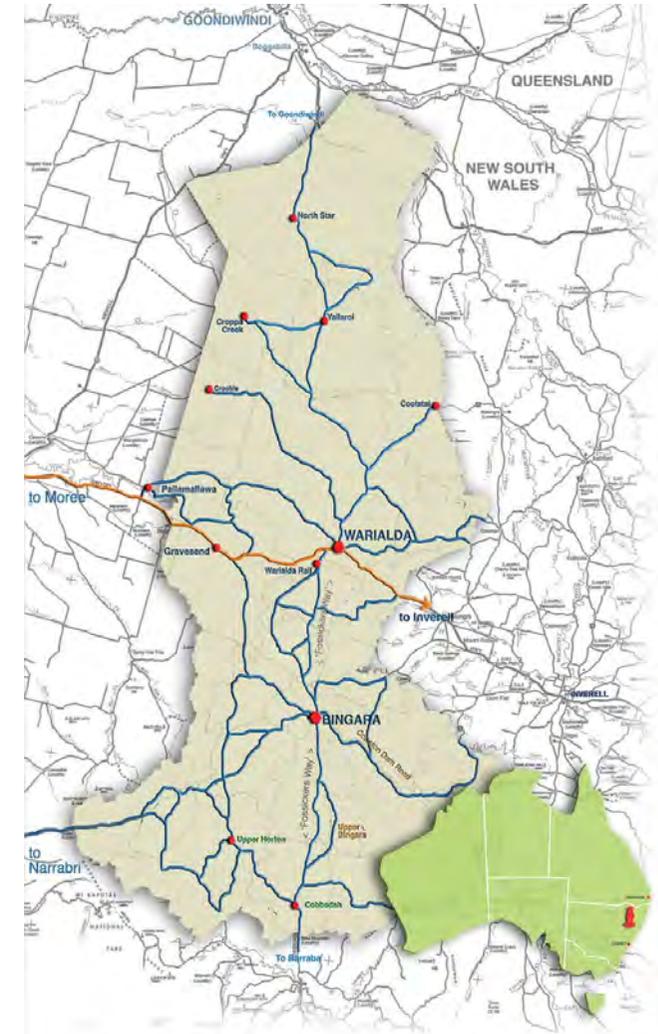
Gwydir Shire is located on the north western slopes and plains of NSW, approximately 560 kilometres north of Sydney, 160 kilometres north of Tamworth, 430km south west of Brisbane, 85 kilometres west of Inverell and 80 kilometres east of Moree. The Shire sits at the crossroads of the Fossickers Way, a popular north-south touring route, and the Gwydir Highway, a significant east-west route linking the NSW North Coast to Outback NSW. The Bruxner Highway (east-west route) traverses the northern edge of the Shire, with Nature’s Way linking Narrabri and Inverell via Bingara.

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 Armidale Regional Council and Uralla Shire to the south east.

Incorporating an area of 9,122 square kilometres, the Shire extends from the Nandewar Range in the south, north to close to the NSW-Queensland border. The Nandewar Range forms the drainage divide the Namoi and Gwydir Rivers. The southern and central areas of the Shire are located within the Gwydir River catchment area with the Gwydir flowing through Bingara and Gravesend. The southern areas of the Shire are undulating to hilly with pockets of highly fertile river flats along the Gwydir River and its main tributaries. The hills to the north of Warialda form the drainage divide between the Gwydir and Macintyre Rivers. The northern part of the Shire lies on a rich basaltic plain, with the topography being flat to undulating. This area incorporates some of the most productive agricultural land in Australia, with the area being part of the ‘Golden Triangle’.

The Shire has a warm temperate climate with hot summers (average temperature range 22-38°C) and cool to cold winters (2-22°C). The average annual rainfall is 686 mm in Warialda and 744mm in Bingara, with rain year-round with a slight summer maximum. Frosts are prevalent in winter. The climate is conducive to cropping and grazing year-round.

Agriculture is the primary landuse and economic activity. Cattle production is the main activity in the southern and central areas of the Shire, with the Shire being a prime beef producer and having a concentration of cattle studs. Sheep, for both meat and wool, and sheep studs are the other major activity in this part of the Shire. Broadacre cropping is undertaken in the northern part of the Shire, with the main crops being wheat, sorghum and barley. Other crops include cotton, other grains (oats, maize, triticale), hay and pasture seed, pulses (chickpeas, field beans, mung beans, faba beans, lentils) and oilseeds (canola, soybeans and sunflowers). Intensive livestock production in the Shire includes three large feedlots in the northern part of the Shire and a piggery in the Upper Horton Valley.



At the 2016 Census, Gwydir Shire had a population of 5,258¹ up by 293 people (5.9%) from the 2011 Census. Over the past 15 years, the population of the Shire has been declining, down 6.8% since 2001. With the status quo in economic activity, the population of the Shire is projected to continue to decline with the Shire’s population forecast to decline by 21.2% to 4,000 by 2036². Increased economic activity with strong employment opportunities is needed to drive population growth. In 2011, the median age of the population was 48 years³, with the median age of the population in the towns (Bingara - 57 years, Wialalda - 48 years) being higher than the median age of the population in the villages and rural areas (North Star – Croppa Creek – 36 years, Upper Horton – 40 years, Gravesend – 43 years, Coolatai – 43 years).

Gwydir Shire has two small towns, Bingara and Wialalda, located approximately 40km apart. Bingara (town population 1,428⁴) 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. Wialalda (town population 1,590⁵) 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 shopping centres with Wialalda also having a small industrial area.

The Shire has 5 rural villages – North Star, Croppa Creek, Coolatai and Gravesend in the northern part of the Shire, and Upper Horton in the south, each with a hotel and/or licenced club. North Star, Croppa Creek and Gravesend also have general stores. Croppa Creek, Coolatai and North Star have several rural suppliers and service providers, while Gravesend and Coolatai each have a lifestyle-based tourism business. The Shire has 21 rural localities – Boonal, Blue Nobby, Yallaroi, Crooble, Pallamallawa (part) and Balfours Peak in the northern half of the Shire, and Wialalda Rail, Gineroi, Bangheet, Riverview, Elcombe, Pallal, Rocky Creek, Back Creek, Cobbadah, Gundamulda, Dinoga, Gulf Creek, Upper Bingara, Keera and Copeton, in the southern half.

The Shire’s main attractions are the townships of Bingara and Wialalda, Copeton Dam / State Waters Park, Gwydir River, Roxy Theatre, Cranky Rock Reserve Three Creeks Gold Mine, Myall Creek Memorial site, and the Rocky Creek Glacial Area. The Shire is popular for camping, fishing, fossicking, motorcycle and horse sports. The Shire hosts a diversity of events, with the higher profile events including the Wialalda 200, Easterfish, North Star Trail Ride, Upper Horton Valley Pony Express, Veterans Week of Golf, the Great Inland Fishing Festival, North Star Show Jumping and the rodeos and camp drafts in Upper Horton and Gravesend.



¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics Population Census 2016 – Quickstats – Gwydir Shire

² NSW Planning and Environment 2016 NSW Population and Household Projections.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Dwellings, 2016: Quickstats – Gwydir Shire

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Dwellings, 2011: QuickStats - Bingara and Wialalda State Suburbs

2.2 Access

Gwydir Shire is located on the junction of Fossickers Way and the Gwydir Highway, with the Bruxner Highway passing through the northern edge of the Shire. The Fossickers Way is a circular touring route (comprising a number of roads) that passes through Tamworth Regional, Gwydir, Inverell, Armidale Regional and Uralla LGAs. In Gwydir Shire, the Fossickers Way includes part of Regional Road B95, which is a north-south aligned route, connecting the Oxley and New England Highway at Tamworth to the Bruxner Highway at Yetman, via Manilla, Barraba, Bingara and Warialda, with the Bruxner Highway providing links through to Goondiwindi and Texas in Queensland. The Gwydir Highway is a State Highway (B76) linking the Pacific Highway at Grafton on the NSW North Coast through to the Castlereagh Highway near Walgett in Outback NSW. The Gwydir Highway passes through the towns of Glen Innes, Inverell, Warialda, Moree and Collarenebri and the villages of Delungra and Gravesend. The Bruxner Highway (B76) passes through the northern part of the Shire. It is part of the route across Australia, linking the most easterly and westerly points on the Continent. The Bruxner Highway links the Pacific Highway at Ballina on the NSW North Coast, to the Newell Highway at Boggabilla, just south of Goondiwindi. It passes through the towns of Lismore, Casino and Tenterfield.

The Shire is also traversed by a number of significant local and regional roads including State Touring Route 3 which has been branded Nature's Way (Killarney Gap and Copeton Dam Roads in Gwydir Shire) which links Narrabri and Inverell via Bingara and provides access from Gwydir Shire to Sawn Rocks and the Mt Kaputar National Park; the Delungra Road which is the main link road between Bingara and Inverell; North Star Road linking Warialda and North Star and onto the Bruxner Highway; Baroma - Yallaroi and Baroma Downs Roads linking Croppa Creek and the North Star Road with these being important routes for livestock travelling between the Feedlots and the processing plant at Inverell; the Croppa Moree Road linking Croppa Creek (and indirectly Crooble) to the Newell Highway north of Moree; and the Croppa Creek Road linking Croppa Creek and North Star. The Coolatai – Yetman Road also carries livestock between the Shire and Inverell for processing.

The northern area of the Shire has rail access for bulk grain transport. The Shire is serviced by the Boggabilla Branch line which originally ran from the North West Line (Mungindi – Werris Creek Branch Line) at Moree to Boggabilla via Crooble, Croppa Creek and North Star. The section of line between North Star and Boggabilla is closed. The railway line provides access to the Port of Newcastle (bulk grain terminal) and the Port of Botany (container terminal). Grain Receiving sites are located at North Star, Croppa Creek and Crooble. There was also a branch line between Moree and Inverell with this closed in 1994 and not likely to re-open. The proposed Inland Railway line will pass through the Shire, possibly offering opportunities for private sector investment in agri-business and/or intermodal facilities.

The nearest airports with commercial RPT services are Tamworth Regional Airport (160km), Moree (80km), Narrabri (115km) and Armidale (150km). Tamworth is the largest of the airports with QantasLink and Virgin providing regular flights to Sydney, (QantasLink - 40 flights per week and Virgin - 10 per week), with Jetgo and Fly Corporate both operating 9 flights per week to Brisbane. Moree offers 2 Qantaslink services to Sydney per day with Fly Corporate providing 5 flights per week to Brisbane. Fly Corporate also provides flights from Narrabri (5/week) and Armidale (12/week) to Brisbane.



2.3 Economic Snapshot⁵

GPR
\$239.704M

Gwydir Shire is primarily dependent on agriculture. The Shire’s Gross Regional Product (GRP) is estimated at \$239.704 million, equating to 2.2% of the NE-NW Region GRP and 0.04% of the NSW Gross State Product. GRP per capita is \$48,279 which is lower than the Regional average of \$58,702. GRP per worker is \$154,150 which is marginally lower than the Regional average of \$156,232. The total output (gross revenue) generated by the Shire economy is estimated at \$443,367 million (2.1% of the NE-NW Region) with the total value-add by the Shire’s economy estimated at \$213.59 million (2.2% of value added in the NE-NW Region). The value of goods and services exported from the Shire is estimated at \$204.253million (3.5% of the value of exports from the NE-NW Region).

Output
\$443.367M

In terms of output, the most significant sectors are Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing (\$173.050M); Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (\$49.629M); and Public Administration and Safety (\$30.210M). The Agricultural sector is the major employer (668 jobs), followed by Health Care and Social Assistance (151 jobs), Education and Training (133 jobs) and Public Administration and Safety (130 jobs).

Value Added
\$213.59M

At June 2015, there were 801 businesses in the Shire with a registered ABN, of which 504 were in agriculture. 69.4% of businesses were non-employing, 25.3% employed 1 to 4 people, with 4.9% employing 5 to 19 people and 0.4% employing 20 or more staff. Businesses (3) employing more than 20 staff are in the retail sector.

Value Exports
\$204.253M

The high level of dependence on agriculture is a major challenge for the Shire, with most of the Shire’s businesses dependent (in part or whole) on the performance of the agricultural sector. Structural changes in the agricultural sector and the increased use of technology has, and is continuing to, reduce the demand for labour and the jobs available, with a resultant net loss of population from the Shire. To reverse this trend, the Shire needs to diversify its economic base, with opportunities including:

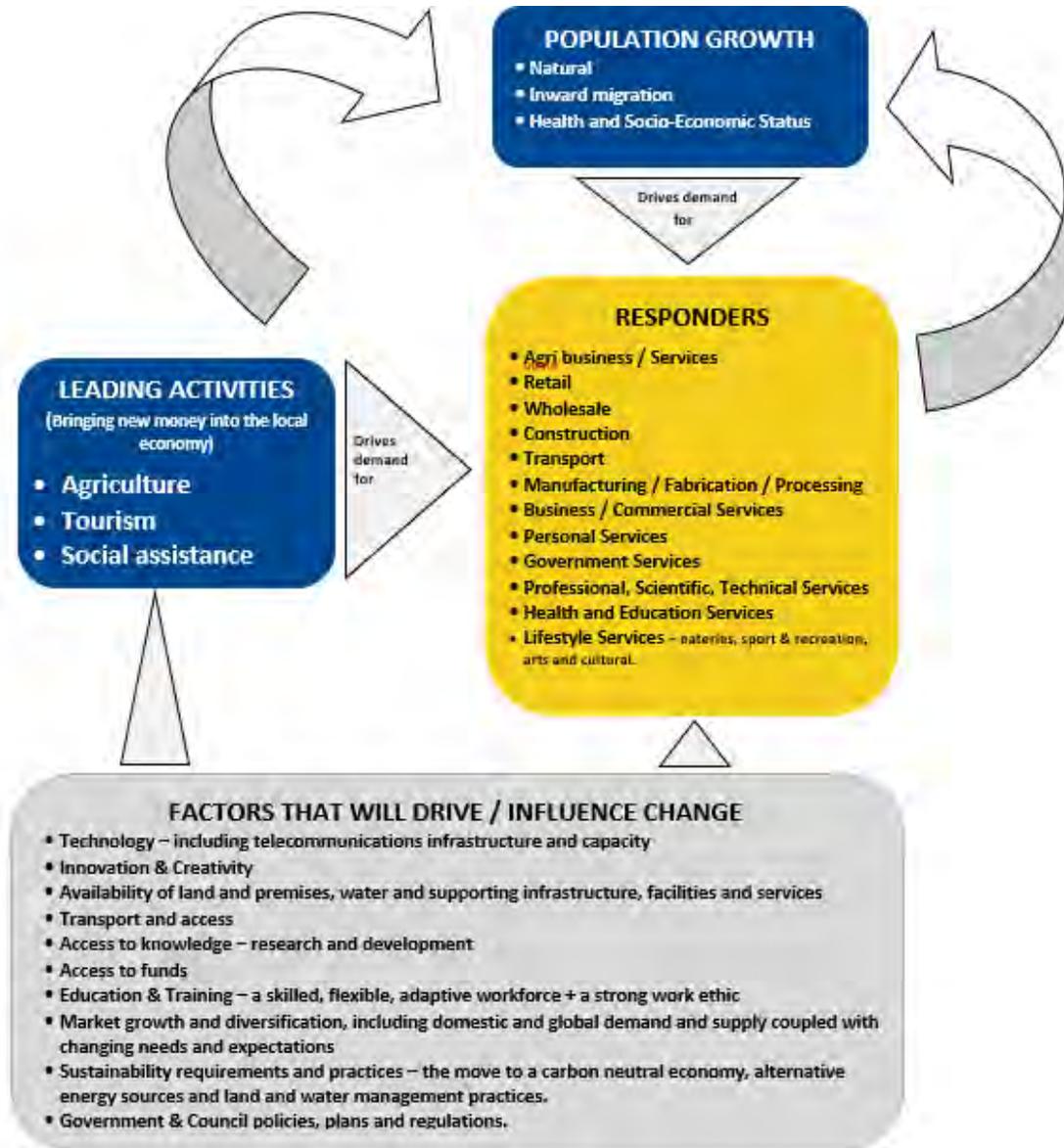
Businesses
801

- Intensive agricultural production, establishing activities such as glasshouse horticulture, poultry farms, feedlots and piggeries, which are more labour intensive than broadacre farming and livestock grazing.
- Value-adding to agricultural production through processing, blending and packaging.
- Growing visitation – the tourism sector is not dependent on agriculture. Visitors bring ‘new’ dollars into the local economy, providing an additional income stream for local businesses and service providers and provides cashflow year-round.
- Encouraging the establishment and relocation of ‘footloose’ businesses such as trades and self-employed people, on-line businesses - for example on-line retail outlets, graphic and web-based designers, small manufacturers, creative industries etc.
- Attracting retirees, capitalising on the affordability of the Shire and the services available.

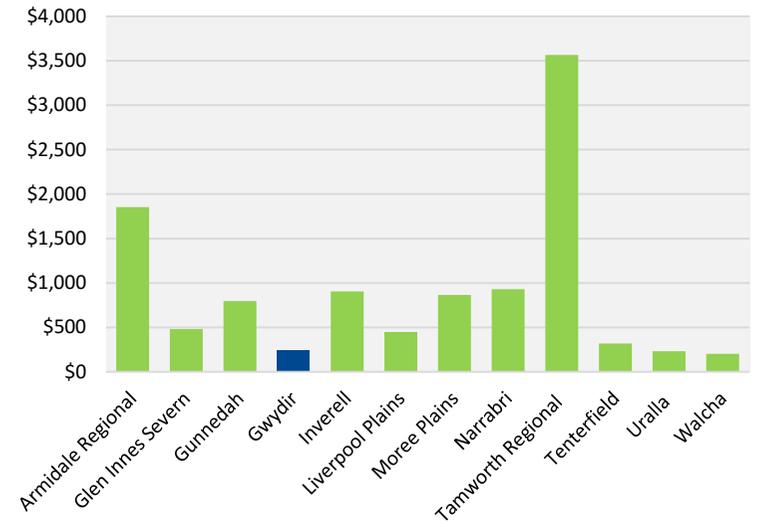
Labour Force
2,286 people

Unemployment
6.7%
151 people
seeking work

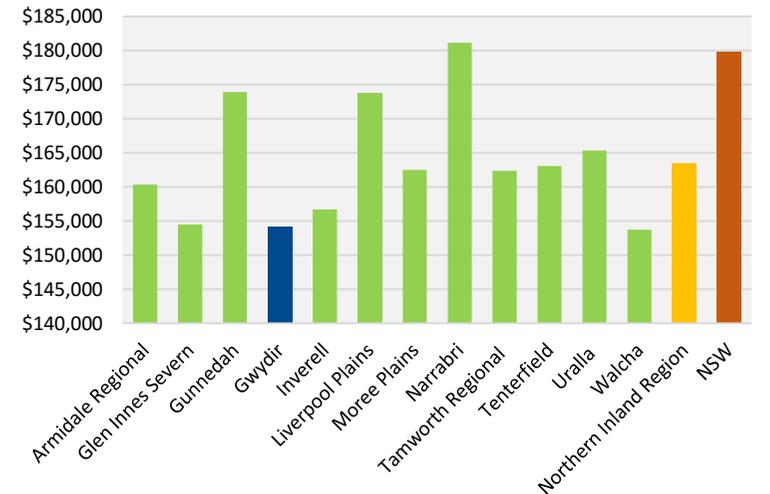
⁵ Economic data in this section has been extracted from the RDA Northern Inland Economic Profile, prepared by REMPLAN



Comparison – Gross Regional Product – LGA’s in the NE-NW Region

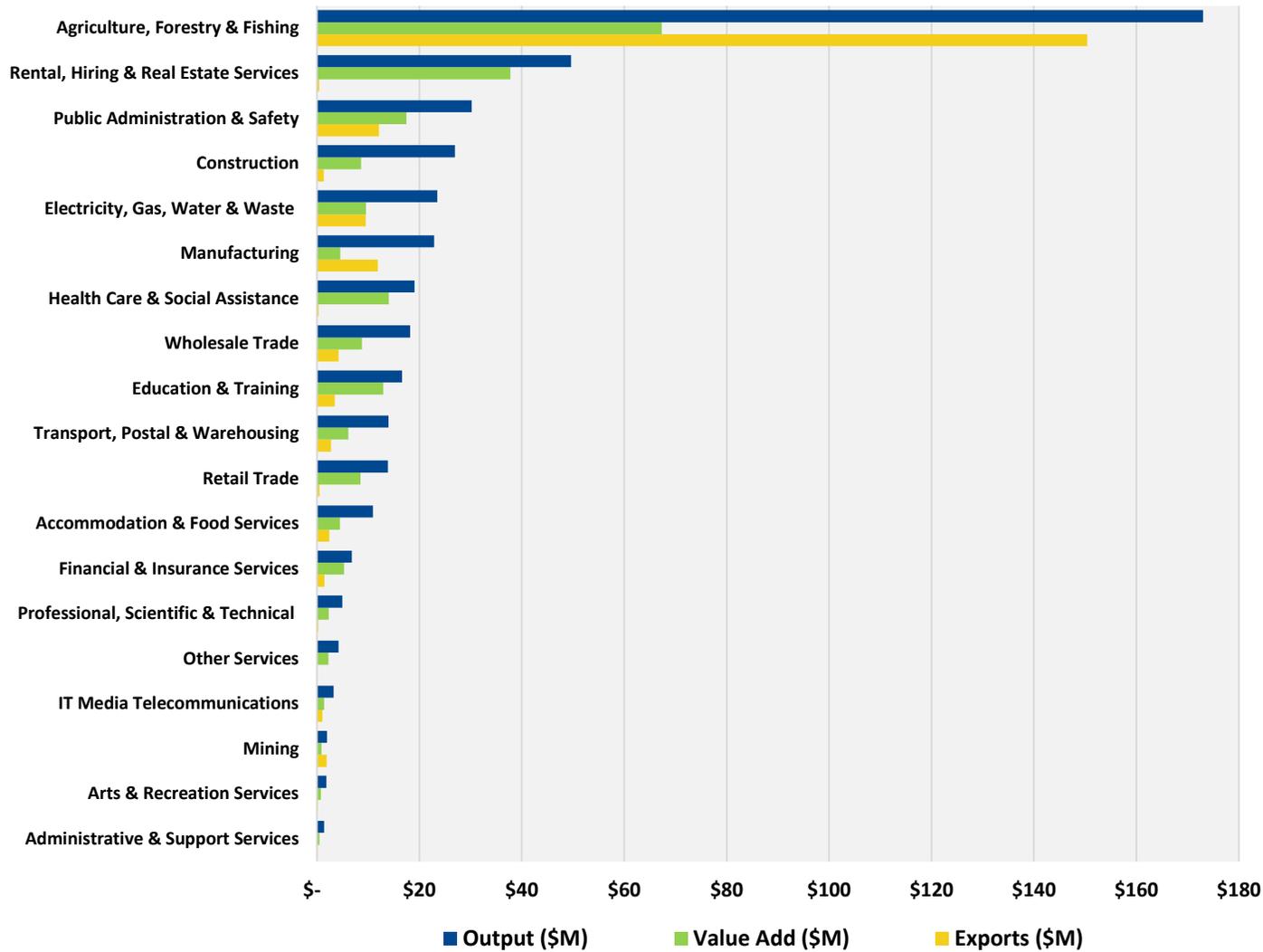


Comparison – Productivity (GRP / Worker) - LGA’s in the NE-NW



Source: RDA Northern Inland – Economic Profile - REMPLAN

Performance (Output, Value Add, Export) by Industry Sector – Gwydir Shire (\$million)



- MAJOR EMPLOYERS**
- Gwydir Shire Council
 - Myola Feedlot
 - Ceres Agricultural Company
 - Tullin Tulla Feedlot
 - McGregor Gourlay Ag Services
 - Hunter – New England Health
 - NSW Education
 - Naroo Aged Care Hostel
 - Touriandi Lodge Aged Care
 - IGA Supermarkets – Bingara & Warialda



Gwydir Shire – Economic Indicators by Sector

Industry Sector	Output		Value Add		Value of Exports		Value of Imports		Businesses with an ABN (June 2015)		Employment (2011)	
	\$ million	% of Shire	\$ million	% of Shire	\$ million	% of Shire	\$ million	% of Shire	Number	% of Shire	Number	% of Shire
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	173.05	39.0%	67.315	31.5%	150.389	73.6%	69.399	45.4%	504	62.9%	668	43.0%
Mining	1.971	0.4%	0.907	0.4%	1.888	0.9%	0.837	0.5%	3	0.4%	5	0.3%
Manufacturing	22.897	5.2%	4.572	2.1%	11.9	5.8%	14.027	9.2%	11	1.4%	34	2.2%
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	49.629	11.2%	37.75	17.7%	0.455	0.2%	8.41	5.5%	22	2.7%	4	0.3%
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	13.982	3.2%	6.14	2.9%	2.75	1.3%	4.925	3.2%	48	6.0%	50	3.2%
Construction	26.943	6.1%	8.62	4.0%	1.357	0.7%	12.403	8.1%	53	6.6%	46	3.0%
Wholesale Trade	18.224	4.1%	8.772	4.1%	4.207	2.1%	6.749	4.4%	16	2.0%	44	2.8%
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste	23.497	5.3%	9.564	4.5%	9.503	4.7%	4.591	3.0%	0	0.0%	25	1.6%
Public Administration & Safety	30.210	6.8%	17.475	8.2%	12.113	5.9%	8.823	5.8%	0	0.0%	130	8.4%
Retail Trade	13.884	3.1%	8.516	4.0%	0.515	0.3%	3.689	2.4%	24	3.0%	113	7.3%
Education & Training	16.642	3.8%	12.946	6.1%	3.485	1.7%	2.539	1.7%	3	0.4%	133	8.6%
Health Care & Social Assistance	19.024	4.3%	14.057	6.6%	0.304	0.1%	3.554	2.3%	16	2.0%	151	9.7%
Professional, Scientific & Technical	4.954	1.1%	2.285	1.1%	0.244	0.1%	2.02	1.3%	16	2.0%	17	1.1%
Accommodation & Food Services	10.936	2.5%	4.477	2.1%	2.393	1.2%	5.184	3.4%	16	2.0%	66	4.2%
Financial & Insurance Services	6.823	1.5%	5.295	2.5%	1.448	0.7%	1.246	0.8%	16	2.0%	9	0.6%
Other Services	4.233	1.0%	2.251	1.1%	0.04	0.0%	1.525	1.0%	18	2.2%	29	1.9%
Administrative & Support Services	1.389	0.3%	0.514	0.2%	0.078	0.0%	0.6	0.4%	13	1.6%	14	0.9%
Arts & Recreation Services	1.836	0.4%	0.758	0.4%	0.132	0.1%	0.728	0.5%	11	1.4%	11	0.7%
IT Media Telecommunications	3.243	0.7%	1.376	0.6%	1.052	0.5%	1.49	1.0%	3	0.4%	6	0.4%
Not stated									8	1.0%		
Total	443.367	100.0%	213.59	100.0%	204.253	100.0%	152.739	100.0%	801	100.0%	1555	100.0%

Source: RDA Northern Inland – Economic Profile - REMPLAN



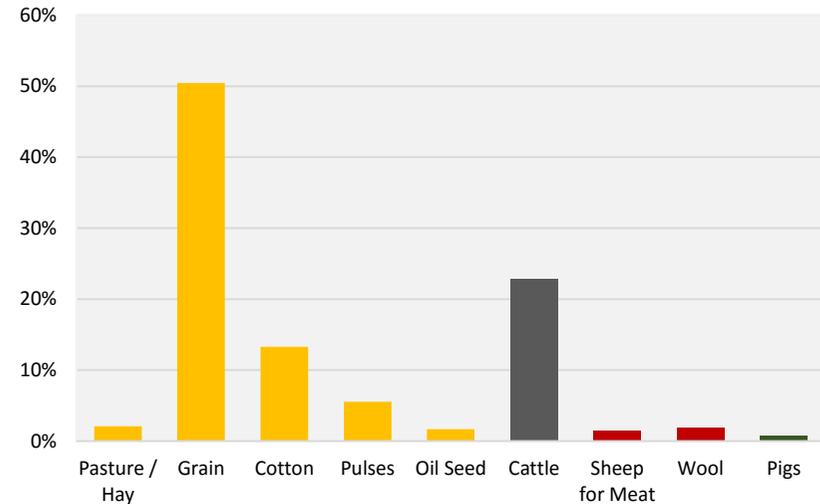
Agriculture

Agriculture is the main economic activity, with the sector being the primary driver of the Shire’s economy. Agriculture accounts for 39.0% (\$173.05M) of the output from the Shire, 31.5% (\$67.315M) of the value add and 73.6% (\$150.389M) of the Shire’s exports. 62.9% (508) of ABN registered businesses and 43.0% of jobs (668) are in the agricultural sector. In June 2015, 72% of agricultural businesses were non-employing, with 24.2% employing 1-4 people, and 3.8% (19 businesses) employing 5-19 people.

In 2011⁶, around 71% of the Shire was in agricultural holdings, with 60.9% of this land used for grazing and 32.9% for broadacre cropping. The Shire had 450 rural producers, with 413 involved in livestock production and 240 in crop production. The gross value of production was \$167M, with cropping accounting for 73.1% of the value (\$122.1M). Grains (primarily wheat, barley and sorghum) were the primary income earner (69.1% of gross value of crop production), followed by cotton (22.1%), pulses (9.2%), hay and pasture seed (3.5%) and oilseeds (2.8%). 38.1% of the area used for cotton was irrigated with 61.9% being dryland production.

Many of the Crops produced in the Shire are exported, going primarily by road transport to receival sites and gins (cotton) in Moree and the Darling Downs, or direct to the Port of Brisbane. Strong growth is occurring in on-farm storage, with grain, pulses and seed stored for livestock consumption and/or to wait for higher prices (yield management). The feedlots in the Shire and surrounding region are also significant purchasers of grain (mainly sorghum and maize with some wheat and barley). Other than a very small specialty mill in Bingara, there is no value-adding to crops produced in the Shire.

In 2011, the Shire had two very small vegetable growers with 3 hectares under cultivation producing pumpkins (12 tonnes pa) and tomatoes (18 tonnes pa). There were also 6 orchards with two producing olives (17,942 kilograms pa). The value of fruit and vegetable production in the Shire was less than \$100,000 pa. The Shire also has several honey producers.



Contribution to Value by Production Type – Gwydir Shire, 2011

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics – Agricultural Census, 2011

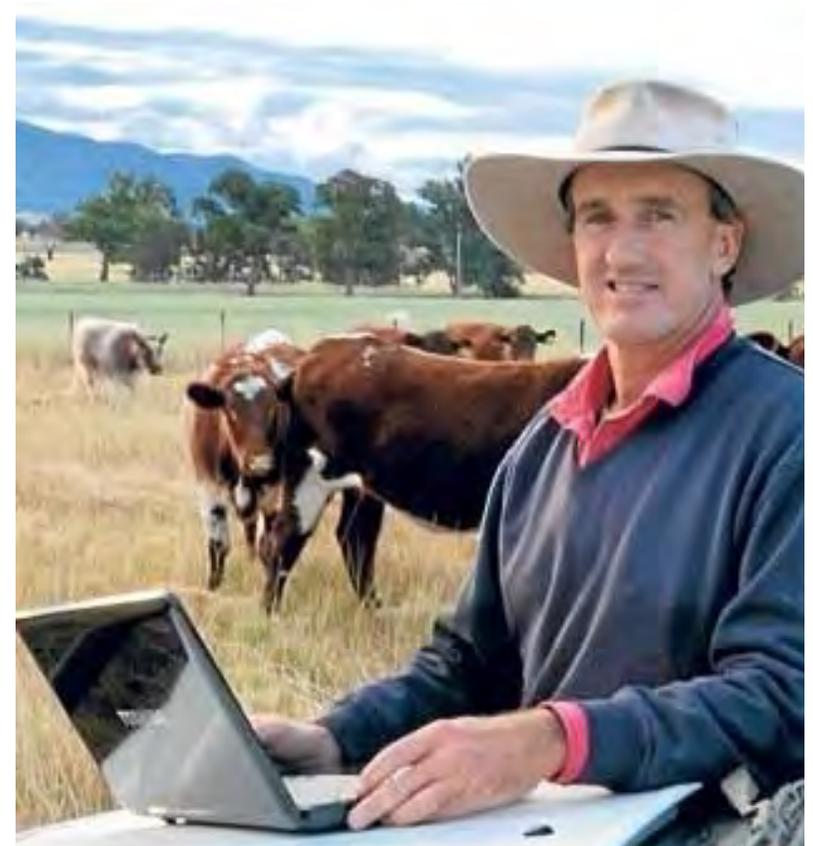


⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics Agricultural Census, 2011

Livestock production generates 26.9% of the value of gross value of production. In 2011, the Shire had 399 cattle producers, 126 sheep producers, 10 pig producers and 5 poultry producers. Cattle (\$38.1M) accounted for 22.8% of total agricultural production and 84.9% of the value of livestock production. Sheep generated \$5.6M with \$3.2M coming from wool and \$2.4M from meat, while pigs generated \$1.2M. The Shire produced around 126,400 eggs, with the value of production being low.

The Shire has a concentration of stud farms, with 18 cattle studs, 4 sheep studs and a horse stud. The Shire also has three larger feedlots – Myola (20,000 head) and Tullin Tulla (5,000 head) at Croppa Creek and Gunyerwarildi (5,000 head) 30km north west of Wyallda. Gunyerwarildi Feedlot is seeking approval to expand to 20,000 head, with Myola also looking to expand. There is also a feedlot (Gunnee – 10,000 head) located at Delungra, just east of Gwydir Shire as well as a number of feedlots across the border in the Darling Downs Region of Queensland. Gwydir Shire is a prime location for feedlots, with ready access to cattle, feed and processing plants. The feedlots are a ready market for local cattle producers. Myola Feedlot is owned by Bindaree Beef, with most cattle sent to the Bindaree Beef plant in Inverell for processing. Gunyerwarildi is part of the Ceres Agricultural Company which is Australia’s largest producer of supplementary grain-fed cattle. Both feedlots have on-site feed mills.

Gwydir Shire has a range of services to support the agricultural sector including agronomists, rural suppliers, stock and station agents, transport / freight operators, farm contractors, earth moving contractors, fencers, weed and feral animal control, shearers, harvesters, wool classers and brokers, seed cleaners, vets, farriers and horse-handlers, as well as engineers / fabricators and financial and legal services. Many of the agricultural service providers are in the Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services sector, which in terms of output, is the second largest economic sector in the Shire, and in the Transport Sector.



Retail and Wholesale

Gwydir Shire has small retail and wholesale sectors, with these sectors generating \$13.884M and \$18.224M, respectively in output. The Shire has 24 ABN registered retail businesses and 16 registered wholesale businesses. The retail sector is the 4th largest employer, 113 staff, with 44 people employed in the wholesale sector. The largest retailers in the Shire are the IGA supermarkets in Bingara and Warialda and the rural suppliers, located in Bingara, Warialda, Coolatai, Croppa Creek and North Star. Warialda and Bingara have basic retail outlets (eg newsagent, chemist, butcher, hardware), and a limited range of higher order white goods providers, lifestyle stores and boutiques. Croppa Creek and Gravesend have general stores which carry a range of groceries and other supplies. The limited choice in retailers, including lack of a discount department store, encourages residents to shop externally with significant escape expenditure to Inverell, and to a lesser extent, Tamworth, Goondiwindi, Moree and Barraba. Retailers are also facing increasing competition from on-line sales. The Shire has several on-line retail businesses including the successful on-line retail clothing store – Dust’n’Boots, and skincare ranges produced by Romeo and Madden, based in Warialda and Oliveque (Talgai Olives) near Coolatai.



Tourism

Gwydir Shire has a small but significant tourism sector. Visitors consume a range of goods and services, injecting 'new' dollars into the local economy, and contributing to the viability of local businesses. Visitors who stay one or more nights in the Shire, spend on average \$122 per night, while day visitors spend an average of \$147 per visit⁷. The output and value add from the Tourism sector is \$14.676M and \$6.531M respectively, with the sector employing an estimated 70 people. Tourism is also a source of new residents for the Shire, with some visitors deciding to settle in the area, attracted by the setting (scenery), lifestyle, affordability and services available.

The Shire attracts a diverse range of visitors, with the primary markets being business and work related travellers, the touring caravan and RV market, through traffic, people visiting friends and relatives and people attending events. The Shire is traversed by several touring routes – Fossickers Way, Nature's Way (STR 3), Gwydir Highway and the Warialda Road (linking the riverside camping sites in Bingara and Texas in Queensland). Visitation is focused on Bingara, with the Gwydir River corridor being very popular for free camping. The main attractions are Bingara and Warialda (historic country towns), Copeton Dam / Copeton Waters State Park, Roxy Theatre, Gwydir River, Cranky Rock Reserve, Rocky Creek Glacial Area, Myall Creek Memorial Site and Three Creek Gold Mine. The Shire is popular for camping, fishing, fossicking and horse sports. The Living Classroom in Bingara has the potential to become a significant attraction for the town and the NE-NW Region.

The Shire has a small accommodation sector incorporating motel and pub hotel rooms, group (dormitory) accommodation, boutique cottages, cabins, caravan parks and free camping areas. The limited number of beds is a constraint, particularly to growing the conference and meetings and events sectors.

Manufacturing and Processing

Gwydir Shire has a small manufacturing and processing sector, with this sector ranking 4th in terms of output (\$22.897M) and 3rd in value of exports (\$11.9M). The value add of the manufacturing sector is low (\$4.572M) contributing only 2.1% to total value. In June 2015, there were 11 ABN registered manufacturing businesses of which 7 were sole traders. The sector employs 34 people. Manufacturing and processing activities include the Bethel Mill (grain milling), engineering and fabrication, bakeries, honey production, jewellery and accessories, and skin care products.



⁷ RDA Northern Inland / REMPLAN – Economic Profile – Tourism Expenditure

Construction

Gwydir Shire has 53 ABN registered construction businesses, with the construction sector ranking second in number of businesses to the Agricultural sector. 66% of construction businesses are sole traders, with 28.3% employing 1-4 staff. The construction sector ranks 4th in terms of output, generating \$26.933M. Construction trades in the Shire include builders and carpenters, concreters, electricians, painters and plumbers. Most of the construction businesses are home-based. There is a significant under-supply of trades people both in the Shire and throughout the NE-NW Region.

Mining

Gwydir Shire has a very small mining sector with 3 ABN registered mining businesses. The value of output from the mining sector is \$1.971M with the value-add being \$0.907M. The Shire has one small gold mine (Three Creeks Gold Mine) which is operated primarily as a tourist attraction, two sand quarries (Warialda Sands and Yammacoona Sands) near Warialda and a hard rock quarry (Runnymede operated by Johnstone's Concrete and Quarries) at Pallamallawa.

The Runnymede Quarry is expanding production to meet growing demand for road-base and ballast materials. The upgrading of and extension of the Boggabilla branch railway line as part of the development of the Inland Rail, will significantly increase demand for hard rock aggregate for ballast and other construction projects. Yammacoona Sands is looking to significantly increase production, with the sand extracted to be exported. Longer term, the company is looking to use the sand in the manufacture of tiles.



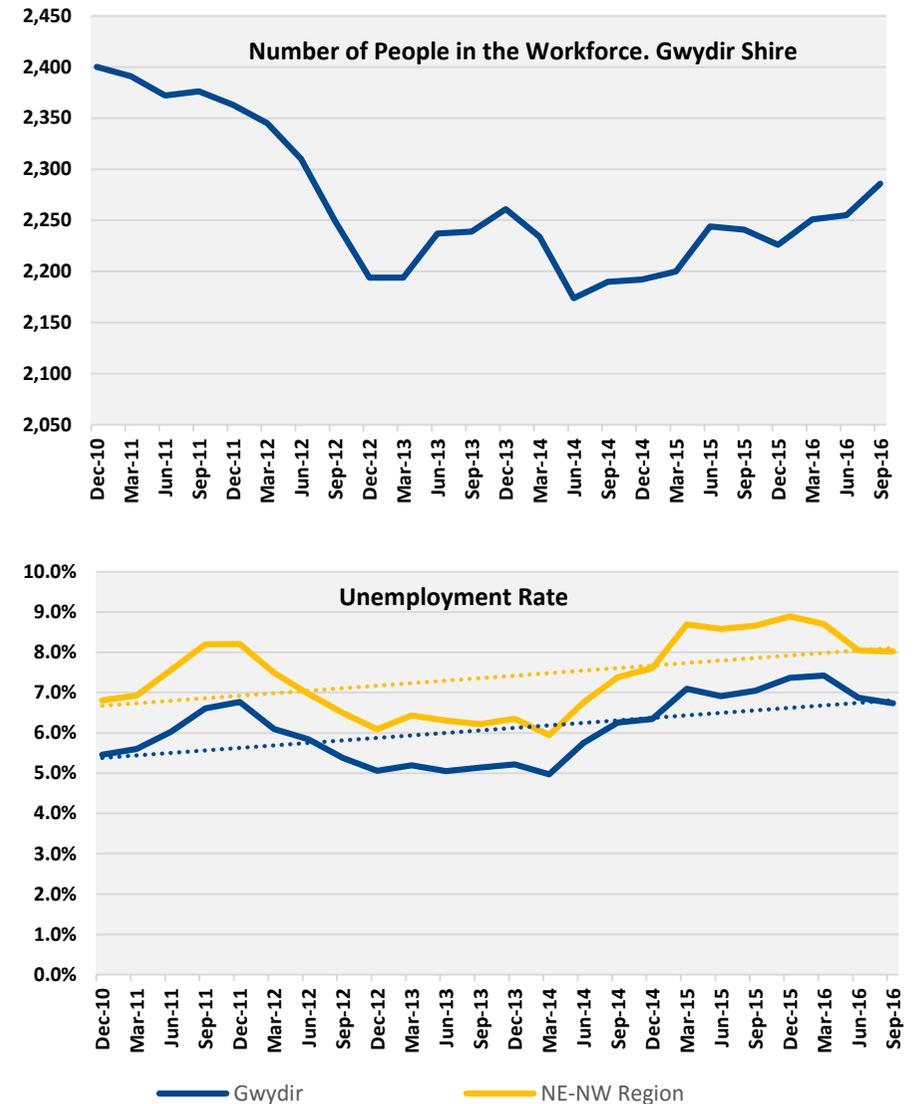
2.4 Workforce

At September 2016, there were 2,286 people in the work force within Gwydir Shire and 151 people seeking work⁸. The unemployment rate was 6.7%, with this rate being 1.3 percentage points lower than the unemployment rate for the NE-NW Region (8%). From December 2010 to June 2014, the number of people in the workforce declined from 2400 people to 2174 people (loss of 217). Since June 2014, the labour force has grown by 5.2% to 2,286 with 112 additional people entering the workforce.

Education levels within Gwydir Shire are below the Regional average. In 2011, 29.1% of people aged 15+ years in Gwydir Shire had completed Year 12, compared to 34.4% across the NE-NW Region. 34.3% had left school at the end of Year 10 (NE-NW Region 32.3%), while 23.3% had left school in Years 9 or below (NE-NW Region 17.9%). 43.7% of the Shire’s workforce had tertiary qualifications. Of those with tertiary qualifications, 18.1% had university degrees, 13.8% had diplomas and advanced diplomas and 43.7% had vocational certificates. The proportion of the workforce with tertiary qualifications in Gwydir Shire (43.7%) was lower than the average for the NE-NW Region (53.6%). The proportion of people with university degrees and diplomas in Gwydir Shire (18.1%) was lower than the Regional average (22.4%), while the proportion of the workforce with vocational certificates (43.7%) was higher than the regional average (40.9%).

34.4% of the Shire’s workforce are Managers, with 13.4% being labourers, 10.5% professional, 9.4% clerical and administrative, and 9.3% technicians and trades. Males are primarily employed as managers (42.8%), labourers (17.0%), machinery operators and drivers (13.8%), and trades (13%), with females mainly employed as managers (23.9%), administrative and clerical workers (19.4%), professionals (18.4%), and community and personal service providers (13.6%).

Developing and maintaining a skilled workforce is essential to business growth and diversification and to build resilience within the Shire community. The NE-NW Region is experiencing labour and skills shortages across most economic sectors. An increasing number of businesses within the NE-NW Region are employing backpackers and people from overseas on temporary work visas to fill positions. Given the cyclical nature of the local and regional economies, the workforce needs to be innovative and adaptable to work across sectors. In some sectors (eg health and aged care and agriculture) the



⁸ Australian Department of Employment (2016) Small Area Labour Markets, Gwydir Shire, September 2016.

workforce is aging which, if not addressed, could become a significant issue within the next decade. The workplace is also changing with employers increasingly looking for skilled workers, with IT, strong socialisation and communication skills, and innovative and creative thinking. 'Green' skills (eg in agriculture, manufacturing and construction) will also become increasingly important as Australia moves to a carbon neutral economy.

Gwydir Shire has an innovative approach to education. Working with education providers, Council has established the Gwydir Learning Region, and owns and operates three training facilities, the Living Classroom and Hospitality Kitchen in Bingara and the Trade Training Centre (TTC) at Warialda which offers a range of automotive and welding programs as well as driver training. Warialda TTC also has facilities for horticultural training, with these currently not being used. Each of these Centres has spare capacity.

2.5 Infrastructure & Services to Support Economic Growth

Utilities

Domestic Water – Gwydir Shire Council provides reticulated potable water to Bingara, Warialda, Gravesend and North Star. Other villages and rural properties rely on tank water and bores. The water supply in Bingara has significant capacity for growth. The water supply in Warialda has capacity for some residential and business growth, but would not support large scale processing or manufacturing requiring high volumes of water. The water supplies in Gravesend and North Star are close to capacity, with very limited opportunity for growth. The bore that services the Upper Horton Sportsground is at capacity and needs to be augmented to meet demand during events held in the village.

Sewerage – Bingara and Warialda are sewered with the sewerage systems having significant capacity for growth.

Power – Power to Gwydir Shire is provided by Essential Energy as part of the Inverell Supply area, with 66kV lines to substations in Bingara, Warialda, Yetman and Goondiwindi. There is a small hydroelectric power station at Copeton Dam (23MW) that feeds into the Inverell supply area. Essential Energy advises that there are no limitations within the Inverell Supply Area. Renewable energy generation is a potential opportunity for the Shire, with opportunities to embed micro-generators into the Essential Energy network.

Telecommunications – The NBN fixed wireless service is in the planning stage for Bingara and Warialda. Fixed wireless is available to a small number of Gwydir Shire residents along the Gwydir Highway east of Adams Scrub Road. The remainder of the Shire has access to the NBN via Sky Muster satellite. 4G/4GX Mobile phone coverage is available in Bingara and Warialda. Most of the rural areas along the main routes have 3G coverage that can be accessed from a hand-held device, however access tends to be intermittent with slow download speeds. There are a number of areas within the Shire, particularly to the north of Warialda and in the Horton Valley, where there is no mobile coverage, or mobile coverage can only be accessed with an external antenna.

UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES

Power

- Explore options for renewable energy generation

Telecommunications

- Access to high speed, reliable, affordable internet
- Improved mobile phone coverage in rural areas

For the Shire to be competitive, there is a need to increase the reliability, speed and affordability of the internet and mobile phone coverage. Internet speeds and mobile coverage are key considerations for people and businesses looking to relocate to rural areas. It is also essential to enable the application of digital technology to improve farming and business productivity, access national and global markets, and increase access to online service and training opportunities.

Transport Infrastructure

Roads

Roads are critical infrastructure for economic development, influencing freight movements and costs which impacts on productivity and competitiveness. They are also a significant part of the tourism infrastructure both as a driver of visitation to the Shire, and as part of the attraction (scenic drives) and activity (eg cycle tourism) base. For the Shire community, roads play a part in community safety and connectedness, influencing where people shop, go to school, play sport etc.

To support the movement of freight, Gwydir Shire has been proactive in approving suitable rural roads for use by high productivity vehicles. Council is also working with Moree Plains Shire Council in developing the North-West Freight Network, which identifies the main freight corridors through both Shires and identifies pinch-points and roads that are a priority for upgrading. The freight routes in Gwydir Shire include:

Southern and Central Areas

- Gwydir Highway.
- Fossickers Way – Delungra Road – movement of livestock and sheep to saleyards and processing plants in Inverell and Tamworth. There are a number of bridges on Fossickers Way that have load and height restrictions, with this road not suitable for high productivity vehicles.

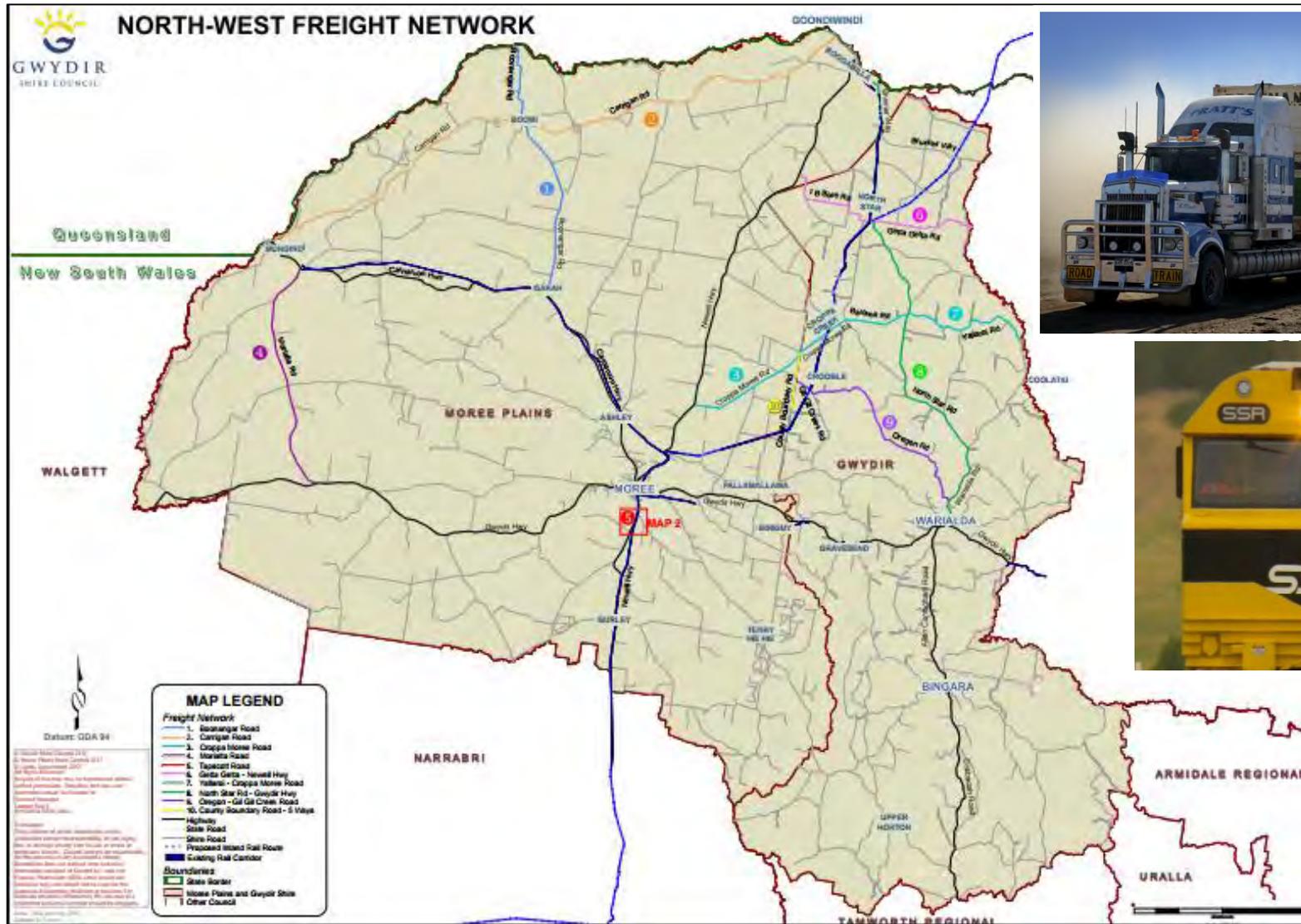
Northern Area

- North Star Road – Warialda to North Star and linking through to the Bruxner Highway.
- Croppa – Moree Road from Moree to Croppa Creek, and the Croppa Creek Road linking north to North Star.
- Baroma – Yallaroi Roads – forming part of the link between Croppa Creek and Inverell (cattle transport) and north to processing plants at Wallangarra and Warwick.
- Baroma Downs Road – linking Croppa Creek and Warialda
- Oregon Road – linking Crooble and Warialda.
- Warialda Road (B95).
- Country Boundary Road

The bridge and right angle bends in Warialda are a significant pinch-point. Funding is being sought to build a town by-pass with this being a high priority. As part of the North-West Freight Network, Council has identified a number of routes as high priority for upgrading.

ROAD UPGRADE PRIORITIES TO IMPROVE FREIGHT PRODUCTIVITY

- Warialda By-Pass
- Oregon – Gill Creek Roads
- Croppa Moree – Baroma – Yallaroi Roads
- North Star Road
- 1B Bore Road – Getta Getta Road





For tourism, significant roads include:

Long-Haul Touring Routes

- Fossickers Way – Warialda Road (B95) – linking from Tamworth through to Texas in Queensland via Bingara, Warialda and Coolatai.
- Nature’s Way (State Touring Route 3) – linking the Warrumbungle National Park and Pilliga Forest through Narrabri and Bingara to Copeton Dam and Inverell.
- Gwydir Highway – through Warialda and Gravesend.
- Delungra Road
- North Star Road.

There is significant potential to establish the Croppa – Moree / Croppa Road, through Croppa Creek and North Star, as an alternative route to the Newell Highway. There is also potential to promote the North Star Road – Fossickers Way as a connecting route between the Newell Highway at Boggabilla and the New England Highway at Tamworth with south-bound links to the Hunter and Sydney.

Scenic Drives

Within the Shire, there are a number of local roads that are promoted as scenic drives, and/or have the potential to be promoted as scenic drives. These include:

- Nature’s and Fossicker’s Ways.
- Delungra Road – Bingara, Delungra, Warialda Triangle – linking the towns, Myall Creek Memorial Site and Cranky Rock Reserve.
- Upper Bingara Road – linking to Three Creeks Gold Mine, gold fossicking area, historic sites and the grass tree forest.
- Horton and Bereen Roads – drives through the Horton Valley with links to Horton Falls National Park.
- Baroma Downs – Croppa Creek Road – scenic route from Warialda to Croppa Creek and onto North Star.

There is opportunity to develop more touring routes, particularly in the northern areas of the Shire. Promotional and directional signage needs to be improved to support visitation and encourage travellers to explore the Shire.

Rail

The northern area of the Shire is serviced by the Boggabilla Branch line which provides access for bulk grain transport. The line originally ran from the North West Line (Mungindi – Werris Creek Branch Line) at Moree to Boggabilla via Crooble, Croppa Creek and North Star, with the section north of North Star now closed. This line provides access to the Port of Newcastle (bulk grain terminal) and the Port of Botany (container terminal). Bulk grain receival sites are located at North Star, Croppa Creek and Crooble. There was also a branch line between Moree and Inverell with this closed in 1994 and not likely to re-open. The proposed Inland Railway line will pass through the Shire, possibly offering opportunities for private sector investment in agri-business and/or intermodal facilities.

There is a proposal to establish an intermodal terminal at Tamworth, with this serviced by the reopening of part of the Barraba branch-line. The proposed terminal will have refrigerated container freight facilities to for transport of processed red meat and poultry and provide access to the Port of Newcastle and Port Botany. To the north of the Shire, the Queensland Government is significantly upgrading the regional rail network, including the infrastructure from Goondiwindi to the Port of Brisbane.

Air

Air access to the Shire is available from airports in Tamworth, Moree, Narrabri and Armidale. The Wellcamp Airport at Toowoomba provides air freight access to Asian markets. Tamworth and Armidale Regional Councils are investigating the feasibility of expanding their airports to include international air-freight facilities.

Agricultural Infrastructure & Services

Supporting Infrastructure – The broadacre cropping areas of Gwydir Shire have access to GrainCorp receival and storage sites at North Star, Croppa Creek and Crooble within the Shire and nearby at Milguy, Biniguy and Boggabilla in Moree Plains Shire. Broadbent Australia and Louis Dreyfus Commodities also have grain, pulse and oilseed receival and storage sites at Moree that service Gwydir Shire. Processing plants for high protein and specialty grains are located in Tamworth and Toowoomba, with grain from Gwydir Shire trucked direct to these plants. The feedlots within the Shire and surrounding region and the poultry farms in the Tamworth area provide local markets for grain and other crops.

Cotton grown in Shire generally goes to Moree or Goondiwindi for ginning, with lint containerised and exported. Cotton seed produced from the ginning process may be returned to on-farm storage for stock feed; stored at the cotton seed storage facilities at Moree and transported back to the Shire as needed; or sold for domestic processing or export; with Cargill having a large cotton seed crushing plant at Narrabri. The Cargill plant is currently being expanded to crush and process canola, which may provide a crop diversification opportunity for Gwydir Shire farmers.

The livestock industry in the Shire is well supported by processing plants in Inverell (Bindaree Beef), Tamworth (beef and sheep plants) and Southern Queensland. The nearest saleyards to the Shire are located in Narrabri, Moree, Inverell and Tamworth, with Tamworth being a regional selling centre. There are several poultry processing plants in Tamworth with Baiada undergoing significant expansion. This may provide opportunities to grow the poultry industry within Gwydir Shire.

Services – The Shire has a range of agri-businesses, including rural suppliers, grain traders, stock and station agents, agronomists, farm contractors, shearers, harvesters and transport companies, that supply goods and services to the agricultural sector.

Other Facilities & Services

Facilities and services to support the Shire community and facilitate economic growth include:

- **Education and Training** – Trade Training Centres (Hospitality, Living Classroom, Automotive / Welding), Northern Inland Community College, TAFE outreach and on-line programs, Warialda High School, Bingara Central School and primary schools in Warialda (public and catholic), Croppa Creek, Gravesend and North Star.
- **Child Care** – Bingara pre-school, playgroups in Bingara, Warialda and Croppa Creek, and the Tharawonga Mobile Resource Unit servicing the villages in the northern part of the Shire. The Shire lacks a long day care centre and/or family day care, and before and after school care.
- **Health Services** – Bingara and Warialda Multi-Purpose Health Centres provide a range of medical and allied health services. There are medical centres and pharmacies in Bingara and Warialda. The Shire lacks a dental services.
- **Aged Care** – home and community services to support aging in place, Touriandi Lodge and Whitfield Place Aged Care Units in Bingara and Naroo Aged Care Hostel and Warialda Aged Units in Warialda.
- **Libraries and Toy Libraries** – Bingara and Warialda.
- **Business Services** – including post offices, accountants, banks and financial services, IT support and legal services.
- **Construction, engineering and automotive services.**
- **Recreation and sporting facilities and Sporting Clubs** – playing fields / ovals, swimming pools, golf courses (Bingara, Warialda and Croppa Creek), Showgrounds and horse sport facilities, lawn bowls, tennis, Warialda Gym and Bingara Fitness Centre.
- **Entertainment** – Films, concerts and shows at the Roxy Theatre and occasionally live music in the pubs and clubs.
- **Clubs, hotels restaurants and eateries** – registered clubs in Bingara, Warialda, Croppa Creek, North Star and Upper Horton; pub hotels in Coolatai, North Star, Gravesend, Warialda and Bingara; and cafes, restaurants and takeaways in Bingara, Warialda and Croppa Creek.
- **Visitor Information Centres** – accredited VICs in Bingara and Warialda to support visitation.
- **Accommodation** - The Shire has a small accommodation-base, with motel, caravan park, pub-hotel and self-contained / boutique accommodation in Bingara and Warialda; dormitory accommodation at the Living Classroom; pub hotel accommodation in North Star, Coolatai and Gravesend; caravan park and cabins at Copeton Dam; and camping sites in the Bingara, Warialda and the villages, Three Creeks Gold Mine and along the Gwydir and Horton River corridors.



2.6 Land & Premises

Industrial

Gwydir Shire has a very limited supply of industrial land, with no industrial land or industrial premises (eg factory units) listed for sale or lease in Warialda or Bingara. A parcel of land has been zoned for General Industrial use on the northern edge of Warialda. This land does not have town water or sewerage and has not been subdivided for industrial development. There is no zoned industrial land in Bingara, although land near the Cemetery has been identified as suitable for light industrial development. Some industrial activities are permissible under the village zoning (RU5) in the towns and villages throughout the Shire. This has resulted in the establishment of back-yard workshops, with businesses interspersed with residential properties. This is not conducive to growth. Rural industries and intensive agriculture are permitted within areas zoned for primary production. Gwydir Shire is not included in the RDA Northern Inland inventory of available industrial land, which forms part of the promotional material and information provided to people looking to establish or relocate a business to the NE-NW Region.

Retail and Commercial

There are several shops and commercial properties available for sale or lease in Bingara and Warialda. Most are older premises which are in average condition, with some of the premises being too large for the needs of potential tenants. Commercial rents are lower than in Tamworth, Inverell and Moree.

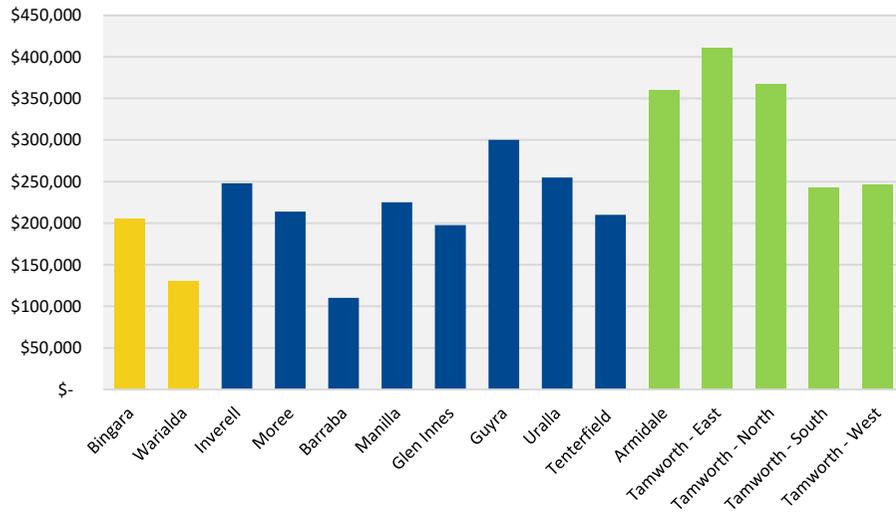
Residential

Bingara and Warialda both have a reasonable supply of contemporary and older-style dwellings available for purchase, with dwellings in Bingara being on relatively large lots. Both towns also have rural residential properties (with and without dwellings) available. There are no apartments or townhouses available. Both towns have a limited number of self-care units for the elderly, with demand for over 55's housing and aged care unit exceeding supply. There are very few properties available for rent, with the few properties available more suited to families than single people or couples. There are vacant residential lots available in both towns, however very few of these lots come onto the market. Due to the under-supply of trades people in the region and cost of bringing in building materials, construction costs for new dwellings are high, offsetting the lower land prices. Council owns several parcels of land in Bingara, including the Council Depot adjacent to the shopping centre, that have been identified as strategic sites for residential development, including the provision of medium density and 55+ housing / self-care units for the elderly.

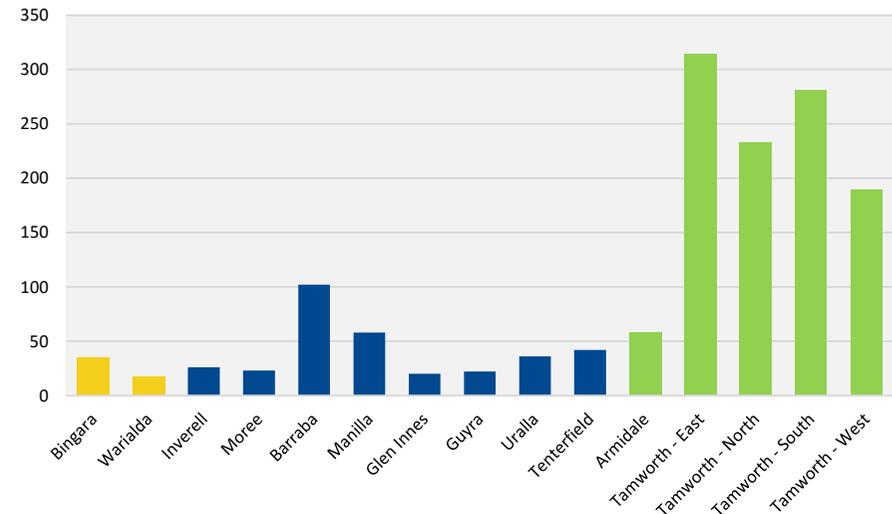
There are very few properties available for sale or lease in the Shire villages. Lack of dwellings and other accommodation in the Croppa Creek area is a constraint to the expansion of the local feedlots.

Housing in the Shire is affordable. The median housing price in Bingara (\$205,000) is around 18% lower than Inverell (\$248,000), 4% lower than Moree (\$213,700), 8% lower than Manilla (\$225,000) and slightly above Glen Innes (\$197,500). The median house price in Warialda (\$130,000) is the second lowest for a town within the NE-NE Region, with Barraba having the lowest median price (\$110,000). Within the NE-NW Region, the level of interest in residential properties outside of Tamworth is relatively low. Due to the low price of houses and being within 100km of Tamworth, Barraba is attracting more interest than other smaller towns. Manilla also benefits from its proximity to Tamworth.

Median House Prices – Selected Towns NE-NW Region (2016)



Level of Interest in Residential Properties – No. Unique User Views / Property



3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Gwydir Shire Economic Development Strategy has been prepared within the framework set by the NSW Government through its **NSW Making it Happen Plan**, key sector development strategies, Regional plans and strategies, and the Murray Darling Basin Plan. Gwydir Shire is part of the New England North West (NE-NW) Region⁹. It is also part of the Namoi¹⁰ and the Border Rivers¹¹ sub-regions.

3.1 NSW Making it Happen

The **NSW ‘Making it Happen’ Plan** articulates 30 priorities for NSW, 12 of which have been identified as the ‘Premier’s Priorities’. Priorities that will help to drive economic development in NSW are:

Premier’s Priorities

- Creating jobs – 150,000 new jobs by 2019
- Building infrastructure
- Improving education results
- Faster housing approvals

State Priorities

- Making it easier to start a business
- Encouraging business investment
- Boosting apprenticeships
- Accelerating major project assessment
- Improving Aboriginal education outcomes
- Increasing cultural participation (event strategy)
- Increasing housing supply
- Reducing road fatalities (improving roads)



⁹ Referred to as the NE-NW Region at State level, and the Northern Inland Region by Regional Development Australia.

¹⁰ Namoi sub-region is also known as North Western NSW and incorporates Gunnedah, Gwydir, Liverpool Plains, Moree Plains Narrabri, Tamworth Regional. Uralla and Walcha LGAs areas

¹¹ Border Region Organisation of Councils includes the Southern Downs, Goondiwindi and Balonne LGAs in Queensland and Inverell, Tenterfield, Gwydir, Moree Plains in NSW

3.2 New England North West Regional Plan – 2036 (draft)

The NSW’s State Government’s vision for the Region is:

‘A sustainable future that maximises the advantages of the region’s diverse climates, landscapes and resources’.

Key elements of the vision include:

- Diversifying and maximising agricultural production
- Establishing thriving intensive agriculture, poultry and alternative energy sectors
- Building strong, diverse communities
- Job creation and a skilled and innovative workforce
- Water security
- Protection of significant agricultural land, and natural and cultural heritage.

The Plan has 5 key goals:



Goals	Strategic Directions	Implications and Opportunities for Gwydir Shire
Goal 1: A growing and diversified agricultural sector	1.1 Grow broadacre agriculture and livestock grazing sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities and sites for inclusion in the proposed Regional Intensive Agri Business Strategy – potential opportunities include cattle and sheep feedlots, piggeries, poultry production, covered horticulture, sawmilling, value-adding to manure from feedlots and poultry sheds, pet food processing, and grain and stock feed mills. Capitalise on the Shire’s highway and rail access, availability of suitable land, access to grain and other produce, and proximity to ports and markets. • The proposed Circular Economy development (Poultry / Horticulture) is consistent with this Goal. • Review planning policies and regulations to ensure that they can accommodate the changing needs of agriculture and the development of intensive agriculture and agri-businesses, and that they make provision for the establishment of suitable agri-businesses in locations with rail access. • Endeavour to ensure that the planning for the Inland Rail makes provision for (or does not prevent) access to the line from Gwydir Shire. There are sites along the rail corridor as well as siding infrastructure in Crooble, Croppa Creek and North Star that may be suitable for agribusiness and/or containerisation facilities in the future. • Ensure that local and regional roads that carry high volumes of produce and/or are used to access feedlots and other intensive producers, are recognised in regional freight and transport infrastructure plans, including plans for higher productivity vehicles. Also ensure that roads that require upgrading and pinch
	1.2 Grow and diversify intensive agriculture and food processing agri business.	
	1.3 Protect agricultural land from urban encroachment and fragmentation.	
	1.4 Increase opportunities to move agricultural produce to market.	

Goals	Strategic Directions		Implications and Opportunities for Gwydir Shire
Goal 2: A diversified economy through the management of minerals and energy resources including renewable energy generation	2.1	Deliver economic diversity through sustainable use of, and access to mineral resources.	<p>points such as causeways and narrow bridges that are impacting on productivity, are identified and prioritised for funding.</p>
	2.2	Manage competing and conflicting interests in rural and resource areas to provide greater certainty for investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The construction of the Inland Railway, the development of the Warialda by-pass and other road projects, and general construction is likely to significantly increase the demand for hard-rock aggregate. There may be potential to further increase production from the Runnymede Quarry or other local hard-rock resources.
	2.3	Increase opportunities for renewable energy generation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for renewable energy generation in the Shire need to be explored, including opportunities for solar and bio-mass generation. • Potential opportunities for Shire engineering firms to develop expertise in solar farm installation / bid for contracts for the fabrication and/or installation of frames etc.
Goal 3: Communities resilient to change, with housing choice and services that meet shifting needs and lifestyles	3.1	Strengthen community resilience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan advocates for the development and positioning of the smaller towns within the Region as lifestyle centres with the focus on enriching quality of life and wellbeing of residents, through the provision of infrastructure and services that promote healthy, active lifestyles. This is consistent with, and reinforces the approach that Council has been taking in Gwydir Shire. • The population is aging and there will be growing demand for services to support ‘aging in place’ as well as increasing demand for supported accommodation and aged care facilities. The Shire will need suitable housing for over 55’s and additional aged care beds if it is going to capitalise on this opportunity. • Planning principles are being introduced at State level to provide the framework for rural residential development. Given the demand for rural lifestyle lots within the Shire, Council needs to be proactive in this area to ensure that lots can be brought on-line in the future.
	3.2	Plan for housing to meet the needs of a growing and changing population.	
	3.3	Deliver housing choice to suit changing needs.	
	3.4	Promote sustainable settlement growth with great places to live.	
	3.5	Increase access to health and education services.	
	3.6	Coordinate Infrastructure delivery.	
Goal 4: Prosperous urban centres with job opportunities	4.1	Grow the regional cities of Tamworth and Armidale.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth, Government investment and resources will continue to be focused on Tamworth and Armidale. • Tamworth’s focus on growing its food processing capacity, including growth in livestock and poultry processing, may provide opportunities for producers in Gwydir Shire. The feasibility of developing a large intermodal terminal near Tamworth Airport (similar to the Wellcamp business park in Toowoomba), is being assessed, with the emphasis being on refrigerated air and rail freight of livestock and poultry products for both the export and domestic markets. • Explore the potential to position and promote the North Star Road – Fossickers Way route as the access route from the Newell Highway at Boggabilla to Tamworth. • A number of LGAs within the Region are developing and/or facilitating the development of fully serviced industrial estates and business parks, and the development of factory units. If Gwydir Shire is to attract businesses it needs to have serviced industrial land and premises available. • Residents of Tamworth, Armidale and the regional towns are potential day visitor, short break and events markets for the Shire, with regional agencies and organisations a potential source of conference and meeting business.
	4.2	Enhance access to jobs, goods and services by improving connections between centres.	
	4.3	Provide well-located and serviced supplies of industrial and employment lands.	
	4.4	Enhance the viability and vitality of commercial centres.	
	4.5	Grow tourism to support employment opportunities and urban centres.	

Goals	Strategic Directions		Implications and Opportunities for Gwydir Shire
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Regional Plan advocates for flexible planning controls to facilitate development of tourist accommodation and experiences including those that are complementary to agriculture.
Goal 5: Protect water, environment and heritage	5.1	Manage water resources for a growing economy and environmental sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning controls need to continue to protect water resources and areas of high environmental, Aboriginal, and historic significance. Minimising the impacts of, and building resilience to, both natural hazards and climate change needs to be taken into consideration in Council’s policies and strategic plans. The focus on climate change provides the opportunity for Gwydir Shire to raise the profile and awareness of the carbon sequestration component of the Living Class Room with this included in Regional Strategies, Plans, initiatives etc.
	5.2	Protect areas of high environmental value.	
	5.3	Protect Aboriginal and historic heritage.	
	5.4	Adapt to natural hazards and climate change.	

3.3 Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland NSW Regional Plan 2016-2019

The RDA Northern Inland’s vision is to **‘work in partnership with governments, communities, businesses and organisation to achieve long term sustainable economic growth and employment for Northern Inland NSW’**. The RDA Regional Plan (2016-2019) identifies three priorities for the Northern Inland Region:

Regional Priorities	Key Focus Areas	RDA Projects and Initiatives that have implications or offer opportunities for Gwydir Shire.
Regional community regeneration and sustainable population growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reversing the out-migration of young people and families, retaining these people within local communities, along with local businesses and services. Attracting new industry, workers, residents and visitors, through collaborative marketing campaigns and promotional incentives. Ensuring that the infrastructure and services needed to support economic development and growth are in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘Come on Inland’ marketing initiative to attract new investment, businesses and residents. Skilled migration program – to address labour and skills shortages. ‘Grantsmanship’ – advice and support for Councils, businesses and community organisations to access grant funding. Support for innovative businesses.
Industry diversification, job creation, capacity building and resource efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing the dependence on agriculture. Attracting high value-adding, work intensive, higher skill, higher paid employment opportunities. Provide tailored mentoring programs to grow existing businesses. Exploring renewable energy opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of renewable / cheaper energy sources. Access to business mentoring services. Advice and support to businesses and residents to reduce electricity consumption. RDA Northern Inland Innovation Awards – opportunity to gain recognition for innovative businesses in Gwydir Shire. Implementation of the Northern Inland Digital Strategy. Exposure through the Northern Inland Investment Profile. Identification of opportunities to invest in alternative industries.

Regional Priorities	Key Focus Areas	RDA Projects and Initiatives that have implications or offer opportunities for Gwydir Shire.
Investment in regional infrastructure, education and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading of strategic roads to support the freight sector and increase connectivity. • Increased rail and air access to metropolitan hubs. • Improved education opportunities and outcomes. • Participation of disengaged youth in education and employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGCAP (Agribusiness Careers and Professions) Program – for schools and employers. • Digital Economy Coordinator / Regional Broadband Smart Home Program – providing advice to business and households on accessing and capitalising on the NBN. • Assisting projects access National Stronger Regions Fund and other government grant projects.

3.4 Darling Downs Region, Queensland

The Darling Downs Region of Southern Queensland is located north of Gwydir Shire. Within the Region, Goondiwindi is a service centre for the northern part of Gwydir Shire, with residents from the North Star area undertaking most of their shopping in Goondiwindi. Gwydir Shire also provides grain, pulses and cattle for feedlots and processing plants within the Darling Downs Region. Goondiwindi and Texas are part of touring routes that connect through to Fossickers Way. Texas has a large free, riverside camping area similar to Bingara, with the touring caravan and RV markets moving between Texas and Bingara.

The Darling Downs Region is the most productive agricultural area in Queensland and is rated as the second-most productive area in Australia. The Region also has extensive coal and coal seam gas resources. The Queensland Government’s **Darling Downs Regional Plan**¹² and RDA Darling Downs and South West **Regional Roadmap**¹³ identify the following priorities for the Region:

- Protecting highly productive agricultural land for food production and food security, and managing issues between agriculture and extractive industries.
- Improving road and rail infrastructure within the Region and linking to the Port of Brisbane, with a focus on increased rail transport and use of high productivity vehicles.
- Improving liveability of rural towns – ensuring that services are in-place.
- Investing in telecommunications infrastructure.
- Developing the clean energy sector.
- Growing the tourism sector with a focus on ‘drive’ tourism.

In relation to agriculture, the Darling Downs Region is seeing an increase in intensive production with the expansion of the feedlot sector, poultry production and greenhouse based horticulture. The development of the Wellcamp Airport and Business Park provides direct airfreight access to the Asian markets for live exports, and fresh and frozen produce. This is stimulating investment in food processing facilities in the Toowoomba Region. Some Gwydir Shire producers are already exporting through the Wellcamp Airport. The Airport facilities open-up new market opportunities for Gwydir Shire and provide opportunities for diversification, such as the intensive production of Asian

¹² Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (2013) Darling Downs Regional Plan

¹³ Regional Development Australia Darling Downs and South West (2013) Regional Road Map

vegetables, sucking pigs etc. The processing of goats through the Wallangarra Meat Processing Plant, located north east of Gwydir Shire, also opens-up opportunities for diversification into goat production to meet the rapidly growing global and domestic demand for goat meat.

The use of high productivity vehicles in the transport of agricultural produce is reducing transport costs for Queensland producers. While Gwydir Shire Council has been proactive and permits high productivity vehicles on local roads that have the capacity to carry them, there is a need for State and Federal Funding support to remove pinch points and improve some roads to provide connectivity within and through the Shire.



4. DRIVERS OF CHANGE

4.1 Macro Trends & Drivers

Gwydir Shire is operating in a national and global environment. There are a range of key macro-trends and drivers that have the potential to influence economic growth within the Shire.

Macro Trends & Drivers	Implications and Opportunities for Gwydir Shire
<p>Changes in global markets – globally, economic growth is being driven by the rise of the Asian and Indian markets. Increasing urbanisation, significant growth in household incomes and the use of agricultural land and produce for non-agricultural activities (eg bio-fuel), is creating strong demand for goods and services, particularly for food products.</p> <p>Food Security – with the world’s population growing by 1.1% per annum, and forecast to reach 8.4 billion by 2035, food security is becoming a major issue, with this driving research and investment in the agricultural sector and the expansion of agriculture in second and third world countries – eg Brazil, Chile, South Africa etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing demand for agricultural staples – meat, cereals, oil seeds and pulses. • Changing Australian / State Government policy with a greater focus on agricultural production and support infrastructure. • Potential for new niche crops and value-adding. • Increased awareness of and willingness to pay for ‘clean, green’ produce. • The opening up of new export markets, as well as growth in the Chinese, Japanese and Korean markets arising from the free trade agreements. • Much of the growth is occurring in the northern hemisphere, creating opportunities for counter seasonal production in the southern hemisphere. • Increased exposure to fluctuating global demand and commodity prices. • Growing competition from emerging agricultural producers (eg Brazil), with low cost structures – with Australian farmers needing to be more strategic, efficient and productive. • Changes in farming practices, including a shift to more intensive production methods (eg feedlots, glasshouses), improved land and water management, and introduction of higher yielding plant and livestock varieties. • Adoption of technology (eg automation and monitoring systems) in farming, changing the skill sets needed by farm workers. • Different freight requirements – increasing use of containers. • New sources of capital from overseas investors.
<p>Climate Change – increasing variability in climate and weather patterns is creating uncertainty regarding long term temperature and rainfall patterns as well as an increase in extreme weather events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk for agricultural producers and agricultural dependent industries and services. • Opportunities for development / adoption of technologies and/or land and water management practices to reduce risk. • Increase in ‘climate protected’ production systems (eg greenhouse horticulture).
<p>Eco Efficiency and Sustainability – Australian Government Renewable Energy Target - the transition to a more sustainable and resource efficient economy moving towards a ‘closed-loop’ economy whereby all outputs become either inputs for other activities or are returned to natural systems as benign emissions rather than pollutants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for new industries and businesses in energy and water efficient technologies; waste management, reduction and reuse; carbon farming; and alternative energy. • Shift to investment in renewable energy and demand for land and/or materials for alternative energy production (eg solar and wind farms, bio-fuel production etc). • Increased demand for ‘green skills’ within the workforce.

Macro Trends & Drivers	Implications and Opportunities for Gwydir Shire
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing purchasing criteria and behaviour, with businesses increasingly needing to meet / comply with environmental / sustainability targets and accreditation criteria. • Heightened community awareness and interest in ‘clean – green’ and locally produced products, creating opportunities for value-adding, niche marketing and premium pricing.
<p>Digital Economy – the internet and mobile technologies are transforming production techniques, business models and operations, communication modes and consumer behaviour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased opportunities for local businesses to improve their decision making and productivity, and access new markets. • Increased opportunities for some businesses and workers to relocate away from the cities and continue to operate nationally / internationally. • Potential for greater access to health, education, financial and other services through on-line delivery. • Opportunities for Gwydir Shire and businesses to significantly increase their exposure and also to engage and communicate directly with potential customers. • Increased competition for local businesses from external businesses (eg internet shopping and service delivery). • Changes in supply chain logistics, including shift in focus to ‘just -in-time’ supply chains. • Growth in home-based, on-line and mobile businesses, moving away from shop-fronts and commercial premises. • Increased applications (eg remote monitoring, automation and robotics, 3D printing) in agriculture and manufacturing – resulting in a reduction in demand for unskilled workers and increased demand for workers with IT / digital skills. • Need to improve telecommunications infrastructure to ensure reliable, cost effective high speed internet access and digital coverage.
<p>Changing population dynamics in Australia including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging population and workforce. • Generational change with ‘baby boomers’ moving into retirement and Gen X and Y becoming dominant in the work place. Gen X and Y have different aspirations and attitudes to work than the baby boomers. • Increasing focus on work-life balance and quality of life. • Diversified and growing cultural mix. • Consumers are becoming more aware, sophisticated and demanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging population – increased demand for health, aged care and allied facilities and services. • Increase in travel by baby boomers, including an increase in the touring caravan and RV markets. • The need to re-skill older workers, particularly in the use of IT and technology. • The need to be cognisant of the implications of generational change and social trends in developing investment and marketing strategies and marketing and promoting the Shire. • Lifestyle and work-life balance is playing an increasingly significant role in decision-making and needs to be incorporated in the development, positioning and marketing of Gwydir Shire. • Increase in ‘sea’ and ‘tree’ change. • Gwydir Shire needs to be a socially inclusive community that welcomes and embraces people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

4.2 New England – North West Region

At a regional level, the key drivers of change have been identified¹⁴ as:

Regional Trends & Drivers	Implications and Opportunities for Gwydir Shire
<p>Establishment of the Namoi Council’s Joint Organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible economies of scale for Council and access to additional resources, skills and knowledge. • Stronger ‘voice’ in relation to Government Policies and accessing funding. • Participation in joint projects – infrastructure enhancement, business and investment attraction, education and workforce development etc. • Increased exposure / profile for the Shire through development and leveraging of brands and cooperative marketing and promotional activities.
<p>Increasing productivity of agriculture, particularly in broadacre cropping, arising from changing technology, improved land and water management, development of new crop varieties, which are higher yielding and require less water, and direct competition from the mining sector for staff, contractors and other resources. Increased intensification of livestock production.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for diversification. • Expansion of dryland cotton. • Expansion of grain transport and receival facilities. • Increase in on-farm storage of grains and pulses – improved returns to producers; reduced harvest generated peaks in grain and pulse transport to receival sites; transport services required year-round. • Growth in containerisation / intermodal services. • Establishment of new technology-based service providers and/or new products and services for existing businesses. • Increased intensification of livestock production – cattle and sheep feedlots; expansion of the poultry industry. • Changing skill needs within the agriculture and agri-business sectors. • Need for reliable, high speed, affordable internet / digital access to utilise emerging technologies.
<p>Reduction in access to water for agriculture – resulting from the ‘recovery’ of water to use for environmental flows within the Murray-Darling Basin.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in water and land management practices – need for access to knowledge, skills and technology. • Potential for further reductions in access to water in 2019 to meet water recovery targets. • The agricultural sector will be more exposed to droughts and dry conditions.
<p>Strong growth of Tamworth – significant investment by State Government and Tamworth Regional Council in facilities and infrastructure to support and drive growth; expanded health and education facilities; large scale residential and rural residential land releases; investment proposed for the smaller towns (eg Manilla and Barraba) and villages to position as lifestyle centres and tourism destinations; expansion of industrial areas and food processing activities; proposed intermodal terminal adjacent to airport; growth in aviation industry; expansion of ALEC; development of a Centre of Excellence for sport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going and increased competition from Tamworth for the retail and services sector, schooling, and in attracting new residents and investment. • Increased competition for Bingara and Warialda from the proposed investment in Manilla and Barraba and villages around Tamworth to improve their presentation, lifestyle, facilities and services, and tourism potential. • Growing regional resident market – over 60,000 people within 2 hour’s drive of Gwydir Shire provides opportunity to grow the day trip and short breaks market and increase event patronage. • Opportunity to capitalise on growth in the poultry industry – Baiada is proposing major investment to increase its supply capacity to 3 million birds.

¹⁴ NSW Planning and Environment (2016) Draft New England North West Regional Plan / RDA Northern Inland Regional Plan.

Regional Trends & Drivers	Implications and Opportunities for Gwydir Shire
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in capacity of the Thomas Foods International Sheep processing plant plus approval to establish several sheep feedlots around Tamworth. This will increase demand for sheep for ‘finishing’ as well as for processing, and creates opportunities for breeding and sheep feed-lotting within Gwydir Shire. • Opportunity to capitalise on the Region’s growing horse breeding and horse sports sectors - including the hosting of equine events in the Shire, increased utilisation of showground and racecourse facilities. • Growth in food processing – providing additional market options for farmers. • Proposed intermodal terminal and international airfreight facilities at Tamworth Airport – market options for farmers.
<p>Growing health and education sectors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing services to support aging in place and people with disabilities. • Increased opportunities for training and skills development. • Expanding tertiary education opportunities in Tamworth and Armidale – students remaining in the NE-NW Region for tertiary education increases the likelihood of students and graduates seeking work within the Region. • Changes in the structure of TAFE services in the smaller towns throughout the Region – with Gwydir Shire potentially losing more students to Tamworth and Armidale TAFEs.
<p>Improvements to Transport and Freight Infrastructure – focus on improving road and rail infrastructure to facilitate freight movements; increasing utilisation of high productivity vehicles; development of the Inland Rail – rail access to Melbourne and Brisbane; growth of Moree as an intermodal terminal; proposed intermodal terminal and upgraded rail access to Tamworth; proposal (long term) for international freight to Asia from Tamworth and/or Armidale Airports.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For farmers - increase in freight options and potentially, reduced freight costs. • Increasing use of high productivity vehicles - need to continue to invest to improve capacity / safety of the roads and remove pinch points. There may also be potential for increased driver training and services for the road transport sector. • Potential increase in demand for road base and rail ballast – opportunities for the Runnymede Gravel Quarry and other hard rock resource areas. • Trend to containerisation – potential for containerisation facilities within the Shire – possibly utilising rail siding infrastructure at Crooble, Croppa Creek and/or North Star.
<p>Drive to reduce energy costs – energy costs within the Region are 20% higher than Sydney. The focus is on solar farms, windfarms, biomass conversion, and energy saving. There is also investment in liquid biofuels with trials underway to produce diesel fuel from crop oils and green waste.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative energy investment within the Shire. • Business / community initiatives to reduce power consumptions / costs. • Solar technology – facilitates development in areas not well serviced by electricity grids or where the cost to connect to grid is prohibitive. • Potential contracts for Shire engineering and fabrication businesses in the development and installation of solar farms. • Potential ‘market’ for green waste produced in the Shire – including municipal green waste and manure from intensive livestock, and potentially poultry, production. • Possibly lower diesel costs for farmers and transport operators.
<p>Developing the Digital Economy – focus on formulating and implementing digital strategies and undertaking technology-based research to assist industries and businesses to build capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to training and development opportunities for local businesses. • New market opportunities through e-commerce. • Improved business and farming practices and productivity. • Changing demand for skill sets. • Introduction of disruptive technologies and activities.

4.4 Darling Downs Region

Regional Trends & Drivers	Implications and Opportunities for Gwydir Shire
<p>Wellcamp Airport and Business Park, Toowoomba + improved road access between Business Park and the Port of Brisbane – direct air freight access to Asian markets and improved road access to the Port of Brisbane is stimulating investment in intensive agriculture and agricultural processing plants in Toowoomba and the Darling Downs Region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing regional market for Gwydir Shire livestock and crops. • Air freight access to Asian markets – new market opportunities as well as opportunities to diversify production. • Improved access to the Port of Brisbane – opportunities for containerisation of produce. • Processing infrastructure available to support agricultural diversification (eg goat and vegetable production), with the potential to increase returns from less productive agricultural land and establish activities that are more labour intensive.

4.5 Gwydir Shire

Changes occurring in Gwydir Shire include:

Local Trends & Drivers	Changes Occurring
<p>Changes in the Agricultural Sector</p>	<p>Significant changes in the agricultural sector include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amalgamation of properties to create larger holdings. This is being undertaken by families acquiring neighbouring properties, and by national / multinational investors purchasing properties. • Significant investment by multi-nationals in property improvements, particularly in the areas of automation of watering systems and equipment, and monitoring. On-farm employment in traditional activities is declining while the skill set required of employees is changing to include IT / digital skills. • Reduced access to surface and ground water. • Increase in productivity resulting from changes in land and water management practices, application of new technologies, and the introduction of new crop varieties which are higher yielding and require less water. • Some shift to organic production and speciality crops. • Increase in on-farm storage of grain and pulses. • Expansion of the sheep sector with a shift to non-merino breeds for meat production. • Live export of sheep produced in the Shire through the Wellcamp Airport in Toowoomba. • Generational change with younger people bringing new ideas, skills and business practices to farming. • Increasing focus on production of premium products for the international market, particularly in cattle production. • Increasing focus on product differentiation and branding - eg Jac Wagyu, Horton Valley Premium Port, Bethel Farm Mill • Expansion of Feedlots.

Local Trends & Drivers	Changes Occurring
An aging population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of Pally Pecans into Gwydir Shire. <p>The population of the Shire is aging with the Shire seeing an increase in the number of retirees and people approaching retirement age. Retaining these residents will be dependent on having the services available to support ‘aging in place’ as well as access to supported accommodation.</p>
Growth in visitation to the Shire	<p>The number of visitor travelling through and stopping in the Shire is increasing, with most of the growth being in the touring caravan – RV and regional resident markets. The Shire is also attracting an increasing number of social groups and clubs. Growth has largely been driven by the free riverside camping available in Bingara, increasing traffic on Nature’s Way (State Touring Route 3) and the events held throughout the Shire.</p>
Improvements to / expansion of the product base of the Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New tourism products and experiences in the Shire include the Living Classroom (attraction and accommodation), upgrading of the Cranky Rock camping area and reserve, Roxy Theatre Museum and Tours, improvements to the interpretation of the Myall Creek Memorial site, sound trails in Bingara, Warialda and at Myall Creek, improvements to facilities and accommodation at Copeton Waters State Park, Croppa Creek historic machinery display, promotion of cycle tourism, Three Sisters Eco Farm and free camping at Coolatai, and upgrading of the Rocky Creek Glacial Area. • Growth in the number of events held in the Shire as well as increasing numbers of event attendees.
Expansion of extractive industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in production at the Runnymede Quarry (Johnstone’s Quarries) to meet growing demand for hard rock aggregate for road, rail and civil construction. • Proposal to increase production at the Yammacona Sands Quarry, with sand extracted for the export market.
Increasing leakage from the Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increasing number of students, particularly at High School level, are leaving the Shire for schooling, going to Inverell as day students or to boarding schools in Tamworth, Armidale and to a less extent, Toowoomba. This is impacting on both education outcomes and shopping patterns. • Increasing propensity to shop and access services in Inverell and, to a lesser extent Tamworth, and to access rural supplies and services from Moree. Residents in the northern half of the Shire shop in Goondiwindi and Moree, while residents around the southern edges of the Shire and Upper Horton often shop in Barraba.



5. BUILDING THE GWYDIR SHIRE ECONOMY

5.1 Council’s Role in Economic Development

Gwydir Shire Council’s aspiration for the Shire is to:

Grow our community through economic and social development that enhances lifestyle and liveability and is innovative, environmentally responsible and sustainable.

Council recognises that building our Shire’s economy requires a ‘whole of community’ approach and that a shared vision and structured framework is needed for the Shire to realise its potential. Stakeholders extend well beyond Council and include businesses, industry groups, infrastructure providers, State and Federal Government Agencies and regional organisations. While business development and investment will be driven primarily by the private sector, Council will continue to encourage, support and facilitate this by ensuring that our Shire offers a positive investment environment.

Gwydir Shire Council’s role in economic development currently includes:

Key Function	Services and Support Provided
Facilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-line planning services portal. Grant applications and administration – both through Council and supporting Community groups to prepare and lodge applications. Handling of investment and development enquiries. Conceive and pursue development and investment opportunities – including the Circular Economy Project.
Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of / referral local businesses and services through Bingara and Warialda Visitor Information Centres and Visitor Guide.
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submissions / input (representing Shire interests) into Government inquiries and draft policies, plans and strategies. Membership of the Namoi Council’s Joint Organisation, Border Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils and Australian Rural Roads Group. Ongoing liaison with a range of State and Federal Government Agencies and regional organisations, and participation in economic development and promotional initiatives. Representations to Members of Parliament and Government Departments on issues impacting on the Shire. Membership and participation in Economic Development, Infrastructure and Tourism networks and representing the Shire at State and Regional forums.
Employment and Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Injection of money into the Shire economy through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wages and salaries – Council is the largest employer in the Shire. Local Preference Purchasing Policy. Opportunities for local businesses to tender for capital works projects.
Education & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gwydir Learning Region – owning and operating the Warialda Automotive Trade, Roxy Theatre Hospitality and Living Classroom Training Centres. Traineeships and participation in ‘Work for the Dole’, ‘Work Experience’ and other employment and skills development programs. Council is a Registered Training Provider.

Key Function	Services and Support Provided
Provision of Economic Services and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosting of workshops and training seminars. <p>Council provides and maintains infrastructure to support economic development and tourism, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads, water, sewer infrastructure. • Bingara and Warialda Visitor Information Centres. • Visitor attractions and facilities, including Cranky Rock, Roxy Theatre, Rocky Creek Glacial Area, fossicking areas, Gwydir River corridor. • Showgrounds, Race Tracks, Sports Grounds, parks and playgrounds. • Bingara, Warialda and North Star Caravan Parks and free camping areas throughout the Shire. • Preparation of funding applications to augment infrastructure.
Contribution to Lifestyle	<p>Presentation / landscaping of Bingara and Warialda town centres.</p> <p>Provision and maintenance of parks, playgrounds, visitor facilities, and recreation and sporting facilities, including fitness gyms in Bingara and Warialda.</p> <p>Library and toy library services.</p> <p>Roxy Theatre – performing arts, films etc.</p> <p>Community development programs and initiatives.</p> <p>Sponsorship and support for events and local community grants.</p> <p>Housing and facilities to attract and retain doctors.</p> <p>Provision of child care.</p> <p>Provision of support services to facilitate ‘aging in place’.</p>
Marketing and Promotion	<p>Employment of a Tourism Manager and staff and operation of the Bingara and Warialda Visitor Information Centres (VIC).</p> <p>Showcasing and promoting local industries, products and services through the VICs and the sale of local products.</p> <p>Branding and signage, with Council having strong Council and tourism logos and brands.</p> <p>Production of display and promotional material and funding the town tourism websites.</p> <p>Tourism promotion including participation in marketing campaigns and cooperative activities with New England North West Tourism, Fossickers Way Promotions Group, State Touring Route 3 Councils.</p> <p>Promotion of houses for sale and lease, through the VICs.</p> <p>Bidding for events, conferences and meetings.</p>



5.2 Strengths & Assets to Work With

The strengths and strategic assets that Gwydir Shire has to work with to encourage and facilitate economic development include:

Strength	Assets to Work With	Implications & Opportunities
<p>Highly productive agricultural land supporting a strong agricultural sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern areas of Shire - highly productive basaltic soils and access to water. Southern areas of Shire – good pastures suitable for livestock production. Resilient, innovative farmers – adoption of new technology, business models and land management practices. Reputation for producing quality livestock, with a concentration of cattle and sheep studs, quality pork and a growing recognition of producer ‘brands’. Optimal location for cattle and sheep feed lots – access to cattle, feed (grain and cotton seed), secure water and processing plants, plus good topography and climate. Good supporting infrastructure and services including the grain receival sites, processing plants, saleyards in surrounding centres, road and rail access, international air freight access through the Wellcamp Airport, rural suppliers. Growing local and regional markets for livestock and produce, as well as access to NSW Ports and the Port of Brisbane, and airfreight options for the Asian market through the Wellcamp Airport. Living Classroom – training programs and activities, demonstration site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued diversification and innovation – crops, fruit and nut production and livestock. Significant investment by national / multi-national companies – new money coming into the Shire. Capitalising on the reputation for quality livestock through further branding and promotion. Intensive agriculture – expanding the cattle feedlot sector, sheep feedlots, piggeries, intensive goat production, poultry production, greenhouse based horticulture. Potential to increase returns from marginal land. Value-adding to agricultural produce. Potential use of waste products – bio mass fuel or power, pelletising manure. Potential for small scale or niche production / cottage industry – eg figs, olives, native foods, medicinal herbs etc. Scenery and interest created by cropping – basis for agri and drive tourism. Opportunities for specialised farm industry tours – eg international farmers’ groups.
<p>Highway / Regional Road Access</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong north-south route - Fossickers Way – Warialda Road – providing access to Tamworth as well as links north to Texas and Goondiwindi in Queensland. Located between Newell and New England Highways (major interstate routes) with Gwydir and Bruxner Highways and regional road connections to these routes. Nature’s Way (State Touring Route 3) passes through the Shire with Sawn Rocks being a high profile iconic attraction that draws visitors into and through the Shire. Croppa Creek – Moree Road and Croppa Creek North Star Road – potential to provide a low traffic, scenic alternative to the Newell Highway. Country roads – low volume traffic routes combined with beautiful scenery – ideal for drive-based tourism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to improve road capacity to accommodate High Performance Vehicles. Capitalise on opportunities created by the road network to grow visitation to the Shire and increase visitor expenditure, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build scenic drive product and experiences – Fossickers Way and Nature’s Drive (State Touring Route 3). Continue to develop and promote local scenic drives to encourage visitors to explore the Shire and spend money in the village communities. Work with Councils along the Gwydir Highway Corridor to position and promote the Highway as a touring route, bringing together Aboriginal experiences, significant landforms, unique attractions and activities. Position and promote the Moree – Croppa Creek – North Star route as an alternative to the Newell Highway for touring traffic. Strengthen the link between Texas and Bingara for the touring caravan and RV market. Explore options for signposting Tamworth from Boggabilla – via North Star, Warialda and Bingara.

Strength	Assets to Work With	Implications & Opportunities
Rail Access / Proposed Inland Rail	Boggabilla Branch line with siding infrastructure and grain receival sites at Crooble, Croppa Creek and North Star, with this to become part of the Inland Rail line.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer term, possible opportunities to establish agri businesses and/or containerisation facilities, utilising the siding infrastructure available in the Shire. • Opportunities to provide hard-rock aggregate for the construction and on-going maintenance of the Inland Rail Line.
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good access to the regional cities of Tamworth and Armidale, as well as larger rural towns – Inverell, Moree, Narrabri and Goondiwindi. • Access to Darling Downs / Southern Queensland. • Proximity to Copeton Dam / Copeton Waters State Park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position the Shire as offering an affordable rural lifestyle with direct access to regional city / town services. • Promote ready access to a major regional recreation resource / large water body as one of the lifestyle advantages of the Shire. • Opportunities to look ‘north’.
Attractive towns – Bingara and Warialda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towns are well presented – attractively landscaped, clean and well maintained. • Different characters – two destinations offering different experiences. • Good services. • Very safe, caring environment with low rates of crime and anti-social behaviour. • Proactive communities. <p><u>Bingara:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very attractive setting – river corridor, rugged forested hills, fertile river flats. • Gwydir River – recreation and tourism asset – camping, fishing, boating / canoeing, fossicking etc. Ranked Number One Free Inland Camp Site. • Historic buildings – including the iconic Roxy Theatre. • Wide, tree-lined streets. • Living Classroom. • Good venues and sites for events. • Reputation for having a strong sense of community and being innovative. <p><u>Warialda:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway location and exposure. • Attractive setting – hills and the creek. • Historic, attractive town centre • Small industrial base, plus zoned industrial land. • Highly affordable residential properties. • Good showground – ideal for events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ‘liveability’ and ‘reputation’ of the towns and villages are critical to retaining existing residents and attracting new residents. • Continue to improve presentation and facilities and retain and expand services to provide a desirable place for people to live, visit and invest. • Capitalise on towns to build day trips and touring markets. • Encourage residents to ‘age in place’ rather than move out of the Shire. • Position the Shire as an attractive place to relocate / retire too, including providing opportunities for visitors to engage and build relationships with the community.
Affordable residential land and premises / Available retail – commercial premises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of a range of competitively priced residential, rural residential and commercial properties in Bingara and Warialda. • Flexible planning scheme permits home-based businesses, including light industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote affordability. • Business start-up and entry costs are relatively low.

Strength	Assets to Work With	Implications & Opportunities
Strong village communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong and resilient village communities. • Some innovative village businesses and licensed clubs. • Expanding program of village events – some of which are attracting significant numbers of visitors to the Shire. • Infrastructure and facilities for events. • North Star, Croppa Creek and Crooble have rail access with grain handling facilities and rail siding infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate development of accommodation and agri-businesses within the villages to support / capitalise on the agricultural sector. • Grow visitation to the villages and to village events. • Continue to improve village facilities and event venues. • Support / value-add to events held in the villages. • Strengthen the link between Warialda and Bingara and the events held in the northern part of the Shire – many event attendees are staying in Goondiwindi and Moree rather than staying in the Shire.
Quality tourism attractions and assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copeton Dam / Copeton Waters State Park. • Gwydir and Horton Rivers – riverside camping, fishing, canoeing, fossicking • Iconic landforms – Cranky Rock and Rocky Creek Glacial Area in the Shire, and Sawn Rocks, Waa Gorge, Horton Falls and Kaputar National Park on the edge of the Shire. • Myall Creek Memorial Site. • Wades Horses and Jackaroo & Jillaroo School. • Three Creek Gold Mine and fossicking areas. • Roxy Theatre – Art Deco building, Greek Museum & Tours + hospitality kitchen, conference and entertainment facilities. • Diverse program of events. • Showgrounds, sports grounds, horse sports facilities. • Visitor Information Centres – Bingara and Warialda. <p>Plus supporting local attractions include: Bingara Museum, Carinda Cottage, Croppa Creek historic machinery display, Ceramic Break Sculpture Park.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong basis for growing the tourism sector and building visitation to the Shire’s towns and villages. • Opportunities to showcase the Shire and its lifestyle, producers etc. • Harnessing the skills of visitors – potential for seasonal employment, trades people etc. • Engaging with visitors – a ‘touch point’ for attracting the tree change and retirement markets.
Living Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality training and meeting facilities, state of the art equipment. • Group (dormitory) accommodation. • Size and diversity of the site – bushland and cultivated land. • Diversity of habitats, gardens etc. • Educational themes and capacity to offer a diverse range of programs – including ecological and land management. • Carbon Sequestration Trials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement the master-plan for the site. • Develop walking and potentially mountain-bike trails. • Provide interpretative material and promotion of the Classroom as a tourist attraction – encouraging visitors to explore the gardens and become involved in activities. • Diversify the range of programs and activities on offer. • Promote the Classroom as a hire venue – for activity based workshops (eg quilting, photography), weddings and functions, small groups, meetings and training seminars. • Develop cottage industries – eg drying and packaging of native foods, plant propagation and sales, seed collection and sales. • Value add to the fruit that will be produced on site – farm gate outlet, olive picking and harvest event / festival, picking – pickling – preserving workshops utilising the hospitality kitchen at the Roxy.

Strength	Assets to Work With	Implications & Opportunities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of the Classroom and its programs to generate publicity and raise awareness of Bingara / Gwydir Shire. • Medicinal garden – support and strengthen the Shire’s developing natural therapies business cluster.
Trade Training Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warialda – set up for automotive, welding and horticulture • Living Classroom (see above) • Hospitality kitchen – Roxy Theatre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run special interest / hobby based short-courses and workshops. • Warialda – introduce training programs in the use, care and maintenance of innovative farm technologies (eg solar powers applications – such as soil moisture probes, solar pumps; drones). • Warialda & Living Classroom – horticulture / propagation programs. • Cooking schools and workshops.
Geological / Mineral Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard-rock aggregate • Silica rich sands • Gold and gemstones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard-rock quarrying – to meet growing demand for aggregate. • Use of sand for manufacture of tiles and other goods. • Further development of fossicking opportunities and experiences – encouraging visitors to stay longer in the area.
Growing number micro, mobile and on-line businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster of wellbeing / natural therapy providers • Growing number of internet retail businesses • Arts, IT and creative businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating transition from ‘hobby’ to ‘business’. • Nurturing and mentoring to grow micro and small businesses.



5.3 Issues & Challenges to Address

Addressing challenges and removing barriers is fundamental to attracting investment and delivering sustained growth.

Issue	Challenges for Gwydir Shire Council and the Shire Community
<p>Funding and resource constraints within Council – with this exacerbated by the size of the LGA, the length of the road network, a small business and residential rate base, and the cost of and inefficiency of servicing two small towns (duplication of facilities and services).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourcing service delivery, including economic development. • Accessing the funds needed to maintain and augment infrastructure (eg roads) to facilitate and support economic development. • Providing the range and level of services needed to compete effectively with regional cities and more affluent LGAs to attract and retain residents and businesses. • Servicing two small towns – cost of duplicating facilities and services and mitigating the negative impacts of intertown rivalry. • Providing the funds and resources to effectively market and promote the Shire to attract investment, workers, new residents and visitors. • Providing transparency in decision-making and resource allocation, and effectively communicating decisions to the community.
<p>Narrow economic base with a strong dependence on and exposure to agriculture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To further diversify the Shire’s economic base to reduce the dependence on agriculture, grow demand for goods and services, and inject additional revenue into the local economy.
<p>Declining population / Changing population mix – including loss of population from restructuring of the agricultural sector and limited employment opportunities, aging of the population, and an influx of people dependent on social security.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arresting the population decline. • Declining disposable income and increasing dependence on welfare payments. • Providing local employment opportunities and attracting staff. • Providing housing and services to support aging in place. • Attracting new residents who are self-supporting – eg trades people, home-based and mobile businesses. • Providing engagement and social inclusion activities / programs to welcome and embrace new residents.
<p>Competition from surrounding centres – Inverell, Goondiwindi, Tamworth, Moree, Barraba. Shire residents are by-passing Shire facilities and services to shop, go to school, access services, play sport etc in surrounding towns. Around 50% of people who work in the Shire no longer live in the Shire. Allied to this is the focus by Government to concentrate facilities and services in Tamworth, Armidale and other larger centres, and to encourage people and businesses looking to relocate, to move to these centres.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning the Shire to take advantage of its proximity to larger towns – access to services while having a small, rural community lifestyle. • Raising the Shire’s profile and differentiating it from other centres within the Region. • Retaining services within the Shire and strengthening the retail sector. • Providing long day care options for pre-school aged children within the Shire. • Encouraging residents and businesses to support local businesses (buy local). • Exploring options to retain children in local schools - Changing perceptions of the schools to encourage residents to remain in the Shire rather than travel to Inverell and other centres for schooling. Encourage Shire schools to communicate their activities and successes more effectively. • Ensuring that Government Agencies and decision-makers are aware of both the attributes and needs of Gwydir Shire and that these are taken into consideration in the development of regional strategies and programs.
<p>Competition from other Local Government Areas – most rural Shires are endeavouring to grow and diversify their local economies, and offer similar attributes to Gwydir Shire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising the Shire’s profile and differentiating it from other centres within the Region. • Continuing to improve the presentation of towns and villages – to create positive, memorable first impressions and encourage travellers to stop and explore. • Ensuring that the Shire has a strong ‘open for business’ attitude and that this is effectively communicated, marketed and promoted.

Issue	Challenges for Gwydir Shire Council and the Shire Community
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that comprehensive, up-to-date information and data is available and readily accessible for potential investors and residents. • Developing and implementing effective communications, public relations and marketing strategies. • Encouraging Councillors, the media and other ambassadors for the Shire to focus on the positives.
<p>Remaining competitive in a rapidly changing market place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further developing the capacity and flexibility of local producers, businesses and the workforce to respond to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The changing global marketplace and business environment. ○ Technology – including the digital environment. ○ Changing freight logistics – introduction of high productivity vehicles, increased containerisation of freight. ○ Climate change. • Facilitating access to research and development to keep businesses abreast of trends and changes, and to drive innovation and best practice; training and other means of sharing information and acquiring new skills. • Ensuring that the infrastructure is in place to enable producers and businesses to respond to change and remain competitive – for example, improving rural roads to accommodate high productivity vehicles to enable Shire producers compete with their Queensland counterparts.
<p>Labour force issues – including unemployment; an aging workforce; downsizing of rural workforce and change in skills sets required; lack of career paths and opportunities; unwillingness to work – inter-generational unemployment; limited workplace skills; and increasing competition to attract workers due to growing labour / skills shortages within the Shire and Regional NSW.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding current and likely future labour and skills requirements and incorporating this into education and training programs. • Creating a strong work ethic throughout the community, including mentoring youth. • Ensuring access to quality education and skills-based training to provide ‘work-ready’ employees and enhance and diversify workplace skills. • Providing strong pathways between education and employment to encourage young people to remain in, or return to, Gwydir Shire. • Attracting workers, particularly skilled workers, to the Shire / Region. • Supporting new business start-ups, including home-based, digital and mobile businesses.
<p>Relatively high failure rates amongst new businesses – This is due to a combination of factors, including lack of market research / business planning, limited business skills, low population base – limited demand, entrenched credit expectations from the rural community which impacts on cashflow, and burn-out of business operators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging business proponents to undertake comprehensive research and due diligence, including accessing the range of on-line advisory and mentoring services available. • Providing access to training and information to improve business skills and encourage adoption of technology (eg use of credit card readers on phones) to improve business practices, including credit management and cashflow. • Encouraging adoption of innovative businesses models and income diversification through on-line trading etc. • Continuing to build visitation to increase demand.
<p>Increasing vulnerability of businesses (including licensed clubs) in the rural villages – resulting from declining populations, limited village infrastructure, reduced freight services, increasing operating costs, and changes in the resident mix.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retaining village businesses – as both service providers and social hubs. • Strengthening village communities and facilitating growth. • Building visitation to the villages, to help underpin the viability of village businesses. • Recognising the special needs of small, remote businesses in developing and applying planning policies and regulations. • Ensuring that the villages present well and are effectively signposted, with this being fundamental to encouraging passing traffic to stop. • Developing / maintaining infrastructure (eg halls, sports grounds, parks, camping areas etc) that will enable village communities to run events and activities – building community cohesion and spirit, attracting visitors and generating additional revenue.

Issue	Challenges for Gwydir Shire Council and the Shire Community
<p>Limited land and premises for development – including limited housing choices, and no industrial land or premises. With limited capital growth and low returns on investment, property owners are not investing in upgrading premises; some property owners have unrealistic expectations of sales prices and rent levels; difficult to obtain finance to purchase in the Shire; and properties available are not what the market is seeking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging owners of retail / commercial buildings to upgrade the presentation and condition of their buildings and bring them back into the property market (sale or lease). • Land-use planning that recognises and caters for demand (eg rural lifestyle living). • Bringing industrial land and premises onto the market. • Expanding the choice of housing available. • Providing housing in the northern part of the Shire (Croppa Creek / North Star areas) to support the expansion of the feedlots and accommodate rural and infrastructure workers. • Ensuring, through covenants and planning controls, that any low priced industrial land released by Council is developed and not land-banked.
<p>Poor telecommunications in parts of the Shire - slow internet speeds and cost of internet access; no or limited mobile coverage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing NBN services for Bingara and Warialda. • Exploring options to expand coverage and boost the capacity of telecommunications infrastructure to improve communications, enable adoption of new technologies and increase access to markets.
<p>Accommodation capacity constraints / Dated accommodation properties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited number of beds available in Bingara, Warialda, Croppa Creek and North Star. • Aging / tired motel properties in Bingara and Warialda. • Poor condition and underutilisation of the North Star Caravan Park. • No facilities for caravans / touring RV market in Croppa Creek.

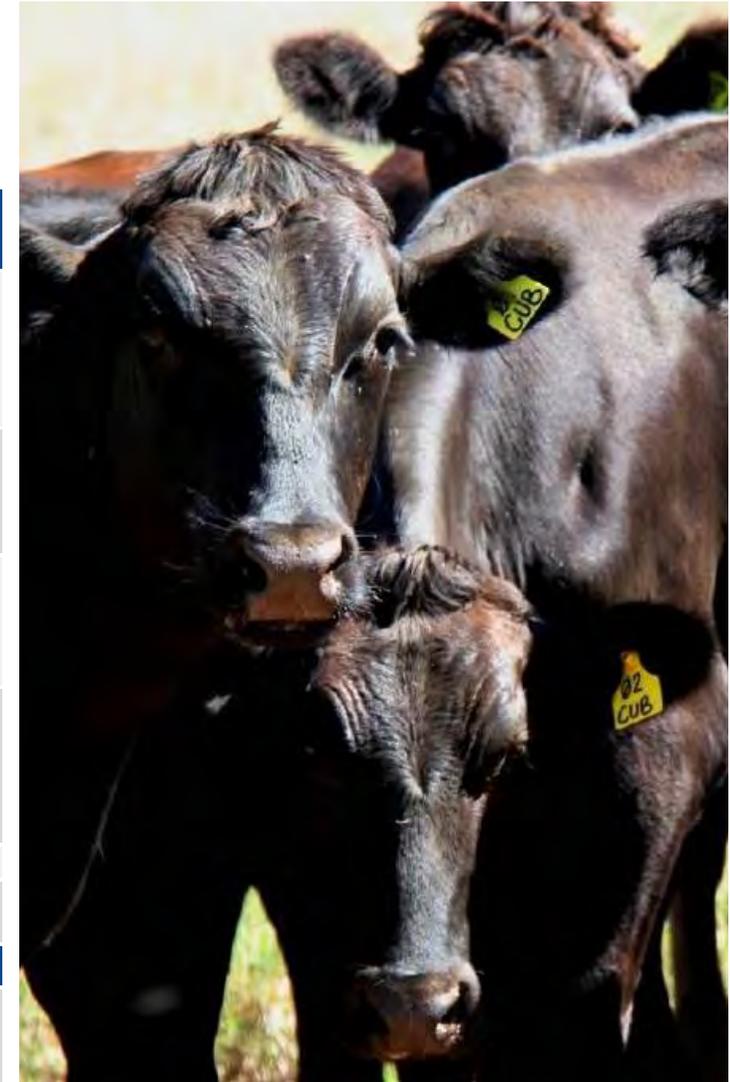


5.4 Opportunities

Opportunities in the Namoi Region

The Namoi Councils Joint Organisation, of which Gwydir Shire is a member, has identified a range of opportunities for the following business and investment opportunities for the Namoi Region. Some of these opportunities could be realised in Gwydir Shire.

Agriculture / Agribusiness		Suitable for Gwydir Shire
Grains, Oil Seeds and Legumes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand recognition and price premiums for ‘clean green’ in the export market. Stock feed production for the Asian Market. Export of knowledge and technology. Improved supply chain logistics. Grain processing and value-adding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Cotton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Branding and premium pricing for quality product. Supply contracts, replacing selling on the spot market. Export of knowledge and technology. Use of cotton trash (biomass) for energy production. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ - -
Specialty Crops & Horticulture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversification into specialty crops eg medicinal cannabis, citrus, tangerines, pomelos, camellias (oil), olives, nuts, ingredients for nutritional supplements. Processing / value-adding of specialty crops. Use of technology to intensify production, including glasshouse production. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓
Cattle and Sheep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Branded, value-added meat exports (grass, grain-fed, clean-green). Meat processing and packaging – export and domestic markets. Export of livestock offal and extraction of pharmaceutical products. Use of feedlot waste for energy production. Export of knowledge & technology, including sensing & monitoring technology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Dairy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dairy investment to support / capitalise on the Walcha Dairy Terminal. 	-
Poultry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of the poultry industry. 	✓
Renewable Energy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large scale renewables – wind and solar farms. Small scale renewables and energy efficiency – solar, wind, biomass Liquid bio-fuel production. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓



Transport Logistics	
• Rail loading and storage infrastructure.	✓
• Containerisation for local processed and value-added products.	✓
Tourism	
Tourism products, experiences and infrastructure to cater for Chinese / North Asian visitors coming into the Region to assess investment, relocation and education opportunities.	✓

Opportunities in Gwydir Shire

Agriculture will remain the primary driver of the Shire’s economy. This sector will continue to evolve with changes in land and water management and farming practices, application of technology, introduction of new crops and crop varieties, changing global and domestic markets, and changing business practices. This will create opportunities along the length of the supply chain. Agriculture will however remain a cyclical industry with performance dependent on a range of climatic, market and other factors outside of the control of local farmers. Securing the economic sustainability and prosperity of the Shire will require both capitalising more effectively on the opportunities generated by the agricultural sector and diversifying the economic base of the Shire, focusing on sectors that are not dependent on agriculture and will bring ‘new’ money into the Shire and/or generate demand for goods and services. Projects being considered within the Shire and other possible development opportunities are summarised below.



ON THE DRAWING BOARD

- **Circular Economy – Integrated poultry, horticulture & energy generation project.**
- **Expansion of the Gunyerwarildi and Myola Feedlots**
- **Living Classroom – interpretative centre, themed gardens and trails**
- **Yammacona Quarry – increased production and export of sand**
- **Runnymede Quarry – increased production**
- **Warialda By-Pass**
- **Inland Rail**
- **Storage unit complex in Bingara**
- **Further upgrading of the Cranky Rock Reserve**
- **Improvements to the Fossicking Reserves**
- **Upgrading of the Rocky Creek Glacial Areas**
- **Revamping of Fossickers Way touring route**
- **Further development and promotion of the Nature’s Way touring route**

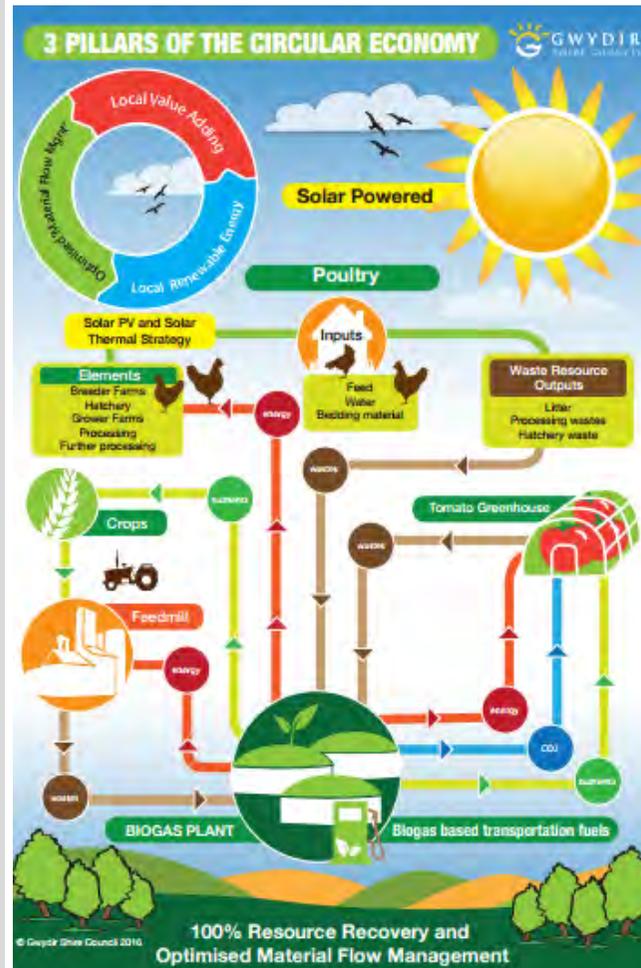
Agriculture & Agri Business – Projects Under Consideration

Circular Economy – Poultry & Greenhouse Horticulture

Proposed for a site near Warialda, the Circular Economy project integrates intensive poultry production with intensive greenhouse vegetable production, with waste produced utilised to generate energy and other inputs for production. Key components of the project are:

- Hatchery and poultry sheds to grow chickens for meat consumption.
- A poultry processing plant, producing chicken meat for domestic and possibly global markets.
- Greenhouses to produce tomatoes and potentially organic vegetables.
- A bio-digester utilising waste products from the poultry farms and processor and greenhouses to produce energy, which will be used to drive farm machinery and for climate control. Carbon Dioxide produced will be fed into the greenhouses to accelerate plant growth.

The project has the potential to generate around 200 jobs. The Trade Training Centre at Warialda has facilities for horticultural training, which can be utilised and expanded as part of developing the workforce for this project.



Intensive Cattle Production

Gwydir Shire has three feedlots, with a feedlot also located at Delungra just to the east of the Shire. The Shire is an ideal location for intensive livestock production with ready access to grain and water, as well as to processing plants at Inverell, Tamworth and in Southern Queensland. Feedlots are labour intensive, provide a ready market for locally produced cattle, grain and other crops, and are a major user of local services – transport, trades, veterinary etc.

The Gunyerwarildi Feedlot is seeking approval to expand its capacity from 5,000 to 20,000 head of cattle while the Myola Feedlot is assessing the feasibility of expanding its capacity from 20,000 to 35,000 head of cattle. Myola is also looking to expand its feedmill.

Expansion of Gunyerwarildi would generate an estimated 30-40 additional full-time jobs, with expansion of Myola generating a further 15-20 full-time positions. Positions will be primarily in stock handling and machine operators (Feedmill, graders and loaders). Expansion would also increase demand for local cattle and grain as well as for transport and other local goods and services.

Additional housing is needed in the Croppa Creek area to support the Myola expansion, with village rather than on-farm accommodation preferred.

Possible Value-Add Opportunity:
Pelletising of manure from the feedlots.

Agriculture & Agri Business – Possible Opportunities

Sheep Feedlots

With increasing global demand for lamb and mutton, and growth in the live sheep exports, sheep feedlots are being established in NSW, with two approved in the Tamworth area. Feedlots may be an option for less fertile land around the eastern and southern edges of Gwydir Shire. The feedlots in the Tamworth area may also provide a market opportunity for sheep produced in Gwydir Shire.

Advantages of the Shire for sheep feedlotting include:

- Suitable climate and pastures.
- Sheep studs in the Shire.
- Access to grain.
- Livestock transport infrastructure in place.
- Access to processing plants in Tamworth and Wallangarra.
- Ability to export live sheep through the Wellcamp Airport.



Goat Production

Goat farming is a growth industry both in Australia and globally. Goats are farmed for meat, milk production and fibre, with goats for meat production being the fastest growing sector.

Australia is the world's largest exporter of goat meat with the meat exported in several forms – live goats (generally air-freighted to the Middle East), fresh and frozen carcasses, and processed and packaged meat products. The global demand for goat meat significantly exceeds supply, with Australian farm-bred meat goats attracting a premium price in the European, Asian and Middle Eastern markets. Domestically, demand also significantly exceeds supply, particularly for halal killed meat. Goat meat is sold as Capretto (milk fed kids – usually cooked whole) and Chevon, with strong demand for both types. Issues with continuity of supply are the major constraint to growing the industry.

Dairy goats are farmed to produce milk, a significant proportion of which is used in the production of specialty cheeses. Two breeds of goats are bred for fibre production – the angora goat which produces mohair and the cashmere goat which produces cashmere. The global demand for cashmere significantly exceeds supply. The demand for mohair wool fell significantly in the 1990's however has recovered and is reported to be growing strongly.

Goats can be farmed on marginal land, including hilly and weed infested areas. They may be suitable for the ridge country around Warialda as well as the hilly areas in the southern and eastern parts of the Shire. Goats consume around 80% woody shrubs and 20% pastures. Goats are ideally suited to small holdings in marginal country, with stocking rates being considerably higher than cattle (5-7 goats = 1 cow). Goats require less work than sheep and are currently fetching similar prices.

Ausgoat in Glen Innes will buy goats from producers. Goats can also be processed through Wallangarra Processing Plant or exported live through the Wellcamp Airport.



Agriculture & Agri Business – Possible Opportunities

Piggeries / Pork Production

Over the past decade the swine industry in Australia has been contracting. Over the same period, consumption of pork in Australia increased by 20%, with imports increasing from 31% of pork consumed to over 50% of pork and 80-90% of bacon.

Globally, the demand for pork is increasing substantially with most of the growth being in the Asian market. There are a number of countries growing their pork sectors (eg Denmark, Canada, United States) to service the Asian market, with these countries subsidising and protecting their pork industries.

With the growing focus on ‘fresh’ and ‘locally produced’ food there is very strong demand from both independent butchers and the restaurant trade for locally produced, quality pork. There is also demand from the Sydney restaurant trade and from Asian markets for suckling pigs.

Within the Shire, Horton Valley Premium Pork is producing quality pork that is gaining recognition for its unique taste. There may be opportunity for additional piggeries.



Poultry Production

Should the Circular Economy project not proceed, there may still be opportunity to establish a hatchery and growing sheds. Baiada is actively looking for new producers. The main locational requirements are sites in Tamworth or adjoining LGAs and access to plentiful water, with water used both to cool the chickens and for cleaning.

There is also very strong demand for game birds for the restaurant market. There may be potential for niche production and processing in Gwydir Shire.

Grain & Pulse Processing

Grain from Gwydir Shire is used by James Squire for beer production. With the strong growth in craft beers, there is strong demand for malted grain. There may be potential to establish a specialty maltings plant in the Shire, possibly as part of the Circular Economy utilising the energy produced.

Bethel Farm Mill is a boutique miller of grain produced in the region. There may be opportunities to work with the owners to diversify and expand this business and/or encourage the establishment of other milling operations to process specialty grains and/or pulses (eg chick pea flour).

Distilling / Meadery

Establishing a boutique / micro distillery using local grain, to produce a range of spirits and /or produce mead from local honey.

Dried / Processed Tomatoes

As a sideline to the production of tomatoes as part of the Circular Economy there may be opportunity to process or dry tomatoes that are classified as ‘seconds’. It may also be possible to access ‘seconds’ from the Costa Tomato Farm at Guyra.

Niche Crops, Fruits & Nuts

There are a range of niche crops, fruits and nuts that can be grown by small producers. Mushrooms, for example can be readily produced in warehouses and shipping containers.

The Living Classroom is establishing a native foods garden, which if scaled up could possibly be developed into a small cottage industry selling direct fresh and dried native foods or processing into condiments. Likewise, the proposed medicinal plant garden could also potentially be scaled up and harvested. There is growing demand from Australian Gin producers for native plants (eg finger limes, cinnamon and lemon myrtles, pepper leaf, peppercorn, wattle seed, bush tomatoes etc) for production of flavoured gins.

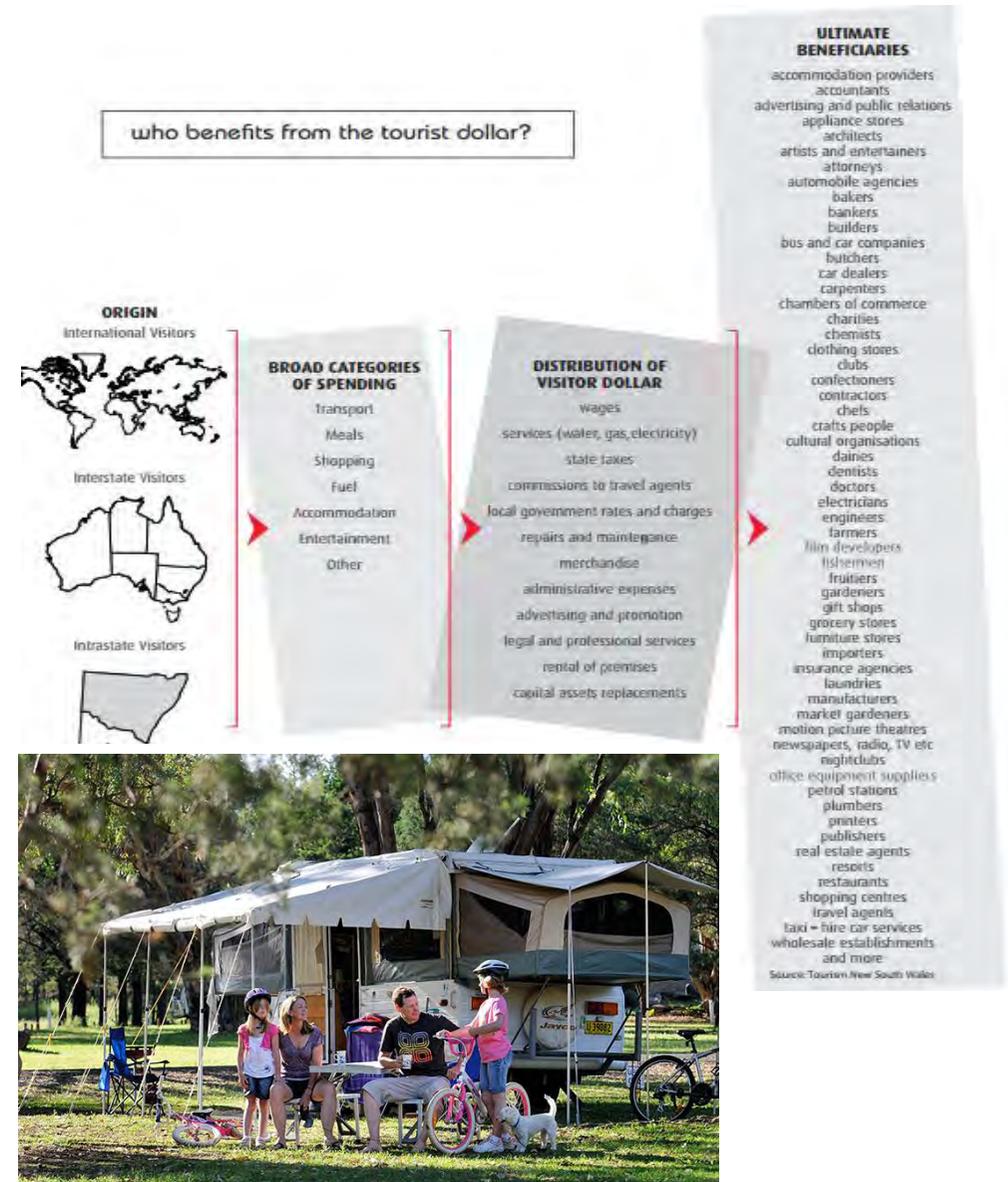
Figs grow well in the Bingara area. There is a significant undersupply of fresh figs (table figs) for the domestic market. There is also strong demand for fresh figs from Asian markets.

Opportunities - Tourism

Continuing to grow the tourism sector (visitor economy) will contribute to strengthening and diversifying the Shire's economy, with potential benefits including:

- Tourism is one of the few economic activities in the Shire that is not dependent on agriculture, nor subject to agricultural cycles. As such it can help to create a more stable local economy.
- Increased demand for local goods and services – with 'new' dollars injected into the local economy. This helps to sustain local businesses through increased revenue, improved cashflow and reduced risk. It also creates employment opportunities.
- Increased awareness about the Shire – its attractions, lifestyle, products and producers.
- 'Touch Point' for potential tree changers, retirees and businesses. Visitor Information Centres are frequently the first port-of-call for people looking to relocate to and/or invest in an area. People often come to the Shire as visitors and return as potential residents.
- Potential source of labour and skills, including seasonal workers. Travellers who are planning to be on the road for extended periods will often take-on short-term jobs to fund the next leg of their journey.

The Shire, particularly Bingara, has a range of attributes that have strong appeal to the touring market, including riverside camping, beautiful scenery, very attractive, well presented town centres, historic buildings, good coffee and a welcoming community. For those looking for a place to 'settle', the affordability of housing in the Shire is also an attribute. Encouraging visitors to stay longer in the Shire, will increase opportunities for engagement which is important if visitors are looking for a place to settle and/or invest in. Activities such as fossicking and fishing, encourage longer stays. There is also potential to introduce programs and activities at the Living Classroom designed to engage the visitor market.



Opportunities - Tourism

There are a range of opportunities for product and market development.

Touring Routes and Scenic Drives

With Gwydir Shire being located off the main interstate highway routes used by long haul travellers, the touring routes that link the highways and/or provide access to high profile destinations are an effective way of bringing travellers into and through the Shire. A network of scenic drives within the Shire will encourage travellers to explore and spend more time in the area.

Existing Tourism Routes

Continue to develop and promote existing touring routes:

- Fossickers Way
- Nature's Way (State Touring Route 3)

New Routes

Develop new routes:

- Gwydir Highway – connecting the NSW North Coast with Lightning Ridge – capitalising on landscape / landform (eg Cranky Rock, Waa Gorge), Aboriginal (eg Myall Creek, Goonowigall Reserve, Kamilaroi Art in Moree) and fossicking / minerals (gold, sapphires, opals) themes.
- Golden Triangle – an alternative to the Newell via Croppa Creek and North Star.

There is also potential to strengthen the through links:

- Texas to Bingara (via Coolatai and Warialda) – connecting two high profile free riverside camping destinations.
- Boggabilla to Tamworth (via North Star, Warialda & Bingara).

Scenic Drives

Continue to improve / develop scenic drives within the Shire, including.

- Upper Bingara Drive
- Horton Valley – Horton Falls
- Bingara – Delungra – Cranky Rock – Warialda Loop.
- Drives radiating from Warialda into the Golden Triangle.

Landscapes & Landforms

With 64% of visitors to the NE-NW Region attracted by amazing or unusual landscapes⁷ there is opportunity to significantly raise the profile of the Shire's spectacular landscapes and landforms, with these promoted in conjunction with iconic / unusual landforms on the periphery of the Shire:

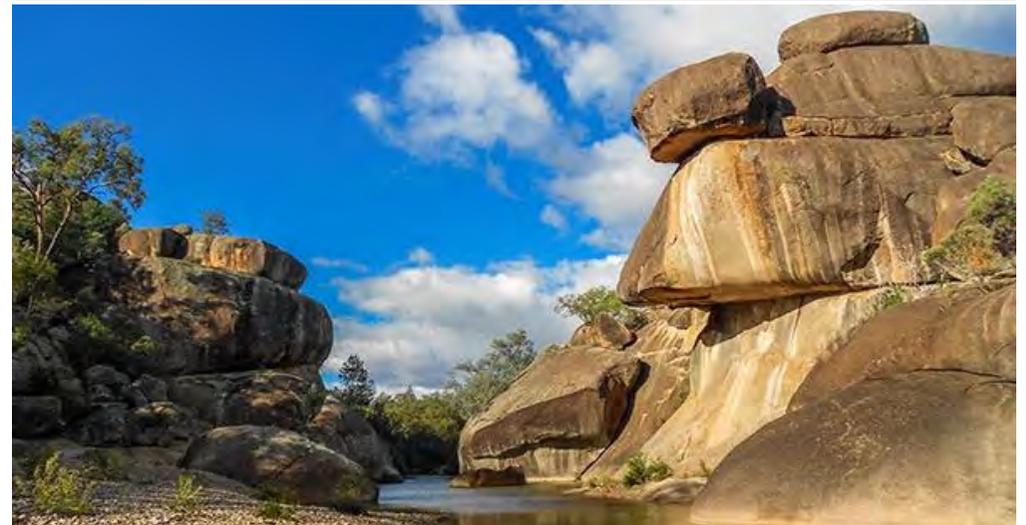
Within the Shire

Cranky Rock
 Rocky Creek Glacial Area
 Gwydir River – Bingara
 Cropping Landscapes of the Golden Triangle

Adjoining Areas

Sawn Rocks / Kaputar National Park
 Horton Falls / Upper Falls
 Waa Gorge

One of the most effective ways of raising the profile of these landforms and building the association with the Shire, is to repeatedly use one or two spectacular 'hero' images, and location branding (Cranky Rock, Warialda). Sawn Rocks provides an example of this approach, with Sawn Rocks now one of the most recognised icons of the NE-NW Region.



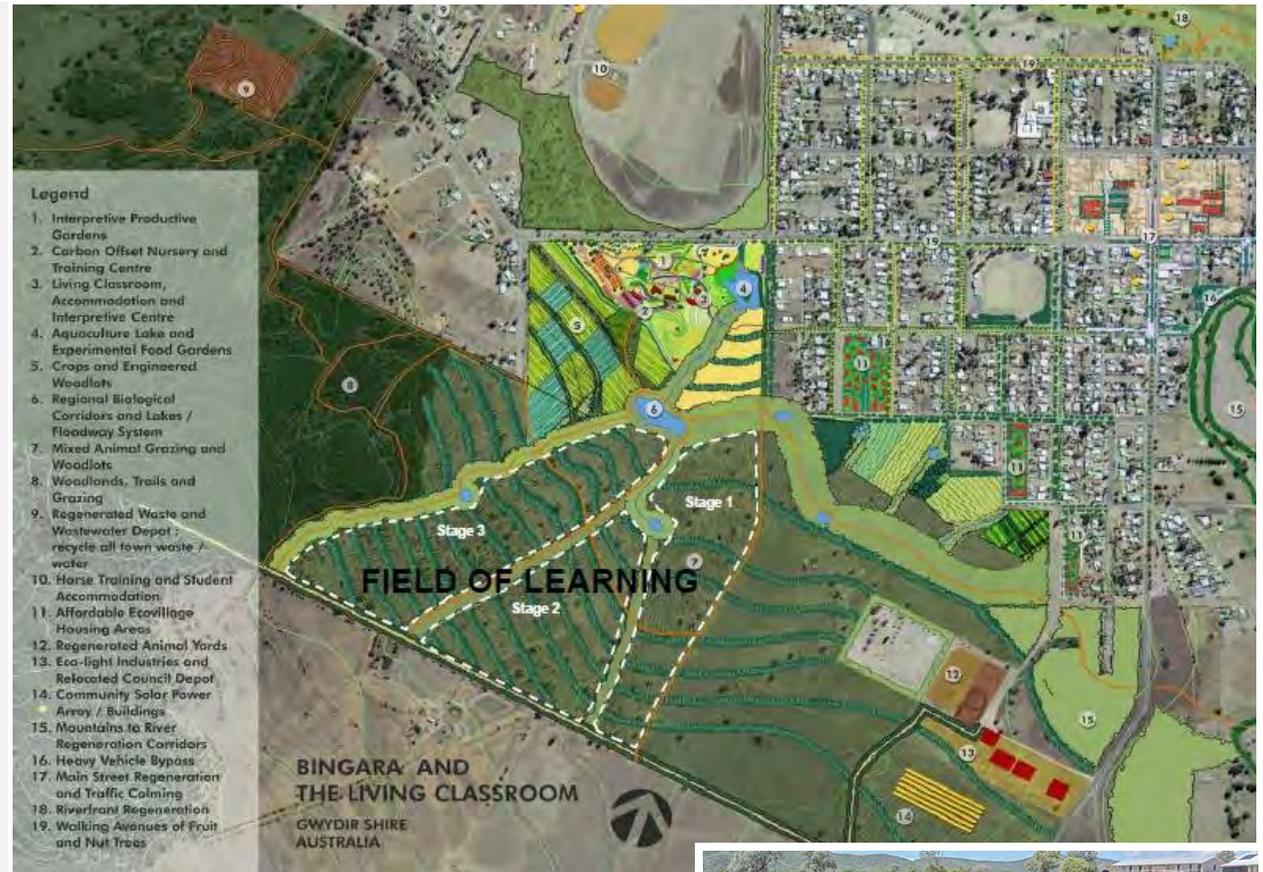
Opportunities – Tourism

The Living Classroom

Combining the attractive setting; showcase gardens, bushland and olive groves; food production, environmental and sustainability themes; and the availability of training/meeting facilities and accommodation; the Living Classroom has the potential to become a significant attraction and venue for the Shire as well as an anchor attraction for the NE – NW Region.

Opportunities include:

- Development of the interpretative centre.
- Education and training – environmental, sustainability and land management for schools, tertiary students, land holders, hobbyists etc.
- Hire venue – for residential workshops (eg arts, yoga, meditation), groups (eg car clubs, golf groups), meetings and training seminars, and private and corporate functions (eg weddings, family re-unions).
- Scaling up of the native food garden and medicinal plants gardens to support a cottage industry to harvest, process and package.
- When the fruit and olive trees become productive, develop a range of activities / events around the harvesting (eg pickling and bottling workshops utilising the Roxy Theatre hospitality kitchen). There may also be opportunity to include harvesting of olives street trees in Bingara as part of these activities.
- Farm Gate Outlet.
- Volunteer program – activities that visitors can help with – as a touch point to engage with the community and build a relationship with the town.
- Walking and mountain bike trails – through the showcase gardens and bushland areas.



Opportunities – Tourism

Fossicking

Fossicking is popular with the touring (retiree) and family markets, and will encourage visitors to stay longer in the Shire. It is also a core activity / attraction for the Fossickers Way Touring Route. Three Creeks Gold Mine provides an anchor for the fossicking experience and an entry point for those looking to try and learn. Fossicking is also an activity that is highly ‘saleable’ to the regional market – escape to Bingara for the weekend, camp by the river and spend quality, interactive time outdoors with the family. Product development is needed with this including signage and interpretation at fossicking areas, an App that provide a ‘how-to’ tutorial, and identification of areas for use of metal detectors.



Trails & Activities

Activity-based trails will help to drive special interest and activity based visitation to the Shire, and add to the list of things to see and do when in the area. Gwydir Shire has in place bird, cycle, geological, fossicking and heritage trails. There is opportunity to further develop these trails and the experiences they offer and to develop new trails, including:

- Canoe trails – along the Gwydir and possibly Horton Rivers.
- Mountain bike trails – including the proposed trail between the Living Classroom and the Myall Creek Memorial Site.
- Motorcycle touring trails – both on and off-road.
- Fishing and camping trails.
- Walking trails – with one of the options being a signature walk between Cranky Rock and Warialda.

Culinary tourism is a strong growth sector and a priority for both Destination NSW and Tourism Australia. With existing products (eg Honey, Bethel Mill flours and cake mixes; locally produced cordials and condiments); the opportunities and profile being created by the Living Classroom; the Bingara Orange and Olive Trees; and increasing awareness of locally produced quality meat (Jac Wagyu, Horton Valley Premium Pork) and independent butchers in Bingara and Warialda selling local meats as well as value-add products; there is opportunity to cluster the products available and the outlets where they can be purchased – the ‘Provedores’ of Gwydir Shire. Increasing the profile of local produce will help to enhance the ‘clean-green’ and ‘sustainability’ positioning of the Shire, and also contribute to ‘liveability’ and ‘lifestyle’ images, tapping into the ‘grow our own food dream’ of many tree-changers.



Opportunities – Tourism

Towns & Villages

Continuing to improve the presentation of the towns and villages and individual businesses will enhance the appeal of the Shire and strengthen the attraction base.

Towns, villages and rural environments play a very significant role in the tourism industry. Towns and villages provide the services and infrastructure sought by visitors, are attractions in their own right, and provide activity and service ‘nodes’ on touring routes. The quality and diversity of the built and rural environments also influences how a visitor reacts to and ‘bonds’ with the area.

Presentation and first impressions play a major role in the decision to stop in or visit a locality. While holiday destinations, overnight stops and visits to major attractions are usually planned in advance, the transit stop is generally an impulse decision. If an area presents well and looks interesting, travellers will often decide to stop and have a quick look around. If the experience gained is positive, there is a likelihood of repeat visitation and/or travellers recommending the area to other travellers (word of mouth, blogs etc). Regular travellers along a route will develop ‘favourite’ places to stop. In addition, interest stimulated while passing through an area often leads to future visits, with travellers returning to explore the area or suggesting it to others.

From a visitor perspective, the key areas that make an impression are the gateway entry points and arrival corridors, appearance and presentation of the town centres, villages, and the parks and gardens. The presentation of businesses, particularly in the smaller centres, is also critical to encouraging travellers to stop, with businesses that present as clean and vibrant more likely to attract patronage than those that appear dated, tired and/or run down. Availability of attractive camping areas is also a key driver for the touring caravan and RV markets.

Presentation is also important for the local community, building pride and confidence in the area. Good presentation is also an attribute for people who are looking to relocate to and/or invest in the area, with this being an ‘influencer’ in the ‘tree change’ process.

In the Inland Region DMP, the North-West cluster’s ‘vision and promise’ to consumers is the ‘simple sophistication of country life’ and to share ‘lifestyle’ and ‘stories’. This needs to be reflected in the customer service provided and the ‘place making’ directions for the Shire’s towns and villages.

Opportunities – Other

Events & Activities

Events form part of the attraction and activity base of the Shire. Locally they are also part of the cultural and social fabric of the area, providing an opportunity to bring visitors and residents together, ‘tell stories’, and create memorable experiences. For visitors, events provide a reason to visit – they are essentially a ‘call to action’. They also generate publicity and focus attention on the area. Events can be a key driver in the economic, social and cultural development of an area and play a role in the ‘tree change’ process.

Gwydir Shire has diverse program of events, some of which (eg North Star Trail Ride and Warialda 200) draw significant numbers of visitors into the Shire. There is opportunity to continue to build and value-add to existing events, bid for ‘footloose’ events (eg CMCA rally) and introduce new events and activities.

There is a need to continue to improve infrastructure to support events, particularly within the villages, and provide event signage in strategic locations throughout the Shire, with events supported by effective marketing and promotion.

There is also opportunity to work with adjoining LGAs to ‘cluster’ events to create an ‘activity’ trail and/or to build visitation – eg building the golf events in the region into a circuit, developing a combined calendar of ‘like’ events – trail rides, fishing tournaments, horse sports etc.



Extractive Industries

There are two projects under consideration:

- Expansion of Johnstone’s Runnymede Quarry – hardrock aggregate production.
- Sand extraction for export from the Yammacona Quarry.

Opportunities:

- Hard-rock quarries / aggregate production to meet expected demand for ballast for the development of the Inland Rail line, road upgrade and civil construction projects in the Shire.
- Use of the sand extracted from the Yammacona Quarry to produce tiles and other products.

Transport & Logistics

- Intermodal terminal / containerisation facilities – capitalising on the proposed Inland Rail corridor.
- 24 hour fuel outlets – North Star, Coolatai and Warialda (bypass).
- Truck Wash Warialda.

Renewables

- Renewable energy generation – solar, wind, bio-mass, bio-fuel.
- Pelletising manure from feedlots, piggeries, shearing sheds and potentially poultry sheds.
- Carbon farming, carbon sequestration, bio-char production.

Aged Care

- Property and other services to support aging in place.
- Over 55’s housing.
- Additional aged care accommodation – self-contained and hostel.

Other

- **Retailing** – adopting innovative business models that increase and diversify income (see Appendix 1).
- **Aquaculture** – expanding the Bingara Fish Hatchery, establishment of on-farm aquaculture utilising irrigation water and water storage dams.
- **Trades people** – automotive, construction, engineering.
- **Funeral Director**
- **Dentist**
- **Property development** – industrial estate, factory buildings, medium density housing, over 55’s housing.
- **Long Day Care / Family Day Care**
- **Hobby to Business** – transitioning hobbies into micro and small businesses.



6. PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

In facilitating economic growth Council is seeking to:

- Grow the population of the Shire.
- Position Gwydir Shire as a place where people wish to live, work, visit and invest.
- Support, retain, strengthen and grow local businesses.
- Attract new investment that is sustainable and compatible with community aspirations and the Shire's environment.
- Support the creation of employment opportunities and a skilled workforce.
- Upgrade existing infrastructure and secure enabling infrastructure.
- Ensure responsible stewardship of resources.

We envisage an economic future where our:

- Population is increasing.
- Community is vibrant, engaged and inclusive.
- Economy is diversified, sustainable and resilient.
- Farms and businesses are innovative, entrepreneurial, profitable and sustainable.
- Visitor economy is thriving.
- Workforce is well educated, skilled, capable and productive.

Strategic Initiatives:

Our strategic initiatives to facilitate and drive economic development are:

- Initiative 1: Gwydir Shire is 'Open for Business';
- Initiative 2: The foundation blocks needed to stimulate and support economic development are in place.
- Initiative 3: A strong and positive profile for Gwydir Shire.
- Initiative 4: Growth from Within - Supporting and nurturing local communities, businesses and industries.
- Initiative 5: Attracting new residents, businesses, investment and economic activities.



Strategic Initiative 1: Gwydir Shire is ‘Open for Business’

Council, through its various touch points, is typically the first point of contact for potential new residents, businesses, developers and investors. For people outside the Shire, Council’s website is generally the starting point for those seeking information about Shire. For visitors to the Shire, the Visitor Information Centres, Caravan Park Employees and Council front counter staff are often the first points of contact, fielding the initial enquiries about what it is like to live in the area, things to do and services available etc.

Being ‘open for business’ is fundamental to facilitating economic grow. As part of providing a positive, supportive and responsive investment environment, Council will:

- Provide strong leadership and direction.
- Continue to have a ‘can do attitude’.
- Ensure that the service it delivers is welcoming, professional and efficient.
- Be pro-active and willing to discuss ideas, concepts and projects, and work through concerns and issues with proponents to deliver the best outcomes for the Shire.
- Advocate strongly with Government Agencies, and coordinate and communicate with stakeholders, to market the Shire, deliver critical infrastructure and find innovative solutions that will stimulate appropriate and sustainable development.



Strategies

Strategy 1: Be a pro-active and supportive Council

Strategy 2: Build strong partnerships and strategic alliances

Strategy 3: Establish effective networks and communication channels

Strategies		Actions	
Strategy 1: Be a pro-active and supportive Council			
1.1	Position and promote Gwydir Shire Council as a leader and driver of economic development.	1.1.1	Ensure that Council’s culture, structure, roles and responsibilities and internal communication channels are conducive to driving economic development within the Shire.
		1.1.2	Incorporate the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) directions, strategies and actions into the Gwydir Shire Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and, where relevant, in other strategies, plans and policies developed by Council.
		1.1.3	Expand Council’s website to incorporate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An economic development / business support section. This section should include relevant social and economic data, advantages / strengths of the Shire and links to support services and on-line training programs provided by Government Agencies and Regional organisations. Consider including a business listing (link to the Gwydir Directory) and case studies and/or short You Tube videos of successful businesses within the Shire. ○ information targeted to potential new residents. ○ Links from the home page to the bingara.com.au and warialdansw.com.au (or an integrated Shire-wide tourism website).
		1.1.4	Ensure that staff resources are in place to coordinate the implementation of the EDS and coordinate and drive economic development.

Strategies		Actions	
1.2	Ensure that Council's customer service procedures for handling development enquiries and processing development applications are 'best practice' – welcoming, helpful, professional and efficient.	1.2.1	Review Council's policies, plans, processes and regulations to ensure that that they facilitate and support development.
		1.2.2	Ensure that Council's systems and procedures for handling and processing development and investment enquiries are welcoming, stream-lined and customer focused, with systems in place to follow-up and monitor and report on 'leads' and opportunities.
		1.2.3	Identify 'touch points' where visitors who may be interested in relocating to / investing in the Shire, come into contact with Council staff (eg VICs, Caravan Parks, Council Reception) and provide training for staff in recognising and responding to enquiries, including providing information, taking details and possibly making introductions.
		1.2.4	Ensure that internal communication protocols (between customer service, VICs, planning and economic development) are effective, with linkages to the General Manager, Senior Staff and the Mayor.
		1.2.5	Put in place a monitoring and feedback system and continue to improve practices and procedures.
1.3	Ensure that developers / investors and potential new residents and businesses have access to up-to-date, comprehensive information on Gwydir Shire.	1.3.1	Ensure that all plans, strategies and policies relevant to development, clearly articulate Council's vision and objectives for the Shire, with these documents readily identified on Council's website and easy to download.
		1.3.2	Prepare a New Resident's Guide / pack.
		1.3.3	Following the release of the 2016 Census data, review and update Council documents, plans and website to reflect and capitalise on changes occurring within the community.
		1.3.4	Produce (and keep up-dated) a Social and Economic Profile of Gwydir Shire, drawing data from the ABS, the RDA Northern Inland Social and Economic Profiles and other relevant statistical sources.
Strategy 2: Build strong partnerships and strategic alliances			
2.1	Engage with key stakeholders.	2.1.1	Identify the organisations that Council needs to work with to implement the EDS actions, the roles that these organisations will play, and the activities / projects that need to be undertaken.
		2.1.2	Brief each of the organisations on the EDS and discuss how they can contribute. Endeavour to gain support for the EDS and commitment to working with Council and taking responsibility for relevant activities and projects.
2.2	Strengthen relationships with Government Agencies, Regional Organisations, infrastructure and service providers.	2.2.1	Maintain strong relationships with key Government Agencies, regional and infrastructure and service providers.
		2.2.2	Brief and continue to update the regional Government offices on the key priorities and projects for Gwydir Shire. Endeavour to ensure that the Shire's priorities and projects are recognised in regional strategies, plans and priority project lists.
		2.2.3	Actively participate in forums and workshops run by these Agencies and respond to invitations to comment on draft plans and strategies.
		2.2.4	Advocate to host regional meetings in the Shire.
		2.2.5	When needed, advocate strongly for improved infrastructure and services.
2.3	Engage with Members of Parliament.	2.3.1	Ensure that Members of Parliament representing the Shire and Northern Inland Region are regularly updated of changes occurring in the Shire and the needs of the Shire – eg facilities, infrastructure, services etc.
2.4	Build and strengthen strategic alliances with Councils within the surrounding region and along strategic road and rail corridors.	2.4.1	Continue to build and strengthen the alliances and promote regional cooperation between Gwydir Shire and neighbouring Councils to achieve regional and sub-regional economic development and tourism outcomes.
		2.4.2	Participate in regional training, economic development, tourism, marketing and promotional activities.
		2.4.3	Explore options for sharing data and resources and undertaking cooperative marketing and promotional initiatives.
2.5	Engage pro-actively with local producers, businesses and business	2.5.1	Continue to build knowledge and understanding of local economic sectors and businesses.
		2.5.2	Encourage and facilitate opportunities for professional development, networking and innovation.
		2.5.3	Support industry (sector), business and community groups and networks.

Strategies		Actions	
	/ industry organisations, and community groups.	2.5.4	Harness the skills and experience available within the Shire and surrounding region - As needed, establish, encourage and support Task Forces / Working Groups, Networks and Business Associations to address specific issues or pursue opportunities.
Strategy 3: Establish effective networks and communication channels			
3.1	Continue to improve communication between Council, local business, industry and community groups and with business operators.	3.1.1	Develop a communications and media framework / approach to keep the business community and public informed about Council and economic activities and initiatives.
		3.1.2	Build and maintain an industry / business data base.
		3.1.3	Produce a business e-newsletter to maintain regular contact with key groups, business operators and other key stakeholders.
		3.1.4	Attend meetings of relevant industry, business and community groups.
3.2	Encourage business operators to communicate with each other.	3.2.1	Encourage and facilitate opportunities for business networking.
		3.2.2	Encourage / support industry associations to hold functions and activities that will enable business operators to communicate and network.

Strategic Initiative 2: Ensure that the foundation blocks needed to stimulate and support economic development are in place

Factors that play a significant role in the decision to relocate to and/or invest in an area include:

- The reputation, amenity and attractiveness of the area, as a place to work and live.
- Location and accessibility.
- Availability and affordability of suitable land and/or premises (to buy or lease).
- Facilities and services available – retail, health, education, recreation, childcare, broadband and mobile coverage etc.
- Access to a skilled workforce, and for potential residents, access to employment.
- Access to and capacity of utility infrastructure.

Lifestyle and work-life balance will play a major role in relocation and investment decisions. The amenity (appeal) of the area, the facilities and services available, access to recreation, arts and cultural activities, opportunities for engagement and social inclusion, and safety, are factors that businesses and people looking to relocate to the Shire will take into consideration.



Council will focus on:

- Working with local communities to enhance ‘lifestyle’ and ‘liveability’.
- Ensuring that the foundation blocks (land and premises, infrastructure and workforce) are in place to support growth.

Strategies

- Strategy 4:** Enhance lifestyle and liveability
Strategy 5: Ensure that there is suitable residential, industrial and commercial land and premises available in the Shire to facilitate growth
Strategy 6: Ensure that the utilities and infrastructure needed to support economic development are in place
Strategy 7: Build a strong and skilled local workforce



Strategies		Actions	
Strategy 4: Enhance Lifestyle and Liveability			
4.1	Protect and enhance the Shire’s natural and scenic assets.	4.1.1	Continue to ensure that planning policies and controls protect rural and bushland areas, water resources, productive agricultural land and significant view-sheds from non-compatible development.
4.2	Create strong, positive impressions.	4.2.1	Continue to improve the presentation of the gateway arrival points and entry corridors – to the Shire and its towns and villages.
		4.2.2	Continue to maintain entry corridors, town centres and parks and playgrounds and to a high standard, encouraging tree planting and garden beds to add colour and vibrancy and attract attention.
		4.2.3	Ensure that key precincts (including showgrounds, sports grounds, caravan parks and camping areas, and any industrial estates that are developed) present well.
		4.2.4	Explore opportunities for quality public art – both temporary and permanent installations.
		4.2.5	Work with the community to encourage property and business owners to continue to improve the presentation of their buildings and businesses, including activating the footpaths.
		4.2.6	Remove / replace tired and dated signs within the town and village entry corridors.
4.3	Position and promote Bingara and Warialda as lifestyle centres and tourist destinations.	4.3.1	Endeavour to differentiate the town centres, creating two distinct ‘destinations’ with different ‘characters’ and appeal.
		4.3.2	Update the Bingara Town Strategy and the Warialda Community Plan taking into consideration the outcomes from the 2030 Visions for both towns.
		4.3.3	Strengthen Bingara’s association with the Gwydir River, Roxy Theatre and Living Classroom – as attributes and points of difference to other small towns in the NE-NW Region.
		4.3.4	Strengthen Warialda’s association with Cranky Rock, positioning Cranky Rock as an iconic landform attraction for the NE-NW Region.
		4.3.5	Capitalise on events held in the towns and surrounding areas to generate media coverage, raise awareness and build the profile of the towns, focusing on vibrancy and strong sense of community.

Strategies		Actions	
4.4	Work with the village communities and businesses to ensure on-going sustainability.	4.4.1	Market and promote the villages, encouraging travellers to explore the Shire and experience country hospitality.
		4.4.2	Support and assist the village communities to improve infrastructure and facilities and enhance their capacity to accommodate visitors and host and grow events (see Appendix 2 for a list of improvements needed to village infrastructure).
4.5	Enhance lifestyle.	4.5.1	Continue to improve and expand the cultural, recreation, sporting and leisure facilities within the Shire.
		4.5.2	Support, foster and promote arts and cultural activities.
		4.5.3	Encourage, host and promote a dynamic and vibrant program of events and activities.
4.6	Encourage and support community development.	4.6.1	Advocate strongly for the retention and expansion of community services (eg health, education, disability, services for the aged).
		4.6.2	Explore the feasibility of providing additional child care facilities and services (eg long day care, before and after school care).
		4.6.3	Ensure that the Shire's facilities and services have the capacity to support 'aging in place'.
		4.6.4	Advocate for improved education outcomes within the Shire.
		4.6.5	Continue to support activities (eg events, sport, creative arts etc) that encourage engagement and social inclusion and build pride in, and commitment to, the local community.
		4.6.6	Support community initiatives to develop, grow and enhance the liveability of the Shire.
		4.6.7	Produce and distribute new resident 'Welcome' packs.
		4.6.8	Explore opportunities for providing information, activities and programs that will help new residents, seasonal workers and people on temporary work visas (if any) assimilate into the community.
Strategy 5: Ensure that there is suitable residential, industrial and commercial land and premises available to facilitate growth			
5.1	Ensure suitable land and premises are available to facilitate and accommodate growth.	5.1.1	Annually review land use plans and strategies to ensure that sufficient land is zoned to accommodate growth, taking into consideration the implications of the demand for housing from large scale development such as the Circular Economy project.
		5.1.2	Explore options for facilitating the development of industrial land and premises within the Shire.
		5.1.3	Advocate for Government funding to assist in providing enabling infrastructure to facilitate subdivision and development of residential, rural residential and industrial land.
		5.1.4	Identify strategic sites for agri-business and intermodal / containerisation facilities and ensure that opportunities and potential sites in Gwydir Shire are included in the proposed NE-NW Agri-Business Strategy (Planning and Environment NSW)
5.2	Expand the range of accommodation and housing available in the Shire.	5.2.1	Endeavour to provide input into the framework being developed by the State Government for rural residential development. Advocate for a flexible approach to development which reflects local needs.
		5.2.2	Encourage the development of a range of housing options in Bingara and Warialda, including over 55's housing and aged care accommodation.
		5.2.3	Explore options to increase the range of temporary and permanent accommodation available in Croppa Creek and North Star to accommodate seasonal workers; support the expansion of the feedlots and the construction of the Inland Rail corridor, and to facilitate future development of agri-businesses in the area.
5.3	Improve retail / commercial premises.	5.3.1	Encourage the refurbishment and re-use of retail and commercial buildings in Bingara and Warialda.
5.4	Promote the Shire's Industrial land.	5.4.1	Identify available industrial and land premises within the Shire and keep RDA Northern Inland advised on the land and premises available and up-date information on the 'Come On Inland' Website.
		5.4.2	Work with local real estate agents to market the industrial land available within Warialda.

Strategies		Actions	
Strategy 6: Ensure that the infrastructure and utilities needed to support economic development are in place			
Utilities			
6.1	Ensure water security.	6.1.1	Ensure that Warialda has sufficient water to cater for growth generated by the proposed Circular Economy project.
6.2	Reduce energy use and costs.	6.2.1	Encourage businesses and households to participate in energy use reduction programs offered by RDA and other agencies.
		6.2.2	Support the development of renewable / green energy producers within the Shire.
		6.2.3	Where needed, advocate for and assist existing and potential businesses access grant funds for 'last mile' infrastructure.
6.3	Improve telecommunications.	6.3.1	Identify mobile blackspots and advocate for these to be rectified.
		6.3.2	Advocate for equity of access and affordability to the internet.
		6.3.3	Capitalise on opportunities afforded by the RDA Digital Strategy and related activities.
		6.3.4	Once dates for the NBN are confirmed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that the infrastructure proposed will meet the needs of the community and accommodate future growth. ○ Organise forums to brief and educate residents and businesses about the NBN, connection process and opportunities.
Transport & Freight Infrastructure			
6.4	Continue to improve the capacity of the road network within the Shire to increase freight productivity and grow visitation to the Shire.	6.4.1	Continue to work with Moree Plains Shire to define the north-west freight network and identify strategically important production and freight routes within and through Gwydir Shire, as well as the capital works required to remove 'pinch points' and expand capacity to accommodate growth in freight traffic.
		6.4.2	Advocate for the Shire's road needs to be included in Regional and State freight and transport strategies.
		6.4.3	Continue to advocate for the development of the Warialda by-pass.
		6.4.4	Advocate for and seek funding to upgrade and maintain strategically important roads.
		6.4.5	Continue to develop and promote touring routes and scenic drives, including improving signage.
6.5	Provide infrastructure and services to facilitate and support road transport.	6.5.1	Assess the need for 24 hour fuel outlet on the proposed Warialda by-pass and fuel outlets in Coolatai and North Star.
		6.5.2	Assess the need for truck washing facilities and, if needed, apply for grants to establish.
6.6	Capitalise on the proposed Inland Rail Line.	6.6.1	Explore with ARTC opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gwydir Shire businesses to supply goods and services for the construction of the Inland Rail. ○ Traineeships and/or employment for Shire residents.
		6.6.2	Identify opportunities for and support the development of suitable agri-business and transport and logistics facilities along the Inland Rail corridor.
Strategy 7: Build a strong and skilled local workforce			
7.1	Identify workforce requirements and skills gaps.	7.1.1	Profile and articulate existing and future (eg for the Circular Economy, expansion of the Feedlots and Shire's quarries, Inland Rail) local workforce requirements and jobs and skills gaps.
		7.1.2	Ensure that Gwydir Shire's workforce needs are recognised in regional training and employment strategies.
		7.1.3	Work with regional organisations and education and training providers to address job and skill gaps and formulate and deliver 'job readiness' and skills development opportunities.

Strategies	Actions
<p>7.2 Grow the local workforce, ensuring that it is aligned with local and regional industry needs.</p>	<p>7.2.1 Ensure that job vacancies within the Shire are included in the job search directory on the RDA 'Come on Inland' website and in promotions undertaken as part of this campaign.</p> <p>7.2.2 Consider listing job vacancies in the Shire on the Council and/or tourism websites and through other promotional channels.</p> <p>7.2.3 Consider having a 'position vacant' board in the VICs and possibly at the local supermarkets.</p> <p>7.2.4 Work with industry and businesses to attract skilled workers to the Shire to fill vacant positions and address skills gaps.</p> <p>7.2.5 Explore opportunities to up-skill agricultural and older workers, particularly in the area of digital skills.</p> <p>7.2.6 As part of the Gwydir Learning Region, work with TAFE, Warialda High School and Bingara Central School to deliver programs and activities that align with workforce needs.</p> <p>7.2.7 Encourage the development of partnerships, such as mentoring and workplace training programs, between local producers and businesses, TAFE and the schools.</p> <p>7.2.8 Advocate for improved access to education and training services and flexible approaches to workplace training, apprenticeships and traineeships.</p> <p>7.2.9 Endeavour to retain young people within the community, through programs such as school based vocational training, transition to work / work ready, offering apprentice and traineeships, and providing access to tertiary training.</p> <p>7.2.10 Explore opportunities to provide mentoring and/or business skills development programs for young people who have completed apprenticeships and traineeships, to encourage them to establish businesses within the Shire.</p> <p>7.2.11 Develop and implement programs to welcome and orientate new employees / residents to assist them to integrate into the community.</p>



Strategic Initiative 3: Build a strong, positive profile for Gwydir Shire

Raising the profile of Gwydir Shire and positively promoting the Shire as a place to live and invest is imperative to attracting investment, development and new residents. Gwydir Shire is competing with other LGAs within the NE-NW Region, with towns like Tamworth, Armidale and Inverell having higher profiles in the market place. Marketing and promotional activities need to have consistent messages and feature the attributes and competitive advantages of the Shire, including its attractive setting, affordability and lifestyle.

Council will focus on:

- Delivering consistent messages about Gwydir Shire’s attributes, competitive advantages, affordability and lifestyle.
- Enhancing the Shire’s on-line presence.
- Generating positive publicity for the Shire.

Strategy 8: Build a strong, positive profile for Gwydir Shire

Strategies		Actions	
Strategy 8: Build a strong, positive profile for Gwydir Shire			
8.1	Align communication and marketing strategies.	8.1.1	Articulate the brand values, positioning and key marketing ‘messages’ for the Shire.
		8.1.2	Formulate communications and marketing strategies for the Shire, articulating clear and consistent key messages.
		8.1.3	Ensure that the branding is consistent across all of Council’s promotional documents, display materials, web and facebook sites.
		8.1.4	Ensure that images used in Council documents, on-line sites and promotional materials reflect the branding and lifestyle values of the Shire.
		8.1.5	Ensure that Councillors and Council staff are cognisant of the communications strategy and key messages and provide training on how to communicate and reinforce these messages.
		8.1.6	Ensure that the marketing plans / directions for Council, Economic Development and Tourism align with the communications strategy and with each other.
		8.1.7	Encourage community and business groups involved in marketing and promotion to incorporate the key communication messages and images.
8.2	Continue to build Gwydir Shire’s digital presence.	8.2.1	Continue to improve and maintain the Gwydir Shire Council website, recognising that the site is one of the first ‘touch points’ for individuals and businesses looking to relocate and has a dual function of providing information and promoting the Shire.
		8.2.2	Develop a ‘whole of Shire’ tourism website that is responsive to locality (ie Bingara, Warialda, North Star), searches and promotes each of the Shire’s towns and villages, all activities and events, as well as touring routes, scenic drives etc.
		8.2.3	Encourage the town and village communities to develop and maintain websites that dovetail and link to the tourism website and provide information for local and potential residents as well as promoting businesses, services and facilities.
		8.2.4	Formulate and implement a social media strategy to communicate with residents, businesses, visitors and the media (recognising that journalists are increasingly using social media to source ‘leads’ and ‘stories’).

Strategies		Actions	
		8.2.5	Capitalise on opportunities to promote Gwydir Shire and its products and activities, through third party websites and apps (including touring, event, venue and activity websites), ensuring that the information available is up-to-date and accurate.
8.3	Endeavour to generate positive publicity for the Shire.	8.3.1	Work with the local and regional media to identify and strongly promote local 'heroes' and achievements – individuals (particularly young achievers and emerging leaders) and businesses that are innovative and strongly reflect the desired positioning and branding of the Shire.
		8.3.2	Encourage businesses, producers and community groups to enter awards, and celebrate achievements.
		8.3.3	Explore opportunities to use Shire events to generate media coverage of and exposure for the Shire.
		8.3.4	Formulate and adopt a public relations strategy that provides the direction and 'tools' for counteracting negative publicity.
8.4	Continue to raise the profile of Gwydir Shire.	8.4.1	Continue to participate in regional economic development and promotional initiatives including the Come On Inland, Fossickers Way and Nature's Way initiatives.
		8.4.2	Utilise opportunities to gain free / low cost exposure in the regional media, including 'What's On' listings.
		8.4.3	Explore opportunities for billboard advertising in strategic locations, ensuring that the images used are vibrant, eye-catching and 'memorable'; and updated regularly to remain 'fresh'.
		8.4.4	Work with the Regional and State tourism and economic development organisations to bring media and industry 'fams' to Gwydir Shire.
		8.4.5	Endeavour to improve and expand the Gwydir content in regional promotional material.
		8.4.6	Endeavour to strengthen the 'link' between Gwydir Shire and the high profile tourist attractions in the surrounding region.
		8.4.7	Explore with industry sectors (eg cattle producers, sheep producers, innovative producers), opportunities for branding and promotion, as well as PR marketing of the Shire and its producers through the trade media.

Strategic Initiative 4: Grow from Within - Support and Nurture Local Communities, Industries and Businesses

Adopting a 'growth from within' approach in which existing local businesses are supported and nurtured, is the most effective way to stimulate growth. The business environment is changing rapidly and business operators need sound information and business acumen and skills to remain viable and continue to grow. Encouragement and assistance is required for some businesses to improve skill levels and to focus on working 'on' their business not just 'within' their business. Businesses need to embrace innovation and creativity, and be aware of and open to, the adoption of new technologies. Some businesses also need assistance to reduce their exposure to 'boom – bust' cycles.

Gwydir Shire Council has a role to play in stimulating growth by improving communication, coordination and information distribution within the business community. There is also a range of advisory programs and services available in the New England – North West Region and through State and Federal Government programs to assist businesses.

Council will focus on:

- Supporting and strengthening local communities, industries and businesses.
- Generating local employment opportunities.
- Building resilience.

Strategies

Strategy 9: Encourage the development of business skills and expertise.

Strategy 10: Encourage and facilitate growth.

Strategy 11: Build the profile of local businesses.

Strategy 12: Strengthen and grow key industry sectors.

Strategies		Actions	
Strategy 9: Encourage the development of business skills and expertise			
9.1	Identify skills gaps and training needs.	9.1.1	Liaise with the business community to identify skills gaps and training needs and the types of programs that businesses would benefit from (eg customer service, merchandise display, building an on-line presence, digital marketing etc).
9.2	Provide and promote information and resources relevant to local businesses.	9.2.1	Investigate business assistance, training and funding programs available from Government Agencies and Regional Organisations and establish a directory / data base, with links to Council's website.
		9.2.2	Position and promote Council's website as the 'go to' place for businesses looking for statistics, information and support services and business listings.
		9.2.3	Encourage Shire businesses to apply for the RDA Northern Inland Mentoring Program.
		9.2.4	Feature information 'highlights' on Council's facebook page and its newsletter and provide links to information sources.
		9.2.5	Assist business and community groups to access grant funding programs.
9.3	Improve access to the business advisory and support services and programs available.	9.3.1	Continue to build relationships with service providers and advocate for training and development programs to be held in the Shire.
		9.3.2	Invite service providers to exhibit at key events held within the Shire.
		9.3.3	Facilitate opportunities for professional development, networking and innovation, and encourage the exchange of ideas through business clusters and networks.
Strategy 10: Encourage and facilitate growth			
10.1	Encourage and nurture micro-businesses and business start-ups.	10.1.1	Provide access to information and business advisory services.
		10.1.2	Assess feasibility of hosting business start-up events to link people with business ideas to business advisory and support services (eg RDA, Many Rivers, Industry NSW, BEC, Australian Small Business Advisory Service).
10.2	Encourage the transition from hobbies to businesses.	10.2.1	Organise a forum on 'how to turn a hobby into a business' – combine speakers / examples of people who have done this and information on the process and assistance available.
10.3	Leverage opportunities for existing businesses.	10.3.1	Endeavour to identify goods and services that are being 'imported' into the Shire or activities being taken out of the Shire (eg packaging) that could potentially be supplied by local businesses.
		10.3.2	Discuss with potential developers of major projects in the Region (eg Inland Rail, renewable energy projects, expansion of the feedlots), the goods and services that will be require and endeavour to secure agreement that local businesses will be given the opportunity to 'quote'.
		10.3.3	Continue to advocate and support 'buy local' initiatives.
		10.3.4	Encourage and assist local businesses to register on Council, State and Federal Government procurement and 'preferred supplier' sites.
		10.3.5	Monitor 'Tender' and 'New Project' web sites and identify leads for local businesses.

Strategies		Actions	
		10.3.6	Encourage and assist local businesses and producers to list on relevant industry data bases and websites and where relevant, participate in programs such as trade missions.
		10.3.7	Explore with local businesses the level of interest in attending ‘tender writing’ workshops, and provide advice and assistance with the preparation of tender documents.
		10.3.8	Encourage local businesses to explore opportunities to become depots / distribution outlets / collection points for businesses in the larger centres within the Region (eg Tamworth, Toowoomba).
		10.3.9	Explore cross-industry value adding opportunities.
		10.3.10	Work with RDA Northern Inland, Industry NSW and other State and Federal Government Agencies and Peak Industry Associations to identify export opportunities for local businesses.
		10.3.11	Identify opportunities for cooperative marketing and encourage businesses to participate and invest in these activities.
Strategy 11: Build the profile of local businesses			
11.1	Embrace technology and on-line opportunities.	11.1.1	Encourage and assist businesses to embrace technology and prepare for the NBN.
		11.1.2	Encourage and assist businesses identify and access on-line business and marketing opportunities, including developing websites, utilising social media and listing on relevant Government and industry data bases.
11.2	Showcase local industries, businesses, products and people.	11.2.1	Continue to showcase and promote local producers and products through the Bingara and Warialda VICs and other outlets in the Shire.
		11.2.2	Work with local and regional media to showcase and promote Gwydir Shire industries, businesses, products and people.
		11.2.3	Explore opportunities to showcase and promote Gwydir Shire, producers and/or products at regional events, field days etc – for example: a Gwydir producers’ display at the Seasons of New England Producers, Makers & Creators Expo.
		11.2.4	Explore opportunities to leverage Sister City relationships to showcase and promote local producers and products.
		11.2.5	Encourage relevant businesses to participate in marketing activities (eg trade missions, industry and trade expos etc) organised by Regional, State and Federal Government agencies.
		11.2.6	Explore opportunities for Council / the Shire to host industry and media famils and trade delegations and missions.
11.3	Leverage business awards to raise awareness.	11.3.1	Encourage local producers, businesses and community groups to participate in Regional and State business awards to build awareness and recognition and potentially generate publicity for their business and the Shire.
		11.3.2	Acknowledge and celebrate achievements.
Strategy 12: Strengthen and grow key industry sectors			
Agriculture & Agribusiness – support primary production, and build on competitive advantages.			
12.1	Provide a positive planning and investment framework.	12.1.1	Continue to protect productive agricultural land and water resources within the Shire.
		12.1.2	Develop and maintain a producer data base and establish networks and communication channels.
		12.1.3	Ensure that planning controls for rural land have the flexibility to accommodate new activities and innovative business models that may include horizontal or vertical integration and/or tourism activities and events.
12.2	Strengthen the foundation blocks.	12.2.1	Continue to advocate for water security.
		12.2.2	Ensure that the needs of the Shire’s agricultural sector are recognised in regional industry and infrastructure development plans and strategies, including the proposed Agri-Business Strategy.
		12.2.3	Continue to advocate for additional funding to improve road networks to accommodate higher productivity vehicles.

Strategies		Actions	
		12.2.4	Advocate for and assist producers to develop strategies to address labour and skills shortages including, developing the local workforce and accessing skilled migration and temporary visa programs.
		12.2.5	Advocate for DPI, Local Land Services and other agencies to deliver extension programs within the Shire and provide access for Shire producers to research and development, innovation and best practice.
12.3	Encourage diversification and build sustainability and profitability.	12.3.1	Encourage and support adoption of new activities and technologies, sustainable land management practices, and innovative business models.
		12.3.2	Encourage local producers to explore options to participate in Carbon Farming / Emission Reduction schemes, leveraging the Living Classroom where possible.
		12.3.3	Encourage and facilitate the development and expansion of intensive livestock, poultry and horticultural production.
		12.3.4	Investigate the feasibility of developing on-farm aquaculture to increase utilisation of water resources.
		12.3.5	Working with producers, explore opportunities to value-add to local products, provide services currently not available in the Shire, expand markets and/or utilise waste products.
12.4	Raise the profile of and showcase the Shire's producers.	12.4.1	Explore with agricultural producers, opportunities to 'brand' and/or 'position' Gwydir Shire as a producer of premium products.
		12.4.2	Encourage specialty producers to participate in regional food and wine events, such as Moree on a Plate, Taste Tamworth and Nosh on the Namoi.
		12.4.3	Further develop the agricultural / local produce displays at the Bingara and Warialda VICs and continue to develop information on agriculture within the Shire (eg cattle and sheep breeds to complement the crop guide).
Tourism – Continue to grow and diversify the Shire's visitor economy			
12.5	Coordinate and drive growth.	12.5.1	Update the Shire's Destination Management (Tourism Plan).
12.6	Use touring routes to bring travellers into and through the Shire.	12.6.1	Continue to develop and promote existing touring routes – Fossickers Way and Nature's Way.
		12.6.2	Develop new touring routes: Gwydir Highway; the Croppa Creek – North Star loop as an alternative to the Newell between Moree and Boggabilla; Boggabilla to Tamworth via North Star and the Fossickers Way; and the link between Texas and Bingara (Warialda Road and Fossickers Way).
12.7	Products, Experiences and Activities – Continue to improve and expand the attraction, experience and activity base of the Shire.	12.7.1	Capitalise on the unique landforms and spectacular landscapes of the Shire and surrounding areas, including positioning Cranky Rock as an iconic and anchor attraction for Warialda, the Shire and the NE-NW Region.
		12.7.2	Continue to implement the Masterplan for the Living Classroom, developing it into an iconic attraction and venue for Bingara, the Shire and the NE-NW Region.
		12.7.3	Continue to develop the fossicking and geological products and experiences in the Shire.
		12.7.4	Continue to develop scenic drives and activity based trails – eg canoe trails, mountain-bike trails, a signature walk.
		12.7.5	Build culinary and creative arts based tourism – showcasing the Shire's produce and producers, and utilising facilities such as the Roxy Theatre hospitality kitchen.
		12.7.6	Work with rural producers to develop tour products and activities targeted to the international industry tour market.
		12.7.7	Encourage and support the development of rural (on-farm) and bushland attractions, activities and experiences.
		12.7.8	Explore opportunities for clustering and packaging activities, experiences and facilities within the Shire.
		12.7.9	Work with the Croppa Creek community to develop its historic truck and machinery display into a quirky attraction.

Strategies		Actions	
12.8	Festivals & Events - Grow the festivals and events sector, and use this sector to enhance lifestyle, drive visitation and raise the profile of the Shire.	12.8.1	Support the town and village communities to improve infrastructure and facilities to enable them to grow their events and activities.
		12.8.2	Continue to develop the Shire's event calendar, encouraging community groups and event organisers to list their events and seek assistance from Council's Tourism Unit / VIC staff to market and promote their events.
		12.8.3	Develop a venue / facilities guide and actively promote the Shire's venues and facilities to potential users (eg car clubs, fishing clubs, dog clubs etc)
		12.8.4	Bid for 'foot loose' events, encouraging event organisers to bring events to the Shire.
		12.8.5	Leverage opportunities to value add to events and generate positive media coverage for the Shire.
12.9	Accommodation - Diversify and improve accommodation available within the Shire.	12.9.1	Support the development / expansion / upgrading of accommodation in the Shire's towns and villages.
		12.9.2	Continue to improve and promote commercial and free camping facilities and opportunities within the Shire, and explore opportunities to leverage the caravan and touring RV markets.
		12.9.3	Explore options to provide cabin / permanent tents at Cranky Rock Reserve.
		12.9.4	Encourage and support the establishment of farm stay and B&B accommodation.
		12.9.5	Encourage / promote the listing of suitable residential properties on on-line directories such as Stayz and Air BnB.
		12.9.6	Encourage accommodation operators to increase their on-line presence, including updating their websites so that they are semantic search and mobile friendly and offer on-line (real time) booking facilities.
12.10	Provide comprehensive and accessible information on the Shire at all stages in the 'path to purchase'.	12.10.1	Develop a Shire-wide tourism website and Visitor Guide, providing comprehensive information on the Shire and encouraging visitors to explore each of the towns and villages. Ensure that the website is linked to other 'touch points' including the Council and touring route websites.
		12.10.2	Continue to operate the VICs in Bingara and Warialda, furthering developing them as attractions in their own right, showcasing local industries and producers, and featuring and selling local products.
		12.10.3	Progressively improve promotional, directional and interpretative signage throughout the Shire, including providing information boards and event signage at strategic locations.
		12.10.4	Continue to update and improve promotional (hard-copy and on-line) material with key brochures and maps downloadable from the tourism websites.
		12.10.5	Continue to up-date Shire product and events on the NSW Connect / STDW and other relevant third party data bases and websites.
12.11	Effectively market and promote the Shire.	12.11.1	Provide funds and resources to market and promote the Shire.
		12.11.2	Maintain strategic alliances with DNSW, Country NSW RTO, NE-NW Tourism and Touring Route Marketing Groups and participate in cooperative marketing and promotional activities and campaigns.
		12.11.3	Continue to pursue cost-effective public relations and on-line / digital marketing and promotional activities.
Other Sectors			
12.12	Retail & Commercial - Encourage innovation and skills development in the retail & commercial sectors.	12.12.1	Endeavour to access programs and/or to source grant funding for training and up-skilling business owners, including courses on business planning, customer service, staff training, merchandising, shop window and merchandise display, marketing and use of digital technology for sales and marketing.
		12.12.2	Encourage all businesses to have a comprehensive website, and leverage on-line trading, social media and marketing opportunities.
		12.12.3	Encourage businesses to participate in the RDA Northern Inland digital marketing activities.
		12.12.4	Explore options for strategic and cooperative marketing and promotion, increasing the effectiveness of marketing dollars spent by local businesses.

Strategies		Actions	
		12.12.5	Support the Warialda Chamber / business operators to implement creative marketing activities that encourage residents to shop locally and to attract residents from surrounding LGAs to the Shire.
12.13	Health Care & Social Assistance – continue to improve access to services.	12.13.1	Advocate for continued improvement in health, aged care and social assistance services, programs and facilities.
		12.13.2	Participate in relevant initiatives from the State Government and Hunter-New England Health to attract and retain health care professionals to the Shire / Region.
		12.13.3	Ensure that facilities and services in the Shire are adequate to support aging in place.
		12.13.4	Advocate for the expansion of the Multipurpose Health Centres and aged care facilities to provide more beds for aged and palliative care to meet growing demand for beds from the local community.
		12.13.5	Encourage the development of Over 55’s housing and supported aged care accommodation in Bingara and Warialda.
		12.13.6	Explore options to expand child care facilities within the Shire, including providing access to Long Day Care and Before and After School Care.
12.14	Extractive Industries	12.14.1	Explore likely future demand for hardrock aggregate within the Shire and surrounding region, including demand from the development of the Inland Rail line, and opportunities to use resources in the Shire to capitalise on the growing demand.
		12.14.2	Encourage value-adding to hardrock, sand and other materials extracted in the Shire.



Strategic Imperative 5: Attract new residents, businesses, investment and economic activities.

The strategic location of Gwydir Shire, the affordability of land and premises, the availability of supporting infrastructure, diverse scenery and rural lifestyle contribute to make the Gwydir Shire an attractive location for business investment.

Council will:

- Leverage opportunities to showcase and market the attributes of the Shire to potential residents and investors.
- Provide advice and assistance to those interested in exploring what the Shire has to offer.
- Investigate and pursue development and investment opportunities.

Strategies

Strategy 13: Target new residents

Strategy 14: Target and pursue new businesses, investment and economic activities

Strategies		Actions	
Strategy 13: Target new residents			
13.1	Encourage people working in the Shire to reside locally.	13.1.1	Identify activities (eg Feedlots, schools) which have staff living in outside the Shire and endeavour to understand why and explore whether there are opportunities for staff to relocate to the Shire.
		13.1.2	Work with businesses that are looking to expand (eg Feedlots) to remove barriers to accommodating staff locally.
13.2	Encourage visitors to the Shire to relocate to / invest in the Shire.	13.2.1	Continue to promote business and investment opportunities through the VICs. Consider including a jobs board at the VIC, and also some 'success' stories.
		13.2.2	Explore opportunities to encourage more engagement between visitors and the local community – eg undertaking some volunteer work at the Living Classroom.
13.3	Endeavour to attract people who are self-sufficient.	13.3.1	Explore opportunities to accommodate migrants and refugees, ex-Defence staff on pensions, self-employed trades people etc.
Strategy 14: Target and pursue new businesses, investment and economic activities			
14.1	Formulate the framework for business attraction.	14.1.1	Investigate possible business attraction incentives and formulate a Business Assistance Policy to clearly articulate the support Council can offer new businesses and investors and the assessment criteria.
14.2	Leverage opportunities.	14.2.1	Produce investment, business and resident attraction promotional material.
		14.2.2	Promote that Gwydir Shire is open for business.
		14.2.3	Assist and support potential investors, providing information, advice, identifying potential sites etc.
		14.2.4	Continue to participate in RDA's 'Come on Inland' campaign and the Namoi Council Joint Organisation Investment Prospectus and allied marketing and promotional activities.

Strategies		Actions	
		14.2.5	Participate in forums, expos, trade missions, marketing campaigns and other activities organised by State and Regional organisations that have the potential to bring new businesses / investment into the Region / Shire.
		14.2.6	Explore opportunities to leverage Council’s Sister City Relationships.
		14.2.7	Identify regional businesses that are expanding and explore whether the Shire could be a potential location for a branch / outlet.
		14.2.8	Investigate the potential of new / emerging activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive livestock and poultry production • Greenhouse vegetable production • Agri businesses – eg feed mill, processing and packaging • Technology-based and Creative Industries • Extractive Industries • Renewable Energy and Carbon Farming • Utilisation of waste products (eg pelletising manure) • Inland Railway
14.3	Pursue development and investment opportunities.	14.3.1	Continue to pursue the Circular Economy Proposal.
		14.3.2	Work with Yammacona Sands to progress the concept of establishing a processing / manufacturing plant to value-add to the sand extracted.



7. MONITORING OUR PROGRESS

The progress and success of the Economic Development Strategy will be evaluated by:

- Completion of the implementation actions listed in the Strategy.
- Monitoring key statistics that measure changes in population, visitation, business activity and employment.

Outcome	Measure	Target	Benchmark/s	Data Source
Population Growth	Resident Population	Increase to 5,600 by 2020	5,258 2016 Census	ABS Population Census - 2016
	Estimated Population		ABS Population Statistics	ABS Population Census - 2021
Increase visitation to the Shire	Visitation to the Bingara and Warialda VICs	Increase to over 20,00 within 3 years	16,899 (2016)	VIC statistics
	Domestic Overnight Visitors	50,000 pa	38,000 (2007)	Destination NSW – LGA Visitor Profiles
	Visitor Expenditure			
	Event attendance	2% increase within 3 years	Create bench mark	Council data base
Growth in productivity	Gross Regional Product	1% per annum	\$239.7 million (2016)	RDA Northern Inland - Remplan
	Value-Add	1% per annum	\$213.59 million (2016)	RDA Northern Inland - Remplan
	Worker Productivity (GRP / Worker)	Over \$160,000 by 2020	\$154,150	RDA Northern Inland - Remplan
Improved business and investor confidence	Number of Businesses	Net gain of 5 additional businesses within 3 years.	801 (2016)	National Economic Indicators for Local Government Areas – ID Profile.
	Number of existing businesses that have expanded	5 businesses expanding within 3 years.	New measure.	Council data base
	New Business Start-ups	2 / year	New measure	Council Data Base
	Business Exits		New measure	Council Data Base
Job Creation	Number of people employed	2,350 within 3 years	2,286 (Sept 2016)	Department of Employment – Small Area Labour Market Statistics.
	Unemployment Rate	Below 6.0% within 3 years	6.7% (September 2016)	Department of Employment – Small Area Labour Market Statistics.

8. CONTACTS - GWYDIR SHIRE



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENQUIRIES

Gwydir Shire Council

www.gwydirshire.com
 Email: mail@gwydir.gwydir.nsw.gov.au
 Telephone: (02) 6724 2000

Locked Bag 5, Bingara NSW 2404
 Bingara Office: 33 Maitland Street, Bingara NSW 2404
 Warialda Office: 52 Hope Street, Warialda NSW 2402

THINKING OF VISITING GWYDIR SHIRE

Bingara Visitor Information Centre

Roxy Theatre
 74 Maitland Street, Bingara
 Tel: (02) 6724 0066 or 1300 659 919
 Email: bingaraturism@gwydir.nsw.gov.au
 Web: www.bingara.com.au

Warialda Visitor Information Centre

Corner of Gwydir Highway and Holden Street, Warialda
 Tel: (02) 6729 0046
 Email: warialdatourism@gwydir.nsw.gov.au
 Web: www.warialdansw.com.au



APPENDIX 1 – Retailing in Small Rural Towns

Retailing and service businesses in most small rural towns are struggling. In many towns, long established retailers are at or approaching retirement age with no succession plan in place. Businesses are often not selling, with the owner walking away and the building becoming vacant. The number of new business start-ups is generally low, as is demand for traditional shop fronts. Banks are reluctant to provide loans to purchase or establish a retail business in small rural towns.

Business models are changing with the traditional 'shop' becoming less relevant. There are a number of successful business models that are emerging in small towns, with these including:

- Clustering of two or more businesses into one premise. For example, Mink and Me in Coonamble incorporates 4 businesses – a lifestyle shop, café, beautician and hairdresser. The rent, property and utility costs are split reducing individual operating costs. All four business operators work in the business, taking bookings for each other, helping out with coffee, sales etc. The rosters are flexible, enabling the business owners to work around school and other commitments, while at the same time ensuring that the business is open 6 days per week.
- Sharing of responsibility. 2-3 adjoining shops are linked with internal doors. During busy periods each of the shops is manned and the front doors are open. During quiet periods, the operators take turns to staff the businesses with only one front door and the internal doors open. This enables the shops to trade 7 days per week, while allowing the business operators to only work a few days per week. This model works well for women with young children.
- Diversifying products and services – rather than being single purpose traders, businesses are diversifying and carrying a number of lines – eg combining lifestyle shops with boutiques and café. The IGA in Bingara has adopted this approach offering a supermarket, white goods and homewares and a hardware outlet, likewise the Croppa Creek Store is a general store, rural goods supplier, post office and eatery.
- Diversifying by developing on-line businesses, often selling products that are not sold through their store. For example, a clothing shop in Cessnock also has an on-line business selling accessories for 'pampered' dogs, while a café in Jugiong has a number of on-line businesses including selling quality linen.
- No shop front, instead opting for online retail businesses supported by stalls at markets and events. Customers have the choice of having their purchases home-delivered or picked up at the markets. Gwydir Shire has a number of on-line retail outlets, including 'Dust 'n' Boots' and 'Romeo and Madden'.
- On-line shop as part of the business mix. This is done exceptionally well by the Nundle Woollen Mill with the on-line shop generating most of the sales, with the Mill selling nationally and globally.
- Businesses aligning themselves with larger businesses in surrounding centres, to become distributors and/or preferred service supplies.

APPENDIX 2 – Building Capacity in the Villages

The village communities within Gwydir Shire are strong and resilient, but need support.

Village Dynamics

Villages are the service centres for the surrounding rural areas. They provide a limited range of services (shop, post office, licensed pub or club), as well as a social hub. Rural property owners and workers gravitate to the villages for social interaction. A strong, vibrant village builds community cohesion and resilience. While the primary market for village businesses and licensed venues are local residents, dollars spent by visitors contributes to on-going viability. The villages within the Shire have developed a number of events to attract visitors and generate revenue for the shops, pubs and clubs and provide funds to maintain infrastructure such as community halls and the recreation / sporting grounds. Organising events also brings communities together and provides opportunities to socialise and to meet new people.

While the communities are prepared to drive their events, undertake fund raisers and organise working bees, they do need support. Most of the village infrastructure is old and in poor to reasonable condition and some of the management structures in place are not optimal. Opportunities to assist the villages include:

- Build the touring markets – through the development of touring routes and scenic drives that encourage travellers to explore the Shire and pass through the villages, improving camping / caravan facilities.
- Grow the event markets – improving the infrastructure to support events and provide assistance with event marketing and promotion.
- Provide assistance with identifying and applying for grants.
- Capital investment in infrastructure and facilities.

With the sealing of the Croppa – Moree Road, the potential to expand the feedlots and the opportunities to leverage the development of the Inland Rail Corridor, the outlook for Croppa Creek and North Star are positive. After years of drought and structural changes in agriculture, the population of these villages has declined as has village infrastructure and facilities. These communities need support to leverage the opportunities that are emerging. The development of an alternative route to the Newell would help to build the touring market.

Croppa Creek – North Star – An Alternative Route to the Newell Highway



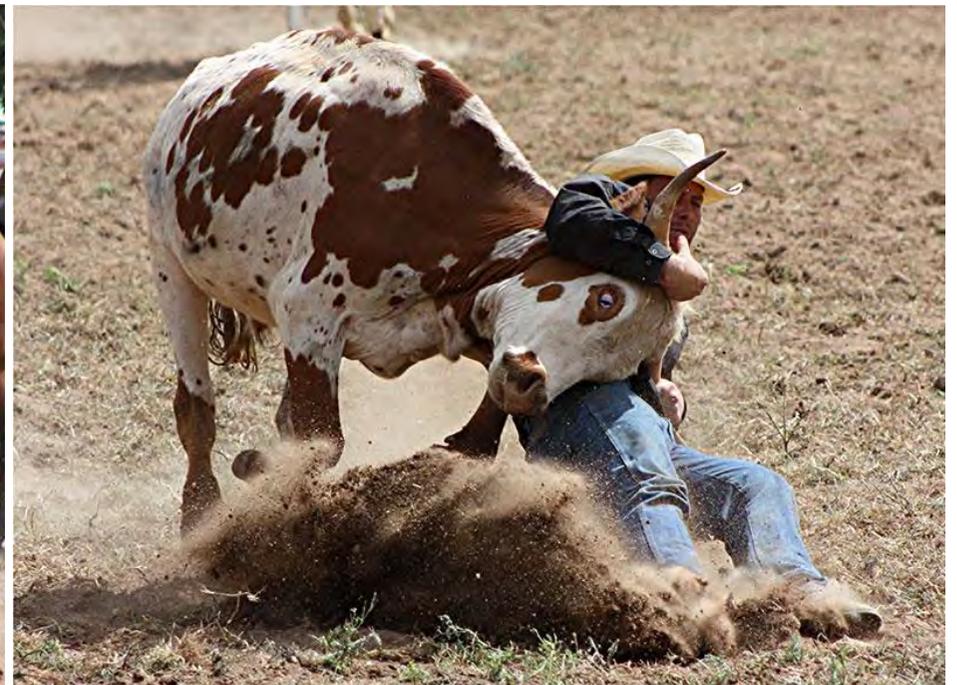
Signpost the Croppa – Moree / Croppa Creek Road as an alternative route to the Newell Highway between Moree and Goondiwindi

Opportunities and issues that the villages have identified plus the support require, is summarised in the following Table.

Issue / Priority	Works / Assistance Required
Coolatai	
Improve services in the village.	Investigate opportunities to provide a general store / convenience goods outlet and petrol.
Continue to improve the presentation of the camping area / reserve surrounding the Hall.	Planting of shade trees. Use the notice-board (currently locked with nothing in it) to provide information on the village and surrounding area, including maps and information on the Dthinna Dthinnawan and Burrell Yurrul National Parks. Provide information / directory on the rare / unusual birds, plantigales, burrowing frogs and other animals in the area. Improve the presentation of the riverbank (currently overgrown with weeds) and provide an access path down the river bank. Landscape around the map of Australia – develop this into a feature. Explore options for featuring Coolatai grass and provide interpretation of how the grass was used by the Aboriginal people. Install a donation box, with the money applied to maintaining the Hall. Signpost the camping area – using the ‘tent’ icon. Explore options for incorporating a historic tractor into the reserve to promote the annual tractor pull.
Capitalise more effectively on the Common.	Signpost the Common from Warialda Road.
No houses available for rent.	Explore options for walking / driving trails, interpretation etc.
Assess demand for dwellings and explore options from bringing properties on-line.	
Croppa Creek	
Improve access to Croppa Creek for both visitors, workers and rural residents.	Tourism route signage from the Newell Highway – alternative touring route.
Increase the capacity of the recreation ground to hold events and provide facilities for the touring caravan and RV markets. Facilities need to cater for up to 500.	Upgrade the Croppa Creek – North Star and Croppa Creek – Warialda (Baroma Downs) Roads. Resolve land tenure issues – consolidate the various Trusts into one Trust and prepare a management plan for the Reserve. Need help with grant applications. Expand the playground. Provide outdoor gym equipment to support residents and the football team (the Crows). Upgrade kitchen in the Hall – use as a canteen. Provide a camping area at the ground. Provide a good toilet and shower block to service the hall and recreation ground. Provide a dump Point for touring vans. Signpost and market the camp site.
Address accommodation capacity constraints – to facilitate the expansion of the Myola Feedlot, cater for travellers and seasonal workers, and capitalise on the construction of the Inland Railway line.	Explore options to provide both visitor / short term accommodation as well as rental accommodation. Possibly subdivide / develop residential blocks in the village and bring in demountable / kit housing (for families) and self-contained cabin accommodation.

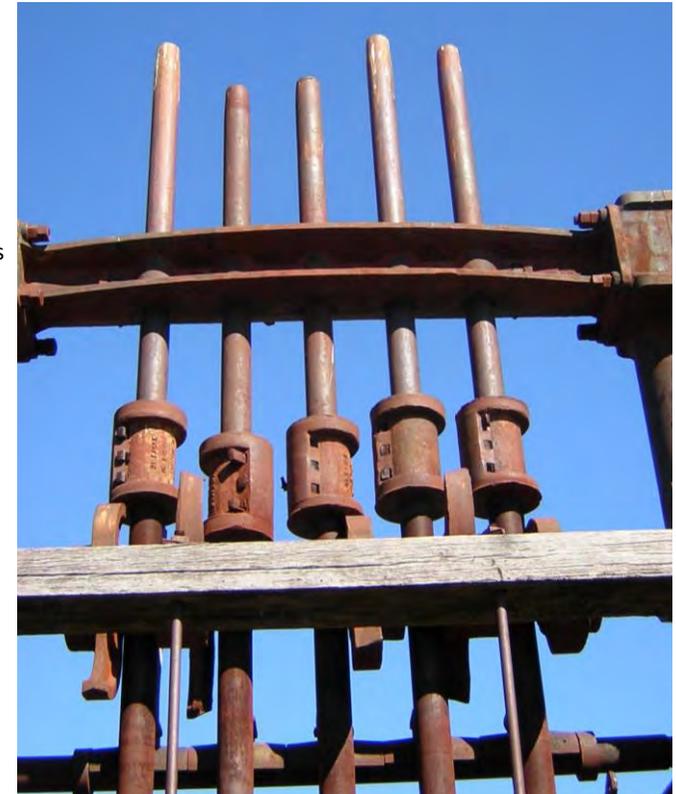
Issue / Priority	Works / Assistance Required
Continue to improve the Bowling Club.	New roof is needed - \$32,000. Shade over the bowling green. Lawn mower (\$12,000) for the golf course, recreation area, club grounds etc.
Truck and machinery display – there is potential to turn this into a ‘quirky’ attraction for the town.	Assistance with ideas for building on this display and creating a quirky tourist attractions / photo opportunity.
Gravesend	
Continue to improve the presentation of the town through tree planting and landscaping to create a very positive first impression and enhance liveability, with the objectives of encouraging people to relocate to the village and visitors to stop in the town.	Drip irrigation for existing trees. Additional tree planting – with these also irrigated.
Improve road access to Gravesend Public School – increase safety.	Upgrade of Gwydir Street – widen and reseal.
To re-open the Gravesend Museum and build visitation.	Assistance with curating the exhibition / presentation of the Museum. Signage. Marketing and Promotion.
Continue to improve the Ezzy’s Crossing reserve on the Gwydir River.	Continue to improve visitor facilities.
To keep the Hall open and available for community and other events – the community is struggling to pay power and gas bills.	Additional fee-paying activities and/or funding assistance to meet the cost of utilities, maintenance etc.
To improve facilities at the Pony Club Grounds (on Dunrobyn farming property). These grounds are used regularly for local and regional pony club and horse sport activities, with the town hosting the State Championships in March 2017.	New toilets and showers.
To improve facilities at the Recreation Ground. The Ground is used for a number of events including the Tractor Pull and Horse Sports – Teaming Penning.	Replace the tennis court fence. Shade Tree Planting.
Update signage 	Replace the Gravesend Rodeo (2013) sign with event signage to promote up-coming events in the village.
North Star	
Drive visitation through the development of touring routes.	Signage from Newell Highway at Boggabilla - to Tamworth. Alternate touring route to the Newell signage. Improved signage to North Star on the Bruxner Highway.
Improve roads for visitors, freight and local movements.	Continue to upgrade and widen the North Star Road to Warialda. Continue to improve the North Star – Croppa Creek Road.
Improve retail services.	Provide a 24 hour, card operated fuel outlet.

Issue / Priority	Works / Assistance Required
North Star Sports Club – further improvements.	Encourage local businesses to revamp.
North Star Caravan Park attracts minimal use, with most caravanners and RVs staying at the Sports Club.	Refurbish the interior of the Club. Establish a Cross Country Course – to enable the village to attract more equestrian events.
North Star Caravan Park attracts minimal use, with most caravanners and RVs staying at the Sports Club.	Assess the need for a caravan park at North Star, given the propensity to camp at the Club. The Caravan Park may be more suited to an overflow camping area for large events at the Sports Ground. In the Caravan Park is to remain, provide new signage.
Upper Horton	
Host 5 major events per year + rodeo school, horse sale, pony club district camp + mini-camp, annual farmer’s day (20-30 days per year use). Sports Ground infrastructure is at capacity and the Hall is in poor condition.	Improve facilities at the Sports Ground: New bore, tank and pump to service the Sports Ground – estimated cost \$50,000 - \$60,000. Additional shower and toilet block. Mobile phone coverage – for safety purposes. Small shed /demountable for stock-handlers. Improve facilities at the Hall with the kitchen and floor being priorities.
Improve access and visibility and encourage tourists to come through the village.	Improve access – seal the road to Moree. Improved directional signage (eg intersection of Eulourie and Horton Road). Develop scenic drives from Bingara and Barraba – include a link between Upper Horton and Horton Falls – ensure that this route is effectively signposted.

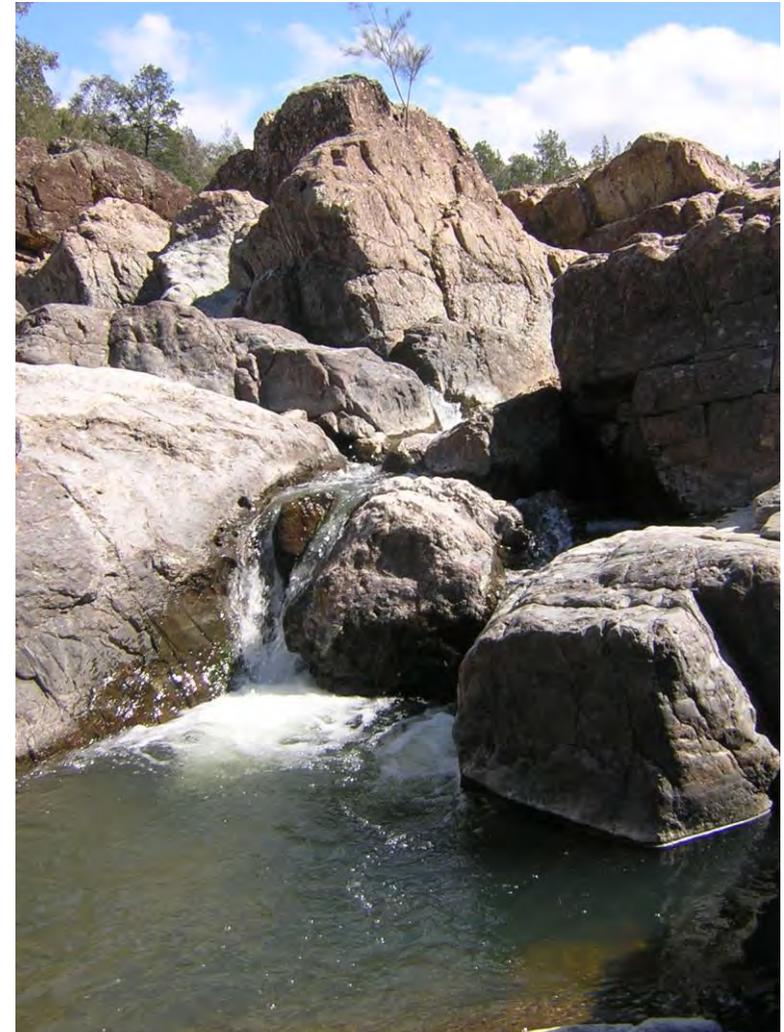


REFERENCES

ABARES (2015) and (2016) Agriculture & Forestry in the New England and North West Region of NSW
Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) Agricultural Census 2010-2011
Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) Census of Population & Dwellings 2006 and 2011
Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) SEIFA Indexes
Australian Bureau of Statistics (2015) Building Approvals by LGA
Australian Department of Employment – Small Area Labour Market Statistics
Australian Rural Road Group Inc Going Nowhere: The Rural Local Road Crisis – its National Significance and Proposed Reforms
Australian Rural Road Group Inc (2011) Worth Feeding – Studies of Rural Local Road Efficiency
Bingara and District Vision 20/20 Imagine Bingara
Bingara and District Vision 20/20 Bingara Strikes Program – Community Strategic Plan 2005
Border Regional Organisation of Council (2014) Inland Rail Submission
Brisbane Wellcamp Airport (2016) Wellcamp Business Park
Commonwealth of Australia (2009) NSW Grain Freight Review.
Department of Infrastructure and Transport (2012) National Land Freight Strategy - A Place for Freight
Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (2013) Darling Downs Regional Plan
Destination NSW (2014) LGA Visitor Profile – New England North West Region & NE-NW LGA Profiles
Essential Energy (2015) Distribution Annual Planning Report
Food Leaders Australia (2016) Western Downs – Opportunities Information Pack
GrainCorp NSW (2016) Project Regeneration – Strategy & Project Update
Gwydir Shire Council (2005) Crooble Community Program - Draft Community Strategic Plan
Gwydir Shire Council (2005) Grow Croppa Creek - Draft Community Strategic Plan
Gwydir Shire Council (2005) Cultivate Coolatai Program – Draft Community Strategic Plan
Gwydir Shire Council (2005) Gravesend Community Program – Draft Community Strategic Plan
Gwydir Shire Council (2005) North Star Shines Program – Draft Community Strategic Plan
Gwydir Shire Council (2005) U Beauty Upper Horton Program – Draft Community Strategic Plan
Gwydir Shire Council (2005) Warialda Works Program – Draft Community Strategic Plan
Gwydir Shire Council (2011) Transport Asset Management Plan
Gwydir Shire Council (2011) Water Supply Asset Management Plan
Gwydir Shire Council (2014) Community Strategic Plan 2014-2024
Gwydir Shire Council (2015) Delivery Program 2015-2019 and Operational Plan 2015-2016
Gwydir Shire Council / Bingara & District Vision 20/20 – Our Place Country Town Living 2025 Forum and Workshop Outcomes
Gwydir Shire Council / Bingara & District Vision 20/20 Vision 2030 Summit Notes
Gwydir Shire Council / Jenny Rand & Associates (2006) Gwydir Shire Tourism Plan 2006-2011
Gwydir Shire Council / Mongard J Bingara Town Strategy
Gwydir Shire Council / Mongard J (2008) Warialda Community Plan
Gwydir Shire Council (2016) Gwydir Shire Council 2012-2016
Hon, Kevin Humphries MP (2103) Western NSW – Regional and Local Road Plan
Id the population experts (2016) National Economic Indicators for Local Government Areas 2014/15
Mitchell J (2006) The Gwydir Learning Region Model: An Independent Valuation



Namoi Joint Organisation of Councils / Regional Australia Institute (2015) Shaping the Future in the Namoi
 NBN (2016) Super-connected Lifestyle Locations
 NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs (2014) OCHRE – NSW Government Plan for Aboriginal Affairs
 NSW Government (2016) NSW Making it Happen – Premier’s and State Priorities
 NSW Planning and Environment /SGS Economics & Planning (2015) Housing Market Analysis for NE-NW Region
 NSW Planning and Environment (2016) Draft New England - North West Regional Plan 2036
 NSW Planning & Environment (2016) NSW and LGA Population & Household Projections
 NSW Trade & Investment (2015) Economic Profile: New England – North West
 NSW Trade & Investment Value of Agricultural Production Data – Interactive Spread Sheet
 Realestate.com Median House Prices and Rent Levels – by Locality
 Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland NSW / Peece PTY Ltd (2012) Northern Inland Region of NSW
 Freight Study
 Regional Development Australia Darling Downs and South West (2013) Regional Road Map
 Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland NSW (2013) Industrial Land Survey
 Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland NSW Northern Inland Digital Economy Strategy for Business
 Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland NSW (2016) Northern Inland Regional Investment Profile
 Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland NSW (2016) Regional Plan 2016-2017
 Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland NSW (2016) Namoi Investment Prospectus – North West NSW
 SKM (2013) Environmental Impact Assessment for Proposed Increase in Annual Production from Runnymede
 Quarry
 SKM (2016) Environmental Impact Statement – Gunyerwarildi Station Feedlot
 Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise – Agricultural Capability Profile
 Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise – Toowoomba, Australia – High Quality Food and Agriculture Exporter
 TransGrid (2014) Network Development Strategy
 Transport for NSW / Price Waterhouse Coopers (2015) Containerised Cargo Demand Assessment Northern NSW
 Transport & Infrastructure Council (2015) National Remote and Regional Transport Strategy
 Transport for NSW (2012) NSW Long Term Transport Masterplan – Western Region Forum Outcomes
 Transport for NSW Origin & Destination of Freight in NSW – by LGA
 Transport for NSW (2013) NSW Freight and Ports Strategy
 Transport for NSW (2015) Newell Highway Corridor Strategy 2015
 University of Southern Queensland Brisbane West Wellcamp Airport – Perishable Goods Facility
 Wheeler L, Wong S, Farrell J and Wong I (2013) Learning as a Driver for Change, Australian Centre of Excellence
 for Local Government, UTS



PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Page	Position	Description	Source
Cover	Left	Wheat Paddock, Golden Triangle	Grace Cobb http://twitter.com/missgracemay
	Top Right	Roxy Theatre Cafe	Gwydir Shire Council
	Second Right	Jackaroo & Jillaroo School, Bingara	www.jackaroojillarooldownunder.com
	Third Right	Award-winning Sheep	www.wiltipollsheep.com.au
	Bottom Right	Cotton Picking	www.wordpress.com
Contents		Ceramic Break Sculpture Park	www.visitnsw.com
2		Upper Horton Rodeo	www.bingara.com
3		Roxy Theatre, Bingara	Jenny Rand & Associates
5	Far Left	Warialda Off-Road 200	www.flickerriver.com
5	Left	North Star Show Jumping Classic	www.moreechampion.com.au
5	Right	Bingara Easterfish	www.bingara.com
5	Far Right	Upper Horton Pony Express	ww.coffsktm.com.au
6		Grain Receival Site, Crooble	Jenny Rand & Associates
9		Gunyerwarildi Feedlot	www.beefcentral.com
10		Grain Farm near Crooble – on farm storage	Jenny Rand & Associates
11	Left	Honey, produced by Ruby Creek Farm	Jenny Rand & Associates
11	Right	Barley Harves, Tamaroo, North Star	www.goondiwindiargus.com.au
12	Top	Ian McDoull, Dunbeacon, Upper Horton	www.theland.com.au
12	Bottom	Irrigated crops, North Star	Jenny Rand & Associates
13	Top Left	On-line clothing company, DustnBoots	www.dustnboots.com
13	Top Centre	Spoilt Warialda	Spoilt Warialda@Spoiltwialda Instagram
13	Top Middle	On-line skin care producer, Rome and Madden Warialda	www.romeandmadden.com
13	Bottom	Local Retail & Producer Brands	
14		Fishing on the Gwydir River	www.outandaboutwithkids.com.au
15	Left	Warialda Engineering and Welding	www.inverelltimes.com.au
15	Top Right	Warialda Engineering and Welding	www.industry.nsw.gov.au
15	Bottom Right	Runnymede Quarry	www.johnstoneconcrete.com.au
19	Top	Cattle Road Train	www.gymeagary's web blog
19	Bottom	Grain Train	www.nbnnews.com.au
20		Motor cycle touring, Bingara	www.bmwspportstouring.com
22		Gwydir Learning Centre, Hospitality Kitchen, Roxy Theatre	www.bingara.com
23	Left	Warialda Main Street	www.gpsynergy.com.au
23	Right	Bingara Main Street	www.travelling-australia.info
25		Wheat harvest on Tullinga Downs, North Star	www.theland.com.au
30	Top Left	Wellcamp Airport, Toowoomba	www.toowoombaenterprisehub.com.au
30	Bottom Left	Loading Sheep, Bingara	https://fullyloaded.com.au

Page	Position	Description	Source
30	Right	Export of Amarula Dorpers from WellCamp Airport	www.amaruladorpers.com
36	Left	Gwydir River Trails Ride, Bingara	www.bingara.com
36	Right	North Star Trail Ride	ww.visitnsw.com
38		Camping along the Gwydir River, Bingara	Jenny Rand & Associates
42	Left	Warialda Trades Training Centre, Gwydir Learning Region	Jenny Rand & Associates
42	Right	The Living Classroom	www.bingara.com.au
45	Left	Camping on the Gwydir River, Bingara	www.visitnsw.com
45	Right	Warialda High School – Agricultural Students	www.warialda-hschool.nsw.edu.au
46		Jac Wagyu Cattle	www.theland.com.au
47		On-farm Storage, Croppa Creek	Jenny Rand & Associates
48		The structure of the proposed Circular Economy Project	Gwydir Shire Council
49	Left	Merino sheep	www.raywhiterural.com.au
49	Centre & Right	Dorpers - Amarua Stud	www.amaruladorpers.com
50		Horton Valley Premium Pork	www.northerndailyleader.com.au
51		Camping, Copeton Waters State Park	www.bingara.com
52		Cranky Rock Reserve	www.newagemultimedia.com
53	Top	Masterplan, The Living Classroom	www.bingara.com.au
53	Bottom Left	The Living Classroom	www.bingara.com.au
53	Bottom Right	The Living Classroom	www.bingara.com.au
54	Top Left	Fossicking, Bingara	www.bingara.nsw.gov.au
54	Top Right	Locally-made Condiments, Warialda	Jenny Rand & Associates
54	Bottom Right	Local and regional gourmet products, sold by Meat on Maitland, Bingara	www.bethelfarmml.com.au
55		Roxy Theatre	www.bingara.nsw.gov.au
56	Top Right	Warialda Seed Cleaners	www.wheris.com
56	Bottom Right	Murray Cod, Bingara Fish Hatchery	www.bingara.com.au
56	Bottom Left	Roger Moore Automotive – new apprentice	www.warialdastandard.com.au
57	Top	Myola Feedlot, Croppa Creek	www.bindareebeef.com.au
57	Bottom	Cotton Harvesting	You Tube
58		Gwydir River, Bingara	www.bingara.com.au
60		Coolatai Tractor Pull	www.aroundyou.com.au
61		Street Parade Orange Festival, Bingara	www.bingara.com.au
64	Right	Agricultural Students Warialda High School	www.warialda-hschool.nsw.edu.au
64	Centre	Home Economic Students, Warialda High School	www.warialda-hschool.nsw.edu.au
71		Cattle, Horton Valley	Jenny Rand & Associates
73	Left	Croppa Creek Entry Signs	Jenny Rand & Associates
73	Right	McGregor Gourlay Agricultural Services, Croppa Creek	Jenny Rand & Associates
76		Stamper Battery, All National Hill	Jenny Rand & Associates (top) www.bngara.com (bottom)
77		Rocky Creek Glacial Area	Jenny Rand & Associates

