

Our reference: 12/595
Your reference: F2012/00884

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16 January 2013

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Mr D. J. Jack
Acting Director
Land Management
Wyong Shire Council
PO Box 20
WYONG NSW 2259

Contact Dennis Mahoney
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Dear Mr Jack

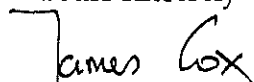
SPECIAL RATE VARIATION APPLICATION - WYONG SHIRE COUNCIL

Thank you for your letter dated 21 December 2012 setting out Wyong Shire Council's proposed timetable for community engagement and the dates that you propose to follow in submitting your application for a special variation for 2013/14.

The Tribunal discussed your proposal at its meeting on 16 January. In light of the changes to the Guidelines for special variations regarding integrated planning and reporting, we have accepted the revised timetable outlined in your letter.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr Dennis Mahoney on 9290 8494.

Yours sincerely



James Cox PSM
Chief Executive Officer
and Full Time Member

DJJ:DA/Mr David Jack
F2012/00884

21 December 2012

Mr Jim Cox
Chief Executive
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
Level 8, 1 Market Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

SRV Application – Wyong Shire Council

Dear Mr Cox



Thank you for meeting with us on Tuesday to discuss the quandary that Wyong could encounter if some flexibility can't be identified in making the transition to the new Division of Local Government's Guidelines for Special Rate Variation Applications.

We really appreciate the constructive approach you took to the discussions and we understand the difficulties that your team is encountering in managing the tight timeframes imposed by the introduction of the Guidelines, at least as they may affect Wyong's need to pursue financial recovery.

Our discussion centred around the key dates that impact the assessment process and we understand that IPaRT would accept an SRV s508A application that met the timetable detailed below – notwithstanding that our application must stand on its merits. You may be assured that we understand that IPaRT views the impending Wyong application to be a document that will require significant assessment resources.

The timetable as discussed:-

	2013	Event
	2 nd January	Final SRV specific public consultation Phase III commences.
	15 th February	Final SRV specific consultation Phase III ends
	27 th February	Council will resolve:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to submit an SRV application to place the draft Wyong Council Strategic Plan (incorporating the IP&R requirement and full detail to support the SRV application) on public exhibition.

	28 th February	WSC supplies IPaRT with draft WSC Strategic Plan and all detail of the intended application as available (specifically the increase to be applied for).
	4 th March	Exhibition commences Wyong Council Strategic Plan.
	11 th March	Wyong Shire Council lodges SRV Application complete except for a final adopted WSC Strategic Plan
	1 st April	Exhibition closed for submissions.
	10 th April	Council will consider submissions to the Strategic Plan Adopt the Strategic Plan
	11 th April	WSC notifies IPaRT of any relevant change to the Strategic Plan as they may affect the SRV Application
	15 th April	WSC supplies final WSC Strategic Plan (incorporating the IP&R requirement and full detail to support the SRV application) on public exhibition.
	May – June	IPaRT announce its decision.

Our Council will have to formally confirm these significant changes to Wyong's IP&R program are acceptable as the proposed timelines shorten the time councillors have to consider what is, a very important annual document to the community. We expect that Council will resolve accordingly on 23 January 2013.

Your confirmation of the timetable by return will be appreciated.

Once again, we appreciate the concessions put forward by you, Alison and your team on behalf of the Tribunal and are committed to ensuring that any application we make robust and compliant with all requirements.

Yours faithfully



D J Jack
Director (Acting)
LAND MANAGEMENT

c.c. Ms Alison Milne, Mr Nick Singer, Mr Dennis Mahoney, Mr Michael Whittaker

GOSFORD CITY COUNCIL / WYONG SHIRE COUNCIL JOINT RESOURCING

Organisational:

- CCROC: Central Coast Regional Organisation of Council.

Water & Sewer:

- Through the *Central Coast Water Corporation Act, 2006* the Councils have agreed to the appointment of a Board of Directors and the commencement of the corporation.

Support Activities:

- Tendering and contract administration for projects and consultancy services for the Gosford Wyong Councils Joint Water Authority relating to the joint headworks,
- Water Supply Planning / Management through the Gosford-Wyong Councils' Water Authority
- Staffing involving one Manager from each Council, for the work on implementing the Central Coast Water Corporation is undertaken by both Councils. Consultancy work is undertaken by one Council on behalf of both the Councils.
- Joint staffing of the Mardi to Mangrove Link Project for the duration of the project
- Collation of both Councils' water supply and sewerage system data (including rainfall, storage and demand) for provision to the Bureau of Meteorology; as required by the Commonwealth Water Act 2008 is undertaken by the Councils jointly.
- Gosford City Council and Wyong Shire Council tendered for a joint Headworks Database to supply data to the BOM, project involves W&S staff, Joint water staff, IM&T staff and WSC staff
- The two Councils through the Joint Water Authority undertake water communication and education activities through shared staffing, including:
 - Joint media liaison and releases,
 - Community events (e.g. Flora Festival),
 - School based education programs (e.g. Watertight),
 - Maintenance and development of website(s)
 - Information display boards, pamphlets and advertisements
 - Major project updates
- Development of a joint water model for both Councils for water headwork's and also a system model;
- Ensuring joint operational practices and coordination where appropriate
- Bulk water transfers to and from Wyong Shire Council and Gosford City Council (including coordination of water system operations and setups)
- Technical Advisory group for water and sewer operates across the Councils and provides support to the joint Water Authority (transitioning to the Central Coast Water Corporation)
- Central Coast Climate Change Fund
- Sharing of selected water data via Gosford City Council and Wyong Shire Council telemetry systems. Preparation and collaboration on the information submitted to IPART. Commenced work on a joint submission for the next pricing pathway.
- Aligning asset management practices involving Fair Value methodology and Fair Value Policy on Joint Water Assets commenced and alignment of Water and Sewer Asset Management Methodology (Asset Creation, replacement maintenance and operation)

Operational Arrangements:

- Field support both ways if required for urgent works
- Supply of fittings and materials if required urgently
- Formal Boundary Roads and Adjacent Roads Agreement to facilitate maintenance operations and apportionment of funding for Capital Projects, currently under review.
- Ensuring alignment of Sportsground Management Strategy between the Councils
- Spray sealing services for Wyong under a contractual arrangement.
- Implementation of a regional contract for domestic waste services.
- Annual joint funding application to DECCW for grant funding to support the regional advertising campaign for the Household Hazardous Chemical Collection program and a combined contract for the provision of the service
- The Gosford tender for the Alternative Waste Treatment facility and Composting Facility at Woy Woy landfill includes the option for Wyong Council domestic waste.
- Development of the Gosford and Wyong Local Emergency Operations Centre Standing Operating Procedures.

Development:

- SEPP65 Panel - Meetings held alternatively with Wyong Shire Council.
 - The Council holding the meeting provides the administration support, pays the panels and costs.
 - If the Council scheduled to hold the SEPP 65 meeting has a full agenda of items then they hold the meeting.
 - If the Council scheduled to hold the meeting does not have a full agenda then they approach the other Council to see if they would like to participate in a joint panel meeting and if it is a joint meeting the panel and the costs are shared.
- Major Developments – Both Councils advise the other party of any major developments within their area.

Library Services:

- Both libraries permit any resident of the Central Coast to use both Council Libraries.
- Gosford and Wyong Councils share a community information database through a commercial company.

Community Development:

- Crime Prevention Partnership (CPP) – joint State and LG initiative to coordinate activities to reduce crime.
- Road Safety Officer projects are carried out jointly with WSC as whole of Central Coast campaigns.
- The Community and Road Education Scheme (CARES) facility at Palmdale was initially funded by both Councils (supplemented by government grants) and provides broad safety education to many community sectors.
- Joint Event promotion such as International Day of People with a Disability, etc.
- Joint training such as Access to Premises Standards, etc.
- Joint Involvement in the annual Community Congress.
- We also work with each other and other services to organise multicultural events such as Multicultural Services Expo.
- HACC Training Project - Gosford, Wyong and Hunter
- HACC MDS Project - Gosford, Wyong and Hunter
- Central Coast Disability Interagency - Gosford and Wyong
- Central Coast Aged and Disability Association - Gosford and Wyong

- Central Coast Community Congress - a Gosford and Wyong Project
- Joint attendance at interagency meetings such as: Regional Neighbourhood Centres Forum
- Each year the Youth Week Calender is jointly developed and co funded for printing and distribution. The calendar of events is planed collaboratively and this year an EOI for a media partner was undertaken by GCC Youth Services Staff for the Central Coast events of Youth week.

Arts & Culture:

- A joint Regional Cultural Strategy is in development. The councils have created a Draft Framework for Regional Cultural Strategy and mapping of Regional Facilities Network
- The Gosford Regional Gallery staff have had the following involvement with Wyong Shire Council
- Conducted artist open studio events that cover both Gosford and Wyong areas.

Recent Achievements:

- Production of Art Trail Map of the Central Coast, 2008
- Produced the 2006 Report on Visual Arts Venues on the Central Coast.
- Joint Promotion of exhibitions and events - ongoing
- Conducted Professional Development seminars in Wyong 2006 & 2007
- Participation in steering committees for the development of the Pioneer Dairy public art site 2009 and ongoing

Education & Compliance:

- Building Regulation – Joint programs for Swimming pool compliance and auditing with Gosford and Hunter Councils.
- Regulatory Services - Regulatory staff from Gosford City Council, Wyong Shire Council and Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water meet for a compliance officers half day forum six monthly to review enforcement tactics, legislative changes, problem issues.
- Regulatory staff from both Gosford and Wyong Council's attend HCCREMS one day forums two or three times annually with other Hunter Regional Council regulatory staff to share enforcement experiences and discuss legislative issues.
- HCCREMS (Hunter and Central Coast Regional Environmental Management Strategy) Gosford to Taree Council. HCCREMS seeks to facilitate a regional approach to ESD principles by encouraging greater co-operation between Councils, State and Federal Authorities, industry and community groups. In particular, HCCREMS has developed a draft regional compliance policy which is designed to be tailored to each Council's regulatory environment and adopted as an 'umbrella' document to form the framework under which Councils manage issues of Compliance
- RACC (Regional Algal Coordinating Committee) Lower North Coast, Hunter Valley and Central Coast
- Central Coast Environmental Health Steering Committee – Wyong and Gosford Council's and North Sydney Central Coast Public Health Unit.
- Hunter and Central Coast Regions Food Surveillance Group
- Interagency Group on Mosquitoes – Wyong and Gosford Council's and North Sydney Central Coast Public Health Unit.
- Combined North Sydney and Central Coast Council's Immunisation
- Hunter Regional Building Professionals Group - A quarterly meeting hosted by various Hunter Regional Councils which is focussed on Building, Construction and Certification matters.
- Septic Tank Action Group (STAG) - A quarterly meeting of Hunter, Central Coast and Mid North Coast Councils (15 Councils). STAG is an organisation of professionals from the various represented Councils

which meet to formulate and create strategies dealing with technical information, education and policies relating to Septic Tank Systems and promote consistency across the Region.

The following Water Education Programs are funded jointly and operated across the Central Coast:

- Preschools Water Education Program.
- High Schools Water Education Program.
- Central Coast Watertight Primary schools water education program.
- Little Green Steps Preschools Sustainability.

Economic Driving Program:

- An internal driver awareness program is funded by the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water. The Clean Air Grant program is developed, co-ordinated and rolled out by staff from Gosford City Council for the 2 Councils.

Sustainability:

- Wyong is working collaboratively with six other Councils on a joint sustainability project focussed on community education and engagement. It is a collaborative project with Ku-ring-gai, City of Sydney, Orange, Coffs Harbour and Mosman.

Integrated Planning:

- Integrated Planning and Reporting Working Group: All Central Coast and Hunter Councils
- Central Coast Regional Community Strategic Plan: in formulation
- Central Coast Quality of Life Survey – run jointly with Gosford City Council
- Climate Change Adaptation Planning – Both Councils and the Joint Water Authority participated in the Statewide Mutual Climate Change Adaptation Risk Assessment project in the first half of this 2010.
- Social Planning - Joint Social Planning projects have been undertaken between the Councils. The Quality of Life on the Central Coast Research and Survey was undertaken in 2007.
- Transport Planning - The main shared project has been the setting up and ongoing activities of 10,000 Friends of Greater Sydney (FROGS).
- The Warren Centre for Advanced Engineering of the University of Sydney initiated FROGS as a community based organisation to research and to communicate a vision of Greater Sydney as a continuously improving sustainable city. CCROC is a founding member of FROGS and has continued membership contributions of \$5000 pa (GST free) since November 2004 sharing 50/50 (i.e. \$2,500 for each Council).

Economic Development:

In the economic development sphere there is joint 'arms length' activity in that both Councils provide financial support to:

- Central Coast Tourism,
- CC Business Enterprise Centre,
- The Central Coast Research Foundation and,
- On a project basis, to Regional Development Australia.
- Support is jointly provided to the Central Coast Mariners

Both Councils contribute in kind resources to the Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy (REDES) processes, including such region wide initiatives as Marketing the Region and Prioritising Infrastructure needs.

Flooding & Drainage Planning:

- Combined funding of the Bangalow Creek & Cutrock Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan.

Human Resources:

- Short term secondments of technical staff to cover operational peaks, for example staff for laboratory water and sewer testing, plant operators.
- Joint training and information sharing sessions with Wyong Shire Council, eg. Councillor training in conducting meetings.

Customer Services & Communications:

Recent Achievements

- Production of Art Trail Map of the Central Coast, 2008
- Produced the 2006 Report on Visual Arts Venues on the Central Coast.
- Joint Promotion of exhibitions and events - ongoing
- Conducted joint Professional Development seminars in Wyong 2006 & 2007
- Participation in a sector wide service benchmarking report.
- Rural Addressing: Partnership between Gosford City Council and Wyong Shire Council to achieve a standard numbering system.

Community Engagement:

GCC have approached WSC to assist them in the development of an Engagement Strategy. They are keen to learn from us and be involved in future engagement programs and services.

Performance Management, Internal Auditor:

- Both Councils provide audit services and probity advice to the other Council on their own projects.
- Corporate Reporting and Measures Systems: a joint framework in development.

Finance:

- Both Councils participated in the Finance Subcommittee for the Mardi to Mangrove Link and the Mardi Suite of Works along with Wyong Shire Council (WSC) representatives.
- As part of the CCWC formation a joint submission is being prepared for the next IPART determination.

Information Management:

- Printing Services have produced printed material and other services for Wyong Shire Council.
- Gosford City Council and WSC have data sharing agreements in place for the sharing of spatial data.
- NBN: Council is involved with Gosford and other Hunter Councils in joint advocacy for this project.
- Records Management: Central Coast Records Management group.
- Councils on Line: Corporate IT system

Supply:

The Council participates in joint procurement arrangements with Gosford City Council through Regional Procurement (HROC). Current joint procurement arrangements through Hunter Councils Include:

- Water Meters and Associated Parts
- Herbicides and Pesticides
- Tyres

Plant :

The Councils share various items of plant such as tractor implements and dredge where practical.

EXHIBITION

4 March - 2 April 2013



WYONG SHIRE
DRAFT COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

2030

creating our ideal community

UPDATED FEBRUARY 2013

Our Community Vision

*creating our ideal community
caring... prosperous... sustainable...*



For additional information contact:

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Exhibition Version March 2013



Wyong
Shire
Council
CENTRAL COAST

Acknowledgement to Country

Our Community Strategic Plan respectfully acknowledges the original inhabitants of our region and recognises the living culture of our local Aboriginal people as well as the unique contribution that they and their elders have made and continue to make to life within Wyong Shire.



What is a Community Strategic Plan?

A Community Strategic Plan is an important community document that it addresses the question of *"Where do we, as a community, want to be in the future?"*

It provides a roadmap to help us achieve the things that are important to us – such as community connectedness, health, transport, environment, job opportunities, local economy and participative governance.

Why do we need it?

The Local Government Act 1993 requires each Council to have a Community Strategic Plan that identifies the main priorities and aspirations for the future of its community.

Every four years the Community Strategic Plan is reviewed against changes to the profile of our Shire to ensure that it still meets our needs as a community.

What is Council's role?

Wyong Shire Council's role is to capture the issues and pressures that affect our community, identify community priorities and aspirations and partner with all members of the community to deliver against the objectives that have been identified within this Plan.

In the delivery of the Community Strategic Plan Council acts as:

Delivery lead:	Delivering specific actions
Advocate:	Campaigning others to deliver
Partner:	Undertaking actions in conjunction with others
Observer:	Monitoring and reporting on the actions of others

The Community Strategic Plan drives the priorities for the delivery of Council services, which are planned through a short and mid-term planning process. Activities to deliver the Community Strategic Plan are published annually in Council's Strategic Plan under twelve principal activities: community and education; community recreation; economic and property development; Council enterprises; regulatory; environment and land use; waste management; roads; drainage; sewer services; water supply and administration.

To ensure Council has the capacity to deliver these activities it produces resourcing strategies for workforce management, long term financial planning, asset management and information management that allow it to consider community needs when undertaking its corporate strategic planning.

Who is responsible for its delivery?

The Community Strategic Plan is owned by the whole community and as such, the whole community is responsible for its delivery.

This includes community members, community groups, government, businesses and non government agencies – really anyone who lives, works, plays or stays in our Shire.

Within the plan we have identified who will help us deliver the strategies - this list is not exhaustive. If we are to succeed in creating the community that we have envisioned within this Plan, we need to work together.

How did we develop the Plan?

With over 153,000 residents, numerous organisations and thousands of businesses, each with their own priorities on what they would like to see to improve the quality of life and ensure the long term sustainability of the Shire, it is essential that the Plan draws on different avenues to build the most representative vision for the future.

The Plan is developed from community priorities that are designed to identify where we need to focus on to improve our quality of life, while remaining prepared to respond proactively to changes and challenges as they unfold.

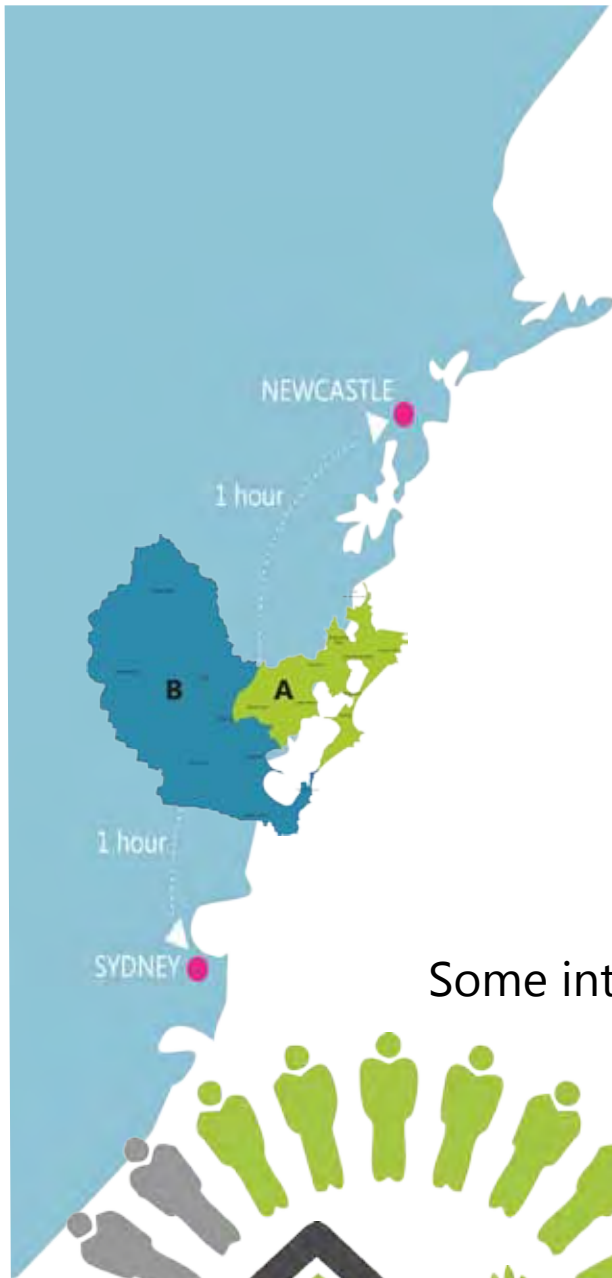
This draft Plan is a review of the Community Strategic Plan endorsed by Council in 2011 which was based on extensive consultation from 2007-2010 that saw over 5,600 community members participate in various styles of community engagement. The consultation topics were designed to capture our community's priorities for the future and included community visioning, quality of life, youth engagement and community planning.

This 2013 review includes consideration of consultation that involved over 2,900 community members during 2011 and 2012 on topics including: learning communities, State Plan 2021, NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan, Council service priorities and standards and quality of life. This consultation identified the community priorities of skills enhancement, local job opportunities, local investment, access to learning, improved transport times and accessibility, environmental protection, support for young people and their families, local roads and drainage and effective governance.

This highlighted that the community's focus has not altered over the past 18 months. The amendments made in this updated version of the Community Strategic Plan were therefore limited to formatting, to make the document easier to read. The new additions are the inclusion of an assessment framework, so that we can track how we are going and the inclusion of all strategies, including those numbered 1 to 14 in the back of the previous plan, to ensure all strategies had focus during the plan's 20 year delivery horizon.

It should also be noted that development of the Community Strategic Plan is based on the NSW Government's social justice strategy framework. This means that we have tried to the best of our ability to engage our entire community in the process of identifying what is important to meet the four interrelated principles of equity, rights, access and participation.

OUR SHIRE



Wyong Shire is located between Sydney and Newcastle. It is a world away from the pressures and pollution of its big city neighbours and boasts a coastline of rare beauty, shimmering waterways, deep rural valleys and an unspoilt mountain backdrop.

The community is made up of both families and retirees with the majority of the population living east of the F3 freeway in the suburbs clustered around the Tuggerah Lakes.

The region boasts a dynamic tourism industry, a skilled and motivated workforce, opportunities for commercial investment, living affordability and ease of access to both Sydney and Newcastle.

Today the population is more than 153,000, with projections for this to grow to over 203,000 by 2031.

To meet the projected population growth it is estimated that the Shire will need 22,000 more dwellings by 2031.

Some interesting facts about our community:



- Higher proportion of population aged <15 and 65+
- Median weekly household income \$934
- 28% of households are couples with children
- 25% of households are older couples without children
- 66% of households are purchasing or fully own their home
- Median mortgage repayments are \$1733 per month
- Total of 65,662 dwellings
- 33% of residents who work travel outside of the Central Coast for employment
- 30% of people aged 15 and over have completed year 12 schooling (or equivalent)
- 5% of people use public transport to get to work
- 63% of homes have broadband internet connection
- 14% of the population are engaged in some form of volunteer work

WHAT DO WE WANT AS A COMMUNITY?

- Vibrant, caring and connected communities
- Ease of travel
- Access to facilities, programs and services
- Educated, innovative and creative communities
- Enhanced areas of natural value
- Community ownership of the natural environment
- Strong sustainable business sector and increased local employment
- Advanced information communication technology

Planning Themes

To progress toward the future that we want, we have set certain objectives and supporting strategies that allow us, as a community, to plan and start to achieve significant outcomes. While strategies will often require the development of programs, identification of specific funding and co-ordination of actions, they give us the initial roadmap for our future.



OUR COMMUNITY

Read more on pages 5 to 9



OUR ENVIRONMENT

Read more on pages 10 to 13



OUR ECONOMY

Read more on pages 14 to 17



OUR CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Read more on pages 18 to 23

Under each theme is a statement of progress to date, a list of objectives, strategies for how we will achieve the objective, who will help us deliver and ways to measure progress, so we know we are on track.

It is important to note that the objectives and strategies do not focus on the large number of essential community services and programs that Council provides which will continue to evolve over time in keeping with best practice (eg. garbage collection, road maintenance, sewerage services, governance, water supply).

These activities are not listed as separate strategies as they will continue at a level of service determined with consideration of the objectives in this Plan.

OUR COMMUNITY

Where we are now...

We have made strong progress in the delivery of outcomes that bring the community together, encourage social interaction, maintain communication, engage individuals in volunteering and mentoring, increase participation and build individual and community capacity.

Over the past four years we have held community events in which thousands of residents have participated, initiated social enterprise agreements for a training café and art workshop, supported the development of programs through funding from State Government and Council, implemented a program to welcome new residents, commenced development on a strategy for land use and development activities and upgraded / built key community facilities.

We have improved pathways and advocated State and Federal Government agencies for the improvement of transport services including increased rail services, commuter parking stations, road network upgrades and the development of pathway and transport strategies.



IN THE FUTURE WYONG SHIRE

1 Communities will be vibrant, caring and connected with a sense of belonging and pride in their local neighbourhood

We will create and support communities where individuals feel closely connected, people know their neighbours, relationships are built within local neighbourhoods, there is participation in the local community and a sense of belongingness and pride in the local area.

We will achieve this through:

- 1a Expanding and supporting programs that increase participation among all ages
- 1b Expanding and supporting programs and activities that encourage and enhance neighbourhood connections
- 1c Encouraging and valuing genuine youth and seniors participation in the community
- 1d Expanding and resourcing children and family service programs
- 1e Developing and implementing the Wyong shire-wide Settlement Strategy
- 1f Improving the effectiveness of the system of connections that tie towns/suburbs and facilities of the Shire together as well as connecting to the wider region
- 1g Implementing the Regional Strategy for the Central Coast that will guide appropriate development, maintain the lifestyle and environment and include Government intervention to provide more than 35,000 jobs in the next 25 years (Regional Strategy)
- 1h Planning and delivering a new Town Centre at Warnervale including a new railway station and transport interchange (Regional Strategy)
- 1i Having residents as active participants in setting the direction of their communities
- 1j Ensuring communities are safe and have a clear perception of security
- 1k Providing individuals with access to a variety of housing types that enable residents to buy or rent accommodation locally
- 1l Taking a long-term integrated approach to the provision of both new and existing infrastructure

2 There will be ease of travel within the Shire, and to other regional centres and cities. Travel will be available at all hours and will be safe, clean and affordable

There will be availability of affordable, safe and clean transport options to easily travel both within the Shire and to other regional centres and cities.

We will achieve this through:

- 2a Ensuring public and private bus services are timely, clean, safe and affordable
- 2b Upgrading train and public transport services between Williamtown and Sydney Central ensuring the service is safe, timely and reliable
- 2c Improving and linking the bicycle/shared pathway network and related facilities to encourage more cycling opportunities
- 2d Improving commuter parking at railway stations
- 2e Improving commuter hubs along the freeway
- 2f Creating a better public transport system including new outer suburban train carriages, upgrades of the Tuggerah station, rail maintenance upgrades and better local bus services (Regional Strategy)
- 2g Ongoing upgrading of roads in the region including The Entrance Road and Pacific Highway (Regional Strategy)
- 2h Improving the F3 links to Sydney to three lanes in each direction partnership with the Federal Government (Regional Strategy)
- 2i Providing an integrated transport system that satisfies users' needs
- 2j Supporting commuters and their families
- 2k Supporting the development of a regional airport within the Shire



3

Communities will have access to a diverse range of affordable and coordinated facilities, programs and services

We will have a range of local and regional facilities that support the diverse needs of the community and contribute to its vibrancy, connections and pride, including complementary programs, services and activities that are affordable, financially sustainable and maximise use of the facilities.

We will achieve this through:

- 3a Providing and maintaining local and regional community facilities for recreation, culture, health and education
- 3b Providing and maintaining a range of community programs focused on community development, recreation, culture, environment, education and other issues
- 3c Providing recurrent funding for community support and development services
- 3d Promoting community facilities to help maximise their benefits and use
- 3e Balancing the varying provision of facilities and amenities between towns/suburbs to enhance the quality of life in the Shire
- 3f Maximising the access to, and potential for, new and existing facilities/infrastructure to support growth
- 3g Supporting people in the community to lead healthy, active lifestyles
- 3h Providing access to basic and specialist health care services to all community residents

4

The community will be well educated, innovative and creative; people will attain full knowledge potential at all stages of life

Wyong Shire will be established as a learning community where people value learning, have an opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills, be creative and innovative. This will lead to improving income opportunities from a skilled local workforce and the attraction of business, social cohesion, cultural understanding and active participation.

We will achieve this through:

- 4a Generating community awareness and behavioural change about the value of ongoing education
- 4b Creating programs that encourage lifelong learning for everyone
- 4c Creating and maintaining programs to actively encourage community involvement in educational institutions
- 4d Establishing and maintaining a committed network of education, community, business and government representatives
- 4e Providing programs and services which respond to changes in the field of education in Wyong Shire
- 4f Accessing a range of post school, tertiary, and degree based educational facilities. Promote innovation in areas important to the local and regional economy.
- 4g Providing education, training and skills development that reflect the region's specific employment needs
- 4h Ensuring that all students and educational institutions have access to high quality services and technological resources

WHO WILL HELP US GET THERE?

Delivering against these community objectives requires input from individuals, community groups, Council, State and Federal Government agencies, local businesses and non government agencies. Council has a major role to play in the delivery of objectives 1 and 3, in close partnership with the community. In most cases, these will benefit from State Government support and funding to achieve a high standard. Council's role in objectives 2 and 4 is largely as an advocate and in monitoring achievements. Delivery of strategies is supported by the following regional priorities, which are identified in detail in the Central Coast Regional Action Plan, developed by the NSW Government in December 2012.

Regional Priority	Delivery Lead
Enhance skills development and educational outcomes	
Engage young people in education and help their transition to further education and employment	
Partner with businesses, schools, TAFE, training organisations and universities to develop quality training options linked to employment opportunities	Department of Education & Communities Central Coast Regional Development Corporation
Foster additional educational facilities and encourage more students to undertake further education in courses that cater to future workforce needs	
Improve transport connectivity and regional roads	
Improve the regional road network to address traffic hotspots and increase linkages within the region	Roads & Maritime Services
Improve the region's external connections	
Improve movement of rail freight through the region	Transport for NSW
Improve public transport connectivity across the Central Coast, making public transport a more attractive option	
Deliver coordinated support for the community, families and in particular, our disadvantaged and vulnerable members	
Improve community safety	NSW Police Force Department of Premier & Cabinet
Support families and disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our community	Department of Family & Community Services Roads & Maritime Services
Reduce homelessness and improve access to affordable housing	Department of Family & Community Services
Improve access to health services and promote healthy lifestyles	
Improve access to quality health services	Central Coast Health District
Promote healthy lifestyles	



We will know we
are succeeding
when there is:



Increased levels of community
interaction and participation



Increased usage of Council
community facilities



Greater attendance at sporting and
community events



Increased use of and satisfaction
with public transport



Reduced crime and graffiti



Increased school retention rates
and participation in further
education



Higher levels of community health



Increase community perceptions of
safety

OUR ENVIRONMENT





Where we are now...

Progress has been made toward the protection of natural resources, maintenance of natural processes and ecosystems and retention of natural amenities in the face of ongoing development through the implementation of the Tuggerah Lakes Estuary Management Plan, wetland construction, sustainable living workshops and foreshore restoration works on Lake Macquarie.

Greater access has been provided to environmental areas, environmental projects and activities that encourage community involvement including Saltwater Creek rehabilitation and education programs, landowner workshops, the development of a Greening Wyong Strategy, Mates of the Lakes funding, water education programs, community gardens and the introduction of a sustainable business program.

IN THE FUTURE WYONG SHIRE WILL BE A PLACE WHERE...

5 Areas of natural value in public and private ownership will be enhanced and retained to a high level in the context of ongoing development

We will retain, maintain and enhance areas of natural value by preserving endangered species, ecological communities and biodiversity as well as expanding programs for the restoration of degraded natural areas.

We will achieve this through:

- 5a Preserving threatened and endangered species as well as ecological communities and biodiversity
- 5b Expanding and continuing programs focused on restoring degraded natural areas in our community
- 5c Ensuring all development areas create or maintain tree covered ridgelines and waterways
- 5d Developing and implementing strategies to reduce the Shire's Environmental Footprint
- 5e Developing and implementing a Natural Resources Sustainability Strategy for Wyong Shire
- 5f Ensuring high quality, sustainable development that is sympathetic to the local setting and reflects community values

6 There will be a sense of community ownership of the natural environment through direct public involvement with environmental programs

We will develop and establish a range of programs and activities that creates community involvement and allows the community to appreciate and embrace the natural areas of the Shire.

We will achieve this through:

- 6a Improving and promoting public access to environmental areas
- 6b Establishing and maintaining projects and programs to encourage more active participation in community based environmental activities
- 6c Creating and promoting a network of renowned natural trails
- 6d Establishing an annual community 'Celebration of the Environment' event based around our lakes and beaches
- 6e Developing and implementing a 'Greening Wyong Shire Program'
- 6f Creating, maintaining and promoting a series of community gardens
- 6g Actively supporting and encouraging volunteer environmental champions
- 6h Maintaining and making available a high level of information about the natural environment and environmental change
- 6i Community knowledge of sustainability and environmental issues impacting Wyong Shire will be comprehensive

WHO WILL HELP US GET THERE?



Delivering against environmental objectives requires input from individuals, community groups, Council, State and Federal Government agencies, local businesses and non government agencies. Council has a major role to play in the delivery of a majority of the strategies, which will require a close partnership with the community and depend on support and resources from State Government. Delivery of strategies is supported by the following regional priorities, which are identified in detail in the Central Coast Regional Action Plan, developed by the NSW Government in December 2012.

Regional Priority	Delivery Lead
Protect our natural environment and achieve balanced outcomes between development and conservation	Council Department of Primary Industries (Crown Lands) Office of Environment & Heritage
Ensure land use and planning support sustainable economic growth and environmental protection	Department of Planning & Infrastructure Trade & Investment Environment Protection Authority
Manage and protect the Central Coast's water catchment areas	Hunter Central Coast Rivers Catchment Management Authority

We will know we are succeeding when there is...



Increased rehabilitation of natural areas



Increased preservation of endangered species and ecological communities



Increased numbers of environmental volunteers



Increased community knowledge of environmental issues

13

OUR ECONOMY





Where we are now...

We have been busy creating business and industry partnerships, promoting the region for its unique advantages and continuing to support major developments that encourage sustainable growth. Projects have included developing iconic sites, active participation in Regional Development Australia and the launch of the InvestCentralCoast.com.au website. We also effectively campaigned for the Central Coast to be one of the first locations in Australia to access the National Broadband Network (NBN).

IN THE FUTURE WYONG SHIRE WILL BE A PLACE WHERE...

7 **There will be a strong sustainable business sector and increased local employment built on the Central Coast's business strengths**

We will create a strong business sector that withstands financial downturn, and ensures local businesses achieve sustained growth and local jobs are available for the community.

We will achieve this through:

- 7a Providing a coordinated approach to business generation, employment and development for the region
- 7b Identifying and leveraging the competitive advantages of Wyong Shire
- 7c Supporting the growth of the Shire as a competitive major business sector while reducing the alienation of towns/suburbs that can result from regional pressures
- 7d Actively promoting the business benefits of Wyong Shire. Creating a single executive voice to attract employment generating development to the Central Coast and negotiating in liaison with all relevant agencies
- 7e Establishing and maintaining a strategic database on business and economic trends on the Central Coast
- 7f Establishing and maintaining key industry networking roundtables
- 7g Regularly identifying Central Coast businesses that are innovative and creative with high growth potential ("gazelles")
- 7h Supporting the development of a major conference centre in the Shire
- 7i Ensuring adequate and appropriate employment land in the Shire
- 7j Sourcing tourist attractions across the Shire

8 **Information communication technology will be consistent with world's best practice and adaptive to technological advances across all sectors**

We will support the region's growth and ensure businesses and residents are technologically connected and have access to hi-speed networks.

We will achieve this through:

- 8a Advocating for the provision of high speed broadband throughout Wyong Shire
- 8b Developing and implementing guidelines to ensure all residences and businesses as well as commercial and educational centres can be quickly linked to fibre-optic telecommunications networks

WHO WILL HELP US GET THERE?



Delivering against economic objectives requires input from business groups and networks, Council, State and Federal agencies, telecommunication providers, visitors and tourism agencies to help generate business interest, increase opportunities for local employment, invest in local tourism and support the economic growth of our region. Council has an important function as a partner, advocate and in monitoring achievement against these objectives. While it has primary responsibility for some of the strategies it will need to work in close partnership with the above partners to deliver results. Delivery of strategies is supported by the following regional priorities, which are identified in detail in the Central Coast Regional Action Plan, developed by the NSW Government in December 2012.

Regional Priority	Delivery Lead
Grow the economy of the Central Coast and provide sustainable employment	
Partner with local stakeholders to encourage regional economic growth and employment	NSW Trade & Investment Central Coast Broadband Infrastructure Group
Support key regional industries and local businesses to grow	NSW Trade & Investment Small Business Commissioner Department of Primary Industries
Support increased productivity by cutting government red tape	Service NSW

We will know we are
succeeding when there is...



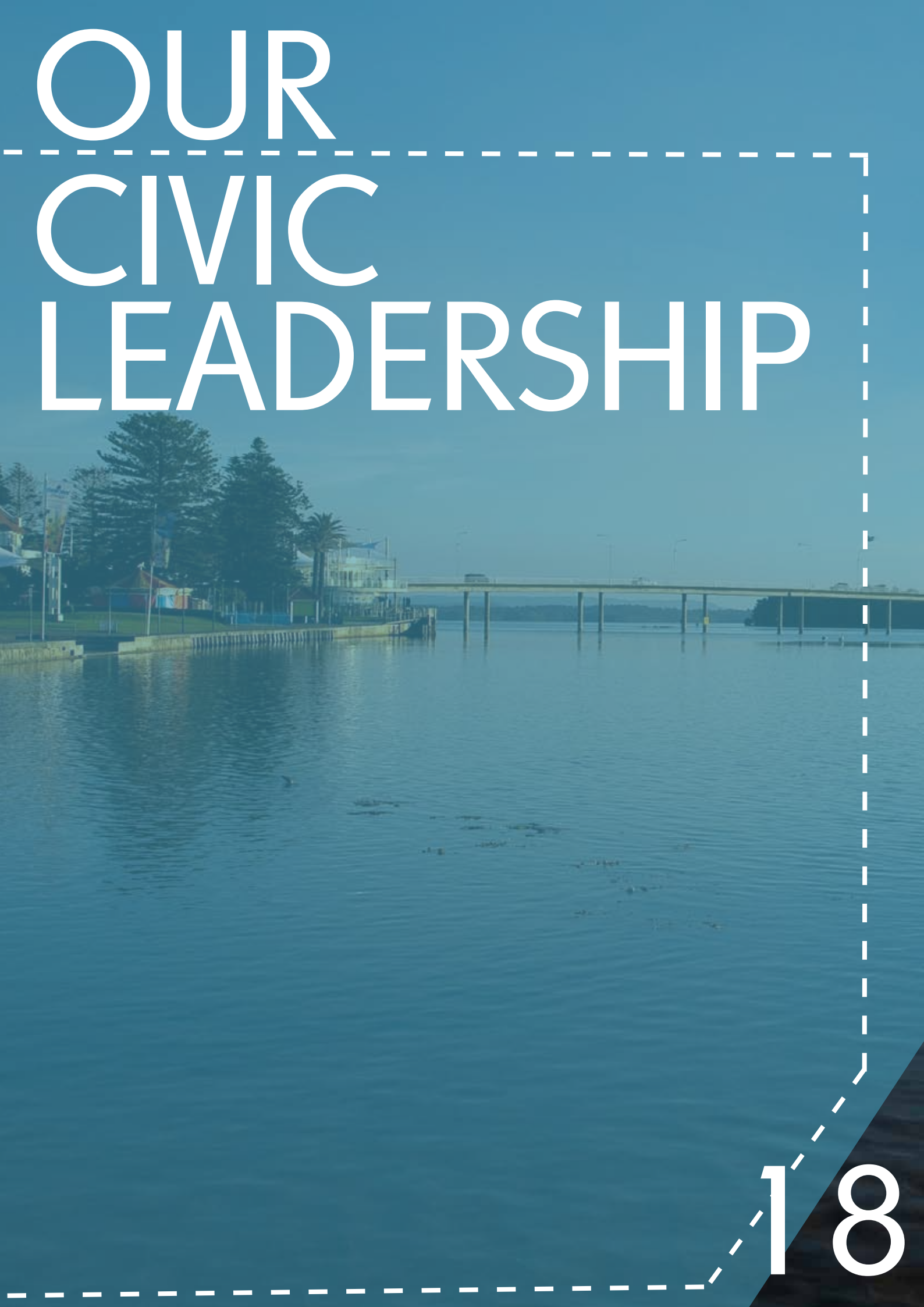
Reduced unemployment



Increased local jobs



Increased access to high quality information
communications technology



OUR CIVIC LEADERSHIP



Where we are now...

We have been undertaking extensive engagement with the community, working with government agencies to improve services and infrastructure and created avenues for more effective community input. We have developed a new Resident ePanel, introduced social media streaming to update the community about Council activities, participated in the Central Coast Transport Working Group and continue to effectively campaign for infrastructure funding to be spent on significant State roads such as the Pacific Highway, Wyong Road and Central Coast Highway.

OVERRIDING PRINCIPLES

As a community we do not have any specific Civic Leadership objectives and strategies, however we have set overriding principles that support delivery of the Community Strategic Plan, no matter what future objectives and strategies are pursued. These principles state that:

Government is conducted with openness and transparency involving the community in the decisions that affect it

The roles of government include:

- timely, equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community ensuring those services and facilities are managed and maintained efficiently
- keeping the local community and other government levels informed about its activities
- ensuring that, in the exercise of its day to day functions, it acts consistently

All three levels of government work closely together

All three levels of government need to work closely together to improve the decision making process and ultimately the outcomes that can be achieved. This includes collaboration of departments within each level of government. Changes in government, changes in representatives and changes in policy all impact on this over time. As the level of government

closest to the community, Council has a significant role to play in ensuring good outcomes for our area by acting as a conduit and advocate between the upper levels of government and the community.

There is environmental, social and economic sustainability

Genuine sustainability is about the things we value and need in everyday life including, but not limited to, food and shelter, natural environment, education and employment, health and welfare services, cultural and recreational activities, transport, as well as water and energy supplies. Sustainability is about considering the social, environmental and economic implications of our decision-making and actions and reducing our "environmental footprint". Pursuing sustainability in the things we value builds resilience to withstand future upheavals such economic downturn, climate change and population growth.

Sustainability guiding principles should be applied to all decisions and programs impacting the Shire to help clearly define the community vision's commitment to sustainability. Council staff and the Wyong Shire community have developed the following sustainability principles to be used to guide everything from planning and development decisions to every-day on-ground actions.

Think holistically.
Act responsibly.

We integrate these considerations into our decision making, working with the forms and functions of the **natural environment** and with our **social and economic** attributes as the basis of our **planning and development**.



Good processes.
Improved outcomes.

We measure our prosperity by the health and wellbeing of our people, **environment and economy** and strive for **continuous improvement**.



Care for nature.

We commit to the sustainable use of natural resources to maintain healthy ecological systems for the **benefit of present and future generations**.





There is fiscal responsibility

Directing our funds in a planned way will help deliver our community's objectives and provide, in a sustainable way, the things we want and need in the future. Whilst external funding will be sought for some projects and initiatives, for the most part it is our community that will ultimately bear the costs of significant changes in direction or new strategies and their maintenance.

We recognise that our community has limited capacity to find activities that do not deliver a direct and substantial benefit. We will therefore ensure that there is: best value in the delivery of actions against community objectives; ongoing productivity gains; and options for implementation of user pay principals.

It will be effectively managed through

Input from community groups and individuals, State and Federal agencies and Council. These parties need to work together to provide effective leadership to drive our community forward.

Smart, local, adaptable.

We base our actions locally, mindful of our place in the world, building on our strengths and special qualities of **place and community**.



Lead by example.

We involve people with the relevant **skills and knowledge** in our projects and recognise there are many ways to achieve our goals. We embrace the opportunity to **learn from our actions** and the actions of others.



Work together.

We have a **culture of collaboration** and participation that encourages innovation, sharing of resources, engagement in decision making and **shared accountability** for all results.



LINKING TO STATE/REGIONAL PLANS

Linking to State / Regional Plans

There are several State and regional plans that support the delivery of our Community Strategic Plan. The over arching plan of the NSW Government is the NSW State Plan 2021 which sets the following priorities for the allocation of resources.

NSW State Plan 2021	Link to CSP Objectives
Rebuild the Economy	
1. Improve the performance of the NSW economy	
2. Rebuild State finances	
3. Drive economic growth in regional NSW	7 Strong sustainable business sector and increased local employment
4. Increase the competitiveness of doing business in NSW	8 Advanced information communication technology
5. Place downward pressure on the cost of living	
6. Strengthen the NSW skill base	
Return Quality Services	
<i>Transport</i>	
7. Reduce travel times	
8. Grow patronage on public transport by making it a more attractive choice	2 Ease of travel
9. Improve customer experience with transport services	
10. Improve road safety	
<i>Health</i>	
11. Keep people healthy and out of hospital	3 Access to a diverse range of affordable and coordinated facilities, programs and services
12. Provide world class clinical services with timely access and effective infrastructure	
<i>Family and Community Services</i>	
13. Better protect the most vulnerable members of our community and break the cycle of disadvantage	3 Access to a diverse range of affordable and coordinated facilities, programs and services
14. Increase opportunities for people with a disability by providing supports that meet their individual needs and realise their potential	7 Strong sustainable business sector and increased local employment
<i>Education</i>	
15. Improve education and learning outcomes for all students	4 Educated, innovative and creative communities
	7 Strong sustainable business sector and increased local employment
<i>Police and Justice</i>	
16. Prevent and reduce the level of crime	3 Access to a diverse range of affordable and coordinated facilities, programs and services
17. Prevent and reduce the level of reoffending	
18. Improve community confidence in the justice system	
Renovate Infrastructure	
19. Invest in critical infrastructure	
20. Build liveable centres	
21. Secure potable water supplies	Civic Leadership – overriding principles
Strengthen Our Local Environment and Communities	
22. Protect our natural environment	
23. Increase opportunities for people to look after their own neighbourhoods and environments	1 Vibrant, caring, and connected communities
24. Make it easier for people to be involved in their communities	3 Access to facilities, programs and services
25. Increase opportunities for seniors in NSW to fully participate in community life	5 Enhanced areas of natural value
26. Fostering opportunity and partnership with Aboriginal people	6 Community ownership of the natural environment
27. Enhance cultural, creative, sporting and recreation opportunities	8 Advanced information communication technology
28. Ensure NSW is ready to deal with major emergencies and natural disasters	



NSW State Plan 2021	Link to CSP Objectives
Restore Accountability to Government	
29. Restore confidence and integrity in the planning system	Civic Leadership – overriding principles
30. Restore trust in State and Local Government as a service provider	
31. Improve government transparency by increasing access to government information	
32. Involve the community in decision making on government policy, services and projects	

The State Plan is supported by the following regional strategies:

- Central Coast Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy
- Regional Development Australia Central Coast Regional Plan 2012-2017
- Central Coast Regional Transport Plan
- Central Coast Health Services Development Plan
- Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2010-2014 – Central Coast
- Central Coast Regional Strategy
- Hunter Central Rivers Action Plan 2006-2016
- Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Action Plan 2007-2016

Information from the two year Central Coast Regional Action Plan – 2012-2014 is included under the planning themes. Detailed information on specific actions can be found within the Regional Action Plan, with the short term focus on deliverables that will:

- Grow the economy of the Central Coast and provide sustainable employment
- Enhance skills development and education outcomes
- Improve transport connectivity and regional roads
- Deliver coordinated support for the community, families and in particular, our disadvantaged and vulnerable members
- Improve access to health services and promote healthy lifestyles
- Protect our natural environment and achieve balanced outcomes between development and conservation

We will know we are succeeding when there is...



Increased community participation in Council engagement activities



Increased community satisfaction in the delivery and management of infrastructure assets





HOW DO WE MEASURE OUR PROGRESS?

It is important for us to keep track of how we are progressing against the objectives of the plan and to assess these regularly against the community's changing needs.

Council produces an Annual Report which details progress against the items in Council's Strategic Plan, which is aligned to this Community Strategic Plan.

Council also collates a report every four years which is aligned to the end of the Council term. This allows the outgoing Councillors, as community representatives and the wider community to see how we have progressed in the delivery of outcomes against the identified objectives. The next End of Term report will be produced in 2016.

Using data from the following sources we will be able to compare our progress between where we are now and where we are in four years time to see if we are moving towards outcomes that support the Community's vision.

Measure of progress	Information source	Related Strategies
Our Community		
Neighbourhood and community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels of social interaction with friends, relatives and neighbours Satisfaction with neighbourhood Perception of sense of community 	CC Quality of Life Survey CC Quality of Life Survey CC Quality of Life Survey	1b, 1f
Community participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in organised groups Levels of volunteering Attendance at local community and sporting events Participation in arts/cultural/creative activity Participation in fitness/sporting activities 	CC Quality of Life Survey CC Quality of Life Survey/ABS CC Quality of Life Survey CC Quality of Life Survey CC Quality of Life Survey	1a,1b,1c,1i
Community safety: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported crime Incidence of graffiti Perceptions of crime and safety in local area 	NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics Wyong Shire Council CC Quality of Life Survey	1j
Housing Choice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and type of dwellings Proportion of households experiencing housing stress 	Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Bureau of Statistics	1k
Transport Use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Method of travel to and from work Access to and satisfaction with public transport Lengths of pathways Road upgrades 	Australia Bureau of Statistics CC Quality of Life Survey Wyong Shire Council Wyong Shire Council	2a-2j 1f
Community Facilities & Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community facility usage (Council facilities) Perceived adequacy of venues and opportunities to pursue cultural, sporting, recreation, leisure and learning activities Perceived adequacy of public spaces for people to come together in their neighbourhoods Levels of community funding support provided by Government (capital and recurrent) 	Wyong Shire Council CC Quality of Life Survey CC Quality of Life Survey WSC/State/Federal government	3a-3f 1a,1b,1c,1d, 1l 2j
Health: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self assessed health status Obesity levels Satisfaction with and access to health services 	CC Quality of Life Survey CC Local Health District CC Quality of Life Survey	3g-3h
Education and Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High school retention rates/proportion that have completed Year 12 Participation in TAFE and University Level of education attainment Satisfaction with achievements in life Attitudes to education and employment opportunities 	NSW Department of Education/ Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Bureau of Statistics CC Quality of Life Survey CC Quality of Life Survey	4a-4h
Socio-economic disadvantage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socio-economic disadvantage as this relates to income, education, employment, occupation and housing Median weekly household incomes Satisfaction with standard of living Well-being score 	Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Bureau of Statistics CC Quality of Life Survey CC Quality of Life Survey	1,2,3,4,7

Measure of progress	Information source	Related Strategies
Our Environment		
Environmental sustainability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of native species planted/trees planted • Hectares of natural areas sustained/protected • Biodiversity • Length of riparian rehabilitation and protection • Total waste to landfill, recycled waste, green waste • Funding support for environmental programs • Water quality 	Wyong Shire Council Wyong Shire Council Wyong Shire Council Wyong Shire Council Wyong Shire Council Wyong Shire Council/State Government Wyong Shire Council	5a-f
Community involvement in natural environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in environmental based activities and programs including levels of volunteering • Visitation to natural environments • Perceptions/attitudes to the natural environment 	Wyong Shire Council/ CC Quality of Life Survey CC Quality of Life Survey CC Quality of Life Survey/ CC Region Environmental Attitude Survey	6a-i
Our Economy		
Employment & Business Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment rate/labour force participation rate • Unemployment rate (including youth unemployment) • Employment location of working residents • Employment by industry and occupation • Business Confidence/Economic Indicators • Number of home based/registered local businesses • Industrial/Commercial land statistics • Level of business activity in town centres • Tourist numbers 	Australia Bureau of Statistics / DEEWR Australian Bureau of Statistics NSW Bureau of Transport Statistics/ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics State Government State Government/Wyong Shire Council State Government Reports from Chambers and Town Centre Management Tourism NSW	7a-j
Information Communication Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to broadband internet connection • Access to NBN 	Australian Bureau of Statistics NBN Co.	8a-b
Our Civic Leadership		
Engagement & Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement statistics • Resident ePanel membership • Website hits • Residents who feel that they have an opportunity to have a say on important community issues • Residents who are members of a decision making or community-based council, board or committee 	Wyong Shire Council Wyong Shire Council Wyong Shire Council CC Quality of Life Survey CC Quality of Life Survey	1i



ESSENTIAL SERVICES

In addition to the strategies contained within this Community Strategic Plan there are a number of essential services which must be provided. These are delivered by Wyong Shire Council under the following twelve principal activity areas:

1. Community & Education: provides community services, programs and events; provides libraries and develops and promotes education, culture and lifelong learning; and supplies information to the community through customer contact and community engagement.
2. Community Recreation: establishes and maintains buildings, facilities and services for public use and enjoyment; promotes and operates "fit for purpose" facilities and services to support diverse recreation activities and maximises their benefits and use; and manages and maintains natural areas and open spaces in order to supply public open space facilities and provide for passive recreation.
3. Economic & Property Development: strengthens the economic base of the Shire by promoting economic development as well as the creation of employment opportunities; identifies and develops sustainable income streams for Council; and provides property-related services for the organisation.
4. Council Enterprises: provides child care and education; provides information, programs and support for the community; and provides, promotes and operates high quality holiday park facilities and services that contribute to the local tourism industry, generate income for Council and ensure maximum benefits and use of these facilities.
5. Regulatory: ensures compliance with laws across a wide range of responsibilities; and provides land-use controls and enforcement of building standards as well as environmental protection, domestic animal care, road safety and essential public health functions.
6. Environment & Land Use: enhances the natural and built environment on both private and public land by providing strategic planning and policy as well as controls over land-use in order to maintain a high quality of life and natural environment; and promotes sustainable use of natural resources on the Central Coast.
7. Waste Management: provides domestic and commercial waste processing and disposal operations including landfill remediation; and provides a safe, reliable and environmentally responsible waste collection and disposal service and aims to reduce the Shire's environmental footprint.
8. Roads: provides the Shire's roads, bridge network and traffic management along with associated infrastructure to help ensure ease of travel and environmental responsibility; and maintains roads to support a growing population in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.
9. Drainage: provides safe and reliable collection, transmission, treatment and discharge facilities for storm water in a cost-effective and sustainable manner through an extensive network of engineered and natural drainage; and protects life and property while retaining natural values and amenity.
10. Sewer Services: provides safe and dependable storage, collection, treatment and disposal facilities for sewage in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.
11. Water Supply: provides safe and reliable water services including the collection, storage, transportation, treatment and distribution of water to standards appropriate to its use in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.
12. Administration: provides corporate-wide internal services; is accountable for the governance and statutory compliance of the organisation's finance, human resources and corporate information; includes asset management, contract and project management as well as plant, fleet and depot services; and provides the framework and tools to ensure effective administration of Council on behalf of the community.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Achieving the objectives of the Wyong Shire Community Vision and Community Strategic Plan is a dynamic process involving first and foremost the community, but also Council, State and Federal government working as partners to create an optimistic, but achievable future.

Delivery of the community vision is not business as usual. There is a need for many partners in this process to manage the change required.


The objectives and their strategies will head our Shire towards "Creating Our Ideal Community - caring... prosperous... sustainable" and improve the quality of life in 20 years time on the Central Coast while retaining the values and natural amenities our community holds close to their hearts.

The community, Council and State government will check the Community Strategic Plan periodically to ensure that we are progressing towards the objectives and, wherever possible, implementing the strategies to get us there. The check of progress on strategies will be undertaken annually by Council as part of the update of the 4 Year Delivery Program and in Council Annual Reports.

Council needs to ensure that major projects and capital works clearly meet criteria that deliver the community's priority objectives while maintaining essential services. This includes the need for criteria that address community need, local and regional identity, availability and access, self-sufficiency, connectivity and linkages, future options as well as unlocking future options.

The community's vision for the future extends beyond the Shire's boundaries. In particular there is great value in identifying the shared visions for the Central Coast in partnership with Gosford City Council. It is for this reason that the two councils are working together with State government to identify shared objectives and priorities. In collaboration with the communities of both councils, it is also intended to work towards a future Central Coast Community Strategic Plan.

Council welcomes ongoing feedback.



Where can I get more information?

Further details on information referenced in the Plan can be found at:

- Census Data - Australian Bureau of Statistics:
<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/data>
- Central Coast Regional Economic Development and Employment Strategy:
<http://www.rdacc.org.au/strategy-and-plans>
- Central Coast Regional Strategy:
http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/plansforaction/pdf/central_coast_regional_strategy.pdf
- Central Coast Regional Transport Plan:
<http://haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/transportmasterplan>
- Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Action Plan 2007-2016:
<http://www.hn.cma.nsw.gov.au/topics/2181.html>
- Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Action Plan 2006-2016:
http://www.hcr.cma.nsw.gov.au/default.asp?section_id=58
- NSW Government's social justice strategy framework:
www.dlg.nsw.gov.au
- NSW State Plan 2021 Central Coast Action Plan :
<http://www.2021.nsw.gov.au/regions/central-coast>
- NSW State Plan 2021: <http://www.2021.nsw.gov.au/>
- Regional Development Australia Central Coast Regional Plan 2012-2017: <http://www.rdacc.org.au/strategy-and-plans>
- Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2010-2014 – Central Coast:
<http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Help+with+Housing/Homelessness/>
- Wyong Shire Council Strategic Plan: www.wyong.nsw.gov.au

HAVE YOUR SAY

Have your say on the future direction of the Shire

The Community Strategic Plan sets out the community's objectives and strategies for achieving a quality of life for 2030.



Your comments are important in ensuring that the objectives and strategies within the Plan capture the community's future needs.

Comments from the community during the exhibition period will be carefully considered prior to a revised plan being presented to Council for adoption in April 2013.

View the plan

Council offices: 2 Hely Street, Wyong

Council Libraries: Tuggerah, Lakehaven, Bateau Bay, The Entrance or Toukley.

Council Care and Education Centres: Kanwal, Karinya (Toukley), Northlakes (San Remo), Spotted Gum (Killarney Vale), Tom Stone (Berkeley Vale) or Treelands (Wyong).

How can I make my submission?

- dropping off the feedback form to any of the exhibition locations
- fill out a feedback form online at www.wyong.nsw.gov.au
- send written submissions by email to wsc@wyong.nsw.gov.au; fax to (02) 4351 2908 or post to the General Manager, Wyong Shire Council, PO Box 20, Wyong NSW 2259.

Submissions are to be received by 5pm, Tuesday 2 April 2013.

HAVE YOUR SAY

FEEDBACK FORM

(TO BE RETURNED BY 2 APRIL 2013)

If you have any comments on the Wyong Shire Council Draft Community Strategic Plan 2030 please provide a submission on the following form. If you are referring to a specific part of the plan please tell us which page(s).

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

If you require more space, please attach additional pages to this form.

Name

Address

Preferred contact number

Email

Contact details are required if you would like feedback or to be kept informed of the Community Strategic Plan's progress.

Interested in being involved in future engagement? Council conducts regular engagement on many projects. By ticking the circle that is at the start of this note, we will place your details on our Resident ePanel. Find out more go to www.wyong.nsw.gov.au/get-involved



DRAFT COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

creating our ideal community

Produced on behalf of the community of Wyong Shire by:

WYONG SHIRE COUNCIL
2 HELY STREET
WYONG NSW 2259
EXHIBITION 4 March - 2 April 2013

Community Strategic Plan (2030)

Creating Our Ideal Community



Wyong
Shire
Council
CENTRAL COAST

Updated 2011

For enquires contact:
 Wyong Shire Council
 PO Box 20
 Wyong NSW 2259
 Telephone: 4350 5555
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 Endorsed by Council June 2011

Photograph by: David Gosling

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Creating a better quality of life

This Vision for Wyong Shire addresses the question of: "Do we, as a community, want to continue to do the same things in the future for similar results?"

As a community, we can approach the future by waiting until opportunities and problems arise and then react or we can seek ways to best plot our course for the future. This requires setting our priorities to get what will really improve and really matter to our quality of life. At the same time we need to be prepared to respond proactively to changes and challenges as they unfold.

We have grown in numbers over the last 20 years with an average of 2,300 additional people per year moving here. In 1989 there were 98,600 people, now there are 150,000. That strong and relatively consistent **growth has seen both benefits and issues** for the area. We assume that growth will continue for the next 20 years with a predicted population of 192,600 by 2029.

The Shire's Vision must build on what is important to us now, to ensure it meets social, economic, environmental and civic leadership needs of our community both now and in the future.

The Shire Strategic Vision is realistic in that it does not achieve "utopia" over the next 20 years. The Vision requires that we set priorities to concentrate on objectives and strategies that make the biggest improvements overall. Conversely we recognise some objectives are not priority and this report outlines some of the results of them not being actively pursued.

A Vision also needs to respond to major shifts in our community over time. For example, during the five year period June 2004 to June 2009 there were approvals for 1361 aged care occupancies in the Warnervale, Kanwal and Wadalba area. This represents 70% of new occupancies approved during this time. If this continues there will be an impact on a broad range of regional facilities and services that will be needed to achieve the Vision. This 2011 update therefore includes:

- Increased emphasis on the vision principle of sustainability,
- Clarification of Council's role in helping to deliver the SSV as well as essential community services and infrastructure,
- Additional strategies arising out of Council's Service Delivery Review 2010 and
- Adoption of clear project evaluation criteria to ensure that future Council projects and capital works deliver the community's and Council's priority objectives.

As outlined above, in 2010 Council undertook an in-depth review that explored how the services delivered to the community could be improved. A number of recommendations arising from this Service Delivery Review enable improved delivery of the community's vision.

The Shire Strategic Vision provides a direction for the future of the community. Its focus is on long term benefits. Many of these will take time and considerable effort to achieve. On this basis the Vision objectives will be reviewed at least every four years, with checks and balances of strategies annually. As change is inevitable, the Vision will need to respond over time.

Our 1st Inhabitants

The coastline, creeks and Hawkesbury Sandstone hills especially retain clear proof of Aboriginal occupation over thousands of years, long before European arrival.

Our Vision acknowledges with respect the original inhabitants and recognizes the living culture of local Aboriginal people as well as the unique contribution that they and their elders have made and continue to make to the life of Wyong Shire.





How the Shire Strategic Vision works

“I am living in a beautiful area in every sense -- good people, lots of flora and fauna and sporting facilities, medical and education of a high standard with Sydney and Newcastle close by.”

- SSV survey respondent -
2008

The purpose of this document is to report to the community on:

- What the Shire Strategic Vision is
- How the Vision was created through the community
- The importance of the community, Council, state and federal government working together to achieve the Shire's Vision.
- How the Shire Strategic Vision integrates with Council's Asset Management Strategy and Long-Term Financial Strategy.

If the community, Council, state and federal government all want a better quality of life in Wyong that is sustainable we need to know:

- What is our community's ideal vision?
- What do we need to do over the next 20 years to head towards the ideal vision?
- What broad actions, programs or services should we be providing now to start achieving the Vision?

Answering these questions is not an easy task since the 150,000 residents that make up our community, numerous organisations and thousands of businesses all appreciate the great lifestyle in Wyong Shire. Each has their own priorities and changes they would like to see to improve the quality of life and ensure the long term sustainability of what is important to our community.



Our Vision for Wyong addresses the issues and concerns of our community, as expressed in a number of in-depth community consultations during 2007 and 2008. More than 3500 individuals participated. A wide variety of consultation techniques were used including individual conversations, children's art projects, telephone surveys, feedback following public meetings and an early morning survey of commuters. These took place across all ages and social groups.

Three Liaison Groups were formed to help guide the Shire Strategic Vision process - one each for the community, Council and state government. Participants in the liaison groups contributed generously of their energy to help formulate this Vision.

The process followed to create the Vision is shown in a diagram on page 6.

The Liaison Groups identified more than 100 strategic issues. Through a series of workshops these groups formulated a picture of the best future outcomes that reflected what life could be like if the main issues were actively addressed. These were compiled in the form of fictional stories about an average life in Wyong sometime in the future. These stories show the impact of focusing future efforts on achieving the Shire's Vision while also describing the negative effects of not focusing elsewhere.

The three Liaison Groups rigorously explored how the community's issues

were inter-related and analysed these relationships to identify better outcomes for the future. These were expressed as 22 objectives for the future. Strategies were also developed that would start to achieve each of the objectives.

"The local community at Canton Beach has helped develop a wonderful regional all access playground, focusing on the visually impaired."

- Rod Wallis Project Manager -
2009

SSV PROCESS

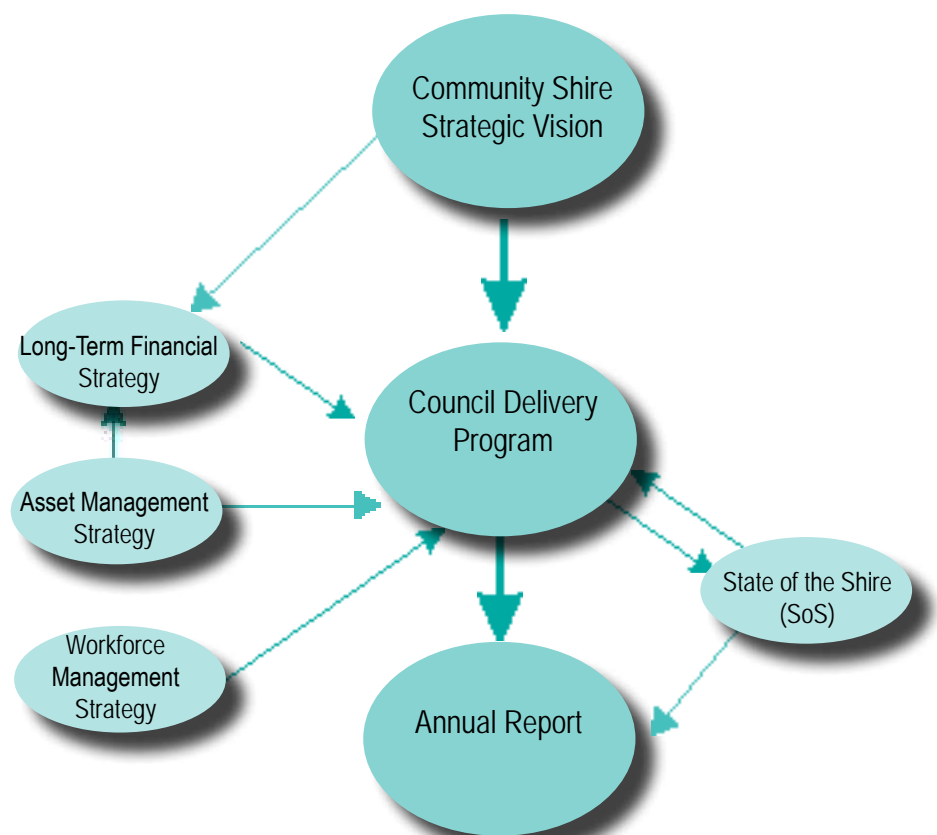


Remembering that our vision is a long term (20 year) vision it is understandable that our community cannot achieve everything at once. We simply don't have the resources and we know we cannot give equal priority to all 22 identified objectives. The three Liaison Groups and Councillors therefore selected eight priorities to provide the biggest improvements to our lives when we focus and work hard and consistently towards achieving them. Responsibility for achieving these objectives involves both community and government. The remaining 14 objectives (Appendix 1) are not priority.

This Vision document was the subject of an extensive community engagement during June and July 2009. More than 1,000 residents received detailed information about the Vision. Following extensive support and amendment in response to feedback received, this document was formally adopted by resolution at a Council meeting on 9 September 2009.

Council itself provides a large number of essential community services and programs that will continue to evolve over time in keeping with best practice (e.g. garbage collection, road maintenance, sewage services, governance, water supply etc). These activities are not listed as separate strategies as they will continue in some form at a level of service determined with consideration for objectives in this Vision.

The Shire Strategic Vision process has been carried out to comply with the Department of Local Government's approach to "Integrated Planning". As a result, in conjunction with the Vision, Council has formulated a Wyong Shire Strategic Plan to clearly demonstrate the integration of the Vision with other services Council provides to the community. This document includes:



- **4 Year Delivery Plan and Annual Plan:**

These will identify Council's priorities, programs and budgets for the next four years with an emphasis on the first financial year. This document replaces the past 'Management Plan'.

- **A Long Term Financial Strategy**

includes ten year financial projections to ensure that there are sufficient funds to meet both Council's ongoing commitments and undertake new projects, programs and initiatives from the Shire Strategic Vision and Asset Management Strategy. The Long-Term Financial Strategy is described in more detail later in the document.

- **Asset Management Strategy**

identifies the desired level of service across the variety of assets and programs managed by Council and the funding and resources required to ensure Council assets are maintained at a reasonable level. This includes, but is not limited to roads, community buildings, community facilities, water, sewer, parks and, in the long run, our natural assets. The Asset Management Strategy is described in more detail later in this document.

- **Workforce Management Strategy**

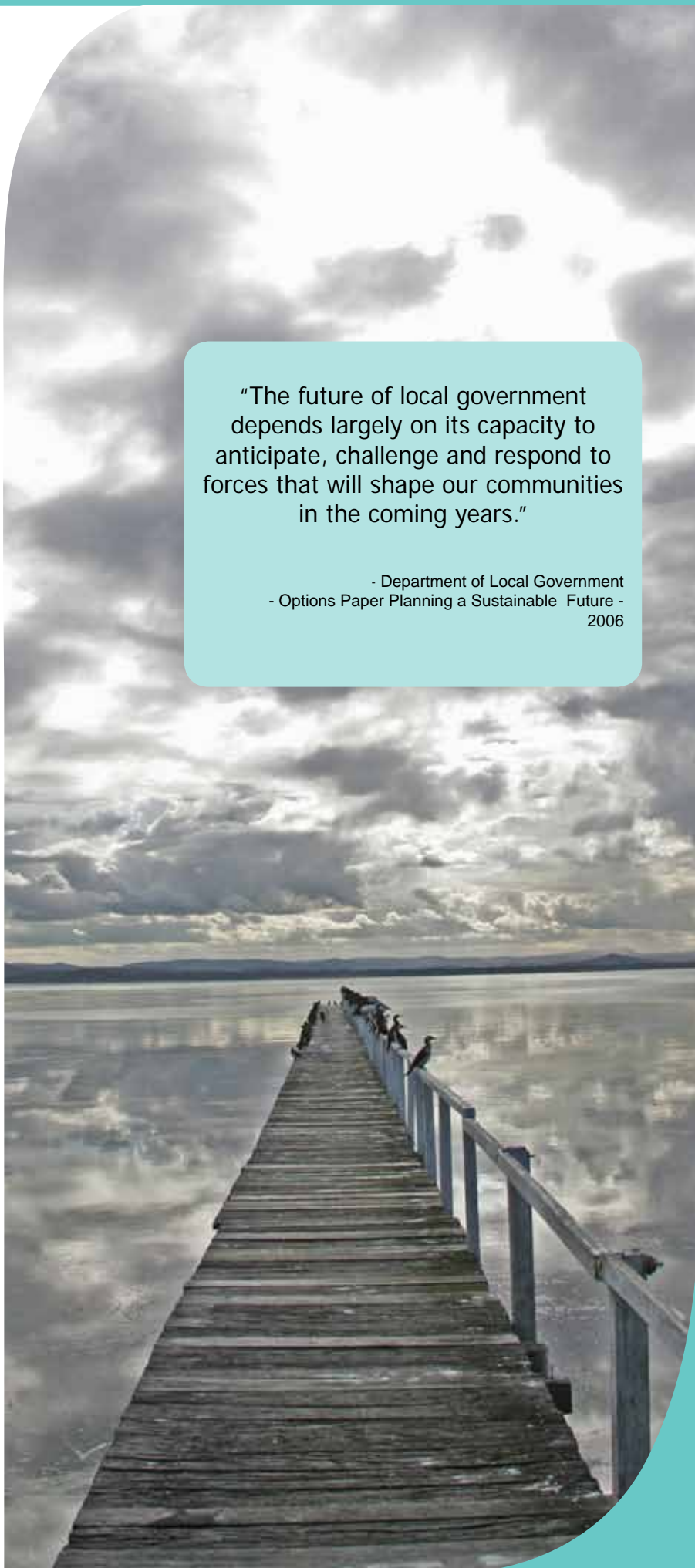
identifies the staff and skills required to implement both the Delivery Program and the Shire Strategic Vision.

The diagram on page 6 shows how these all interact to direct Council's activities in achieving the community's Strategic Vision.

Within nine months of a new Council being elected a check will take place with the community to ensure the Vision is being achieved and is leading to tangible improvements to the quality of life.

"The future of local government depends largely on its capacity to anticipate, challenge and respond to forces that will shape our communities in the coming years."

- Department of Local Government
- Options Paper Planning a Sustainable Future -
2006



Creating Our Ideal Community caring... prosperous... sustainable





Principles... above all else

The community, State government and Council all have a part to play in achieving the objectives of this Vision. In moving forward they can be guided by basic Principles.

The three Liaison Groups found that basic Principles arose repeatedly as ways to address a variety of community issues. Rather than listing them as separate objectives, it was resolved to include them in the Vision as overriding Principles.

The Liaison Groups found that Principles express important underlying assumptions and described fundamental ways in which the Vision can be achieved no matter what future objectives and strategies are pursued. In particular, Vision Principles outline how governance can be effectively applied and show the energy and vigour generated by sharing a common Vision and working together to achieve its objectives.

The basic Vision Principles are:

Government is conducted with openness and transparency involving the community in the decisions that affect it.

All three levels of government work closely together.

There is environmental, social and economic sustainability.

There is fiscal responsibility.

Open Government

The roles of government include:

- timely, equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community ensuring those services and facilities are managed and maintained efficiently.
- keeping the local community and other government levels informed about its activities.
- ensuring that, in the exercise of its day to day functions, it acts consistently

and without bias considering the social, environmental and economic implications of our decisions and actions.

Throughout the Vision program, the desire of the community for greater involvement in decision-making that impacts them has been strongly expressed. It is recognised that there are many challenges in community engagement to ensure true community involvement.

Governments Working Together

The three Liaison Groups identified the need for all three levels of government to work closely together to improve the decision making process and ultimately the outcomes that can be achieved. This includes collaboration of departments within each level of government. Changes in government, changes in representatives and changes in policy all impact on this over time.

As the level of government closest to the community, Council has a significant role to play in ensuring good outcomes for our area by acting as a conduit and advocate between the upper levels of government and the community.

Sustainability

Around the world people are striving to better integrate how we manage our environment, lifestyle and economy. Here in Wyong Shire it is no different. Sustainability is the responsibility of the entire community and constitutes one of the essential principles of our Vision.

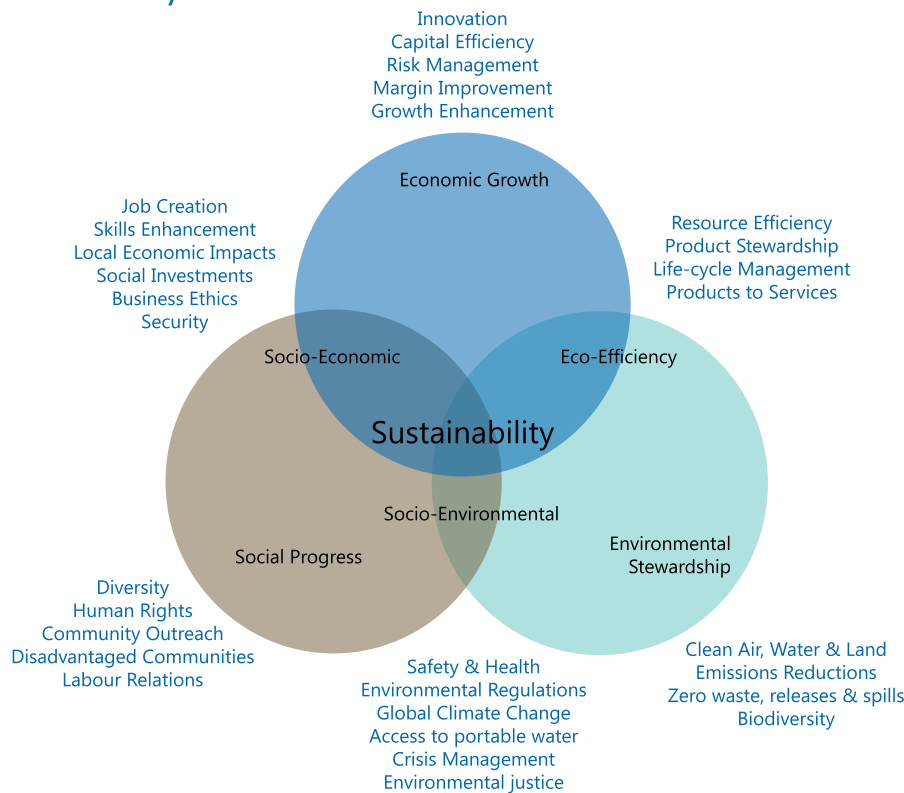
Our Vision will assist Council, State and federal government as well as the community to work towards Wyong Shire growing as a caring community, a prosperous economy and a thriving environment. This can be displayed in the following diagram.

Genuine sustainability is about the things we value and need for everyday life including,

“Encourage community participation and reward those who do, to ensure positive connotation.”

- Youth Advisory Council
- Survey-
2008

Sustainability Definition



but not limited to, food and shelter, natural environment, education and employment, health and welfare services, cultural and recreational activities, transport, as well as water and energy supplies. Sustainability is about considering the social, environmental and economic implications of our decision-making and actions and reducing our “environmental footprint”. Pursuing sustainability in the things we value builds in resilience to withstand future upheavals such as the current economic downturn, climate change and population growth. For example, it is essential that climate change forecasts are monitored and appropriate steps taken to proactively adapt to change and ensure our social, environmental and economic sustainability.

Sustainability guiding principles should be applied to all decisions and programs impacting the Shire. These help to clearly define this Vision’s commitment to sustainability.

Our guiding principles were developed by Council staff and the Wyong Shire community. They are based on what we value and have been benchmarked against national and international principles. The guiding principles are to be used

to guide everything from planning and development decisions to every-day on-ground actions.

The guiding principles for a sustainable Wyong Shire are:

Think holistically.

Act responsibly.

- We recognise that people, nature and the economy are affected by our actions. We plan for the long-term and recognise shorter term needs.
- We integrate these considerations into our decision making, working with the forms and functions of the natural environment and with our social and economic attributes as the basis of our planning and development.

Smart, local, adaptable.

- We respond to future challenges by embracing innovation and acting timely and effectively.
- We base our actions locally, mindful of our place in the world, building on our strengths and special qualities of place and community.

Care for nature.

- We recognise the intrinsic value of biodiversity and natural ecosystems, protecting the environment for the

benefit of all life forms.

- We commit to the sustainable use of natural resources to maintain healthy ecological systems for the benefit of present and future generations.

Good processes. Improved outcomes.

- We demonstrate leadership, accountability, transparency and financial responsibility in all decision making.
- We measure our prosperity by the health and wellbeing of our people, environment and economy and strive for continuous improvement.

Work together.

- We build partnerships by engaging with and listening to all facets of society, working together for the benefit of the whole.
- We have a culture of collaboration and participation that encourages innovation, sharing of resources, engagement in decision making and shared accountability for all results.

Lead by example.

- We lead by example with actions for positive change and support visionary policies and practices within the community.
- We involve people with the relevant skills and knowledge in our projects and recognise there are many ways to achieve our goals. We embrace the opportunity to learn from our actions and the actions of others.

Fiscal Responsibility

Directing our funds in a planned way will help to deliver our community’s objectives and provide, in a sustainable way, the things we want and need in the future.

Whilst external funding will be sought for some projects and initiatives, for the most part it is our community that will ultimately bear the costs of significant changes in direction or new strategies and their maintenance.



Objectives and Strategies... where we are going

There are eight priority objectives. These are focus areas which will provide the biggest improvements to our lives when we concentrate on them over the next 20 years and work hard and consistently towards achieving them. In short, these say that in the future Wyong Shire will be a place where:

- **Communities will be vibrant, caring and connected;**
- **There will be ease of travel;**
- **Communities will have a range of facilities and services;**



- **Areas of natural value will be enhanced and maintained;**
- **There will be a sense of community ownership of the natural environment;**
- **There will be a strong sustainable business sector;**
- **Information and communication technology will be world's best;**
- **The community will be educated, innovative and creative.**

A number of strategies are identified that support how our community can start to achieve significant outcomes. While strategies will often require the development of programs, identification of specific funding and co-ordination of actions; they give us the initial roadmap for our future. The numbering used to identify each of the eight objective and their respective strategies does not indicate priority.

Strategies include those that have already been set for the Central Coast in the State Plan (a new direction for NSW), Chapter 8 (Central Coast Region) 2006. Such regional strategies are identified under the initials "RS". The NSW State Plan: Investing In A Better Future (2010) was published after the initial Vision document. The State Plan 2010 contains eight focus areas. Seven of the eight State focus areas correspond to at least one of this Vision's Priority Objectives. The relevant State focus area(s) is therefore listed under each Priority Objectives in a box labelled "State Focus 2010". The eighth State Plan 2010 focus area "Better Government" is one of the main themes of the Principles on pages 10-11 of this document. Note that a new State government elected in 2011 has stated that they intend to update the State Plan.

The stories and priorities for our Shire follow.



"People are friendly and welcoming, we love it here and are very happy."

- Community Plan Summary Report -
2008

I love my community

Tom Bradley has a very busy day ahead. That's why he's up early, despite getting only a few hours sleep after the annual street party.

Tom is happy he lives in such a vibrant and well connected community. His street and local parks are clean because everyone

has a real sense of community pride and belonging. This pride and overall cleanliness may have reduced the level of graffiti although it is hard to say.

He has built up some very solid relationships in the community owing to the fact he volunteers his spare time as president of the local football club,

where one of his children plays. In his own small way, Tom feels this helps him make a difference, or a contribution, to his community.

He has helped, with other community members, turn the local footy clubhouse into a second home for the area's youth. He is proud that these same youth, including



children respect this and Tom knows it's a great example of interacting between different generations for the one common cause ... promoting a healthy lifestyle in the community and giving the local children a sense of direction, pride and a say in their own activities. This is happening right across the Shire.

Tom really likes his neighbours, who keep a watch on his dog, Digger, and his house when he goes away on holiday. He especially likes the way people look out for each other in his street, without any major programs to provide security in neighbourhoods like the removal of shrubs and flood-lighting in parks, major increase in police presence, roller doors on shop fronts or security cameras.

He also knows that people can obtain help within communities when they need advice and support as problems arise such as in-home help for his aging father Roy.

In Tom and Gabby's community, they know you don't have to look too far for people of all ages to put up their hands to volunteer in school reading programs, toddler learning programs and the local P&C Committee. They sometimes feel, however, that the Council and state government operate at a different level. "I just wish they would give us a part of the money they spend and let us decide how to spend it. We would have a major footy complex and clubhouse," Tom declared at his last AGM. His dad Roy would also like a footpath outside his home in San Remo. After 40 years in the family home there is still a footpath on only one side of the road.

As Roy becomes older he is finding that maintaining the family home is a burden especially since his wife Helen passed away. He would like to find a smaller unit, but there are none available in San Remo or nearer to Tom and Gabby to buy or rent. Maybe he will shift into The Entrance.

The other thing Tom loves is the fact that his children can travel to major centres

in the Shire should he or wife Gabby be tied up at any stage. Council has worked hard with governments at all levels, but particularly the state government, to create safe and reliable local transport links. While it may require purchasing several tickets, bus services to all major centres including Tuggerah, Toukley, The Entrance and Wyong are regular and frequent. There are also links to all local train stations, schools, major business centres and workplaces.

Tom still wishes that more could be spent in improving roads. While roads in his relatively new residential area are good, overall the Shire's road surface remains fair. He realises that there is only so much money for roads, but he wishes that the quality of road surfaces in the Shire could be improved. How the road maintenance funding is allocated changed many years ago and has led to some improvements in roads, but it remains a worry in the community.

Commuting, while still a burden for some families is also a lot easier than the past, with trains at all hours including a very fast train during peak hours that has decreased travel time to Central by 30 percent. There are fewer cars on the freeway, owing to more people opting to car pool and larger commuter carparks at train stations. For everyday transport, the Shire's shared pathway system links up right around the Lakes' system giving locals the chance to ride to and from school, shops or work.

his own 14-year-old son Fletcher, have even formed their own group where they raise ideas at regular fortnightly meetings trying to entice new members to the club, and talking about the good things they can do in the community to give the club an even better name. Tom, as club president, often sits in on these meetings with other committee members just to listen. The



In the future Wyong Shire will be a place where:

1. Communities will be vibrant, caring and connected with a sense of belonging and pride in their local neighbourhood.

This will help residents to interact in a positive manner, build relationships and participate locally.

We will achieve this by:

- a. Expanding and supporting programs that increase participation among all ages.** This could be in the community, business, sports and recreation, education and creative sectors. It could also encourage training or leadership programs which foster lifelong community involvement.
- b. Expanding and supporting programs and activities that encourage and enhance neighbourhood connections.** This could include street parties and a "Get to know your Neighbours" Program. It will help improve interaction between different generations and cultures and encourage more neighbourly support of each other.
- c. Encouraging and valuing genuine youth and seniors participation in the community.** This will help ensure involvement of young people and seniors, respect for their ideas and active involvement in the life of their community.
- d. Expanding and resourcing children and family service programs.** This will help and monitor child development, provide parenting advice, support positive family relationships and encourage community involvement from an early age.
- e. Developing and implementing the Wyong Shire-wide Settlement Strategy.** This should clearly lay out the areas for residential, business and commercial development while retaining the natural environment. It should clarify how the balance can be reached between constructed development and the natural environment.
- f. Improve the effectiveness of the system of connections that tie towns/suburbs and facilities of the Shire together as well as connecting to the wider region.** This includes improved connections between residents and between residents and facilities at both the local and regional level as well as the use of new technologies.
- g. RS --Implementing the Regional Strategy for the Central Coast that will guide appropriate development, maintain the lifestyle and environment and include Government intervention to provide more than 35,000 jobs in the next 25 years.**
- h. RS -- Planning and delivering a new Town Centre at Warnervale including a new railway station and transport interchange.**

Council Contribution: Council has a major role to play in the delivery of this Objective. In particular it has the primary responsibility for action on strategies

1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1f and 1h above in close partnership with the community. These need to be carried out in close partnership with the community and in most cases benefit from State government support and funding.

State Focus 2010 -- Stronger Communities,
Healthy Communities and Keeping People Safe



In the future Wyong Shire will be a place where:

2. There will be ease of travel within the Shire, and to other regional centres and cities. Travel will be available at all hours and will be safe, clean and affordable.

This will improve access within, around and out of Wyong Shire and allow travel options.

We will achieve this by:

- a. **Ensuring public and private bus services are timely, clean, safe and affordable.** They should service schools, workplaces and commercial centres and major community events along with entertainment venues during off-peak times such as large clubs, hotels, tourist centres and festivals.
- b. **Upgrading train and public transport services between Williamstown and Sydney Central ensuring the service is safe, timely and reliable.** This should include a very fast train during peak hours that will decrease travel time to Central by 30%. Local shuttle trains should run every 20 minutes.
- c. **Improving and linking the bicycle/shared pathway network and related facilities to encourage more cycling opportunities.** This includes improved road crossings, signage and installing lockers and showers at key centres. Businesses should also provide financial incentives for the purchase of bicycles.
- d. **Improving commuter parking at railway stations.** This should focus on being safe, accessible and appealing. Landscaping and bicycle facilities should also be provided.
- e. **Improving commuter hubs along the freeway.** These should be planned and designed to encourage carpooling and should provide safe, easy parking for vehicles, bicycles and buses. Some hubs should have kiosks selling coffee and newspapers.
- f. **RS - Creating a better public transport system including new outer suburban train carriages, upgrades of the Tuggerah station, rail maintenance upgrades and better local bus services.**
- g. **RS - Ongoing upgrading of roads in the region including The Entrance Road and Pacific Highway.**
- h. **RS - Improving the F3 links to Sydney to three lanes in each direction in partnership with the Federal Government.**

Council Contribution: With the community, Council has an advocacy and monitoring task for most of the above strategies. It has primary responsibility for action on strategy 2c above and for strategy 2g for local roads.

State Focus 2010 -- Better Transport & Liveable Cities, Healthy Communities and Stronger Communities



Diverse facilities at your doorstep

Thursday is a big night in the Bradley household, so it's lucky that both Tom and Gabby are able to work from home these days to fit in around the children's busy education and social schedules. Straight after school, Tom is off to footy training while Fletcher and Gabby head off to netball with Nicky on their bikes.

Both of these training facilities have been built in the last 10 years and offer good floodlighting and playing surface resulting in fewer problems with injuries or abrupt end to training just because the sun has gone down.

The family then meets every Thursday for a quick bite to eat, often at one of several local restaurants, before Gabby takes both of the kids to the nearby community centre where all three do Tae Kwon Do training and Tom heads home for some time out on the lounge with a cyber-book or in front of the computer. He claims he can't do martial arts due to an old footy injury, but what he really appreciates is the little bit of peace and quiet.

The community, state government and Council have worked hard to ensure people know what facilities are available in their area, and how to make use of them and participate in the programs offered such as parenting courses, continuing education, social activities, counselling and family support as well as many sporting and recreational activities for all ages such as the local Tae Kwon Do classes attended by Fletcher, Nicky and Gabby.

In addition, Warnervale has an Aquatic Centre and Wyong has a new Cultural Centre, other areas have new cinemas, and most major suburbs have active community centres focusing on family and community development. Surf clubs, local sporting facilities and community buildings are well maintained and offer a range of activities that are reasonably priced or free.

Council has maintained a number of existing centres over the years, rather than building new ones. These centres remain the hub of many communities and are available to be hired out for functions to help raise funds for their maintenance. Transport connects all centres via the ever expanding pathways and bus timetables, while seniors in the area have access to a shuttle bus that connects a number of local senior citizens centres.

Funding generally ensures the ongoing operation of these centres, which are largely run by volunteers who report directly to their communities. There are problems, however integrating service funding between the three levels of government so that professional staff at community centers often operate on short-term and part-time contracts due to lack of agreement as to who should pay for ongoing operations.

"I'm really excited that the Shire is taking cycling facilities seriously, as evident with the new bike path between Wyong and Tuggerah."

- SSV blog site comment -
2009



In the future Wyong Shire will be a place where

3. Communities will have access to a diverse range of affordable and coordinated facilities, programs and services.

This will encourage connected and sustainable communities.

We will achieve this by:

- a. Providing and maintaining local and regional community facilities for recreation, culture, health and education.** This will include major new regional centres in the Shire such as The Art House, cinema complex and Aquatic & Healthy Lifestyle Centre as well as maintaining and supporting existing facilities such as surf clubs and the Bateau Bay sports fields.
- b. Providing and maintaining a range of community programs focused on community development, recreation, culture, environment, education and other issues.** This will support a wide range of community activities.
- c. Providing recurrent funding for community support and development services.** This should target all ages and abilities and include business support programs, cultural and recreational programs as well as educational and health services.
- d. Promoting community facilities to help maximise their benefits and use.** This should ensure people know what facilities are available, how to make use of them, how to participate in the programs offered and how they can help maintain and manage them.
- e. Balance the varying provision of facilities and amenities between towns/suburbs to enhance the quality of life in the Shire.** This includes review and enhancement of current use of facilities.
- f. Maximise the access to, and potential for, new and existing facilities/infrastructure to support growth.** This includes expanding use of facilities and innovative ways of providing facilities and infrastructure.

Council Contribution: Council has a major role to play in the delivery of this Objective. It has primary responsibility for action on all of the above strategies in close partnership with the community. In most cases State government support and funding will be needed to carry out the strategy to a high standard.

"I love the new community centre. It is abuzz with activity and people, there is so much going on."

- Community Plan Summary Report -2008

State Focus 2010 -- Stronger Communities, Healthy Communities and Keeping People Safe



Preserving our natural wonders

Nicky Bradley has always been a nature lover. She enjoys living and going to school in an area with lots of trees around her. On weekends, Nicky and father Tom, and sometimes Tom's father Roy, take in the area's abundant beauty on a leisurely walk or ride around the lakes and beyond. The trail system along the ocean and around the lakes connects to the Great North Walk which takes you all the way to Circular Quay in Sydney.



Ever since she can remember, Nicky's school has been involved in environmental programs which has given her a feeling of being part of the natural environment. Nicky and some friends joined a local Landcare group and regularly get involved in raising money and planting new vegetation along the vast dunes of the Shire's coastline and controlling weeds. In fact, Nicky and her friends have decided to take their commitment to the environment a step further by adopting a nature trail in the area to look after, ensuring it is well maintained and able to be enjoyed by people of all ages. She thinks having young people involved will stop some of the graffiti that still occurs.

Nicky is also excited about the establishment of the annual Celebration of the Environment which is based around our lakes and beaches. Increasingly more people are sharing her passion, for protection of endangered species such as the Regent Honeyeater or Swift Parrot.

Tom and Gabby know not to raise the topic of sustainable homes since Nicky gets stuck into them about their 15 year-old house that is very comfortable and spacious. Like most homes in the neighbourhood, however, even with rebates it is going to take a number of years to retrofit all of the things that Nicky believes it should have (such as a 10,000 L rainwater tank with pump, eaves, double glazed windows, roof ventilator, solar water heating and solar electrical panels). After all, Tom and Nicky already have put in a veggie garden.

The \$40 million plus spent on implementation of the Tuggerah Lakes

Estuary Management Plan over the years has significantly reduced sources of water pollution and therefore avoided the degradation in water quality that would've occurred if these sources had not been eliminated. There are still calls to build a breakwall despite the fact that studies for more than 50 years shows it simply will not improve water quality nor improve access for boats to the shallow estuary. The Lakes remain the heart of the Shire and priority is given to their protection.

The "Green Wyong" Program has ensured native trees now form a key feature of all developed areas and along all major roads in the Shire. New residents like this.

The Bradley's regularly attend markets, which focus on local produce creating a sustainable lifestyle hosted by a number of community gardens in the area and supporting local market gardens.

Areas important to past local indigenous inhabitants remain untouched by development. While information is available about the location of threatened vegetation, there is always a higher level of information that would be desirable to better understand and manage these ecological communities especially due to the changing climate.

Council continues to attract funding from both governments to ensure the lakes' quality doesn't diminish and there are ongoing streambank stabilisation and rehabilitation programs, along with educational campaigns, ensuring people pick up their dog faeces for example, so it doesn't run off into our lakes.

"Wyong Shire has great natural amenities, the beach, the lake and bush all close by."

- Community Plan Summary Report --
2008



In the future Wyong Shire will be a place where:

4. Areas of natural value in public and private ownership will be enhanced and retained to a high level in the context of ongoing development.

This will protect natural resources and ecosystems and retain a high quality of natural amenity.

We will achieve this by:

- a. Preserving threatened and endangered species as well as ecological communities and biodiversity.** This involves a balance in the use of local endemic species in both landscaping and bush regeneration and the identification of habitats which are so sensitive that no development or recreational access should be permitted near them so as to achieve sustainability.
- b. Expanding and continuing programs focused on restoring degraded natural areas in our community.** This should be done, where possible, in partnership with the local community and all levels of Government. The program could include, but not be limited to, lakes improvements, streambank stabilisation/rehabilitation, bushland regeneration and noxious weed and feral animal control.
- c. Ensuring all development areas create or maintain tree-covered ridgelines and waterways.** This should form an attractive backdrop to development and also add to the environmental value and appeal of the area.
- d. Developing and implementing strategies to reduce the Shire's Environmental Footprint.** This will reduce the impact of the human population in the Shire on the range of current and future environmental issues and serve as an example of more sustainable communities and economies.
- e. Developing and implementing a Natural Resources Sustainability Strategy for Wyong Shire.** This will be based on comprehensive environmental and resource information and outline how the balance between natural and built environments will be achieved over the next 100-200 years.

Council Contribution: Council has a major role to play in the delivery of this Objective where it has primary responsibility for strategies 4b, 4c, 4d and 4e. In addition, its decisions and programs can have a major impact on achieving strategy 4a even though overall responsibility rests with a State government agency.

State Focus 2010 -- Green State, Better
Transport & Liveable Cities



In the future Wyong Shire will be a place where:

5. There will be a sense of community ownership of the natural environment through direct public involvement with environmental programs.

This will lead to community appreciation of the natural environment and create personal involvement and alliances that will maintain and improve the amenity and sustainability of our natural ecosystems.

We will achieve this by:

- a. Improving and promoting public access to environmental areas.** This will help increase community awareness and involvement, encourage greater use among all ages and abilities, and improve community ownership.
- b. Establishing and maintaining projects and programs to encourage more active participation in community based environmental activities.** This should include an "Adopt a Park/Nature Trail Program", and other activities which can break down barriers and help people become actively involved in improving and maintaining their local environment.
- c. Creating and promoting a network of renowned natural trails. These could include:**
 - o A world-class "Beach and Cliff Walk" along the coastline.
 - o A "Mountains to the Sea Trail"
 - o Improved promotion and facilities for the Great North Walk
 - o Shared pathways around the entire Tuggerah Lakes system that connects to Lake Macquarie to enhance a lakes focus for Wyong Shire.
- d. Establishing an annual community 'Celebration of the Environment' event based around our lakes and beaches.** This could partner other major events with artistic or cultural theme.
- e. Developing and implementing a 'Greening Wyong Shire Program'.** This can help to ensure native trees form key features of all developed areas and other areas as well as improving the visual amenity of the Shire.
- f. Creating, maintaining and promoting a series of community gardens.** These can help to provide meeting places, local food stalls and a focus on sustainable lifestyles, as well as being an attractive natural amenity and asset for the Shire.
- g. Actively supporting and encouraging volunteer environmental champions.** These could be individuals, groups, schools, businesses, Council or other organisations. These people/ organisations can help to engage and motivate the community through their actions.

Council Contribution: Council has primary responsibility for achievement of most of the above strategies with the exception of 5d and 5f. All of these will require a close partnership with the community and depend on support and resources from State Government

State Focus 2010 -- Green State, Healthy Communities and Stronger Communities



Working hard from home...

Tom Bradley finishes up an email and races into the conference room for a big screen, video conference hook up with the company head honchos in the Munich office.

It's the regular monthly catch-up, for Tom who is a senior manager at a leading international logistics company. The company has rapidly expanded over the past decade, and has set up an operation in the Tuggerah Business Park along with other national, international and local Central Coast businesses. Their success has created some problems as it is difficult to source people with qualifications in their specific areas of need. Tom wishes that there was a closer connection between the local educational system and local employment.

There have been a number of releases of industrial land encouraging the growth of local employment. From a goat paddock 20 years ago, there are now about 6000 people employed in the Wyong Employment Zone.

Tom loves it. He remembers more than a decade of travelling two hours each way to Sydney every day where he worked for an Australian telecommunications company. When the opportunity to get a job locally came up in this growth industry, for the same money he could get in Sydney, he applied.

It's not easy. The Munich based company haven't got to where they are without demanding a lot from their experienced employees like Tom, but Tom thinks it's a



..thanks to IT advances

hell of a lot easier than jumping on a train at 6am every morning and not getting home until at least 7.30pm each night. Watching his children grow into adults and spending quality time with Gabby is certainly an added bonus.

Wyong Shire now has a strong and sustainable business sector, which has provided sustainable growth in local jobs and is strong enough to withstand financial downturns. Council's challenge is to ensure there is enough land available to support increasing business investors.

One of the major success stories in the Shire has been the introduction, across the board, of a free wireless broadband. In partnership with network providers, industry and governments, all businesses

and residents are now electronically connected at least on a basic level.

Such a system has allowed Gabby to start up a home marketing business, where she is a contractor helping to promote new film releases on the Central Coast through major film companies. Like Tom, Gabby also travelled to Sydney before the birth of her children (Fletcher and Nicky). If she wanted to continue working in her industry in the past, it meant a return to the trains which is something she wasn't keen to do.

The "world's best" telecommunications network has enabled our businesses, and educational centres, to compete on an equal footing with the rest of the world. This network, and business base, has

built up a wonderful reputation both in Australia and abroad. As a result, a major Conference Centre in the Shire with the capacity to host 1000 people opened last year and has been a big success.

The Bluetongue Brewery has showed over the past 15 years how successful a business can be, and is now a major tourist attraction in the Shire contributing significantly to local employment and economic development. Experts from throughout Australia and overseas come to inspect its water reuse system that also provides renewable energy for the plant.



In the future Wyong Shire will be a place where:

6. There will be a strong sustainable business sector and increased local employment built on the Central Coast's business strengths.

This will provide sustained growth in local jobs and ensure a strong business sector able to withstand financial downturns.

We will achieve this by:

- a. Providing a coordinated approach to business generation, employment and development for the region.** This should be done through partnerships across industries, businesses and government departments. Representatives from each sector should take a leadership role and "think outside the square" to continually generate new business opportunities. The group should also clarify responsibilities and avoid repetition.
- b. Identifying and leveraging the competitive advantages of Wyong Shire.** This will help to differentiate the Shire from other regions, ensure a coordinated approach to business development and provide greater focus for business investors and job seekers.
- c. Support the growth of the Shire as a competitive major business sector while reducing the alienation of towns/suburbs that can result from regional pressures.** This will generate employment while sustaining the quality of life.
- d. Actively promoting the business benefits of Wyong Shire. Creating a single executive level voice to attract employment generating development to the Central Coast and negotiating in liaison with all relevant agencies.** This will reduce duplication and help target businesses that can take full advantage of the benefits on offer.
- e. Establishing and maintaining a strategic database on business and economic trends on the Central Coast.** This should also include information on best practices for employment generation and other regional centres. It will provide useful information to governments, industries and business networks and act as a valuable monitoring tool.
- f. Establishing and maintaining key industry networking roundtables.** Each roundtable should focus on different industries. They will share information, encourage local business expansion and encourage the local sourcing of business materials.
- g. Regularly identifying Central Coast businesses that are innovative and creative with high growth potential ("gazelles").** These should be supported in maintaining their growth and encouraged to expand in the region.
- h. Supporting the development of a major Conference Centre in the Shire.** This should be capable of hosting conferences of 600-1000 participants and promoted throughout Australia.

State Focus 2010 --
Supporting Business and
Jobs, Better Transport
& Liveable Cities and
Clever State

- 
- i. **Ensuring adequate and appropriate employment land in the Shire.** This will help to ensure timely land availability and also support business investors.
 - j. **Sourcing tourist attractions across the Shire.** This will build the tourist industry and contribute significantly to local employment and economic development.

Council Contribution: Council has important functions as a partner, advocate and for monitoring achievement of this objective. It has primary responsibility for strategies 6b, 6c, 6f, 6g, 6h and 6i in close partnership with the business community and State government.

In the future Wyong Shire will be a place where:

7. Information communication technology will be consistent with world's best practice and adaptive to technological advances across all sectors.

This will allow local businesses to compete on an equal footing with the rest of the world.

We will achieve this by:

- a. **Providing free wireless broadband throughout Wyong Shire.** This should be in partnership with network providers, industry and governments and enable all businesses and residents to be electronically connected.
- b. **Developing and implementing guidelines to ensure all residences and businesses as well as commercial and educational centres can be quickly linked to fibre-optic telecommunications networks.** Hi-speed networks should be connected as soon as buildings are completed and before businesses start operating.

Council Contribution: Council has primary responsibility for the delivery of strategy 7b and will need to work in close association with service providers and Federal government if strategy 7a is to be achieved.

State Focus 2010 --
Supporting Business & Jobs
and Clever State



A place where you are always learning

"What's up," Tom says, pushing the button so he can talk to his brother Matt's face staring at him from his video phone. "I've been thinking lately," Matt says. "I wouldn't mind doing some study to broaden my skill set and see if I can change jobs."

Matt has been a policeman for many years, getting a trade out of school before entering the NSW Police Force. But he is tired of the shift work and has seen and done it all over the last decade. He wants a change. "I've been looking at all the job advertisements on the "Wyongwork" website. I just want to move my family back to the Shire and see if I can get a job on the Central Coast, but I need to do some extra training to broaden my skill set," Matt says from his western Sydney home.



Luckily, Tom is part of a key industry networking roundtable where he has learned that a number of businesses are looking to expand. This expansion involves hiring new people and training them part time locally while learning the rest on the job. "I think I can help," Tom says and passes details onto his brother.

Despite Matt being older than your average person seeking further training and employment opportunities, Wyong Shire has become a place where people are able to gain knowledge at all stages of life and generate income. In turn, this has attracted businesses, keen to build and train their workforce almost from scratch. The Wyong Shire workforce of today is skilled compared to decades ago.

The Ourimbah University Campus, while still part of Newcastle University has built a solid reputation as an innovative centre in specific subjects such as nursing, marine science, teaching and food technology, most tied to local businesses. In addition, there are any number of courses conducted through other organisations. Training and studying is made a lot easier thanks to the high speed broadband.

A couple of days a week, Gabby also provides her time at the local school for volunteer reading programs. She finds it very rewarding after ensuring that her own children were read to from when they were first born. She believes this reading contributed significantly to their good school reports. Nicky, in particular,

had achieved recognition both within her school and the Council's "Scholastic Achievers" awards. Tom has been asked to be a mentor for his industry in the local area, and help train new staff.

Wyong Shire has slowly and steadily transformed itself into an educational centre of excellence.

The stereotype of sitting in a classroom and looking at an overhead projector or whiteboard has long been replaced by learning on the job. Even Roy is learning through the University of the Third Age and regularly giving talks on local history.

In the future Wyong Shire will be a place where:

8. The community will be well educated, innovative and creative. People will attain full knowledge potential at all stages of life.

This will lead to residents valuing lifelong learning, strengthening community and participation and lead to a skilled local workforce. For many this will generate income and attract businesses.

We will achieve this by:

- a. Generating community awareness and behavioural change about the value of ongoing education.** This should seek to change local views that higher education levels do not provide advantages for job seekers or income levels.
- b. Creating programs that encourage lifelong learning for everyone.** This will reduce the stereotypes of traditional learning environments, create opportunities for individuals to expand and explore interests and careers and help to ensure mental activity through all stages of life and all sectors of the community.
- c. Creating and maintaining programs to actively encourage community involvement in educational institutions.** This could include volunteer reading programs, leadership and mentor projects, artists or business in residence programs and others. Regulatory restrictions to community involvement should be removed.
- d. Establishing and maintaining a committed network of education, community, business and government representatives.** These sectors should work together to transform Wyong Shire into a centre of educational excellence and convey an understanding of the positive impacts of education on values such as community, health, the local economy, employment and the natural environment.
- e. Providing programs and services which respond to changes in the field of education in Wyong Shire.** This should encourage continual education of community leaders through programs including mentoring, personal development and cultural pursuits and improve long-term community participation and engagement.

Council Contribution: Council's role in achieving the above strategies is largely as advocate and monitoring achievements. It does not have primary responsibility, but through its programs and public information it can have a significant impact on outcomes for this objective.



State Focus 2010 -- Clever State, Better
Transport & Liveable Cities, Healthy
Communities, Stronger Communities and
Keeping People Safe

Council's Principal Activities for Essential Services

Council has a major role in delivery of the community's vision as shown under each of the eight preceding priority objectives. In addition, it has a very significant responsibility for supplying the community with diverse essential services that are basic community needs (e.g. sewerage services, waste collection, information, regulatory services etc.).

Council has provided these services over many years. The community did not view these activities as current priorities, but if the level of service, for whatever reason, declines than they would undoubtedly quickly become community priorities (e.g. community concerns over the past few years regarding water restrictions).

Council's roles in providing these essential services can be described in terms of 12 Principal Activities as follows:

1. Community & Education

Community & Education establishes relationships with people in the community and promotes connectedness and participation in order to maintain a high quality of life on the Central Coast.

This activity comprises community services, programs and events. Education, culture and lifelong learning are developed and promoted throughout the community including the provision of libraries and childcare. The supply of information for the community is coordinated through customer contact and community engagement.

2. Community Recreation

This activity establishes and maintains buildings, facilities and services for public use and enjoyment. It promotes and

operates "fit for purpose" facilities and services to support diverse recreation activities and maximise their benefits and use. It also manages and maintains natural areas and open spaces in order to supply public open space facilities and provide for passive recreation.

3. Economic & Property Development

Responsibilities for this activity include strengthening the economic base of the Shire by promoting economic development as well as the creation of employment opportunities. It identifies and develops sustainable income streams for Council. In addition, it provides property-related services for the organisation.

4. Council Enterprises

Council Enterprises includes child care and education. It provides information, programs and support for the community to assist in making Wyong Shire a place where individuals are always learning.

It also provides, promotes and operates high quality holiday park facilities and services that are a significant contributor to the local tourism industry, generate income for Council and ensure maximum benefits and use of these facilities.

5. Regulatory

This activity ensures compliance with laws across a wide range of responsibilities.

It includes land-use controls and enforcement of building standards as well as environmental protection, domestic animal care, road safety and essential public health functions.

6. Environment & Land Use

Responsibilities under this activity include enhancing the natural and built environment on both private and public land. This is done by providing strategic planning and policy as well as controls over land-use in order to maintain a high quality of life and natural environment.

Through this activity Council seeks to promote sustainable use of natural resources on the Central Coast.

7. Waste Management

Waste Management includes domestic and commercial waste processing and disposal operations including landfill remediation. Waste management provides a safe, reliable and environmentally responsible waste collection and disposal service and aims to reduce the Shire's environmental footprint.

8. Roads

Responsibilities for this activity include the Shire's roads, bridge network and traffic management along with associated infrastructure to help ensure ease of travel and environmental responsibility.

It provides and maintains roads to support a growing population in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.

9. Drainage

Drainage provides safe and reliable collection, transmission, treatment and discharge facilities for stormwater in a cost-effective and sustainable manner through an extensive network of engineered and natural drainage.

This activity is needed to protect life and property while retaining natural values and amenity.



10. Sewer Services

This activity provides safe and dependable storage, collection, treatment and disposal facilities for sewage in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.

11. Water Supply

Water Supply provide safe and reliable water services including the collection, storage, transportation, treatment and distribution of water to standards appropriate to its use in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.

12. Administration

The Principal Activity of Administration provides corporate-wide internal services. Administration is accountable for the governance and statutory compliance of the organisation's finance, human resources and corporate information.

It includes asset management, contract and project management as well as plant, fleet and depot services. Administration provides the framework and tools to ensure effective administration of Council on behalf of the community.

Asset Management Strategy

Infrastructure is built to provide a wide range of services to the residents of the Shire. The replacement value of Wyong Shire's assets is over \$2 billion, as shown in the chart below. They require careful management as they age.

The use and the standard of maintenance has a direct consequence on the cost of managing an asset over its entire life. There will be an ongoing requirement for Council to properly manage all of its asset classes and for new assets to meet the needs of a growing community. The results of the Shire Strategic Vision process indicates that the priorities are:

- Roads & Drainage – priority to maintenance and rebuilding over new, upgraded structures. Concentrate on upgrading only where there are safety considerations.
- Community Facilities (including community, sporting and recreation areas) – concentrate on higher levels of maintenance and rebuilding of existing assets, upgrade bicycle/shared pathway network, develop new facilities for the growing population.
- Other asset classes such as water and sewerage and waste management – continue with current proposals to provide high quality services.

It is important to confirm that this strategic direction will meet the community's wishes for the future and, if not, the community's willingness to pay for higher levels of service.

Asset Management Plans have shown that:

For Roads -

- The current funding and approach to selecting jobs for maintenance and renewal of the 1039km of road managed by Council does not satisfy the community nor improve the overall condition of the network;
- The average road condition is described as "fair";
- The proposal to change the focus to emphasis road maintenance and renewal with less emphasis on road upgrading will result in road network improvement.

For Drainage -

- The drainage assets are relatively young;
- The current expenditure on maintenance and renewal work will not quickly overcome flooding problems nor ensure that older assets are replaced in a timely fashion;
- Increased maintenance funding will be required for wetland complexes being built.

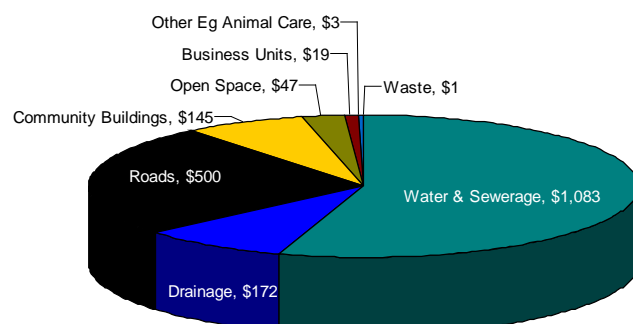
For Community Buildings -

- The current level of expenditure on the 307 existing buildings is not sufficient to satisfy the community nor to overcome known defects in a timely manner;
- Currently proposed new building projects will increase the value of these assets by 30%, resulting in an associated need for increased funding for maintenance.

For Open Space & Recreation -

- The current level of funding to allow for replacement of the 1665 major assets in this group is insufficient to ensure they continue to provide a good level of service.

Further community engagement later in 2012/13 is required to clarify the community's expectations of the level of service provided by assets. If a higher level of service is expected, then the community needs to be consulted on their willingness to pay for this service. The aim of this second round of consultation is to manage any identified gaps between the community expectation and the current level of service.





Long-Term Financial Strategy

In the same way as individuals need to balance their household budget, Council needs to balance its income and expenditure. Council has undertaken long-term financial modelling since the mid-1990s. The financial model forecasts are based on extrapolating past trends, varying underlying assumptions, modifying programs and incorporating new initiatives.

In conjunction with the development of the Shire Strategic Vision and Asset Management Strategy, the financial model will be expanded into a Long-Term Financial Strategy. The Long-Term Financial Strategy will ensure that there are sufficient resources to meet both ongoing commitments and undertake new projects. It will complement the financial model with a written commentary on financial policies, levels of service, sensitivity analyses, and scenarios.

In the short-medium term the financial model shows that Council's General Fund is in significant deficit (\$30 million in 2010/11). This position deteriorates further in the long term due to the growth in rates not keeping pace with a significant proportion of Council's costs.

The financial model shows that Council has very little discretionary funding for any additional expenditure on new programs or projects arising from the Shire Strategic Vision or enhanced levels of service from Council's Asset Management Strategy. This means that new initiatives or service levels will only be possible by cutting existing services and programs, finding additional sources of funds, or getting others (i.e. community groups, the private sector, other levels of government, etc.) to do it.

In the past it has been very difficult to identify services and programs to cut because this option (i.e. reduced levels of service) has negative impacts on the quality of life of some residents.

Potential additional sources of funds include:

A special rates variation -

- This would provide an ongoing revenue source; it is a sustainable increase to the underlying revenue base (to support more or improved services).

Borrowing for major projects -

- Borrowing provides lump sums to undertake major projects however, on the current projections, this would need to be accompanied by a special rates variation to fund the loan repayments.

Investigating land development opportunities -

- Land sales also provide a lump sum to invest in long-term assets without the need for loan repayments. Opportunities for this are limited.

Considering Joint Ventures -

- Small scale joint ventures, with an appropriate like-minded partner, can result in enhanced community infrastructure.

Just like a household budget, in order to fund any additional expenditure (or Shire Strategic Vision initiatives or enhanced asset management) something has to be foregone or someone has to pay.

Before Council makes any decision about potential funding options, they will be subject to further investigation, community consultation and scenario testing through the long-term financial model.



When Liam (age 5yrs 10 months) was read the Vision story entitled "Preserving our natural wonders," he wanted to draw a picture of "children working in a community garden."



Beyond the Vision

Achieving the Wyong Shire Vision is a dynamic process involving first and foremost the community, but also Council, state and federal government working as partners to create an optimistic, but achievable future.

The Vision is not business as usual. There is a need for many partners in this process to manage the change required.

The eight priority objectives and their strategies will head our Shire towards "Creating Our Ideal Community - caring... prosperous... sustainable" and improve the quality of life in 20 years time on the Central Coast while retaining the values and natural amenities our community holds close to their hearts.

The community, Council and state government will check the Shire Strategic Vision periodically to ensure that we are progressing towards the objectives and, wherever possible, implementing the strategies to get us there. The check of progress on strategies will be undertaken annually as part of the update of the 4 Year Delivery Program and the future State of the Shire and Council's Annual Reports. Checking of priority objectives will occur at least every four years with the community.

Council needs to ensure that major projects and capital works do not proceed in the future unless they clearly meet criteria that deliver the community's priority objectives while maintaining essential services. This includes the need for criteria that address community need, local and regional identity, availability and access, self-sufficiency, connectivity and linkages, future options as well as unlocking future options.

The community's visions for the future extend beyond the Shire's boundaries. In particular there is great value in identifying the shared visions for the Central Coast in partnership with Gosford City Council. It is for this reason that the two councils are working together with State government to identify shared objectives and priorities. In collaboration with the communities of both councils it is intended to work towards formulation of a single Central Coast Community Plan by 1 July 2013.

Council welcomes ongoing feedback which can be in writing c/o - PO Box 20, Wyong NSW 2259 or through the internet site www.wyong.nsw.gov.au. This feedback will form part of the review process.

Appendix 1: Responsibility for action

In addition to Councils' primary responsibilities identified under each objective, the following highlights which State government agency, the community etc. carries primary responsibility for action.

Plan Priority Objective	Plan Strategy	Primary Responsibility	Council's Role		
			Partner	Advocate	Observer/ Monitor
1. Communities will be vibrant, caring and connected	1g. Implementing the Regional Strategy for the Central Coast.	State Government Dept	X	X	X
2. There will be ease of travel	2a. Ensuring public and private bus services are timely, clean, safe and affordable.	Bus Companies		X	X
	2b. Upgrading train and public transport services between Williamstown and Sydney Central ensuring the service is safe, timely and reliable.	State Rail		X	
	2d. Improving commuter parking at railway stations.	State Rail		X	X
	2e. Improving commuter hubs along the freeway.	MoT & RTA		X	
	2f. Creating a better public transport system	State Rail & Bus Companies		X	
	2g. Ongoing upgrading of roads in the region	RTA		X	X
	2h. Improving the F3 links to Sydney	RTA & Federal Government		X	X
4. Areas of natural value will be enhanced and maintained.	4a. Preserving threatened and endangered species as well as ecological communities and biodiversity.	DECC & Federal Government	X	X	X
5. There will be a sense of community ownership of the natural environment	5d. Establish an annual community "Celebration of the Environment"	Community	X		
	5f. Creating, maintaining and promoting a series of community gardens.	Community	X	X	X

Plan Priority Objective	Plan Strategy	Primary Responsibility	Council's Role		
			Partner	Advocate	Observer/ Monitor
6. There will be a strong sustainable business sector	6a. A coordinated approach to business generation, employment & development	Regional Development Aust	X	X	X
	6d. Actively promoting the business benefits of Wyong Shire.	Regional Development Aust		X	X
	6e. Establishing and maintaining a strategic database on business and economic trends on the Central Coast.	Regional Development Aust	X		X
	6j. Sourcing tourist attractions across the Shire.	Business Interests	X	X	
7. Information communication technology will be world's best	7a. Providing free wireless broadband throughout Wyong Shire.			X	X
8. The community will be well educated, innovative and creative.	8a. Generating community awareness and behavioural change about the value of ongoing education.	DET	X	X	X
	8b. Creating programs that encourage lifelong learning for everyone.	DET, University OF Newcastle & Community Groups	X	X	X
	8c. Creating and maintaining programs to actively encourage community involvement in educational institutions.	DET, University of Newcastle & Community Groups		X	X
	8d. Establishing and maintaining a committed network of education, community, business and government representatives.	DET, University of Newcastle, Partners		X	X
	8e. Providing programs and services which respond to changes in the field of education in Wyong Shire.	DET			X





Appendix 2: The remaining objectives

The Wyong Shire Vision process identified 22 community objectives where their achievement would, for the most part, lead to significant improvement to the quality of life in the Shire. While eight of these objectives are identified as priority, in the body of this report the remaining 14 are not priority. They will not receive preference for funding and resources. These objectives and their related strategies are as listed:

In the future Wyong Shire would be a place where:

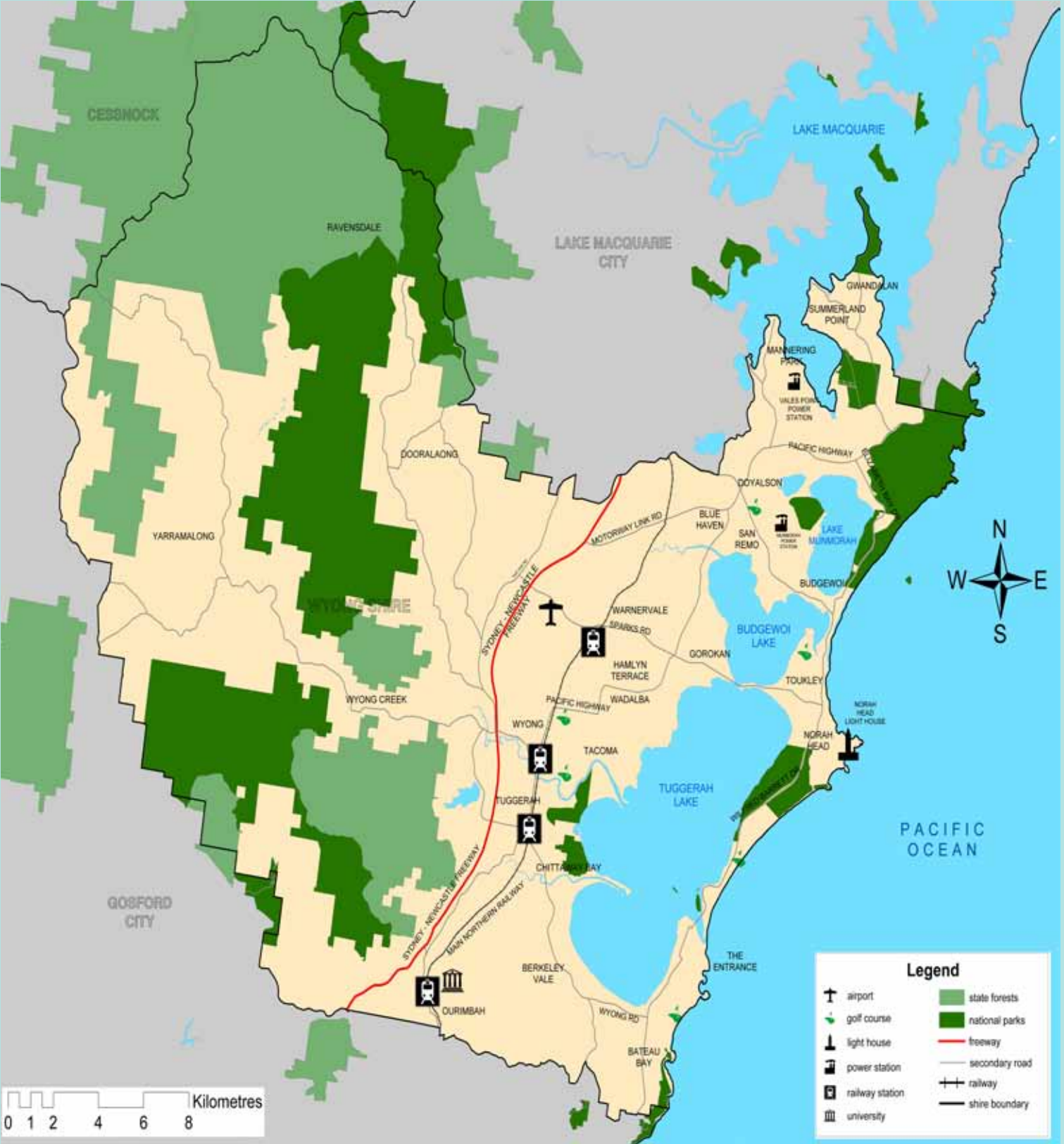
- 1. A high level of information about the natural environment and environmental change will be maintained and available.**
- 2. Community knowledge of sustainability and environmental issues impacting Wyong Shire will be comprehensive.**
- 3. Residents will be active participants in setting the direction of their communities.**
- 4. Communities are safe and will have a clear perception of security.**
- 5. Individuals have access to a variety of housing types that enable residents to buy or rent accommodation locally.**
- 6. High quality, sustainable development will be sympathetic to the local setting and reflect community values.**
- 7. There will be a long-term integrated approach to the provision of both new and existing infrastructure.**

8. **There will be an independent University on the Central Coast that promotes innovation in areas important to the local and regional economy.**
9. **Education, training and skills development in Wyong Shire will reflect the region's specific employment needs.**
10. **All students and educational institutions will have access to high quality services and technological resources.**
11. **There will be an integrated transport system that satisfies users' needs.**
12. **Commuters and their families will be supported.**
13. **People in the community will lead healthy, active lifestyles.**
14. **Access to basic and specialist health care services will be available to all community residents.**

Photograph by: Michelle Weir



Wyong Shire





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Endorsed by Council June 2011



Our Shire Our Future

WYONG SHIRE COUNCIL (02) 4350 5555 www.wyong.nsw.gov.au

5.10 SERVICE STANDARDS REVIEW - Special Rate Variation

TRIM REFERENCE: F2012/00884 - D03273687

MANAGER: Michael Whittaker, General Manager

AUTHOR: Maxine Kenyon; Director

SUMMARY

In 2010 Council recognised there was an issue with the financial sustainability of the organisation. After substantial productivity improvements significant on going annual savings of more than \$20m were made. Even so, it is still apparent that there is a funding shortfall of \$130m to bring our assets up to a satisfactory standard to deliver the services the community need and expect and reduce the risk to Council and the community of these assets failing.

Council has undertaken significant consultation with the community on this issue and the options to fund this dilemma. We do not have sufficient income to continue with the level of services we currently provide and a decision is required to increase income or cut services.

This report provides the results of the final consultation and the financial detail of three options for consideration to increase the General Ordinary Rates: increase by the rate peg amount only; increase by a total of 9.5%; and, increase by a total of 6.9%. Staff recommend a Special Rate Variation be submitted to the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for a 9.5% increase each year, cumulative over seven years to address this crucial asset gap, reduce the substantial risk associated with these assets and deliver the services required for this community.

DRAFT

RECOMMENDATION

- 1 *That Council make a submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for a S508A Special Rate Variation for 9.5% (including rate cap) for a period of seven years commencing 2013/14 financial year by 11 March 2013.*
- 2 *That Council promote this decision and provide a link to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal website on Council's website once the submission has been made.*

ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2013

RESOLVED on the motion of Councillor EATON and seconded by Councillor WEBSTER:

- 1 ***That Council make a submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for a S508A Special Rate Variation for 6.9 % (including rate cap) for a period of seven years commencing 2013/14 financial year by 11 March 2013.***
- 2 ***That Council promote this decision and provide a link to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal website on Council's website once the submission has been made.***

FOR: COUNCILLORS BEST, EATON, GREENWALD, NAYNA, TAYLOR, TROY AND WEBSTER

AGAINST: MATTHEWS AND VINCENT

BACKGROUND

Local Government Context

Councils of years ago do not compare to the way councils are run and are required to be run in this day and age, they are now seen and run as a business. Community expectations have changed and the number of residents has grown dramatically. Now, Council provides 94 services and 170 different products to the community, some of these are regulated, some are historical and others are because of the need in our community. The State Government require Wyong Shire to accommodate a further 70,000 residents by 2031, the impact of this ever increasing population on our services and assets is continual and requires significant renewals, upgrades and new assets to meet the demands of the changing population.

In 2010 a new framework to ensure the sustainability of all councils in NSW was introduced. All councils have been required to adopt the Division of Local Government's (DLG) Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework from 1 July 2012 as part of the Group 3 councils. To do this Council is required to have a Community Strategic Plan, Four Year Delivery Plan, Annual Plan, Long Term Financial Strategy (10 year), Asset Management Strategy and Workforce Management Strategy. In recognition of the complexity and influence of technology on our business, Wyong Shire Council has also added an Information Technology Strategy. This Framework provides more regulation, reporting and focus on councils being sustainable on a quadruple bottom line approach than there ever was previously.

In 1977 rate capping in NSW councils was introduced, this meant the NSW Government through the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) determine the maximum level of annual rate increases for all NSW councils. In Wyong's case, when rate pegging was introduced our rates were very low in comparison to some more established council areas.

NSW is the only state in Australia where local government has a rate cap. IPART can also grant special levies and in 2010 IPART introduced a Special Rate Variation process which aligned to the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework process. Over the last two years, 25% of the 152 councils in NSW have submitted applications to IPART for rate increases above the annual rate peg amount. The success of councils has varied, including changes to years, percentage increases or no increases approved in some cases. A further 24 councils (including Wyong) have notified IPART of their intention to submit an application for 2013/14.

The rating structure of Local Government means that there is a total maximum amount of annual rate income that we are capable of collecting. Each year IPART sets the amount by which councils total rate income can increase. Land value only determines the proportion of that total amount that any individual will pay. That total amount is divided between all ratepayers including, businesses, residents, farmland and mining properties.

Council's rates consist of a variety of charges, including:

- General Ordinary Rates
- Domestic Waste
- Stormwater Management
- Water Service
- Sewerage
- Drainage

Many NSW councils do not operate Water Authorities and therefore bills for water and sewer are not associated with council, e.g. Sydney Water or Hunter Water. On the Central Coast, the local councils are also water supply authorities and therefore the water and sewer bills are included on the rates notice from each Council. The proposed Special Rate Variation addressed in this report only refers to the General Ordinary Rates on the rates notice and does not impact the other rates and charges set out above.

While Council's budget is based on the following funds, this report only relates to the General Fund and the effect on General Ordinary rates.

- General Fund
- Water Fund
- Sewerage Fund
- Waste Fund.

In more recent years, the effects of State or Federal Government shifting costs to Local Government have been extensive. In 2013/14, it is planned that Wyong Shire Council will need to fund \$23m worth of cost shifting from other levels of Government. This includes things like contributions to the NSW Fire Brigade and Rural Fire Service, Waste Levy, Pensioner Rate Subsidy and maintenance of crown reserves. The table below highlights the level of cost shifting over recent years, in millions.

	2007/08 \$'000's	2008/09 \$'000's	2009/10 \$'000's	2010/11 \$'000's	2011/12 \$'000's	2012/13 \$'000's	2013/14 \$'000's
Total income from continuing operations before capital amounts (for comparison)	\$174,642	\$190,495	\$202,346	\$207,826	\$223,364	\$237,559	\$238,010
Total net cost shifting	\$17,148	\$20,926	\$23,868	\$17,873	\$19,526	\$23,272	\$23,153
Cost shifting ratio (total net cost shifting divided by total income before capital amounts times 100) in %		10.99%	11.80%	8.60%	8.74%	9.80%	9.73%

Council Identified The Issue

In summary, Council does not have enough income to pay for the costs associated with bringing our \$2.3bn of assets up to a satisfactory standard to continue to provide services to our community. A decision needs to be made to find more income or reduce service levels.

In 2010 Council implemented the DLG Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework as an initial step in complying with the requirements, however identified the need to further consult with the community on service levels and Council's long term financial sustainability. As part of this process Council established programs for 2011 and 2012 to improve Council's financial position and inform Council's priorities. Council adopted the 2011-2015 WSC Strategic Plan in June 2011 and the Long Term Financial Strategy identified future operating short-falls which were financially unsustainable, and adopted an intervention strategy to

reduce Council's operating deficits to break-even by 30 June 2015. This included saving and revenue initiatives to reduce the operating deficit to \$10m (short-fall) and identified the investigation of a special rate variation in 2013-2014 to fund essential infrastructure subject to the assessment of service levels and community needs.

On 23 November 2011 Council resolved to commence consultation with the community on priorities, desired levels of service and preparedness to pay for services. Since that time significant work has been undertaken to identify the priorities, options for addressing them and the community's willingness and capacity to pay for an increase above the annual rate peg.

The Details Of The Issue

Council uses a wide range of assets to provide services to the community, including roads, buildings, playground equipment, parks and sporting facilities, waterways, wetlands and asset protection zones. As outlined above, Council's Strategic Plan includes an Asset Management Plan. This document includes information about the condition of Council's total \$2.3bn assets and the actions and funding needed to keep those assets in a satisfactory condition to ensure they provide the required level of service to the community. That information is derived from Council's asset management systems and industry standards. Council uses various approaches to keep assets in the required condition, including regular maintenance, renewal when they reach the end of their useful life and upgrading them from their original design to a higher standard. Council also obtains new assets through procurement, construction and third parties such as developers.

The adopted 2011/15 and 2012/16 Council Strategic Plans both identified that there was significant shortfall in the level of capital expenditure needed to bring Council's existing assets to a satisfactory condition. The draft 2013/17 Strategic Plan does likewise. As at 30 June 2012, the funding shortfall for Council's General Fund assets was \$121m, as reported in Special Schedule 7 in Council's adopted annual financial statements. This figure does not include the work required on natural and open space assets, which currently has an interim estimate of \$9m, further work is required in this asset class. Overall, at the moment Council has \$130m of work to fund to bring existing assets back to a satisfactory standard.

This amount is on top of what Council is already spending each year to maintain assets to keep them ticking over, or to replace assets that have reached the end of their useful life. It does not include any allowance for new assets that are required to deliver services expected or needed by the community.

The asset funding gap has developed over many years due to a number of factors, including:

- During the '60s, '70s and '80s, Council built new assets to meet the community's service requirements. At that time, asset management systems were not as sophisticated as they are today and issues like whole of life costs were not always considered before deciding to provide new assets. Initially, those assets were in good condition and did not require high levels of expenditure to keep them satisfactory, this changes as the assets age.
- Developers built assets to a standard beyond what was expected in some cases and what Council could afford to maintain.
- At the same time, community demand for a wider range of services from Council meant that an increasing proportion of Council's funding was directed to operational costs rather than renewing and upgrading assets.

- Section 94 developer contributions don't often provide the complete funding for an asset and do not provide any of the maintenance or improvement costs required for assets once handed over to Council.
- Previously Council used cash accounting rather than accrual accounting which left unfunded depreciation costs in the operating budget.
- Once Council was committed to providing levels of service that the community expected, additional funding for asset renewal and upgrades was not available.
- Council had limited ability to raise enough revenue to meet the ever increasing demand of our assets, particularly with the impact of cost shifting from other levels of Government onto councils.

Around 2007, NSW council's started thinking more about their approach to asset management. With the introduction of the Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework in 2010 councils were required to better address asset management and financial sustainability. As a result, this improved all NSW councils approach to business planning and has better identified the asset funding issue that Council is facing. This situation is not unique to Wyong Shire. A recent report released by the Urban Taskforce identified that the majority of NSW councils are facing similar asset related issues. It stated that *"NSW has been under-spending on capital works relative to operations in the 30 years since rate pegging was introduced in 1976/77. Over this 30 year period local government in NSW expanded the cost of its recurrent operation eleven fold whereas it's real spending on capital works only doubled. Hence its proportion of its total spending dedicated to infrastructure renewal fell dramatically."*

With long standing substantial operating deficits since 2007 Council has now reached the point where its assets are deteriorating quicker than they can be renewed or upgraded. This rate of deterioration will increase exponentially unless the required amount of work is carried out. Older assets are more costly to operate, maintain and renew. Apart from the financial issues which arise from asset conditions, there is an increased risk of asset failure and subsequent loss of service to the community if they are not maintained appropriately. Usability and public safety is compromised when assets get to a less than satisfactory condition.

We are now facing the situation where existing assets are deteriorating at an increasing rate and there is not enough additional income to fund the necessary works. Council's Long Term Financial Strategy shows that if the required level of asset spending is implemented, without additional income Council will be in a serious financial position within the next five years.

This is supported by a 2012 review of Council's finances by NSW Treasury Corp, which said in part *"Although Council has strong debt servicing abilities, as indicated by its high forecast DSCR and Interest Cover Ratios, its cash and investment levels are forecast to be exhausted by 2016. This is a serious liquidity issue which Council needs to consider, develop options and remodel. Should Council consider adjusting its capital expenditure program to an affordable level, source additional operating cash flow or reduce operating cash expense, then additional borrowing could be considered"*.

In addition, the Division of Local Government in 2012 highlighted their concerns with Council's financial position as at 30 June 2011 after they undertook a review of Council. Their particular focus was on our deficit, low infrastructure renewal, shortfall in maintenance of assets and condition of our assets.

There is no quick fix to this situation, Council's asset management systems show the amount of work needed will take seven to 10 years and it needs to start in 2013/14. Each year of

delay increases the rate of deterioration and eventual cost. The short-term result is a decline in asset condition and cuts in service levels to the community. The longer term outcomes have a detrimental effect on the amenity and economic prosperity of Wyong Shire. Failure of these assets has serious consequences, as identified in the Coronial inquest on the Piles Creek disaster in Gosford.

What Council Has Done About The Issue

Since recognising the extent of this issue in 2010 Council has been focused on reducing the operating deficit from \$30.4m down to \$12.4m in 2012. On the commencement of the new General Manager in 2010 a Service Delivery Review was undertaken that identified \$8m in savings. This review, combined with a focus on providing best value, identifying clear metrics, increasing income and attention to continuous improvement across the business, has seen staff and Councillors work together to deliver these savings which are planned to reach a \$10m operational deficit by 30 June 2013. Efforts will continue to reduce the operational deficit to nil by June, 2015.

Council has worked smarter, been efficient, attracted revenue and supported the need for change across the business. Some examples of these savings include:

- New equipment increases output, reduce service times, reduces staff
- New road-building technology recycles most of the existing pavement - \$118 m² down to \$21m²
- Energy saving sensor lights in buildings - \$1.2m over 10 years
- Own legal counsel - \$300,000 a year
- New business paper software - \$85,000 a year and one staff member
- Reduced staff by 8.7% from 1,150 (2010/11) to 1,050 (2013/14)
- Increased available cash flow and reduced the outstanding debt ratio from 7.34% (2007/08) to 6.29% (2011/12)
- Consultancy fees have been reduced by 26%
- Changes to vehicles, one-off saving \$2.1m
- Using technology, save time, staff and improve service
- Closing Vacation Care services
- \$521K in grants and \$200K working in partnership just for work on sport and recreation assets
- Income commercial and residential rental properties has risen by 79%
- Earning income using our skills building custom vehicles for other councils.

These savings have been realised despite significant pressure from increasing costs. Costs of energy and raw materials have increased well above Consumer Price Index (CPI) in recent years driven by factors such as the carbon tax, general electricity price increases and increases in the Environmental Protection Authority levy.

It is recognised that there will be continual improvements made within the business and in 2013/14 there are numerous reviews of Council services to determine if there are alternative ways to deliver the service to the community that will provide further savings. Even though savings will be generated from this approach, the level of savings will not address the asset backlog of \$130m which is the biggest risk.

Funding The Issue

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Council can't afford to not spend the money on assets, but there won't be any money to spend within five years unless the actions such as those identified in the NSW Treasury Corp report are taken. Options to raise the required amount of funding to close the asset gap have been identified in Council's Long Term Financial Strategies (2011/15, 2012/16 and 2013/17). Although there are a number of ways to raise income, there are some constraints on how that can be achieved as outlined below:

- Increased borrowing - As stated in the NSW Treasury Corp report, this is not an option unless Council cuts its capital expenditure program, raises additional income or cuts operating costs.
- Increased government grants - Council continually pursues grant funding, but it is unlikely these will be available on a reliable basis and to the level that is required.
- Increased income from fees and charges - Council has made a concerted effort in recent years to increase this income. However, the potential to raise enough to fund the asset gap is limited by Government regulation on some fees and charges. There is also the economic reality that customers will seek other suppliers if Council fees are too high, or just stop using services.
- Productivity and other internal savings - Since 2010, Council's operating deficit has reduced by \$20m and will reduce by a further \$10m over the next two years to a break even situation by 2015. Initiatives such as the Service Delivery Review and improved management systems have contributed to this significant improvement in Council's financial position. Council will continue to look for further internal savings, but there is limited scope for major savings of the extent required.
- Rationalisation of assets - Council has many assets, many of which are required for Council to operate. Council has developed an assessment tool to determine the long term economic, social, and environmental value of each Council asset in accordance with sound and responsible governance. The questions in the assessment tool form part of a process that focuses on the value of each asset, opportunities to improve the operation of the asset and the asset's relative use within its asset class within the Shire. This provides information to support a decision on the future of the asset, through this process Council will be able to identify opportunities to rationalise some of its assets. This will assist in securing funds to close the asset gap however will not provide the full solution. If assets are rationalised this could also result in a reduction in services.
- Cut services to free up operating funds and use that to close the asset gap - This will require around \$20m per year in service cuts. Consultation has occurred on this issue and is discussed later in this report.
- Apply for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) – This would be above the annual rate peg amount set by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) and would be the only way that will bring in the revenue required to address the asset gap issues.

As can be seen above Council's General Fund income is limited and although Council is trying to source revenue from all of these areas, the extent is limited. Therefore, of the options above, an SRV is the preferred option as it provides a guaranteed source of income that enables Council to properly plan and implement the required works to close the asset gap.

Council rates are only 39% of Council's income and contribute to expenditure on our General Fund operations such as roads, lakes and waterways, open space, community facilities, sport, leisure and recreation facilities. The maximum amount of total rate increase each year is capped by IPART. In most years this is limited to an average increase of approximately 3%, operating costs have traditionally increased more than rate peg. Council's general rates are consistently below the average for Group 7 councils (councils of similar size) and the NSW average. This has kept the overall cost to ratepayers as low as possible for many years. Council also has a Hardship Policy to assist those ratepayers who have difficulty in meeting their commitments.

IPART also reviews and determines council applications for increases in general income above the rate peg, known as 'Special Variations'. There are 2 special variation options under the Local Government Act that a council may apply for:

1. A single year increase under Section 508(2). This can be a one-off (single year) percentage increase that remains permanently in the rate base or a one-off (single year) percentage increase that remains in the rate base for a fixed number of years. At the end of the fixed period the rate base is adjusted to match the rate peg path.
2. A multi-year increase (of between two and seven years) under Section 508A. Successive annual percentage increases (for between two and seven years), which remain permanently in the rate base.

Under Section 508A, a council is able to phase in a potentially significant rate increase over a number of years, rather than concentrate the increase in rates in one year, as under S508(2). This is cumulative in nature over multiple years and the increases are retained permanently in the revenue base.

For Wyong Shire Council, Section 508A provides the required amount of funding over a period of seven years, which is consistent with Council's Asset Management Plan. It also spreads the burden to ratepayers over a number of years. This was endorsed by Council at its Ordinary Meeting of 12 December 2012 as the preferred option if Council decided to submit a request to IPART for a Special Rate Variation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS AND RESULTS OF EACH STAGE

As part of creating a more financially sustainable Council, Council resolved in November 2011 to commence consultation with the community on their priorities, desired levels of service and willingness to pay. This consultation was a follow on to the significant amount of community consultation Council carried out in previous years through the Community Strategic Plan and other key initiatives such as: Quality of Life Survey, telephone and online customer satisfaction and reputation surveys, Youth Engagement Strategy, Community Plan, Learning Communities Strategy, Community Facilities Review and On-Road Bicycle and Shared Pathways Strategy.

In preparing the Community Strategic Plan in 2009, Council undertook extensive and in depth community consultations in 2007 and 2008, where more than 3,500 residents participated in various forms of consultation to identify the vision for the Shire and what were the issues important for our community.

Following Council's decision in November 2011, the Service Standards Review (SSR) project commenced. Using the recently adopted "Engage Me" framework, a community

engagement plan was developed and the engagement process was branded 'Your Place, Your Say, Your Future' and was designed to inform and connect with the community.

There were a number of stages in this consultation process:

- Stage 1 focused on the values, service levels and priorities for the community.
 - Stage 1a focused on consultation with staff to look at aligning the community values from Stage 1 and other consultation with factors that staff needed to consider.
 - Stage 1b focused on an external Deliberative Working Group to test the information and work through the funding options.
- Stage 2 focused on providing the community with three options to increase their general ordinary rates: rate peg, 9.5% and 12.5%.
- Stage 3 focused on providing the community with three options to increase their general ordinary rates: rate peg, 9.5% or somewhere in between.

These processes are outlined below, further detail can be found in previous Council reports.

Stage 1 Community Engagement – Values, Service Levels And Priorities

The first stage of SSR consultation was undertaken in May 2012 with 184 responses received via community workshops and an online survey. The engagement strategies used are outlined below:

'Engage Me' spectrum	Description	Engagement modes
Inform	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Paid advertising-Radio and print media • Mayor's column • Emails to community groups and associations • 1300 postcards handed out at railway stations, libraries, child care centres and events. • 50 posters at community facilities and Council • Council's web-site and social media • Council staff word of mouth
Connect	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation survey 2010, 500 participants • Omnibus surveys 2010, 153 participants • Omnibus surveys 2012, 415 participants • Online survey 2012, 112 participants
Connect	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 community workshops, 37 participants • 1 staff who are residents workshop, 35 participants •

The demographics of the 184 residents who participated in Council's Online Survey and the 4 workshops were:

Age 18-24	5
Age 25-34	17
Age 35-49	63
Age 50-64	65
Age 65+	33
Not specified	1
Male	84
Female	99
Not specified	1
Number of suburbs represented	38

From those workshops the community told us what they valued the most:

- Ease of access to services
- Quality/affordable/reliable services
- Good governance, efficiency, equity in provision of services
- Sustainability - both environmental and financial
- Services which provide community benefit and promote community spirit.

What the community told us in general terms:

- Shire residents overwhelmingly love their Shire and feel it is a good place to live
- Strong preference for Council to be financially sustainable
- General preference among residents for maintaining and protecting the bushland, coastline, lakes and the estuary within the Shire
- Strong support for cycle-ways, sports and recreation facilities
- Strong preference for sustainability
- Preference for libraries and community centres/ facilities that help promote community spirit
- Consistently strong preference for high quality roads and drainage
- Strongly favour generation of local employment opportunities and development of tourism
- Low to medium satisfaction with the overall levels of service provided.

Also highlighted were the relative importance and satisfaction with current level of service:

- High - Roads and drainage; Governance.
- Medium – Environment; Community recreation; Community education; Waste; Economic & property development.
- Low - Regulatory and compliance.

Stage 1 engagement was the starting point for levels of service planning. At this stage, neither the cost of delivering the service nor Council's capacity to provide that level of service was being factored into the discussions and analysis from the community.

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Based on the community response to Stage 1 and using data from previous community engagement, significant work was undertaken with Service Unit Managers to understand what we know about community needs and our services and incorporate that with the information in Council's Asset Management system. This information along with the values identified by the community helped identify the high level priority areas for increased focus and to bring assets up to a satisfactory standard in line with community expectations, quality asset management and public safety standards. Staff then developed a number of funding options to meet the community's required service levels in future years.

During October 2012, facilitated discussions on these options occurred with a Deliberative Working Group (DWG) of 14 community members to test the scenarios and seek a preference for the most suitable. The DWG members were sourced from Council's resident e-panel and involved a mix of gender and age groups. They attended two x three hour sessions and there was no payment to members of the DWG for their involvement.

The Deliberative Working Group was not a decision making body. Its role was to provide thoughtful and informed input, to assist Council finalise the funding options to take out to the broader community and to test the information we provided. The DWG also provided input as to the draft option they preferred, using criteria that were developed during the sessions, which focused on:

- Likely impact on the community of the various options
- Advantages and disadvantages of each
- Areas needing further consideration by Council
- Things Council may have missed, ways to improve the options
- The validity of assumptions underlying each of the funding options.

Having received this input and worked with the DWG, Council was in a position to finalise the funding options with confidence. A report to Council's Ordinary Meeting of 24 October 2012 detailed the level of consultation that was carried out in Stage 1 of the Service Standards Review and suggested three funding options considered by the DWG as the basis for extensive community engagement in Stage 2, during November/December 2012.

Stage 2 – Community Engagement – Three Options: Rate Peg; 9.5% Or 12.5%

The Stage 2 community consultation occurred in November and December 2012 and was designed to promote community involvement, gain an indication of the community's willingness to pay for each of the funding options and service levels. It provided valuable service planning information and assisted in meeting the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal's (IPART) requirements should Council decide to submit an application for a Special Rate Variation.

This stage of engagement provided information about the financial and asset funding issues including:

- Council's previous financial performance and forecast future performance
- Council's efforts to find substantial savings from within the organisation and maintain service levels
- The amount of funding needed to restore important assets to a satisfactory condition
- The three funding options developed to address the asset gap
- The effect of each funding option on the asset gap and Council's financial sustainability
- The additional cost of each funding option to ratepayers.

The three final options used in the Stage 2 community consultation were:

Option 1 - No additional rate income above the Rate Peg

In this scenario, rate increases are maintained at the annual amount approved by IPART, usually around 3%. This means that the level of proposed spending on asset renewals set out in the Long Term Financial Strategy is not affordable and there would have to be cuts to the proposed capital expenditure and/or cuts to services.

The asset gap would not close and would actually get worse, asset maintenance costs will increase and future generations will have to meet the increased asset renewal cost. There would be no capacity to fund work on natural assets and no significant new asset works.

Option 2 – Rate Increase of 9.5% each year over seven years

In this scenario, there is an increase of 9.5% in General Rates (includes the rate peg and assumes it is 3%) each year for seven years. This increase would remain permanently in Council's rate base and after seven years the increases would revert to the normal rate peg amount.

This Scenario is based on properly funding the Long Term Financial Plan, so the seven year time frame is consistent with that plan. Seven years is also the maximum period for a Special Rate Variation approved by IPART, thereby minimising the annual cost increase.

Asset conditions will improve significantly in this time and there would then be a substantial saving in annual asset maintenance costs of approximately \$3m per annum. There is limited scope for spending on new assets.

Option 3 – Rate increase of 12.5% each year over seven years

This scenario provides for an increase of 12.5% in General Rates (includes the rate peg and assumes it is 3%) each year for seven years. It is similar to Option 2 in closing the asset gap over seven years, but allows an additional \$5m per year that could be spent on new assets.

The Stage 2 consultation was extensive and used the following methods to make the community aware that Council was seeking their input on this important issue:

Engage spectrum	Description	Engagement modes
Inform	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	Local Radio and Newspapers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 articles in Shire-Wide News • 5 media releases in local papers and radio stations • 6 paid advertisements in Central Coast Express/Advocate, Wyong Regional Chronicle and Central Coast Grandstand - over 300,000 exposures of these ads to local residents • 4 page supplement in the Express/Advocate on 16/11/12 – 58,000 circulation • 303 paid radio advertising spots on 2GO, SeaFM, StarFM • 20 community service announcements on 2GO • 10 x 15 second live reads just before news on SeaFM • 18 radio news items and 1 television news story on NBN • News articles in Express Advocate, Wyong Regional Chronicle and Lakes Mail.

		<p>Online presence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's web-site uploaded with relevant information - 2,684 hits on council's web site • Council's on-line survey via web site engagement hub • Use of social media, Facebook and Twitter - 1,013 Facebook posts, 10 Twitter posts • Advertising on Business Insider web site, linking to Council's online survey. During the campaign the ads were delivered 4,776 times and the web site had 2,148 visits.
		<p>Face to face</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information booklet produced, 2,900 hard copies distributed via libraries, child care centres, other Council facilities, Councillors, Council staff, local residents, shopping centre displays and commuters at railway stations • Manned displays at shopping centres – 18 hours total, 96 contacts • Customer Contact and Library staff actively promoted the process during each contact with the public.
		<p>Direct mail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic copy of the information booklet sent to all members of the Library Services database and Child Care data base - 3,200 contacts • Electronic copy of the information booklet sent to all ratepayers with an email address - 4,800 contacts • Electronic copies of the information booklet sent to Councillors, resident e-panel members, Precinct Committees, local community groups and committees for distribution to network contacts • Copy of information booklet posted to 12,700 non-resident ratepayers. <p>Passive notification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters in Council facilities and outlying areas.

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Detailed information about the asset funding issues, the three funding options and the additional cost to ratepayers of each option was conveyed to the community through:

'Engage spectrum	Me	Description	Engagement modes
Connect		To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct discussions with staff • A random telephone survey of residents conducted by an external independent provider – 400 responses • An online survey – 876 responses • Reply paid hard copy voting form (or drop off at a Council centre) – 469 responses (17 did not choose an option). • Submissions from individuals or organizations – 44 responses

Engage	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 community workshops, 23 participants • 1 precinct committee workshop, 26 participants • 1 staff workshop, 12 participants • (Note: voting in workshops was via hand held devices)
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In addition, there were 2,684 hits on Council's website, 1,013 Facebook posts and 10 Twitter posts.

The engagement process started on 14 November 2012 and was scheduled to cease on 2 December 2012. Due to the increased level of response in the last week and to allow extra time for postal replies to be received, the closing date for responses was extended to 4 December 2012.

The demographic spread of the respondents was:

Age 18-24	41	2%
Age 25-34	170	9%
Age 35-44	263	15%
Age 45-54	346	20%
Age 55- 64	451	26%
Age 65-74	372	21%
Age 75+	126	7%
Male	883	50%
Female	867	49%
Not specified	20	1%
Number of suburbs represented	55	

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Analysis of Results

The total number of voting responses for Stage 2 was 1,770 as set out in the table below.

	Option 1 – Rate Peg	Option 2 – 9.5%	Option 3 –12.5%
Workshops	17% (7)	64% (27)	19% (8)
Phone Survey	51% (206)	41% (164)	8% (30)
Online Survey	66% (580)	21% (187)	13% (109)
Return Mail Survey	68% (307)	23% (106)	9% (39)

- General preference for Option 1 except in workshops
- Gender composition balanced for mail-ins; otherwise skewed towards males (workshops, online) or females (telephone)

- Suburbs generally well-represented in all modes
- Age groups skewed towards 45+ age groups in all modes
- Degree of engagement influences preference for option (e.g. higher preference for rate rise in workshops)

Workshops - showed a high level of support (83%) for a rate increase. This is directly related to the opportunity for attendees at the workshops to discuss issues with staff and gain a better understanding of the options before making a decision. At the start of each workshop there were attendees who clearly stated that they would not support a rate increase above the rate peg and subsequently supported Option 2 when they better understood the issues.

Telephone Survey - Option 1 is the most preferred scenario (51%), but there is a significant proportion of the population (49%) that would accept a rate variation in order to maintain or improve assets. During the phone survey, respondents were asked an additional question: *"If Council was to determine that it should make an application to IPART for a special rate variation, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means not at all supportive and 5 means very supportive, how supportive would you be for Council to seek the following options?"*. In answer to this question, 54% of respondents were 'somewhat supportive' of Wyong Shire Council seeking a special rate variation in order to maintain assets, as outlined in Option 2.

Online and Mail-in Survey – received high level of support for Option 1 from the online (66%) and mail-in survey (68%) which is significantly different to that of the workshops and telephone survey. It is reasonable to conclude that these responses are largely due to the decreased level of understanding of the asset gap and the funding options, compared to those who attended a workshop or got to speak to someone. Together with the fact that in these types of situations the highest level of response is generally against significant change.

Other submissions - 44 separate submissions were received from community members and organisations who were generally in support of no rate increase. Many of the online and hard copy voting responses also contained comments on the proposed options and other issues. Combined with the letters and submissions received, the issues raised can be broadly summarized as:

- The size and affordability of the proposed increases
- Uncertainty about where the money will be spent
- Uncertainty about which services are at risk if Option 1 is adopted
- Council's efficiency and financial management
- Current lack of services
- Lack of adequate notification to all ratepayers and residents
- The short time frame for the consultation.

Overall, it was concluded that the results from the community workshops and telephone survey give the best indication of how the community will respond when properly informed.

Previous phone surveys have also asked questions about willingness to pay for improved service delivery. While the options presented in these surveys were not exactly the same as the current options, it supports the view that an informed community is more likely to support Council's decision to increase rates. The following results have been gathered previously:

2010 Omnibus Survey

Survey question	Weekly amt \$1-\$2	Weekly amt \$50c - \$1	Weekly amt \$25c - \$50c	Weekly amt Nothing at all	Total
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Willingness to pay for: Public works program	27%	25%	18%	30%	100%
Willingness to pay for: Environmental works program	23%	24%	23%	30%	100%
Willingness to pay for: Community Development program	19%	24%	27%	31%	100%

2012 Omnibus Survey

Survey question	Mean Rating	Weekly amt \$1-\$2	Weekly amt \$50c - \$1	Weekly amt \$25c - \$50c	Nothing at all	Don't know / Refused	Total (Weekly amt)
Community willingness to pay for:							
- Public works	2.6	27.4%	18.4%	9.1%	39.0%	6.1%	100%
- Environmental works	2.9	20.1%	17.4%	10.9%	44.8%	6.8%	100%
- Community Development	2.9	15.5%	19.0%	15.4%	42.2%	8.0%	100%

The results of the Stage 2 consultation were reported to Council on 12 December 2012. At that meeting Council considered the concerns raised by the community and resolved that further community consultation was to be undertaken during January/February 2013 focusing specifically on two options, the community's willingness to pay and their priorities. The two options were: no rate increase above the rate cap, or a rate increase of 9.5% per year for 7 years. To address the willingness to pay concern an alternate option was added, a rate increase in between the rate cap and 9.5%. If the respondent understood the issue but felt that 9.5% was too much they could use this option. In light of the community response to the previous option 3 (12.5% increase per year for 7 years) Council decided to remove that option all together.

Council also decided to keep open the option of a Special Rate Variation by complying with the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal process timeframes. This involved advising IPART by 14 December 2012 that Council intended to apply for a Special Rate Variation application in 2013/14 up to 9.5% (including the capped rate increase approved by the NSW Government which is 3.4% in 2013/14, which means up to a maximum of 6.1% in 2013/14) to ordinary general rates each year for seven years from 2013/14 under S508A of the Local Government Act.

By making this submission it met the IPART timeframe and provided Council with the option of submitting if they determined to proceed after Stage 3 of the consultation. Council's intent was to consider the response from the January/February consultation before deciding on 27 February 2013 whether to proceed with an SRV application.

Stage 3 Engagement – the final options: rate peg, 9.5% or in between

Stage 3 engagement process commenced on 18 January 2013 and ran until 15 February 2013, providing four working weeks for the community to be informed and respond to the funding options Council provided.

A new engagement strategy for Stage 3 was prepared which took into account the community's feedback from Stage 2 and would:

- Provide more detail on the savings and efficiency gains Council has achieved to date
- Provide more detail on which services would be affected under Option 1
- Provide more detail on what assets would be improved under Option 2
- Directly target a higher response rate from the under 45 year old age group

- Ensure information and voting form was mailed directly to every ratepayer on the rates database.

An intensive communications campaign was undertaken to achieve increased community awareness of the process and provide a satisfactory level of understanding of what is a complex problem. For Stage 3, additional information was needed to explain why Council was undertaking the additional round of consultation and why those who had already voted would need to vote again.

The basis of the engagement was an information booklet setting out the funding options, the further information requested by the community and detailing how they could register their preferred funding option. The information booklet was mailed out to all ratepayers on 18 January 2013. The great majority of those were sent with the scheduled quarterly installment notices to reduce mailing costs, the remainder were mailed directly.

Stage 3 consultation included the following options:

Option 1 - No additional rate income above the Rate Peg

In this scenario, rate increases are maintained at the annual amount approved by IPART, usually around 3%. This means that the level of proposed spending on asset renewals set out in the Long Term Financial Strategy is not affordable and there would have to be cuts to the proposed capital expenditure and/or cuts to services.

The asset gap would not close and would actually get worse, asset maintenance costs will increase and future generations will have to meet the increased asset renewal cost. There would be no capacity to fund work on natural assets and no significant new asset works.

Option 2 – Rate Increase of 9.5% each year over seven years

In this scenario, there is an increase of 9.5% in General Rates (includes the rate peg and assumes it is 3%) each year for seven years. This increase would remain permanently in Council's rate base and after seven years the increases would revert to the normal rate peg amount.

This Scenario is based on properly funding the Long Term Financial Strategy, so the seven year time frame is consistent with that plan. Seven years is also the maximum period for a Special Rate Variation approved by IPART, thereby minimising the annual cost increase.

Asset conditions will improve significantly in this time and there would then be a substantial saving in annual asset maintenance costs of approximately \$3m per annum. There is limited scope for spending on new assets.

Option 3 was removed after stage 2 consultation – to not confuse the options, option 3 is not referred to again.

Option 4 – An amount in between Option 1 and 2

This scenario recognises the need for a rate increase, however provides the community with an alternative that is less than the full 9.5% being more affordable and in recognition of their capacity and willingness to pay. This option would provide an increase in General Rates (assuming the rate peg is 3%) each year for seven years, however it would not fully fund the asset gap and therefore would also limit the funds that could be spent on new assets.

The following engagement activities took place in Stage 3 of the consultation:

'Engage spectrum	Me	Description	Engagement modes
Inform		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	<u>Information booklet</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mailed with the scheduled quarterly instalment notices to reduce mailing costs, those not paying by instalments were mailed separately – 59,000 copies • Available at Council's Civic Centre, 5 Libraries and 6 Child Care Centres – 2,300 copies • Emailed to community groups, sporting groups and other Council networks - 1,000 recipients • Emailed to all members of Council's resident e-panel, child care data base and respondents to the Stage 2 online survey - 2,000 recipients
			<u>Postcards</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising the engagement and urging people to have their say were distributed at a range of community events – 1,000
			<u>Newspaper Advertisements</u> - Wyong Regional Chronicle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 17 – half page ad – Look out for important information with your next rates notice • January 31 – half page ad – Wyong Shire residents and ratepayers <i>its time to MAKE YOUR CHOICE ON RATES</i> <u>Newspaper Advertisements</u> - Rural and Village Grapevine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 5 - Wyong Shire residents and ratepayers <i>its time to MAKE YOUR CHOICE ON RATES</i>
			<u>Newspaper Advertisements</u> – Central Coast Express <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday January 9, 2013 – first half page advertisement appears on page 26 – Look out for important information with your next rates notice.' • January 16 and 18 – Don't miss your chance to tell us what you think • January 23 and 25 – Wyong Shire residents and ratepayers <i>its time to MAKE YOUR CHOICE ON RATES</i> • January 30 – • February 1 – double page advertisement appearing on pages 2 and 3 with large heading <i>RATE RISE ON THE CARDS</i> – If you live in the Wyong Shire, this affects you – You can still choose what you want Council to do • 6 February – Wyong Shire residents and ratepayers <i>its time to MAKE YOUR CHOICE ON RATES</i> • 8 February – Wyong Shire residents and ratepayers <i>its time to MAKE YOUR CHOICE ON RATES</i> – Come along to the LAST Community Information Session • In Council's weekly Shirewide ad, in the Central Coast Express, a short article on the 'Your Voice, Your Say, Your Future' campaign was featured on the 16 January 2013 and 6 February 2013

		<p><u>Radio Advertisements - SEAFM and 2GO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 233 radio ads ran on SEAFM and 233 ads ran on 2GO between 7 January 2013 and 15 February 2013 • From 9-25 January the message was watch out for important information about rates in your mailbox • From 23 January to the 15 February – the message was read the brochure and come along to one of the Community Information Sessions <p><u>Radio Advertisements- StarFM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 ads ran from 21 January 2013 until 8 February 2012 – • 28 ads ran from the 8th-15th February
		<p><u>Media Releases</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A media release entitled Crunch Time on Rates Rise was issued on 21 January 2013 – this date was chosen as it was when the information brochures were expected to land in ratepayer's mailboxes • A media release entitled Wyong Shire Residents – come to one of our Community Information Sessions – was issued in the week of the first Community Information Session

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Inform	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	<p><u>Council's Website</u> A banner with the heading <i>TIME IS RUNNING OUT TO MAKE YOUR CHOICE ON RATE RISE</i> was displayed at the very top of the main Wyong Shire Council website (www.wyong.nsw.gov.au). From there residents/ratepayers could click on 'Read more about the two options' or go straight to voting at the consultation hub. Information about the Community Information Sessions and urging residents to come along was a main feature. A copy of the brochure, sent to all ratepayers, could be downloaded. A number of subpages could be accessed from the main page, 'Your Place, Your Say, Your Future' webpage views - 4,057</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the current situation and why are we asking you to make a choice? • What have we already done to save money and improve our business? • How will Council services be impacted by my decision? • What are the two options to choose from? • How has Council consulted the community about this so far? <p><u>Council's Website sub pages</u> These subpages contained detailed information about Council's current financial situation and the impact on services without a rate rise. A number of important documents were also available for downloading - 2,504 sub-page views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A media release from the Local Government Shire's Association – Council's cough up nearly \$500 million to cover Government costs • A detailed list of proposed asset upgrades budgeted over the next seven years that would greatly improve the condition of our assets. • NSW Treasury (TCorp) Financial Assessment and Benchmarking Report on Wyong Shire Council • Department of Local Government Annual Financial Review • Wyong Shire Council's response to the Department of Local Government Review • Wyong Shire Council Media Release – Council to cease Vacation Care services • A copy of all the postcards, distributed around the Shire, advertising the Community Information Sessions • Graphs detailing ordinary rates increases under Option 1 and Option 2 – over seven years • Wyong Shire Council Report – Service Standards Review – Results of Stage 1 Community Consultation • Information brochure on the three options that was produced for Stage 2 Community Consultation • Council report – Service Standards Review – Results of Stage 2 Community Consultation • Minutes of the ordinary Council meeting of 12 December 2012
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Detailed information about the asset funding issues, the three funding options and the additional cost to ratepayers of each option was conveyed to the community through:

Engage spectrum	Description	Engagement modes
Connect	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct discussions with staff • A random telephone survey of residents conducted by an external independent provider – 400 voting responses • An online survey – 3599 voting responses • Reply paid hard copy voting form (or drop off at a Council centre) – 2595 voting responses • Submissions from individuals or organizations – 112 responses of which 48 were voting responses and are included in the overall mail-in results. The issues raised in these submissions are referred to elsewhere in the report. • 9 Facebook posts • 892 Facebook post views • 27 Comments on Facebook posts • 9 Posts on Council's Twitter feed • 6 Re-tweets of our messages by others
Engage	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	<p><u>Community Information Sessions</u></p> <p>2 information sessions were held where council staff presented the issues and information around the SRV and the community was able to ask questions of staff – 181 voting responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic Centre, Wyong, 7 February 2013 - 245 attendees • Halekulani Hall, Budgewoi, 12 February 2013 - 172 attendees <p><u>Ourimbah Precinct Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mayor attended a meeting of the Ourimbah Precinct Committee on 06/02/13 to explain Council's position on the SRV – 17 voting responses which are included in the overall information session results

The demographic spread of the respondents was:

Age 18-24	107*	2%
Age 25-34	569	8%
Age 35-44	863	13%
Age 45-54	1228	18%
Age 55- 64	1559	23%
Age 65-74	1535	22%
Age 75+	725	11%
Not specified	254	3%
Male	3332	49%
Female	3189	47%
Not specified	319	4%

Number of suburbs represented	67	

*Includes 10 responses from <18

Analysis of Results

During Stage 3, ratepayers and residents were asked to indicate their preference for Option 1 (rate peg only) or Option 2 (9.5% increase per year for seven years, including the rate peg). A further question was asked as to whether there would be support for in between the rate peg amount and less than 9.5%. 6,840 voting responses were received for Stage 3 as detailed below. The initial comparison for Options 1 and 2 are shown, followed by the overall support for an increase above the rate peg. That is derived from those respondents who supported Option 1, but also said they would support an increase less than 9.5%.

Total Numbers Stage 3	Rate Peg Only	9.5%
6840	5920 (87%)	920 (13%)

Those who answered to Rate Peg Only also had the option of indicating if they would support an increase below 9.5%, the table below highlights the percentages of those who were willing for a rate increase.

	Rate Peg Only	Any Increase
6840	3888 (57%)	2952 (43%)

This rate of response is high for a Council engagement process and the random telephone survey adds validity to the response as it provides the best chance of an unbiased representation of the community's response. It was conducted by an independent provider, using the same questions as Council's online and hard copy surveys. 400 respondents were chosen at random and given time to read the information booklet before being interviewed. The respondents represented a broad cross-section of Council's demographics and a sample size of 400 residents is statistically proven to provide a maximum sampling error of approximately +/- 4.9% at 95% confidence. 73% of phone survey respondents supported an increase above the rate peg. This phone survey contacted 400 different respondents to the first survey undertaken in Stage 2. Overall support for some form of increase went from 49% in Stage 2 to 73% in Stage 3.

Stage 3 respondents were also asked to provide their priority order for those asset areas in order to assist Council if service levels need to be reviewed. The table below shows the preferences from each engagement mode. 1 is the highest priority, 7 is the lowest. This indicates the highest overall priorities are for roads, drainage, parks, playgrounds, open space and the natural environment.

Priority	On line survey	Mail in Survey	Phone Survey	Information Sessions
1	Roads and Drainage	Roads and Drainage	Roads and Drainage	Roads and Drainage
2	Natural Environment	Parks, Playgrounds, Open Space	Natural Environment	Parks, Playgrounds, Open Space
3	Parks, Playgrounds, Open Space	Natural Environment	Parks, Playgrounds, Open Space	Town Centres

4	Sport, Leisure & Recreation Facilities	Sport, Leisure & Recreation Facilities	Sport, Leisure & Recreation Facilities	Sport, Leisure & Recreation Facilities
5	Town Centres	Town Centres	Community Buildings	Natural Environment
6	Community Buildings	Community Buildings	Town Centres	Community Buildings
7	Other	Other	N/A	Other

During Stage 3 there were numerous comments made by respondents at the workshops or in their written comments, key themes are outlined below.

Submissions suggested alternatives to the proposed 9.5% increase, such as:

- Apply for a lower percentage increase over a shorter term
- Apply for a lower increase over a longer term (not possible as IPART maximum term is seven years)
- Re-assess the situation after four years and adjust the increase if Council's financial position improves
- After seven years, return the base rate level to what it would have been under rate pegging
- Special Rate Variation of 6% per year for seven years, combined with additional borrowing

The issues which were consistently raised included:

- Council staff productivity needs further improvement
- Council's financial management needs improvement
- Get back to core business, cut back on the number of non-core services
- Fix the roads and provide kerb and gutter
- The poor condition of assets, particularly in the older areas of the Shire
- Sell off under-utilised assets
- Amalgamate with Gosford Council
- Fix the lakes
- State and Federal Governments should be providing more funding to Council.

There were also a number of misconceptions raised, particularly:

- Council has lost millions on foreign investments during the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). This is incorrect, Council did not lose investments during the GFC.
- Councillors or staff will get a bonus or pay increase if the rate increase goes ahead. This is incorrect, Councillors do not get bonuses, their maximum fee is set by a State Government Tribunal and there is no bonus system in place for staff at Wyong Shire Council.
- The proposed increase applies to the whole rates bill. This is incorrect. This Special Rate Variation if submitted will only apply to the general rates, not water, sewer and waste charges.
- Council will spend the additional rate income on other projects. IPART place stringent reporting requirements on any council that receives a Special Rate Variation to ensure the community is kept well informed of progress and that the funds are spent for the intended purpose.
- The proposed increase will be even greater if land valuations increase. This is not correct, Council does not get a windfall if valuations increase, nor does it get less if

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they decrease. The IPART approval sets a maximum amount that Council's total rate income can increase by each year. Each ratepayer pays a share of that based on their land valuation. If valuations change, individual ratepayers share of the total income may change, but Council's total income stays within the limit set by IPART.

These issues were addressed when they arose at the information sessions or in discussions with Council staff. Council staff will work through these and the other issues raised during the consultation to work out appropriate actions to address them.

Capacity And Willingness To Pay

A key part of any IPART submission is the community's capacity to pay. Council must consider whether the proposed increase is reasonable and whether the community has the capacity to pay. The following points support the reasonableness of the proposed increase.

- Despite steadily increasing expenses over many years, Council has a long history of limiting increases to the rate peg only, with the exception of 1997/98 when a one-off increase in Ordinary Rates of 8.1% (including the notional increase of 3.1%) was approved.
- We have reviewed our rating structure regularly and made changes to the distribution across rating categories to improve fairness and equity according to our best knowledge of local social and economic conditions.
- We have extensively consulted with residents and ratepayers to identify their priorities for Council service levels and what funding options they would support to resource those service levels. This has included a number of options where increased payment resulted in corresponding increases in service levels.
- It is recognised that Wyong Shire have some socio economic challenges and is disadvantaged in comparison to the Sydney region.
- Analysis with other comparable councils shows that Wyong's average residential rates are among the lowest charged.
- A significant proportion of properties in Wyong Shire are owned by those whose primary residence is outside of the area. At March 2013, this equals 12,700 of the 64,500 properties, or 19.7%. It is reasonable to assume that these properties are owned for either investment purposes or as holiday homes which make the owner's capacity to pay increased rates is difficult to assess. In addition, there are 4,976 property owners on our database who own multiple properties within the Shire, or 6.4% of all properties.
- Farmland properties attract the lowest ad valorem rate, receive concessions as primary producers and 17% of farm category property owners live outside Wyong Shire, mainly from the Sydney metropolitan area. Mining pays a high rate in the dollar, as this sector is highly profitable a rate notice is relatively insignificant proportion of a mine's total operating expenses. Business properties pay approximately 186% of the Residential Rate in the dollar with major retail category ratepayers paying more.
- Council's debt recovery and hardship policy assists in achieving that through a broad range of payment assistance options. This approach has been developed in consultation with other authorities and local financial counselling organisations to ensure the strategies are appropriate.

When considering the community's capacity to pay for the proposed increase, Council should also take into account the impact of reducing or removing Council assets or services which currently contribute positively to improving the local economy, individual health, safety, amenity and social wellbeing for all residents. A continued decline in the condition of Council

assets and levels of service will have negative social and economic effects on the community. The risk to public safety will become apparent if we do not properly address the asset gap. The statutory liability on Council, Councillors and staff to carry out their roles in a professional manner is paramount in making decisions when operating in a local government.

It is also important to consider the effect that the proposed increase would have on the total rate bills to ratepayers. This is explored in the following section.

It is recognised that the community will face financial challenges because of the proposed rate increase. However, Council must also consider the consequences of not addressing the asset funding gap on current and future generations. Doing nothing is not an option, the risks associated with the assets will continue to increase and there will be a reduction in services. The statistics from the statistically valid consultation demonstrate that there is approximately a 40% level of support for an increase.

THE FINANCIALS ON EACH OPTION

On 13 February 2013, Council resolved that a further option be prepared for a 6.9% increase (including the rate peg) each year for seven years. This was resolved based on the interim results indicating that there was support for some form of special rate variation and the time that was required to prepare the information for inclusion in this report to Council.

Therefore, three options are presented in this report:

- Option 1 - Rate peg amount only
- Option 2 - 9.5% increase (including rate peg)
- Option 4 - 6.9% increase (including rate peg)

(Option 3 – 12.5% increase was removed as an option after Stage 2 consultation results).

Option 1 – Rate Peg Amount Only

In this scenario, rate increases are maintained at the annual amount approved by IPART, usually around 3%, this would mean that there would continue to be a substantial asset gap of \$130m by 2020. This amount does not cover the CPI costs and the asset gap would get worse, focus would only be on some asset renewals.

There would also be the need to undertake significant cuts to services, rationalisation and Council would not have any ability to source loans or other income to secure the financial sustainability of the organisation. If Council were required to find the \$20m each year it would equate to between 50-100 full time equivalent staff cuts and a dramatic reduction in associated services. Council also needs to be mindful that it has already reduced expenditure on services by \$20m year.

Option 2 - 9.5% Increase (Including Rate Peg)

This scenario is based on properly funding the Long Term Financial Strategy and would raise the \$130m over seven years required to fund the asset gap as it is known at this time by June 2020. Asset conditions will improve significantly in this time and there would then be a substantial saving in annual asset maintenance costs of approximately \$3m per annum. There would be limited scope for spending on new assets, however this option would support minor growth to the value of \$4-6m.

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With this increase the asset backlog issue can be addressed, the risk to the public and organisation is diminished.

Option 4 – 6.9% increase (including rate peg)

At 6.9% Council will be able to spend an extra \$15m annually to close the asset gap. This means that by 30 June 2020 (end of the special rate increase) we will have reduced our asset gap from \$130m to \$25m by June 2020.

It is recognised that with a lesser amount of 6.9% Council will still need to reduce its levels of service and staff will need to create further efficiencies and improvements to reduce our costs. That will require some lower levels of service and some asset rationalisation.

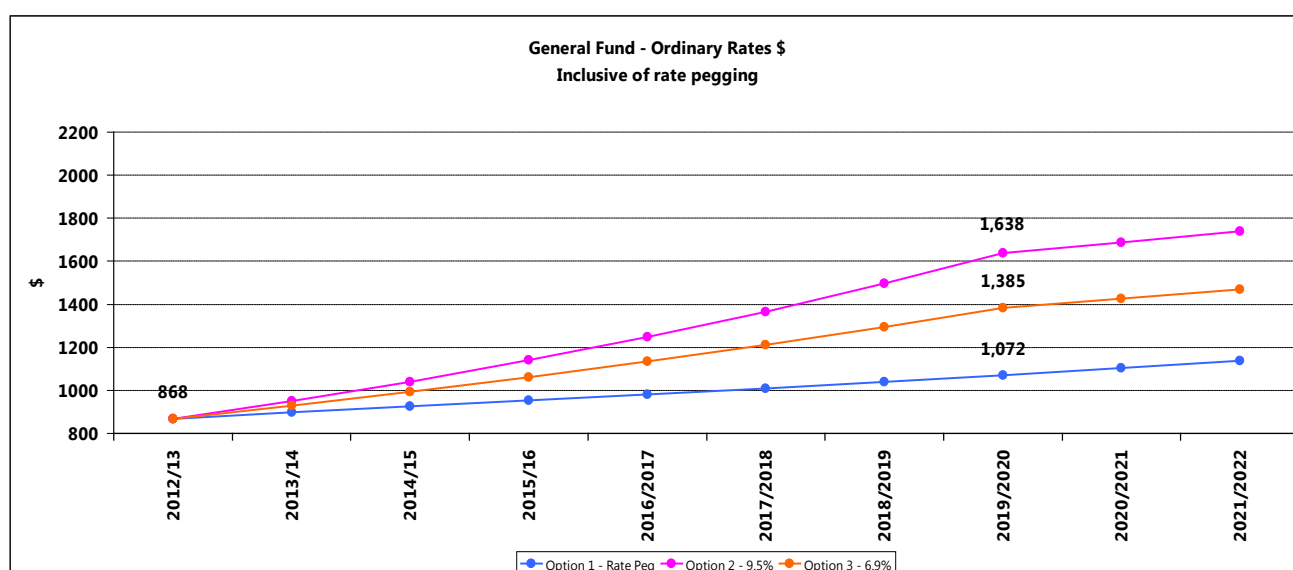
The table and graph below show the effect on average general rates of a 6.9% increase compared to the other two options of rate peg only and 9.5%.

Average Ordinary Rates – Annual aggregate	2012/13 Baseline	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Option 1 – Rate peg	\$868	\$898	\$924	\$952	\$981	\$1,010	\$1,040	\$1,072
Option 2 – 9.5%	\$868	\$950	\$1,041	\$1,140	\$1,248	\$1,366	\$1,496	\$1,638
Option 4 – 6.9%	\$868	\$928	\$992	\$1,060	\$1,134	\$1,212	\$1,295	\$1,385

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The following table shows the impact of the options on the weekly rate cost in Year 1 and Year 7:

Rates Per Week	2013/14	2019/20
Option 1 – Rate peg	\$17.26	\$20.61
Option 2 – 9.5%	\$18.28	\$31.51
Option 4 – 6.9%	\$17.84	\$26.63



Asset Conditions

Based on our asset management systems, the table below sets out the general asset conditions that will be achieved under each option.

Funding Analysis	Option 1 - Rate Peg	Option 2 - 9.5%	Option 4 - 6.9%
<i>Proposed Renewal:</i> <i>Proposed New:</i> <i>Total CAPEX:</i> <i>Funding Gap:</i>	\$25M \$1.5M \$26.5M \$0M	\$25M \$6.7M \$50M \$19M	\$25M \$4.0M \$44M \$15M
Summary	On average infrastructure will steeply decline from deterioration. In worst case scenarios selected playgrounds, jetties and footbridges may require closing due to condition decline (public safety) and or legislative requirement.	On average infrastructure condition will improve to a satisfactory condition over the (7) years. There are no foreseeable closures under this model.	On average infrastructure condition will improve to a reasonably satisfactory condition over the (7) years. A funding gap will remain at the end of the 7 years and there may need to be closures under this model.
<u>Roads</u> The local roads of the Shire. Renewals affect the smoothness and feel when driving.	Some focus in renewing our Shires road network. This will see the condition increase in the first year, then steeply decline over the ensuing (7) years. Minimal optional new road infrastructure.	Strong focus in renewing our Shires road network. This will improve the condition of our roads over the (7) year period. Minimal optional new road infrastructure.	Good focus in renewing our Shires road network. This will improve the condition of our roads over the (7) year period but some will remain in less than satisfactory condition. Minimal optional new road infrastructure.
<u>Drainage</u> Responsible for redirecting water from developments.	Drainage network condition will remain poor. Minimal optional new drainage infrastructure.	Drainage network will improve over the period. Some optional new drainage infrastructure.	Drainage network will improve but some sections will remain less than satisfactory Minimal optional new drainage infrastructure.
<u>Playgrounds</u> An outdoor activity centre for the children of the Shire.	Many will become dilapidated overtime and may require closing or even removal due to not meeting Australian Standards. No new playgrounds.	Can be maintained as per Australian Standards. Condition is expected to slowly increase overtime. Some new playgrounds	Can be mostly maintained as per Australian Standards. Condition will slowly increase overtime. Minimal new playgrounds

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Funding Analysis	Option 1 - Rate Peg	Option 2 - 9.5%	Option 4 - 6.9%
<i>Proposed Renewal:</i> <i>Proposed New:</i> <i>Total CAPEX:</i> <i>Funding Gap:</i>	\$25M \$1.5M \$26.5M \$0M	\$25M \$6.7M \$50M \$19M	\$25M \$4.0M \$44M \$15M
<u>Jetties & Boat Ramps</u> Fishing, scenic views, heritage. A place to drop the boat in, have a ski or spend the day on the water.	There will be zero work on closing the gap undertaken; a few of the jetties around Tuggerah Lakes may require closing due to structural deterioration through age. No possibility of new jetties.	Remedial works will be undertaken over the ensuing 7 years with no condition related closures foreseeable. It is likely that the condition of the jetties and boat ramps will remain stable or slightly improve.	Remedial works will be undertaken over the ensuing 7 years with some possible related closures foreseeable. Minimal new boat ramps.
<u>Footbridges</u> Accessibility for continuity of walkers and bikers, or simply enjoy the amenity of our parks.	There will be zero work on closing the gap undertaken; several footbridges located in outdoor passive recreation areas will require closing due to structural deterioration through age. No possibility of new footbridges.	Remedial works will be undertaken over the ensuing 7 years with no condition related closures foreseeable. It is likely that the condition of the footbridges will remain stable or slightly improve. Improved likelihood of a small amount of new footbridges.	Remedial works will be undertaken over the ensuing 7 years with some possible related closures foreseeable. Minimal new footbridges.
<u>Town Centres</u> Assist with keeping our Shire vibrant and attractive thus increasing tourism which is good for local business.	Some assets will remain less than satisfactory No new works undertaken.	Town centre conditions slowly improve over the following years. Minimal new works undertaken.	Town centre conditions slowly improve over the following years but some conditions will remain less than satisfactory. Less likelihood of new works.
<u>Tuggerah Lakes Estuaries</u> Maintaining estuaries which contribute to the quality of our Shires Tuggerah lakes.	Zero work on dealing with unsatisfactory items would be performed. Gross pollutant traps and other environmental devices, some thirty years old will fail. The result will be an increase of pollutants entering Tuggerah Lakes.	Progressive program to replace unsatisfactory devices This will maintain the existing devices and ensure the lakes continue to improve.	Progressive, but slower program to replace unsatisfactory devices Lakes will improve but some areas remain unprotected for longer

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What Works Will Be Delivered Under Each Option

Attachment 1 shows the works that will be delivered over the next 4 years under each option, as set out in Council's draft 2013/17 Strategic Plan. Option 4 will not deliver the same level of works as option 2 as there is less funding. If option 1 is adopted, the works to address the asset gap will not be undertaken. Those projects identified in Attachment 1 which do not have a budget allocation assigned to them in each option mean they will not be delivered if that option is chosen.

	Option 1 3.4% Rate Peg	Option 2 9.5% SRV	Option 4 6.9% SRV
Renewals	\$25,743,108	\$25,743,108	\$25,743,108
Gap	\$0	\$19,153,865	\$15,297,865
New	\$0	\$7,629,990	\$4,175,490
	\$25,743,108	\$52,526,963	\$45,216,463

The works set out in the tables attached align to the asset management plans and the service priorities identified through community consultation. The priorities are continually under review based on factors such as changes in asset condition due to usage and deterioration rates, additional funding from other sources (e.g. grants) can become available unexpectedly and the estimated cost of projects can also change. Each year the final list of projects will be adopted by Council as part of its annual planning process, which is available to the community for comment. Progress is reported regularly to the community, as are any changes to the adopted list of projects.

These capital plans are based on the existing asset management plan and have not yet been approved by Council. For this reason, and due to the dynamic nature of managing priority on a \$2.3bn asset portfolio, this plan is subject to reprioritisation or changes to timing.

Service Cuts

If Council resolve to proceed with either option 1 or 4, there will be a need to reduce or cut services. During the community consultation the community highlighted their priorities for service delivery. In considering these priorities, along with business models and opportunities, Council will continue to find optimal ways to do business and will need to rationalise delivery of some services, or find alternative operating models. Detailed analysis to determine the feasibility, economic cost versus benefit, and social impact of any service reductions or revised operating models.

The option1 cuts would result in 50-100 full time equivalent staff and their associated services being cut. There would be further funds required to terminate these staff.

Indicative Total Rates Notice

In the last week IPART have made a draft determination on the Water and Sewer charges for both Gosford and Wyong councils. These charges are also included in the rates notice. This information is provided as a matter of transparency.

Option 1 – Rate Peg Only	2012/13 Baseline	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Ordinary Rates (1)	\$868.05	\$895.79	\$922.67	\$950.35	\$978.86	\$1,008.22	\$1,038.47	\$1,069.62
Domestic Waste (2)	\$460	\$483	\$502	\$522	\$543	\$565	\$588	\$612

5.10

SERVICE STANDARDS REVIEW - Special Rate Variation (contd)

Stormwater Management (3)	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25
Water Service (4)	\$167.35	\$164.97	\$150.86	\$136.48	\$122.37	\$126.05	\$129.83	\$133.72
Sewerage (4)	\$463.44	\$457.25	\$467.70	\$478.42	\$489.37	\$504.05	\$519.17	\$534.74
Drainage (4)	\$89.77	\$97.01	\$104.73	\$113.06	\$122.07	\$125.73	\$129.50	\$133.39
TOTAL Annual Rates & Charges	\$2,073.61	\$2,123.02	\$2,172.96	\$2,225.32	\$2,280.67	\$2,354.05	\$2,429.97	\$2,508.48
Increase \$		\$49.42	\$49.94	\$52.35	\$55.35	\$73.38	\$75.92	\$78.51
Increase %		2.38%	2.35%	2.41%	2.49%	3.22%	3.23%	3.23%

(Assumptions)

1. Rate Peg of 3.4% in year 1 and 3% for subsequent years
2. 4%
3. Flat
4. Draft IPART Determination + CPI of 3% after 2016/17

Option 2 – SRV 9.5%	2012/13 Baseline	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Ordinary Rates (1)	\$868.05	\$948.73	\$1,038.86	\$1,137.55	\$1,245.62	\$1,363.96	\$1,493.53	\$1,635.42
Domestic Waste (2)	\$460	\$483	\$502	\$522	\$543	\$565	\$588	\$612
Stormwater Management (3)	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25
Water Service (4)	\$167.35	\$164.97	\$150.86	\$136.48	\$122.37	\$126.05	\$129.83	\$133.72
Sewerage (4)	\$463.44	\$457.25	\$467.70	\$478.42	\$489.37	\$504.05	\$519.17	\$534.74
Drainage (4)	\$89.77	\$97.01	\$104.73	\$113.06	\$122.07	\$125.73	\$129.50	\$133.39
TOTAL Annual Rates & Charges	\$2,073.61	\$2,175.96	\$2,289.16	\$2,412.52	\$2,547.43	\$2,709.78	\$2,885.03	\$3,074.27
Increase \$		\$102.35	\$113.20	\$123.36	\$134.91	\$162.35	\$175.25	\$189.24
Increase %		4.94%	5.20%	5.39%	5.59%	6.37%	6.47%	6.56%

(Assumptions)

1. 9.5%
2. 4%
3. Flat
4. Draft IPART Determination + CPI of 3% after 2016/17

Option 4 - SRV 6.9%	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Ordinary Rates (1)	\$868.05	\$926.18	\$990.09	\$1,058.40	\$1,131.43	\$1,209.50	\$1,292.96	\$1,382.17
Domestic Waste (2)	\$460	\$483	\$502	\$522	\$543	\$565	\$588	\$612
Stormwater Management (3)	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25
Water Service (4)	\$167.35	\$164.97	\$150.86	\$136.48	\$122.37	\$126.05	\$129.83	\$133.72
Sewerage (4)	\$463.44	\$457.25	\$467.70	\$478.42	\$489.37	\$504.05	\$519.17	\$534.74
Drainage (4)	\$89.77	\$97.01	\$104.73	\$113.06	\$122.07	\$125.73	\$129.50	\$133.39
TOTAL Annual Rates & Charges	\$2,073.61	\$2,153.41	\$2,240.39	\$2,333.37	\$2,433.24	\$2,555.33	\$2,684.46	\$2,821.03
Increase \$		\$79.80	\$86.97	\$92.99	\$99.87	\$122.08	\$129.13	\$136.57
Increase %		3.85%	4.04%	4.15%	4.28%	5.02%	5.05%	5.09%

(Assumptions)

1. 6.9%
2. 4%
3. Flat
4. Draft IPART Determination + CPI of 3% after 2016/17

As can be seen above this highlights the difference between what ratepayers would be required to pay under each of the options, including the other costs identified in the rates notice, based on the draft IPART determination on water and sewer. The table below provides a summary of the difference in total annual council charges under each of the scenarios as compared to the rate peg.

Year	Option 1- Rate Pegging Only	Total \$ Bill Increase under 9.5% (Annual)	Weekly Increase to Total Bill under 9.5%	Total % Bill Increase under 9.5% (Annual)	Total \$ Bill Increase under 6.9% (Annual)	Weekly Increase to Total Bill under 6.9%	Total % Bill Increase under 6.9% (Annual)
2012/13 Baseline Average Rate	\$2,073.61						
2013/14	\$2,123.02	\$52.94	\$1.02	2.49%	\$30.39	\$0.58	1.43%
2014/15	\$2,172.96	\$116.19	\$2.23	5.35%	\$67.42	\$1.30	3.10%
2015/16	\$2,225.32	\$187.21	\$3.60	8.41%	\$108.06	\$2.08	4.86%
2016/17	\$2,280.67	\$266.76	\$5.13	11.70%	\$152.58	\$2.93	6.69%
2017/18	\$2,354.05	\$355.73	\$6.84	15.11%	\$201.28	\$3.87	8.55%
2018/19	\$2,429.97	\$455.06	\$8.75	18.73%	\$254.49	\$4.89	10.47%
2019/20	\$2,508.48	\$565.79	\$10.88	22.56%	\$312.55	\$6.01	12.46%

PROPOSAL

Council's role is to decide what the best option for the community is; either proceed with an Special Rate Variation application or cut services to the community. Doing nothing is not an option that will lead to financial sustainability for the organisation and deliver on the needs of our community.

The state of the assets that deliver the services to the community is an enormous risk to our community and will continue to be if Council does not act quickly with insight and rigor. Council's financial and asset management systems have clearly identified the need for enhanced funding and that the required level of funding requires a 9.5% increase each year for seven years to close the asset gap.

A number of councils assets are failing and require more than \$130m to bring these assets to a satisfactory level. Council will continue to have an asset management issue just by the sheer volume of assets currently owned and the ones which will be required for the extra 70,000 people planned to settle in Wyong by 2031.

This issue has been a long standing one and only in 2010 did Council identify the depth of the issue and implement a range of strategies to move into financial sustainability and identify the risk associated with the asset back log. Council can not afford not to spend the funds required on maintaining our assets to a satisfactory standard. If we do not, the increased risk of asset failure, loss of service and risk to public safety place liability on Council, Councillors and staff.

Council staff are already reviewing a number of assets that could be rationalised to save money. Council staff are also exploring new management models around its assets to leverage off other partners, minimize the operating, maintenance and improvement costs and deliver more cost effective services to the community.

The community is aware that Council has not been replacing the assets at the rate that they are wearing out, if we do not spend money on this now the future maintenance and

replacement costs will only be higher. The demand by the 70,000 new people for new assets will not be met. It is recognised that there is no quick fix. Assets will continue to grow, be it through a new development, a replacement of an old asset, a gifting of an asset or the requirement from other tiers of Government to take on an asset. Even so, focusing on bringing what we have to a level that can deliver what is needed is required now to be able to manage the risks now and those that will eventuate in future years.

Staff recognise that there are concerns with the affordability for some members of the community, to be able to pay for a Special Rate Variation of 9.5%, however Council's hardship policy needs to be able to cater for these concerns and provide options. This should be considered on merit. Without this level of increase there will be significant risks to the organisation, Councillors and staff both financially and legally if our ageing assets fail.

Some of the considerations if the SRV is not successful or is reduced below 9.5%:

- If Council wishes to improve the condition of existing assets, it will have to find an additional \$20m per year. That will have to come from cuts to services due to the amount required and the limited alternatives to finding revenue.
- If that additional funding is not found, assets will continue to decline as there will not be enough funding to keep them at a satisfactory standard. Those assets currently in poor condition will deteriorate at a faster rate, those currently in reasonable condition will move into poor condition.
- The assets will not be able to deliver the level of service that they were originally designed to provide to the community.
- Maintenance costs will rise as asset conditions deteriorate, placing further pressure on Council's operating costs and leaving less funds for services.
- Assets will become non-functional and unsafe, in some cases they will need to be removed.
- Service cuts and asset deterioration will result in a decline in the amenity of the area and impact the quality of life for our residents. That will lead to negative impacts on tourism, business and the local economy, affecting local jobs.

In the longer term, working towards the vision the community has for the Shire, as outlined in the Community Strategic Plan, will be less realistic and may not be achieved. CSP objectives such as: "There will be ease of travel; communities will have a range of facilities and services; and areas of natural value will be enhanced and maintained" cannot be achieved if the Council assets which contribute to those objectives are in poor condition or closed down.

The engagement process was extensive with nearly 8,800 responses received through Stages 1 to 3. In addition, previous consultation feedback was also considered which had more than 4000 responses. When these responses are considered collectively it identifies that there is an understanding by the community of the need to improve assets and the services they provide, together with support for a rate increase to achieve that.

The responses to Stage 3 indicate that there is reasonable community willingness to pay some level of increase above the rate peg. It is recommended by staff that Council proceed with a submission to IPART for a Section 508A increase of 9.5% increase per year over seven years commencing 2013/14 to enable the asset maintenance backlog of \$130m to be addressed.

IPART Application - Criteria To Be Addressed

The process of applying for an SRV requires a number of steps to comply with the IPART guidelines and assessment criteria. A considerable amount of community consultation is required and Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting documentation must fully document and support the need for the SRV. The IPART criteria are as follows:

1. The need for and purpose of a different revenue path (as requested through the special variation) is clearly articulated and identified through the council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) documents, including its Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan. Evidence for this criterion could include evidence of community need/desire for service levels/project and limited council resourcing alternatives and the Council's financial sustainability conducted by the NSW Treasury Corporation.
2. Evidence that the community is aware of the need for and extent of a rate rise. This should be clearly spelt out in IP&R documentation and the council must demonstrate an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure opportunity for community awareness/input. The IP&R documentation should canvas alternatives to a rate rise, the impact of any rises upon the community and the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay rates.
3. The impact on affected ratepayers must be reasonable, having regard to both the current rate levels, existing ratepayer base and the proposed purpose of the variation. Council's IP&R process should also establish that the proposed rate increases are affordable having regard to the local community's capacity to pay.
4. The proposed Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan must show evidence of realistic assumptions.
5. An explanation of the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years, and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period.
6. IPART's assessment of the matters set out below, against criteria 1-5 above.
 - size of the council
 - resources of a council
 - size (both actual \$ and %) of increase requested
 - current rate levels and previous rate rises
 - purpose of the special variation
 - any other matter considered relevant in the assessment of a special variation application.

These criteria will be addressed through the submission process if Council determine to request a Special Rate Variation. Council's previous and current Strategic Planning documents have addressed the asset gap finding issue. The issues of willingness to pay and capacity to pay have been highlighted in this report to enable Council to satisfy itself that it is appropriate to proceed with an SRV application.

There are risks attached to the proposal for proceeding with an SRV application. It could be unsuccessful, it could be approved for less than 9.5% and/or less than seven years, in either case Council will be still faced with reducing services and be required to deliver other cost saving measures.

The timeframe for the 2013/14 application process is:

- Council must submit its application to IPART by 11 March, 2013. The application and supporting documents will be available on Council's web site and on IPART's web site.
- IPART will accept and consider submissions from interested groups or individual ratepayers regarding special variations up until 4 weeks after the relevant application deadline. For 2013, this date is 8 April 2013.
- Council will accept and consider submissions during the public exhibition period for the 2013/17 Strategic Plan.
- IPART will hand down its determination in mid June 2013.
- If approved, the increase will apply as from 1 July, 2013.

Council has complied with the above timeline in that it notified IPART of its intention to submit a Section 508A application by 14 December 2012, up to 9.5%. This does not compel Council to submit an application and provides the freedom to submit an amount lower than 9.5%.

Due to the changes to the guidelines while in the middle of our consultation process, Council has gained agreement from IPART that if Council proceeds with an SRV application, we can submit our supplementary documents (2013-17 Council Strategic Plan and revised Community Strategic Plan) by 15 April 2013. This is to facilitate the Council's consultation with the community about the 2013-17 Strategic Plan and to allow Council to incorporate the outcomes of the public exhibition process in the final Council Strategic Plan.

OPTIONS

Apart from the two options of SRV or service cuts which have been set out in this report, there are other actions Council could take.

Option 1 - Make a submission to IPART for a Special Rate Variation for 9.5% for seven years commencing 2013/14. This option is recommended as outlined in this report.

Option 2 - Make a submission to IPART for a Special Rate Variation for less than 9.5% as determined by Council for seven years commencing 2013/14. This is not recommended as outlined in this report, due to not being sufficient to close the asset gap and the impact on services. This option is not recommended.

Option 3 - Make a submission to IPART for a Special Rate Variation for less than seven years. This won't provide sufficient funding to close the gap in a reasonable time. This option is not recommended.

Option 4 - Defer a decision and re-consider a Special Rate Variation during preparation of the 2014/18 Council Strategic Plan. This will involve additional cost of community consultation and would be required to commence relatively soon. It will delay addressing the problem and the asset gap will continue to get worse and harder to overcome. This option is not recommended.

Option 5 - Not apply for any Special Rate Variation and continue with the rate peg amount as determined by IPART. This provides significant financial issues for Council and will result in assets being unsustainable into the future, with significant cash flow issues in the short

term. Existing services will need to be reduced to a level where assets would be significantly deteriorated and would lead to usability and safety issues. Staff cuts of 50-100 full time equivalent will need to be terminated. Personal liability to Councillors and staff will rise significantly if assets fail. This option is not recommended.

STRATEGIC LINKS

Wyong Shire Council Strategic / Annual Plan

The proposal assists compliance with Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework through using community consultation to inform the Strategic Planning process. Information on the asset gap and financial sustainability of the organisation including the option of a Special Rate Variation is included in the draft 2013/14 Council Strategic Plan.

Contribution of Proposal to the Principal Activity

The proposal affects all Principal Activities and Services as it is a review of all service levels across the organisation.

Long Term Financial Strategy

The proposal uses information from the Long Term Financial Strategy. Final decisions on a Special Rate Variation or not will have impact on future expenditure and funding sources.

Asset Management Strategy

This Strategy highlights the asset gap issue as outlined in this report. Our assets are used to provide services and depending on the final decision of a Special Rate Variation or not, it will impact assets and service levels across the business.

Workforce Management Strategy

Staff resources are used to provide services so it will impact the Workforce Management Strategy. Dependent on the final decisions on a Special Rate Variation or not, there will be impacts on staffing levels across the business.

Link to Community Strategic Plan (2030)

The proposal will impact on the services Council provides towards achieving the Community Strategic Plan objectives.

BUDGET IMPACT

This recommendation has significant impacts on the budget, as does an alternate decision made by Council. The draft 2013/17 Strategic Plan takes into account each of the 3 options: rate peg only, 6.9% and 9.5%.

The budget outcomes for the General Fund for each of the 7 years under each scenario are as follows:

General Fund Profit Profile

Option	2013/14 \$m	2014/15 \$m	2015/16 \$m	2016/17 \$m	2017/18 \$m	2018/19 \$m	2019/20 \$m
Option 1 – Rate Peg	-2.5	-3.0	-2.9	-4.1	-3.2	-3.3	-3.3
Option 2 – SRV 9.5%	0.8	2.4	5.6	8.3	14.1	19.9	27.0
Option 3 – SRV 6.9%	-0.1	0.3	2.4	3.6	7.4	106	14.4

The profit is what generates the required cash-flow to fund the capital required to replace assets and bring assets to a satisfactory condition.

CONSULTATION

Consultation undertaken throughout the Service Standards Review included more than 8800 responses is outlined in the body of the report. In addition, extensive community consultation was undertaken with the community to develop the Community Strategic Plan and other strategic documents to guide the work of Council.

GOVERNANCE AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The recommendation complies with the Division of Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework requirements. The development of the consultation process was in accordance with Council's adopted Engagement Framework and was supported by the previous and current Resourcing documents, including the Long Term Financial Strategy and the Asset Management Strategy.

MATERIAL RISKS AND ISSUES

If Council decides to not proceed with a Special Rate Variation or a lesser amount than the recommended 9.5% it will lead to major risks of our assets failing. The financial sustainability of the organisation will not be viable and significant cuts to capital expenditure and services will be required.

Without this level of increase there will be significant financial and public liability risks to the organisation, Councillors and staff if our ageing assets fail. There are risks attached to the proposal for proceeding with an SRV application. It could be unsuccessful, it could be approved for less than 9.5% and/or less than 7 years, in either case Council will be still faced with reducing services and be required to deliver other cost saving measures.

The significant risk to Council, Councillors and staff is asset failure, this is highlighted in the Piles Creek road tragedy in Gosford which was as a result of inadequate maintenance of the assets.

CONCLUSION

Since 2010 Council has identified a clear path to be financially sustainable by 2014/15 which was reliant on productivity and efficiency savings as well as a Special Rate Variation. Independent reports from NSW Treasury Corporation and the Division of Local Government highlighted concerns with Council's financial sustainability and asset management. Council has worked toward addressing these concerns through clear financial management which has resulted in over \$20m savings per year. However further work is required to make Wyong sustainable into the long term.

Council is facing a difficult decision, managing more than \$2.3bn in ageing assets as well as continuing to provide the services the community has become accustomed to and expects. With a shortfall of \$130m to bring our assets up to a satisfactory condition and the increasing population of a further 70,000 people coming into the area, the current status quo can not

remain, services will need to be reduced or further income will be required to address the asset backlog to reduce the risk to Council and the community if an asset fails.

Over the last five years Council has undertaken significant engagement with the community to identify their values and desires. This has been supplemented over the last year with Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the Service Standards Review consultation. These stages have gathered over 8,800 responses. The overall level of support for an increase of some amount above the rate peg, but less than 9.5% is reasonable. It is recommended that Council proceed with a submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for a Special Rate Variation Section 508A for a 9.5% increase every year for seven years.

ATTACHMENTS

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| 1 | 2013-14 Capital Expenditure all options | D03273999 |
| 2 | 2014-15 Capital Expenditure all options | D03274003 |
| 3 | 2015-16 Capital Expenditure all options | D03274006 |
| 4 | 2016-17 Capital Expenditure all options | D03274009 |

DRAFT

Long Term Financial Strategy

Introduction

The Community Strategic Plan presents a 20 year vision of the community's aspirations; however the reality is that Council's resources will only be able to physically provide a portion of this, and there are other community and government stakeholders which will also be partners in the delivery. Council's Annual Plan and 4 Year Delivery Plan deal with the short and medium term services which Council will resource and provide, whilst this Long Term Financial Strategy looks at the longer term (10 year) financing options.

Council is both a Local Government Authority and a Water Authority and is therefore regulated by the Local Government Act (1993) and the Water Management Act (2000). This means that Council's general operations are regulated by the Division of Local Government which has used a rate capping system to limit Council's ability to increase revenues for Property Rates – it is this revenue stream which funds Council's general operations. While the Water and Sewer Pricing is regulated by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal. Wyong Council's current Water and Sewer Pricing Determination runs from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2013.

The past

Wyong Shire Council has increased its rating in accordance with the allowable rate increases and introduced three special rates to fund services in the business centres of Wyong (2005), Toukley (1997), and The Entrance (1997).

Over this time many things have changed both internally and externally to Council including:

- **Increases in the number of services and the community (consumer expectations of levels of service)**
 What the community wanted and was prepared to fund in 1950-1980 is very different today. Many services are delivered more efficiently, but being a service provider Council's cost structure is highly dependent on labour to provide. Employee costs \$76.5 million (source: audited Annual Financial Statements 2009/10) represent 33% of Council's operating costs.
- **Increases in Council's cost base over and above the Consumer Price Index**
 In most years the allowable rate pegging increase was less than the increase in the cost of providing services. At the same time, Council has had to maintain many more assets and older assets and there has been increased legislative responsibilities.
- **Shifting of responsibilities from other levels of government (cost shifting)**
 Over a number of years, other levels of government have added to the roles of Council in providing services without fully funding the additional cost. In 2009/10 the cost to Wyong Council's residents of cost shifting was \$22.2 million.

- **Waste management legacy issues**

Council has significant legal obligations regarding past waste activities on community owned lands. In recent years Council has commenced rehabilitation of closed landfills and has estimated it will cost \$49.6m (2011/12 Budget estimate) to complete the remediation of these sites including Gwandalan, Mardi, Toukley, Halekulani, Tumbi, Shelley Beach and Bateau Bay (almost complete). These works have been provided for up to the end of 30 June 2010 (estimate of remediation costs \$35m), but have to be funded in future years. Additionally, in 2009/10 Council was required to pay \$1.6m over three years for state tipping levies relating to past activities and is still facing possible legal penalties.

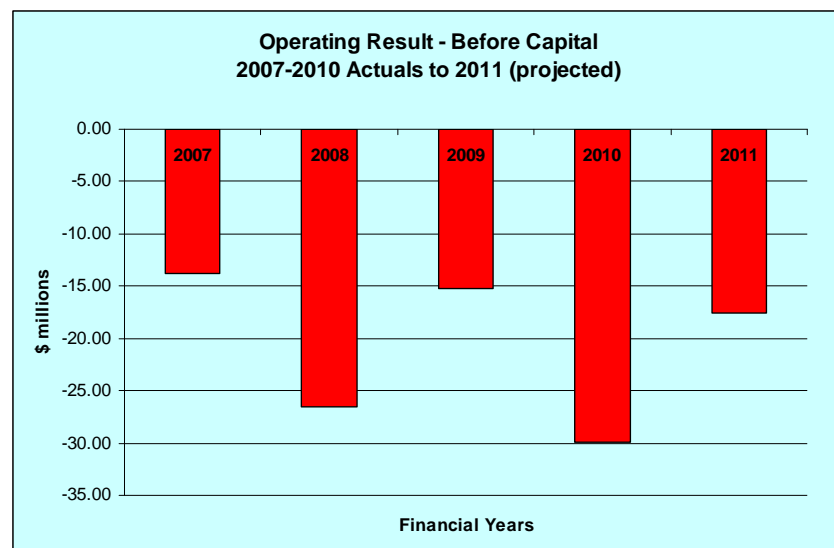
- **The drought and water supply**

The drought from 2001-2007 placed significant pressure on Council's water supply which at it's lowest reached 12% of total capacity. As a result Wyong Shire Council has had water restrictions at Level 3 since

2004. This has had a two-fold effect on Council's financial position with water usage decreasing dramatically and increased costs for alternative supplies (e.g. purchasing water from the Hunter Water Authority). Establishing water security has included building a larger pipeline link between the Hunter Water Authority and Wyong and Gosford Water Authorities and the building of the Mardi-Mangrove Pipeline.

For Council this has meant a deteriorating financial position over time with the last five years showing Council's current level of income is unable to fund daily operations.

The following table shows the last 5 Operating Short-falls, and how the Operating Revenue (excluding any capital grants) has not cover the required Operating Expenditure to maintain the existing services and levels of service. Additionally, Council has reported that they cannot fund the required maintenance and renewals of the existing assets (refer Special Schedule 7)



This means that over the last 5 years it has cost Council \$103m more than it raised in income. During this time Council has been unable to fully finance required asset maintenance, so this means we have delivered the services for the community at the expense of the Council's assets. This financial position is not sustainable in the long term as eventually assets will start to critically fail – this can be seen in Council's Annual Plan and 4 Year Delivery Plan priorities where there are timber bridges (2011/2012 \$3.4m plus 2012-2019 \$3.4m) and pedestrian bridges (2011/12 \$1.6m) that are in need of urgent repair.

Special Schedule 7	Est.Cost to bring to Satisfactory (2 Good)	Est.Cost to bring to Satisfactory (3 Average)	Required Annual Maintenance Expense	Current Annual Maintenance Expense	Annual Maintenance Over / (Under) spend
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Public Buildings	5.7	4.3	3.2	1.7	(1.5)
Public Roads	349.5	139.3	7.6	4.7	(2.9)
Water	25.1	7.9	11.9	4.6	(7.3)
Sewer	55.4	17.4	10.3	5.5	(4.8)
Drainage	17.6	15.1	2.3	1.3	(1.0)
Total	453.3	184.0	35.3	17.8	(17.5)

This can also be seen in Council's Financial Ratios which are generally unfavourable against industry benchmarks and have trended poorly over the five years.

Financial Modelling – Scenarios

For the Long Term Financial Strategy Council assumed no significant changes from overall current structure, services, and service levels. This results; however in under funding of Council's recurrent operations as well as asset maintenance and renewal.

The following scenarios identify how WSC can respond to these issues in order to generate a sustainable financial position, however financial estimates have not yet been fully costed. It is proposed to investigate these scenarios more fully in consultation with the community and determine service priorities and funding options.

Scenario 1	Change to rating structure (1/7/2013)	
	<p>Opportunity to introduce a minimum rate with ad valorem to ensure that the longer term rating structure keeps pace with the development and growth to ensure a financially sustainable level of funding.</p>	<p>Proposed Solution No change to overall rate income which is capped, however will result in a redistribution of the rating burden across the Shire. Community consultation and engagement planned for 2011/12</p>
Scenario 2	Special rate increase to fund General Fund asset maintenance and renewals gap (1/7/2013)	
<p><i>The Funding Gap – General Fund (excluding waste) estimated \$12.2m</i> The General Fund Result (excluding Waste) is budgeted to incur an operating loss in 2011/12 of (\$9.8)m and 2012/13 (\$10.4)m. In addition to this funding gap Council has identified a short-fall of \$1.5m in annual maintenance on community buildings (2009/10 Audited Annual Financial Statements SS7 Condition of Public Infrastructure) which has not yet been addressed.</p> <p>Note, the 2011/12 budget included additional roads maintenance and renewals to lift the overall standard of roads over a four year period which will establish a new maintenance curve in line with the current funding and commence work on improving overall asset condition. The condition of assets will be reassessed annually.</p>		<p>Proposed Solution 2011/12- Council is completing a comprehensive review of services and asset condition and utilisation. This will include engagement and consultation with the community to establish a prioritisation of services and comprehensive review of Revenue Policy for 2012/13. The results of this review will inform an updated Financial Strategy in 2012/2013 and enable Council to identify services which need to be increased or decreased, and to review the cost structure of services. This will include understanding the full cost of services to enable informed decision making.</p> <p>Once services have been assessed the assets and resources required for efficient and effective delivery can also be reviewed.</p> <p>2011/12 Council is reviewing the LEP and will review land zonings as appropriate 2011/12 – Council is establishing a property investment portfolio and reviewing existing property assets to maximise investment potential and future income generation.</p>

	<p>Action: Target annual reduction in Services / Service Levels, maximise user pays where appropriate and ensure prices reflect the actual operating costs of each service, review and reduce operating costs including asset rationalisation</p> <p>2012/13 Investigate funding options and engage with the community for a special rate increase to fund the current Operating short-falls in order to re-establish a balance between Operating Income and Operating Costs. For example, a 7% special rate increase would yield approximately \$4.3m. This would enable services and income to be aligned.</p>
Scenario 3	Special rate increase to fund recurrent operations (1/7/2017)
<p><i>The Future Funding Gap</i></p> <p>There are a number of new services coming on-line after 2015/16 which are currently unfunded in Council's long term financial plan. Included in this are the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Wyong Art House – estimated \$2.0m per annum • On-going improvement and maintenance of the Lakes System – currently these works have been predominately federally funded, however will require ongoing investment up to \$2.0m per annum • Addressing the Climate Change issues associated with being a coastal council, including on-going funding of the Coastal Zone Management Plan – costs are yet to be fully determined but initial reports estimate a net cost to Council over the next ten years is to be \$2.4m (including \$1.4m 2014/15 – 2021). • Council currently has no resourcing to deal with management of natural assets over and above current service provision. This service is targeted for review and likely to result in higher costs if endorsed by Council. 	<p>Proposed Solution</p> <p>2011/12 Section 94 Plan for Warnervale Town Centre is being reviewed, and will include estimates of whole of life cost including the future operation and asset renewals.</p> <p>Council's long term financial sustainability framework will ensure future decisions of Council for service provisions is balanced with the ability to pay.</p> <p>However, the challenges high-lighted in future years if Council elects to extend services in the management of the environment will require levels of funding over and above rate pegging.</p>

Asset Management Strategy

A Summary of the Asset Management Strategy

Council is responsible for a wide range of traditional public works assets such as roads, drainage, public buildings, and water and sewerage infrastructure.

It is also responsible for a wide range of other infrastructure, recreational and natural assets such as playgrounds, sporting ovals, cycle paths, wildlife corridors and streams.

General Principles of Asset Management

Assets are built and maintained to provide a public service and meet community needs according to local priorities.

Their management must take into account a number of key considerations including:

- The need for public safety
- The need to manage community and corporate risk
- The need for effective management to ensure their optimal lifecycle.

A Strategic Approach to Asset Management

A key challenge for Wyong Shire Council is to determine how best to sustainably balance investment in new asset intensive services against the need to maintain existing services at levels of cost and quality which are acceptable to the community.

Building a sustainable community into the future requires effective asset management. Council has determined that it needs to review its approach to asset management in Wyong Shire if it is to deliver the 12 Principal Activities of the Strategic Plan and the eight objectives of the Community Strategic Plan.

As part of the Annual Plan and 4 Year Plan, therefore, Council will increase its investment in local asset management. It will also focus on the timely renewal of assets rather than delivering new or upgraded assets.

For example, Council will spend \$28.6 million on asset renewal work during 2011-12 which is a significant increase on \$16.4 million in 2010-11.

It will also increase its investment in road renewal work by \$5 million a year to \$11.6 million in 2011-12.

Asset Management Strategy

Council has developed a long-term Asset Management Strategy which specifies objectives and outcomes for asset management over the next 10 years.

Asset Management Plans have also been prepared to provide more details on individual assets, such as their condition, value, maintenance costs, level of service, renewal needs, etc.

The desired outcomes of the Asset Management Strategy are as follows:

- Ensuring the right assets are built
- Ensuring assets are managed well through sound planning and integration with the Community Strategic Plan and Long Term Financial Strategy
- Ensuring a balance between Council operations, new assets and existing assets
- Ensuring future budgets, the Annual Plan and the 4 Year Delivery Plan reflect the asset requirements.

Council's approach to asset management is included in the following Asset Management Strategy and the Asset Management Policy (see Appendix 5).

Current Status of Wyong Shire's Infrastructure Asset Management

Asset Management Practice

An external audit in 2010 confirmed that Wyong's asset management practice overall is above "Core" level and is progressing towards "Advanced" level (as defined in the International Infrastructure Management Manual). Its practices are generally in the top quartile of 88 similar organisations. The audit also showed that Council has progressively improved its practices since the earlier external audits in 2007 and 2008 (when it first achieved "core" level).

Asset Management Plans

Council has developed Asset Management Plans for Roads, Drainage, Waste, Buildings, Sport, Leisure & Recreation and Open Space and Water and Sewerage Assets.

Individual Asset Management Plans cover all details of the assets including:

- physical attributes
- valuation
- condition
- operation
- maintenance cost
- level of service
- future renewal profile
- asset management systems
- risk management for each class

All Asset Management Plans have been prepared in accordance with the International Infrastructure Management Manual

Asset Condition Assessment and Financial information

Council's Annual Financial Statements include a detailed schedule, known as Special Schedule 7 for those assets that meet the traditional description of public works - roads, drainage, public buildings, and water and sewerage infrastructure.

Council is also responsible for a wide range of other infrastructure assets-recreational assets (including open space assets) and natural assets. Depending on available resources, over the next five years, it is intended to expand Special Schedule 7 to include some preliminary financial data for natural and recreational assets.

Special Schedule 7 uses the following Asset Condition codes:

1. Excellent – no work required, normal maintenance
2. Good – only minor maintenance work required
3. Average – maintenance work required
4. Poor – renewal required
5. Very Poor – urgent renewal and/or upgrading required

The following Table 2 summarises the average condition of Council's assets, as reported in Special Schedule 7 for 2010

Table 2 – Average Asset Condition

Asset Class	Asset Category	Asset Condition
Roads <i>1100 km road 930 km Kerbing 220 km footpath 24 timber bridges</i>	Sealed Road Surface	Average (3.2)
	Sealed Road Structure	Average (3.2)
	Unsealed Road	Average (3.2)
	Kerb and Gutter	Good (2.8)
	Bridge	Average (3.9)
	Footpath	Good (2.5)
Drainage <i>334 km (pipe length)</i>	Pipes – all sizes	Average (3.0)
	Culverts and Channels	Average (3.0)
	Gross Pollution Traps/ Wetlands	Average (3.0)
	Pits	Average (3.0)
	Headwalls	Average (3.0)
Water <i>1 water treatment plant 20 reservoirs, 17 water pumping stations 1100 km water main</i>	Treatment Plants	Good (2.0)
	Reservoirs	Good (2.0)
	Mains	Good (2.5)
	Pumping Station	Good (2.7)
Sewerage <i>6 sewage treatment plants, 143 pumping stations, 1200 km sewer mains</i>	Pump Station	Average (3.0)
	Mains	Good (2.2)
	Treatment Works	Average (2.8)

Asset Class	Asset Category	Asset Condition
Buildings <i>565 buildings (of which 307 are community buildings)</i>	Administration/Depot	Good (2.1)
	Aged Care	Good (2.3)
	Arts and Culture	Good (2.0)
	Child Care	Good (2.1)
	Community Centre and Halls	Average (2.8)
	Heritage Buildings	Good (2.5)
	Holiday Parks	Average (2.7)
	Neighbourhood and Youth	Average (2.6)
	Public Amenity	Good (2.5)
	Recreation Centres	Good (2.5)
	Residential	Average (3.1)
	Sports and Recreation	Good (2.5)
	Surf Clubs	Average (2.8)
	Swimming Pools	Average (2.7)
	Tourist Offices	Good (2.0)

The 2010 Special Schedule 7 highlighted that \$184M of capital works is needed to bring Council's assets to a condition of no less than 3 ("average"). There is also a \$17M shortfall in the desirable level of annual maintenance expenditure to keep assets at that condition.

This funding gap is discussed further within the report under *Addressing the Maintenance and Renewal Funding Gap*.

Council may decide that the condition target mentioned above is not appropriate for all asset classes. There may be some cases where a risk and service analysis shows that a lower condition can be tolerated for some assets and a higher condition is appropriate for others.

The following graphs and diagrams give further information on the condition of some of Council's key infrastructure assets:

(a) Roads – Sealed Road Pavement Condition Index (PCI) – compared with other councils. (*Council areas similar to Wyong*)

The condition of sealed road surfaces can be measured in terms of a Road Pavement Condition Index (PCI) displayed below.

Pavement Condition Index (PCI)

- A condition index between 9 and 10 is "excellent"
- A condition index between 8 and 9 is "very good"
- A condition index between 6 and 8 is "good"
- A condition index between 4 and 6 is "fair"
- A condition index between 2 and 4 is "poor"
- A condition index between 0 and 2 is "very poor"
- A condition index of less than 0 is "failed"