



WALGETT SHIRE COUNCIL
DELIVERY PROGRAM : 2012 – 2016
OPERATIONAL PLAN : 2012 – 2013

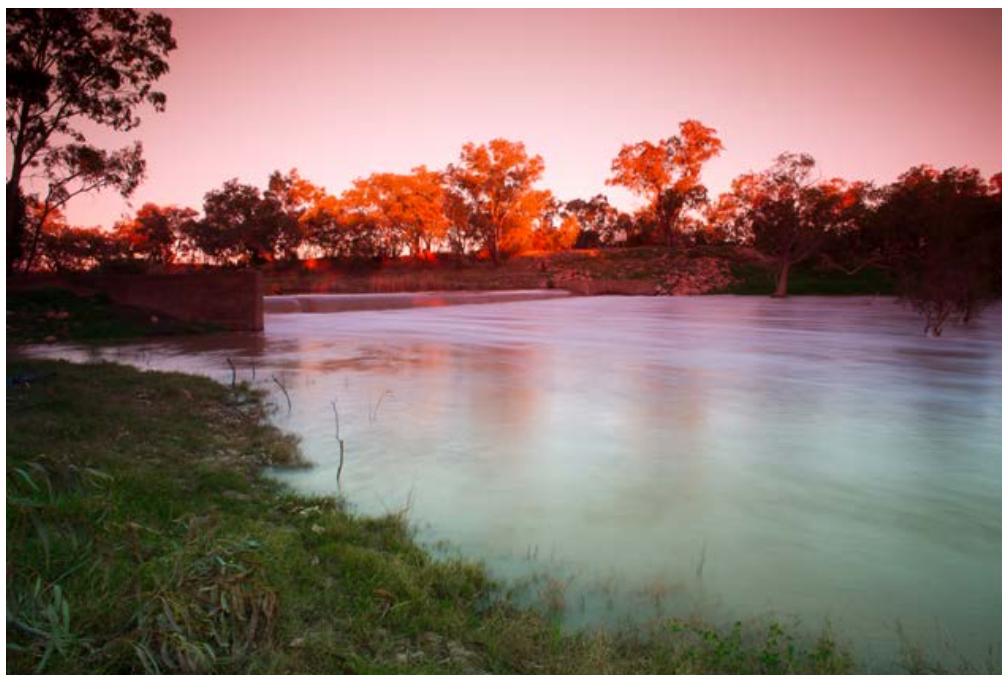


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Foreword – Mayor G.A. (Bill) Murray

It is my pleasing duty to present the 2012 – 2016 Walgett Shire Delivery Program and 2012-2013 Operational plan. This document details the means by which the Council will achieve the strategic priorities identified in the Community Strategic Plan (CSP). The CSP was developed over the last four years involving extensive engagement with all sections of our local community. The Plan focuses on the areas where the community has identified its greatest concerns – the need for road infrastructure, community safety, economic development, youth training and employment, community harmony and respect for our living environment. A number of other plans underpin this Plan. These include a Resourcing Strategy which involves the preparation of a Long Term (10 Year) Financial Plan, an Asset Management Plan and Workforce Plan as well as this Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Community Strategic Plan

The Walgett Community Strategic Plan (CSP) records the identified needs and aspirations of the community as communicated to the Council through the community consultation process. The plan identifies strategic objectives and strategies for achieving these under each of the following themes:

Economic Development

Community

Sustainable Living

Infrastructure

Governance and Civil Leadership

As this is our first ten year Strategic Plan, Council intends that it becomes a rolling forward plan that can be regularly reviewed and updated.

Delivery Program and Operational Plan

The Annual Operational Plan and Four Year Delivery Programme details the actions that the Council will undertake to implement the strategies identified in the CSP, and illustrates the Council's role in realising the Community's long term aspirations. This role involves both direct works and associated budgets by Council in addition to facilitating and advocating other tiers of Government for the delivery of services and facilities that are their responsibility.

Clr G A (Bill) Murray

Strategic Objectives and Action Plans

1. Community Objectives

What is the community vision?

The aim for Walgett Shire over the next decade is that after energetically tackling its challenges and maximising its opportunities, Walgett Shire is home to resilient, resourceful, friendly people with a strong education base. They live within diverse cultures and respect each other and their unique outback environment. The community is socially satisfied, with minimal conflict and it provides opportunities for people of all backgrounds. The community is also welcoming to visitors and those passing through.

What is the current state of the community?

Walgett Shire's population in 2006 was just below 7,000 people, and faces many of the challenges common to small regional and remote communities.

These include:

- A falling population
- An ageing population with a significant increase in persons aged 45+ years
- A significant gender imbalance, with males outnumbering females
- Providing appropriate services that respond to the needs of a diverse community including a significant Aboriginal population.
- Towns within the Shire ranked very high in socio-economic disadvantage which highlights the emphasis given by the community to economic initiatives in the CSP.

What are the opportunities for creating a strong community?

Some of the qualities that make Walgett Shire unique and special are:

- It's a friendly place where you know people when you walk down the street
- There's space – you don't need to live on top of each other
- The co-existence of Aboriginal culture and European settlement that gives Walgett shire a strong identity and optimism for the future.
- It's a place where hard work is valued, where people can cooperate to achieve a goal (such as the swimming pool in Lightning Ridge) and where people with good ideas can flourish
- It draws people from around the world. Lightning Ridge, known as the Home of the Black Opal, is home to people from approximately 50 nationalities who work and socialise harmoniously.

What are the challenges to building a strong community?

The ABS (2006 census data) has identified the Walgett Shire as the third most disadvantaged Shire in NSW on measures such as low income, low education, high unemployment and unskilled

occupations. The trends show that there are challenges for the Shire in the future, with crime and socio-economic disadvantage standing out as key issues.

Councillors also identified:

- Drugs and alcohol misuse as issues of community concern
- Unemployment and lack of entertainment, recreation and sporting activities for young people as key contributors to social issues
- A lack of service organisations and resultant opportunities for people to participate in community activities and sports
- Some young people are not completing school, limiting their learning and career opportunities.
- However, what the statistics don't show is that the Walgett community works well together, is focussed on improving areas of disadvantage and has an extremely optimistic outlook for the future.

What has Council done already to build a strong community?

- ✓ Adopted the Walgett Shire Growth Management Study and Strategy
- ✓ Adopted an Aboriginal community development and reconciliation plan
- ✓ Ran a 'Butt out Bullying' program across the shire with schools, which continues.
- ✓ Ran a Youth Week program which was a finalist in the Local Government Awards
- ✓ Began a mentoring relationship with Gosford City Council
- ✓ Upgraded Youth Centres and planned more youth based programs
- ✓ Formed a 'Youth Council' to give young people a formal voice
- ✓ Supported the Walgett Festival and Lightning Ridge Easter Festival
- ✓ Continued to develop and implement a "School to Work" program in association with schools
- ✓ Supported and participated in a range of Federal and State Government programs aimed at improving the welfare of the Aboriginal community.

What are the future strategies for building a strong community?

In the immediate future (2012 - 2013) the Council will:

Adopt a strong asset management approach to the provision and maintenance of essential infrastructure such as water supply and the local road network

Develop an effective community consultation framework that maximises participation and community initiative.

Identify partnership opportunities at a local level that will provide enhanced education and employment outcomes

- Implement the Walgett Shire Growth Management Study and Strategy
- Commence an Aboriginal Heritage Study and review the Aboriginal Reconciliation Plan
- Complete an annual companion animal welfare project with the RSPCA
- Run ongoing programs including Harmony Day, Youth Week, Children's Week, PCYC programs and vacation care programs
- Engage with local sporting organisations and peak groups to expand opportunities for participation in sport
- Extend the opening hours of youth centres and libraries

- Develop a Community Safety Plan
- Introduce new youth programs that focus on healthy lifestyles and education
- Effectively engage with relevant agencies to achieve improved community outcomes in the areas of domestic violence, alcohol abuse and gambling.
- Ensure that infrastructure planning includes consideration of the access needs of people with a disability

Over the next ten years the Council will focus on implementing the strategies identified in the Community Strategic Plan

Programs and actions to support these strategies include:

- Development of a Tourism Marketing Plan and upgrading of shire signage
- Advocate for significant projects such as the Australian Opal Centre at Lightning Ridge
- Develop main street improvement programs for Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri
- Continue to advocate for improved mobile phone and internet services
- Working with education decision-makers and funders to find ways for school children to retain learning and to build on their knowledge and education base including participation in the 'School to Work Program'.
- Creating employment and traineeships for local people, including developing an Aboriginal Employment Strategy
- Develop a Community Safety Plan that responds to the perception of 'fear of crime' in the community
- Promote participation in cultural and sporting activities as a means of building community capacity and wellbeing
- Develop an Aging Strategy
- Support Harmony Day and initiatives from the CALD community
- Ensuring that Aboriginal culture and identity are respected and acknowledged through consultation with Aboriginal community members on issues relating to land and cultural and natural heritage
- Develop and implement a Solid Waste Management Plan
- Ensure that all urban and rural infrastructure including water supply is effectively managed through an asset management framework
- Research and review opportunities for developing new and existing infrastructure including raising the height of the Walgett weir
- Developing regional and local government initiatives that effectively respond to the issues and aspirations of the Walgett Shire community

Who else will be involved in building a strong community?

State and Federal Government Departments, Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service, MacKillop Rural Services, Community Transport, Walgett/Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge Reference Groups, Community Working Party, Walgett Shire schools, Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Aboriginal Elder Groups, the Murdi Paaki Regional Employment Corporation, Transcultural Community Council, Yawarra Meamai group Reconnect, Mission Australia, Walgett Men's Group,

Aboriginal Land Councils, Women’s Legal Services, Namoi House Inc, PCYC, TAFE, Skillshare and numerous other community organisations across the Shire.

How will we measure success in building a strong community?

The Walgett Shire Growth Management Study and Strategy (2008) and the Walgett Shire Social Plan contain a detailed breakdown of strategies, actions, timelines and areas of responsibility for achieving the Shire’s community goals. The implementation plans for these two programs are a blueprint for cross checking progress in building a strong community. The assessment of outcomes from implementing the CSP strategies through the Delivery Program and Operational Plan will be the primary method of assessment over the 10 year life of the plan.

Our Area and Demographics

Walgett Shire Local Government Area is located in the far north west of New South Wales and covers an area of 22,007 square kilometers. Walgett Shire borders with Queensland to the north, Moree Plains and Narrabri Councils to the east, Coonamble to the south and Brewarrina to the west.

The Shire is located on Gamilaroi country in the southern and eastern sector and to the north is on Yuwaalaraay country. Acknowledgement of the traditional occupiers of the land is an important part of the Shire’s history and social fabric.

The Shire is geographically on the productive black-soil plains of New South Wales, part of which is in the Central Division and part in the Western Division. The North and North West of the Shire is opal bearing country, which is home to NSW state gemstone, the Black Opal.

Walgett Shire comprises thirteen towns, villages and hamlets spread throughout the Shire and the preserved opal fields of Grawin, Glengarry and Sheeppard. Each community has its own special identity and individual challenges and aspirations.

Population Changes (ABS - Place of Usual Residence)

| 1996 | 2001 | 2006 |
|-------|----------------|----------------|
| 8,144 | 7,536 (- 7.5%) | 6,944 (- 7.9%) |

The population breakdown for Shire wide population from the 2006 Census was:

| | | |
|---------|-------|-------|
| Males | 3,874 | 55.8% |
| Females | 3,070 | 44.2% |

Of those people 1,957 or 28.2% identified as Indigenous.

The 2011 Census will provide updated statistics for Walgett Shire which will be incorporated into the Community Strategic Plan when it is reviewed following the Council election in September 2012.

Federal and State Government Context

Council is actively engaged with Federal and State Governments in a number of areas and as such is aligned with its policy direction.

As an example, Council's Youth Services provide extensive Federal and State Governments funded programmes and the Council is the provider of maintenance and construction services for state highways and regional roads within the shire.

The draft Community Strategic Plan further highlights where the focus needs to be into the future: regional economic development, roads infrastructure, transport, education and community services.

Federal Government

Council currently works in partnership with the Federal Government in the delivery of the third round of Regional Local Community Infrastructure Projects (RLCIP).

Roads to Recovery is another example of partnership with the Federal Government. Planned maintenance of the Walgett Aerodrome under the Regional Aviation Access Program (RAAP) and the newly introduced Healthy Communities project are further examples.

Council is committed to continue to work in partnership with the Federal Government in line with their policy direction and Council's Community Strategic Plan.

Policy Direction: Regional Development

Council is the lead agency in advocating for the establishment of the Australian Opal Centre at Lightning Ridge.

Policy Direction: Asset Management and Long Term Roads Planning.

Council is developing Asset Management Plans for all built and infrastructure assets. These plans will underpin decision making going forward and are a key requirement for continuing funding under State and Federal infrastructure programs.

Policy Direction: Remote Service Delivery – Closing the Gap Programme

Council has been working closely with local community groups and government agencies to deliver positive outcomes for the benefit of the whole community. Engagement with these groups and agencies will be focussed on achieving more effective outcomes that can occur through better alignment of and cooperation in service delivery.

Policy Direction: Natural Disaster Programmes.

Sound disaster planning remains a high priority for Council, particularly for flood events. Council is committed to working with higher tiers of government to maximise the return to government through implementing “Betterment” principles when ever feasible as part of the recovery process, particularly as it relates to the road network.

State Government Investing in a Better Future – NSW State Plan

Council currently works in partnership with the State Government and receives funding for the functions of weed control, street lighting, and contributions towards infrastructure through the Roads Block Grant.

Council is also an active member of:

- Outback Arts
- OROC
- NSW Shires’ Association

Examples of other partnerships include:

- North West Slopes and Plains Cooperative Library Service
- State Wide Mutual Insurance Group
- North West Weight Loads Group
- NSW Rural Fire Service

Councils Strategic Outcomes are in line with the State Plan priorities which are

Economic Growth – supporting jobs and attracting business development

- **Transport** – safe, accessible and reliable. Council will lobby the State Government to provide additional funding for the regular maintenance of key Transport Routes
- **Health** –a system which provides high level care. Council will continue to work with State agencies to enhance public health and well being outcomes for residents across the Shire
- **Green State** – our energy is clean, our natural environment is protected and a reasonable approach will be taken to climate change. Strategies that address sustainable living issues were developed as part of the Community Strategic Plan process.
- **High quality of life** – Council will continue its commitment to provide an inclusive community environment that recognises diversity and maximises opportunities for participation

- **Disadvantaged Communities** – Council will continue its focus on providing services and community development to disadvantaged sectors of the community and the development of longer term strategies that more broadly improve community wellbeing
- **Police and justice system** – keeping people safe. Council will continue to work with key stakeholders in developing and implementing a Community Safety Plan. Underpinning this is respect for all sections of the community and ongoing and meaningful consultation and engagement

Economic Development – Strategic Action Plan

OBJECTIVE: A strong and diverse economic base that supports employment, industry and provides lifestyle opportunities for residents

| STRATEGY | ACTION | PERFORMANCE | RESPONSIBILITY | BUDGET | PROGRESS | 12/13 | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 |
|--|--|---|-----------------|----------|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Identify and evaluate projects and partnerships that build on the shire's attributes and natural resources | Develop and implement a tourism marketing plan | Tourism and marketing plan developed and implemented | General Manager | \$70,000 | | X | X | X | |
| | Upgrade Shire Signage | Signage works program completed | | \$50,000 | | X | | | |
| | Advocate for the development of the Australian Opal Centre | Progress in ensuring commitment by other levels of Government | | | | X | X | | |
| Develop main street beautification projects for Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri | Develop concept plans through a community consultation process | Community consultation undertaken and concept plan developed | General Manager | \$25,000 | | X | X | | |
| Advocate for partnerships between Council, businesses, landholders and training organisations to provide localised training and employment opportunities | Facilitate a forum with stakeholders to explore and develop partnership opportunities. | Partnership opportunities for local employment and training identified. | General Manager | \$10,000 | | X | X | X | |

Community – Strategic Action Plan

OBJECTIVE: Develop a connected, informed and resilient community that recognises and values diversity

| STRATEGY | ACTION | PERFORMANCE | RESPONSIBILITY | BUDGET | PROGRESS | 12/13 | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 |
|---|--|---|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Support, resource and initiate local activities and projects that increase community capacity and participation | Develop a community consultation framework | C C framework developed including web based feedback facility | Director Corporate Services | \$10,000 | | X | X | X | X |
| | Develop projects in conjunction with community organisations | Projects developed and supported | Manager Community Development | \$15,000 | | X | X | X | X |
| Develop plans and programs that effectively respond to the needs of Young peoples and the Aged. | Update the Youth Strategy | Methodology and framework for plan update developed | Manager Community Development | \$10,000 | | X | | | |
| | Maximize grant opportunities for the development of youth programs | Grants maintained or increased on 11/12 level | | \$42,731 | | X | X | | |
| | Operate youth centre's and vacation care programs | Program of activities developed and implemented | | \$280,380 | | X | X | X | X |
| | Resource and support the activities of the Walgett Youth Council | Youth Council appropriately resourced and supported | | \$2,000 | | X | X | X | X |
| | Develop an Aging Strategy | Aging Strategy developed | | \$20,000 | | | X | | |
| | | | | | | | | X | X |

| STRATEGY | ACTION | PERFORMANCE | RESPONSIBILITY | BUDGET | PROGRESS | 12/13 | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 |
|--|--|---|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Work in collaboration with agencies and community groups to effectively respond to the needs and aspirations of the Aboriginal community | Update the Aboriginal Reconciliation Plan | Aboriginal Reconciliation Plan updated | Manager Community Development | \$10,000 | | X | | X | |
| | Continue to fund the Aboriginal Liaison Officer position | Position funded | | \$60,500 | | X | X | X | X |
| Develop plans and programs that reduce the perception of fear of crime | Develop a Community Safety plan | Community Safety Plan developed | Manager Community Development | \$20,000 | | X | | | |
| | Advocate for the removal of window bars in CBD | Reduction in number of premises with barred windows | | | | X | | | |
| Support community initiatives that expand access to cultural, sporting and educational opportunities | Undertake a cultural event | Increase in cultural activities | Manager Community Development | \$43,430 | | X | X | X | X |
| | Engage with local sporting associations and peak sporting bodies | Increased participation in junior and senior sport | | | | X | X | X | X |
| | Engage with local Educational and Training Groups | Innovative educational options identified | | | | X | X | X | X |
| Incorporate disability access considerations into infrastructure planning | Consultation process for disability issues developed | Response to disability access issues identified in infrastructure plans | Director Corporate Services | | | X | X | X | X |

| STRATEGY | ACTION | PERFORMANCE | RESPONSIBILITY | BUDGET | PROGRESS | 12/13 | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 |
|---|---|--|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Undertake planning and project development that responds to the needs and aspirations of the CALD community | Develop a multicultural plan | Plan developed | Manager Community Development | \$20,000 | | | X | | |
| Support Harmony day and initiatives from the CALD community | Provide funding and participate in Harmony day activities | Funding provided and Harmony day program developed | | \$2,000 | | X | X | X | X |

Sustainable Living – Strategic Action Plan

OBJECTIVE: To provide waste management, potable and raw water systems, that meets community expectations, and health and environmental standards. To ensure that adequate land is available to meet commercial, residential and recreational needs. The provision of public infrastructure that supports water security, social, economic and recreational opportunities

| STRATEGY | ACTION | PERFORMANCE | RESPONSIBILITY | BUDGET | PROGRESS | 12/13 | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 |
|--|--|---|--|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Undertake planning that addresses the shire's waste management needs | Develop and implement a solid waste management plan. | Solid waste management plan developed and implemented | Director – Urban Infrastructure Services | \$50,000 | | X | X | X | X |
| Develop and enhance water supply infrastructure through an asset management framework | Renew water supply infrastructure in accordance with capital works program | Capital works program completed | Director – Urban Infrastructure Services | \$361,000 | | X | X | X | X |
| Apply a land use strategy to guide sustainable development and implement a local environment plan which reflect the intent of the strategy | Finalise and implement new shire LEP | LEP finalised and implemented | Director- Planning and Regulatory Services | \$40,000 | | X | | | |
| | Undertake Lightning Ridge Urban Expansion design | Project completed | | \$20,000 | | X | | | |
| Research and review opportunities for developing new and existing infrastructure | Explore options for raising the height of the Walgett weir | Feasibility planning commenced | General Manager | | | X | X | X | X |

Infrastructure –Strategic Action Plan

OBJECTIVE: Provide and maintain an effective local road network that meets community expectations and needs. A regional and state road network that is appropriately supported and resourced by other levels of government. The provision of effective and reliable communications services and infrastructure that meets the community and economic needs of local residents. Maintenance and improvement of Council property assets at an optimal level.

| STRATEGY | ACTION | PERFORMANCE | RESPONSIBILITY | BUDGET | PROGRESS | 12/13 | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 |
|---|--|---|--|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Review and implement opportunities to improve roads and bridges from the asset management plan. | Develop a local roads and bridges works program | 80% of works program completed | Director Engineering Services | \$1,830,135 | | X | X | X | X |
| Maintain an effective operational relationship with the RTA | Develop a works program for state and regional roads. | 100% of works program completed | Director – Engineering Services | N/A | | X | X | X | X |
| Research and review options for developing new and existing infrastructure | Identify and prioritise infrastructure issues through research and a community consultation process. | Research and community consultation completed | General Manager | | | X | X | X | X |
| Advocate for improved mobile phone and internet services. | Lobby service providers | Service providers contacted | Director – Corporate Services | | | X | X | X | X |
| Develop and implement a property asset management plan. | Property works programme developed | 80% of works program completed | Director – Urban Infrastructure Services | \$40,000 | | X | X | X | X |

Governance and Civil Leadership – Strategic Action Plan

OBJECTIVE: Implement Governance and Financial practices that support the effective administration of the Council. Engage the community and regional partners through effective communication and consultation processes that can result in improved social, economic and cultural outcomes for the community.

| STRATEGY | ACTION | PERFORMANCE | RESPONSIBILITY | BUDGET | PROGRESS | 12/13 | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 |
|---|--|--|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Implement processes that ensure that legislative and financial standards are auctioned in a timely manner | Timely dissemination of information from Division of Local Government and Auditors | All legislative requirements met and compliance with financial standard | Director Corporate Services | | | X | X | X | X |
| Develop processes that promote Council as an employer of choice | Implement effective recruitment and training processes | Increased response to job opportunities with Council | Manager Human Resources | \$372,000 | | X | X | X | X |
| Develop regional Local Government initiatives and partnerships | Participate in and make visible contributions to regional forums such as OROC, C Division, and Western Division LGSA | Increase in positive outcomes and opportunities from participation at a regional level | General Manager | \$36,000 | | X | X | X | X |
| Engage with the community through effective communication and consultation processes | Implement communication and consultation processes that maximize community engagement | Increase in community participation in Council decision making | Director – Corporate Services | | | X | X | X | X |