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# Council Statements and Values

## Our Vision

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

## Our Mission

To ensure that the Council's long term role is viable and sustainable by meeting the needs of our residents in a responsible caring way, attract sustainable development while maintaining the traditional rural values, character and culture of our people.

## Council Core Values

### 1. For Our Community and Visitors

We will provide a safe, clean and healthy environment in which all people have the opportunity to participate in and share in the Council's services and facilities.

### 2 For Our Community Committees

We will seek their opinion in relation to the services in which they assist us, offer relevant and timely support, and recognise their valuable contribution.

### 3 For Our Staff

We will create an atmosphere of team support, which encourages frank and honest communication, and the use of common sense and innovation in a safe and friendly working environment with the aim of efficiency.

### 4 For Our Councillors

We will treat all Councillors equally and ensure that they are provided with accurate and timely advice and expect that they will treat each other and the staff with due respect.

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

## Welcome

Welcome to Gwydir Shire Council's Annual Report for 2020/2021. It is important to both Council and the community that we measure and report on our progress.

The plans are all interconnected. Progress toward the Operational Plan contributes to the implementation of the Delivery Program, which contributes to achieving our community's goals and objectives as outlined in the Community Strategic Plan. Measures are designed to inform each other and tell a story about Council's progress towards achieving the Community Strategic Plan, both day to day and over longer periods.

The diagram below identifies the types of reports we are required to provide and what reporting periods will be covered.



This Annual Report has been produced for the benefit of our community and stakeholders. It is designed to keep them informed about our activities during the 2020/2021 Financial Year. It is reporting on our performance against the 2020/2021 Operational Plan. The Operational Plan links directly to the Community Strategic Plan, Council's Delivery Program and Resourcing Strategy.

All the plans will be able to be viewed on the Council's website [www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au)

## Community Consultation resulted in four key themes;



All NSW Councils provide different services. Some of these services are the traditional services such as infrastructure renewal and waste management or 'roads, rates and rubbish'. Others are not so traditional like some of the services we are required to provide including Residential Aged Care, Medical Centres, Children's and Youth Services.

Gwydir Shire Council is committed to meeting its commitments under the *Local Government Act 1993* – Sections 8A, 8B and 8C and to be transparent in reporting to our community and stakeholders. This Annual Report 2020-2021 is the primary means of sharing our performance in the last financial year.

If you would like to find out more about Gwydir Shire Council or contribute, through feedback, to the running of the Council you can do the following;

### Visit Council's Website

24/7 access to council is provided through our website [www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au). On our website you will find information on our operations by viewing the IP & R Documentation, Agendas and Minutes along with key documents. Policies and guidelines are also available on the website. [www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au)

### Facebook

We are on Facebook. Look for us on Facebook Gwydir Shire Council (Government Organisation). Enquiries, suggestions and comments can be posted here for consideration by the Administrator. Please 'like' us to make sure you get regular updates. [www.facebook.com/GwydirShireCouncil](http://www.facebook.com/GwydirShireCouncil)

### Council & Committee Meetings

Council Meetings are held on the last Thursday of every month commencing at 9am. Committee Meetings (involving the whole Council) are held on the second Thursday of every month commencing at 9am. Although this is not the forum to contribute, members of the public are encouraged to come along and sit in the gallery to view the business of the council. Information on the location and time of these meetings are published in the local media and on the website.

### Community Public Meetings

Public Meetings in outlying centres are held once a year or when there are topical issues concerning certain areas. Residents are involved to attend these meetings and have their say on the future planning and current operation of the Council. Information on the location and time of these meetings are published in the local media and on the website.



## Mayor's Introduction

This report concludes a 5 1/4 year for the elected councillors.

COVID-19 prevented the scheduled Local Government elections to be held in September 2020.

The election will now be held on December 4th, 2021. No other level of government in Australia has exceeded the legislated term.

The term of Local Government just completed will be recorded in history as one with an outstanding number of significant events.

The term began in September 2016. Gwydir Shire is predominately an agricultural shire and towards the end of 2016 it was noticeably dry. A four year drought followed which proved to be the driest period in recorded history. This impacted heavily on our community and in response Gwydir Shire Council commenced an employment scheme for those out of work due to the drought. Water cartage of potable water was also implemented to households free of charge.

Our sister council Willoughby donated a slide on poly tank to assist this programme and we appreciate this help from our city cousins.

The State and Federal governments responded by supplying drought stimulus funding in the form of increased road funding and civic infrastructure grants.

The next major event was a big one. COVID-19 arrived in Australia.

Travel was restricted, and all of NSW was locked down for four weeks at one stage.

The Federal and State governments provided aid once again as a stimulus to maintain the economy. Gwydir has received large sums of grant funding for road works and civic infrastructure once again.

As you drive the shire you see a distinct face lift in the towns and villages and the road network is improving with some roads to go from gravel to bitumen.

Other events worth noting are the mice plague and the March 2021 floods. Council has received funding to repair the flood damage.

During the period we have built a state of the art truck wash facility, installed solar panels on many Council owned buildings and half completed the Warialda Heavy Vehicle Bypass.

My congratulations go to all staff of Gwydir Shire Council. It has been a testing time with working from home for some, the wearing of face masks and added to that the Bingara indoor staff have had to abandon their offices and relocate to other facilities due to a build up of mould in the main Council building.

Thank you also to the elected members who have served for an extended term. Councillors and staff have worked well together.

The morale in the organisation is high.

As a team we have achieved an enormous amount, most of which is recorded in the following report.

In conclusion it has been a wonderful time to be in Local Government. We have achieved great things for the community we serve.

Thank you to all concerned.

*Cr. John Coulton*  
Mayor



## General Manager's Report

What a momentous term of Council over the last four plus years for those Councillors elected in 2016.

This Council has had to deal with Droughts, Floods, Bushfires and COVID-19.

On the plus side there has been unprecedented, once in a generation, access to both State and Federal Grants to meet the challenges that these natural disasters presented to the Shire's communities.

This term has reminded me of the often quoted Chinese proverb about living in interesting times, which has been both a blessing and a curse at different times.

Overall, I believe the Council met all these challenges head on and achieved great things in spite of the many obstacles thrown its way.

The 2016/2021 Councillors can be rightfully proud of their collective achievements during their term in office.

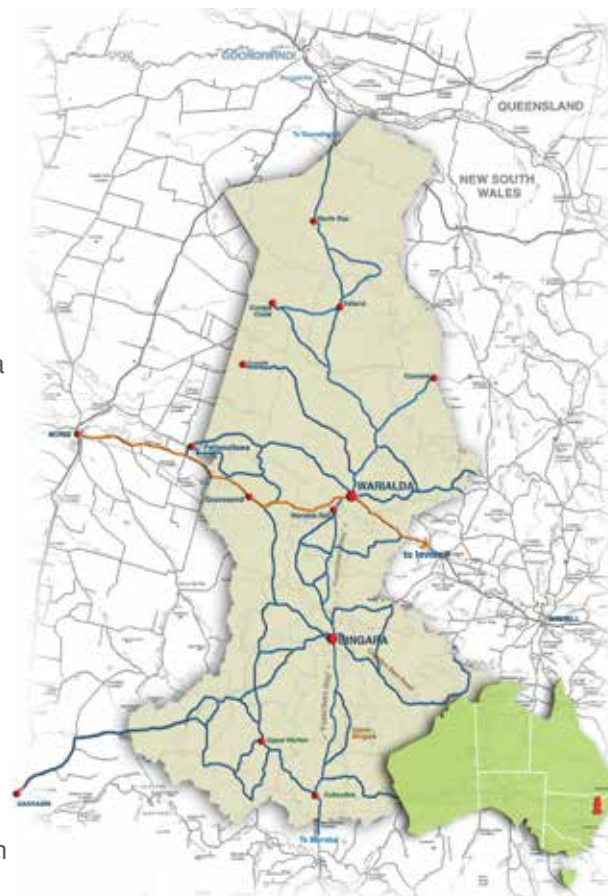
*M Eastcott  
General Manager*

## Our Council Area

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

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

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



The Gwydir Shire lies about 300kms from the Tasman Sea and the north coast of NSW.

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

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

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

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

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





sorghum and barley. Other crops include dryland cotton, other grains (oats, maize, triticale), hay and pasture seeds, pulses (chickpeas, field beans, mung beans, faba beans, lentils) and oilseeds (canola, soybeans and sunflowers).

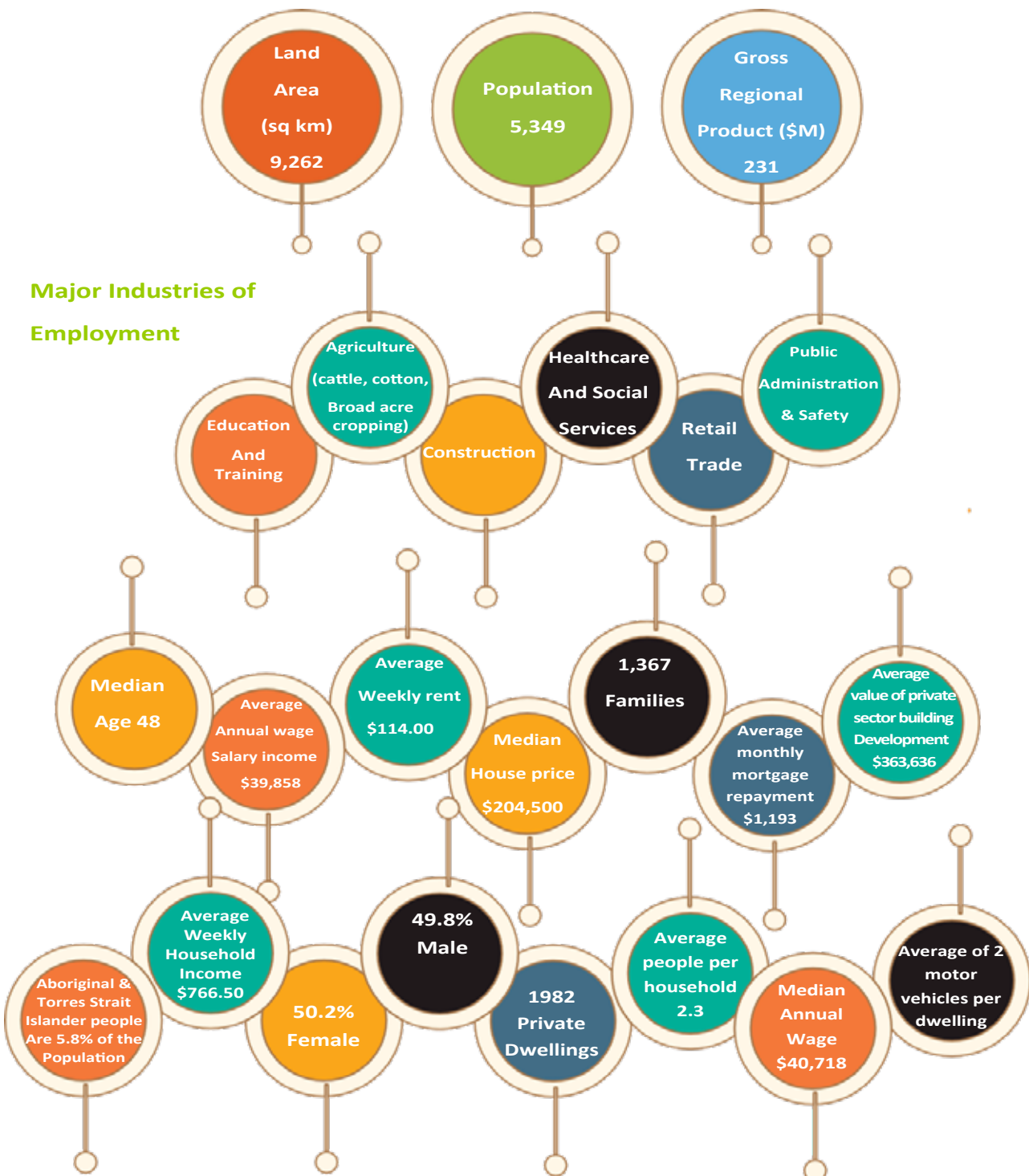
In June 2015, Gwydir Shire had an estimated population of 5,068. The Shire has two small towns, Bingara and Wialda, located approximately 40km apart. Bingara services the southern part of the Shire. Located on the Gwydir River at the intersection of the Fossickers Way and Nature's Way (State Touring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

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

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

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

# Gwydir Shire Council At A Glance

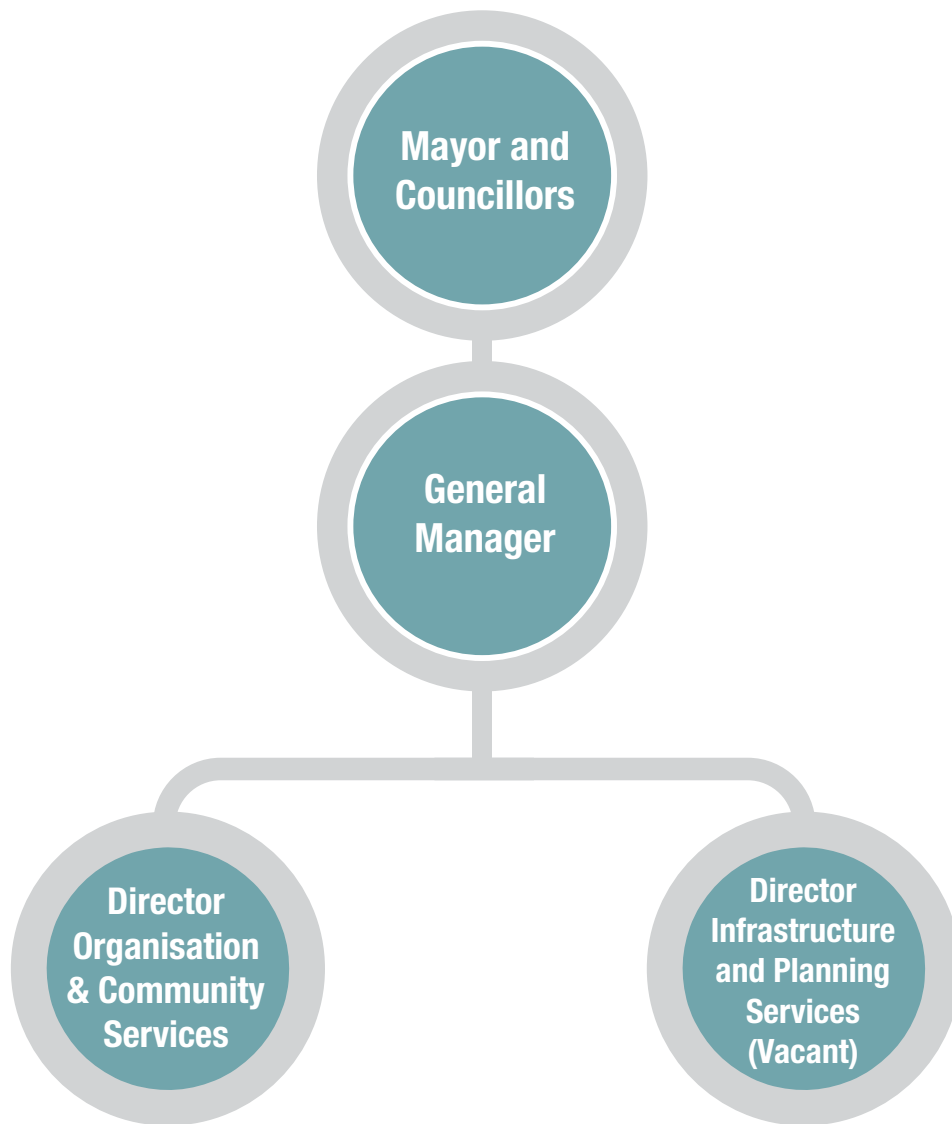


References: Australian Bureau of Statistics [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au), Regional Development Australia - Gwydir Shire Local Government Area

# Gwydir Shire Council Organisation Structure

Below is the organisation structure in place during this reporting period. This structure was reviewed and changed in the first quarter of the 2020/2021 financial year.

## Our Structure



## Our Elected Council

Gwydir Shire Council elections were held on Saturday 10 September 2016. Outgoing Councillors who did not seek re-election were Crs Peter Pankhurst, Kerry McDonald, and Angela Doering.

Councillors John Coulton, Catherine Egan, Stuart Dick, James Moore, Marilyn Dixon, and Geoff Smith were all re-elected. Welcomed to Council were new Councillors Tiffany Galvin, David Coulton and Frances Young.

During the five\* years of their term John Coulton has been re-elected Mayor and Catherine Egan has been re-elected Deputy Mayor.

*\*5 year term due to postponment of elections during COVID-19 pandemic*



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## How the Annual Report is structured

This Annual Report is divided into three sections:

### Section 1 – Gwydir Shire Council Achievements

This section provides an outline of Gwydir Shire Council's progress against the actions set out in the Delivery Program 2017-2021 and Operational Plan 2020/2021.

### Section 2 – Statutory Reporting Requirements

This section includes the Statutory reporting requirements prescribed by the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.

### Section 3 – Financial Statements

This section includes Gwydir Shire Council's General Purpose Financial Statements for the Financial Year Ending 30 June 2021, including an Income Statement, Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Changes in Equity and Statement of Cash Flows.

## **Record of our Achievements Over 2020-2021**





## A healthy and cohesive community

The first key theme identified by our Community through the consultative process was a social objective that we titled 'A healthy and cohesive community'.

Council utilises a software program called Interplan to track progress against actions. Progress reports on the actions during the period of the Operational Plan are reported to Council quarterly.

This section of the report outlines the progress we have made during this reporting period in implementing the adopted Delivery Program 2017/2021. This section contains a summary list of the actions. Additional information on the achievements for Council Business Units is included following this summary information.

The Delivery Program identified a total of 122 actions to be completed over the period 2017/2021.

Other Actions have been introduced with the grant funding received by Council via Stronger Country Communities and Drought Communities Program. See grant-funding achievements for further details

Some of the achievements have included.

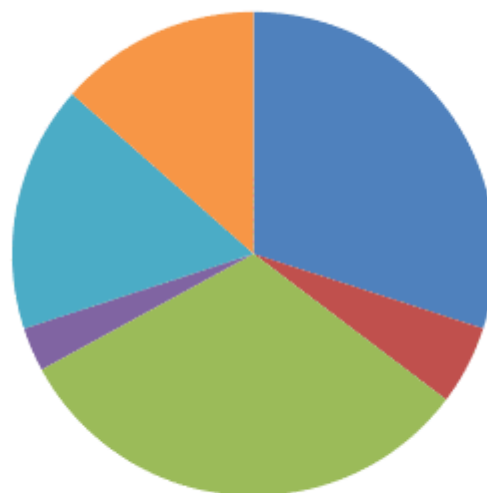
Gwydir Oval new amenities & dressing sheds

Warialda CBD improvements Project - Shade structures and tables for Captain Cook Park & Nicholson Oval.

Gravesend Sportsground - New amenities and tennis court facility.

Development & implementation of a positive ageing strategy.

## A healthy and cohesive environment



■ Completed ■ Deferred ■ In Progress ■ Not approved ■ Not Started ■ Ongoing





## Building the business base

The second key theme identified by our Community through the consultative process was an economic objective that we titled 'Building the business base'.

Council utilises a software program called Interplan to track progress against actions. Progress reports on the actions during the period of the Operational Plan are reported to Council quarterly.

This section of the report outlines the progress we have made during this reporting period in implementing the adopted Delivery Program 2017/2021. This section contains a summary list of the actions. Additional information on the achievements for Council Business Units is included following this summary information.

The Delivery Program identified a total of 178 actions to be completed over the period 2017/2021.

Some of the achievements have included.

Warralda Medical Centre internal works

Water Meter Replacement Program

Mains replacement - Copeton Road

Go live with new Gwydir Shire website

Refurbish kitchen facility at Naroo Aged Hostel

Plan & Coordinate Bingara Happy Days Orange Festival

Implement SMS alert system

### Building the business base



■ Completed ■ Deferred ■ In Progress ■ Not approved ■ Not Started ■ Ongoing



## An environmentally responsible shire

The third key theme identified by our Community through the consultative process was an Environment objective that we titled ‘an environmentally responsible shire’.

Council utilises a software program called Interplan to track progress against actions. Progress reports on the actions during the period of the Operational Plan are reported to Council quarterly.

This section of the report outlines the progress we have made during this reporting period in implementing the adopted Delivery Program 2017/2021. This section contains a summary list of the actions. Additional information on the achievements for Council Business Units is included following this summary information.

The Delivery Program identified a total of 81 actions to be completed over the period 2017/2021.

Some of the achievements have included.

Gwydir River Foreshore Management Plan – in progress and will continue to be rolled out over coming years.

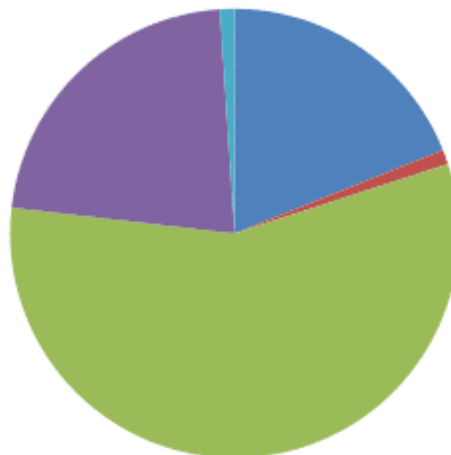
Manage Noxious Weeds

Incorporate Vegetation Clearing Plan as a part of the Development Control Plan (DCP).

Implement Gwydir Shire Council's Waste Management Strategy

Installation of shaded seating - Gwydir River

### An environmentally responsible Shire



■ Completed ■ Deferred ■ In Progress ■ Not Started ■ Ongoing



## Proactive regional and local leadership

The fourth and final key theme identified by our Community through the consultative process was a civic leadership objective that we titled ‘Proactive regional and local leadership’.

Council utilises a software program called Interplan to track progress against actions. Progress reports on the actions during the period of the Operational Plan are reported to Council quarterly.

This section of the report outlines the progress we have made during this reporting period in implementing the adopted Delivery Program 2017/2021. This section contains a summary list of the actions. Additional information on the achievements for Council Business Units is included following this summary information.

The Delivery Program identified a total of 27 actions to be completed over the period 2017/2021.

Some of the achievements have included.

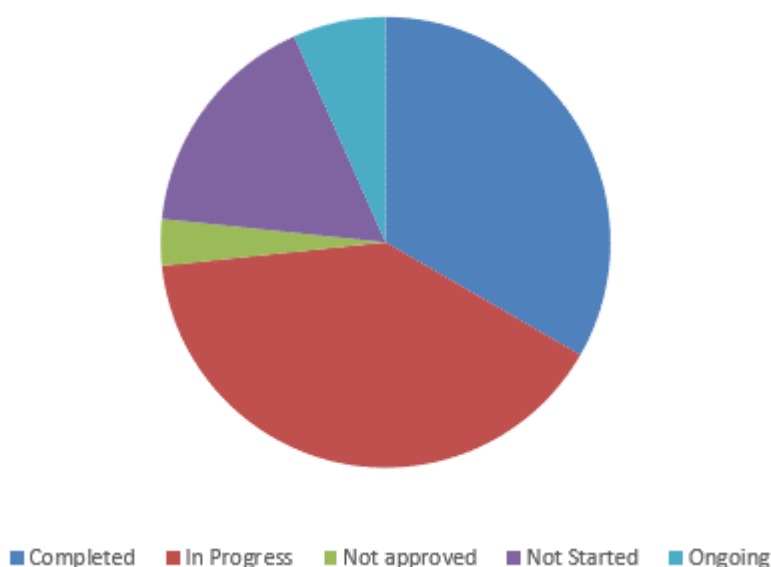
Develop Gwydir Shire Council communications plan.

Undertake volunteering initiatives during the reporting period.

Support the Myall Creek Memorial committee

A review of the effectiveness of communication channels used throughout Gwydir Shire to the wider community.

### Proactive regional & local leadership



## Our Financial Achievements

Gwydir Shire Council has generated a profit for the 2021 Financial Year. A large number of grant funded projects have been completed over the year to the benefit of our communities. Council continues to work hard to ensure financial sustainability and securing future funding for major projects.

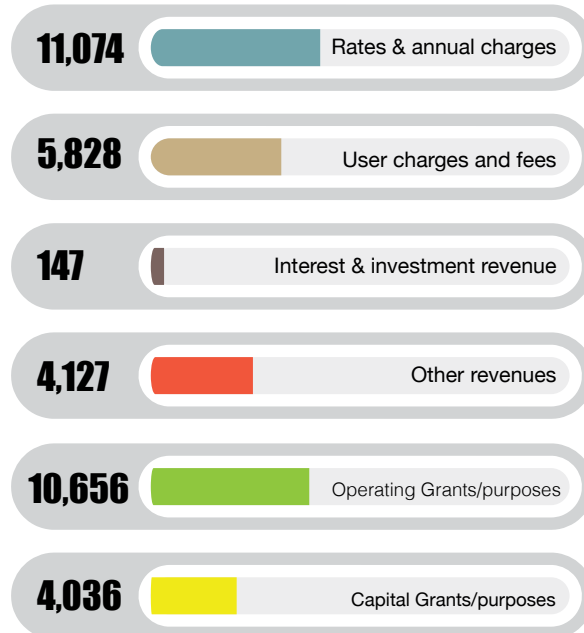
The breakdown of monies that Council receives and expends are tabled below.

<b>Income Statement</b>	<b>(\$'000)</b>
Total Income from Continuing Operations	\$35,868
Total Expenses from Counting Operations	\$33,283
Net Operating Result from Continuing Operations	\$2,585
Net Operating Result before Capital Grants and Contributions	(\$1,451)

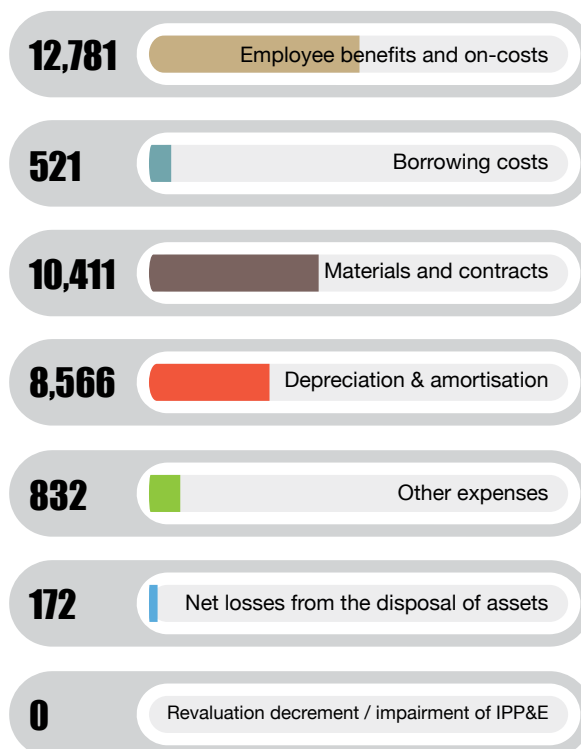
<b>Balance Sheet</b>	<b>(\$'000)</b>
Total Current Assets	\$19,633
Total Current Liabilities	\$13,280
Net Current Assets	\$6,353
Total Non-Current Assets	\$407,213
Total Non-Current Liabilities	\$9,952
Total Equity	\$403,614

# Gwydir Shire Finances at a Glance

## Council Income - where our money comes from



## Council Expenses - where our money goes



# Our achievements through our grant funded works programs

## **Stronger Country Communities**

The Stronger Country Communities Fund was established in 2017 by the NSW Government to help deliver local projects to regional communities

The objective of the fund is to provide projects that improve the lives of people who live in regional areas and since 2017, the Stronger Country Communities Fund has invested \$400 million to assist regional NSW Local Government Areas deliver over 1500 projects.


Round 2 & 3 projects will be completed over multiple years and include:

- Gwydir Oval Grandstand Upgrade
- Warialda Recreation Ground Improvements - amenities
- Warialda Recreation Ground Improvements - function centre
- Gwydir Oval Amenities Building
- Warialda Swimming Pool Improvements
- Bingara Showground Stables
- Warialda Showground Kitchen Upgrade
- Warialda Rail Sports Ground Improvements - club additions
- Warialda Rail Sports Ground Improvements - playground
- Bingara Sporting Club Improvements
- Bingara Historical Centre Additional Building
- Carinda Community Centre Improvements
- Bingara Library - Civic Centre Redevelopment
- Gravesend Sports Ground Amenities Building
- Croppa Creek Hall Improvements
- CWA Park Playground Improvements
- Captain Cook Park Playground Improvements
- Cunningham Park Playground Improvements
- Gravesend Recreation Ground tennis court upgrade
- Nicholson Oval Warialda sports field lighting
- Warialda Building Maintenance
- Warialda Swimming Pool amenities upgrade
- Bingara Historical Society additional display and storage areas
- Crooble Hall upgrade
- Gwydir Oval Sports Field Lighting

## **Everyone Can Play – All Abilities Park Warialda**

The creation of inclusive playspaces requires a new way of thinking about the way playspaces are planned, designed and managed. The three principles of Everyone Can Play will guide thinking around how to create more inclusive playspaces across NSW. When it comes to determining if a playspace is truly inclusive, it is important to consider the wider context. Look outside, around and through the playspaces and ask: Can I get there? Can I play? Can I stay?

The 2020/2021 Everyone Can Play program focused on funding inclusive playspaces across NSW by partnering with councils to design and construct new playspaces and upgrade existing playspaces in line



with the Everyone Can Play Guideline. This allowed the NSW Government and councils to immediately deliver on-ground benefits to the community. Gwydir Shire was successful in obtaining funding to convert the park space across from the Warialda hospital and Naroo into a wonderful all-inclusive park facility for all members of the community to be able to enjoy together.

### **Restart NSW – Big River Dreaming**

In April 2018, the NSW Government announced Council secured \$2 million for a visionary Bingara tourism project – Big River Dreaming, Water Weaving Way. The Restart NSW Fund was established by the NSW Government in 2011 to improve the economic growth and productivity of the state. As at the 2020/2021 NSW Budget, more than \$33.3 billion has been deposited into Restart NSW since 2011. Under the Restart NSW Fund Act 2011, Infrastructure NSW is responsible for providing independent funding recommendations to the NSW Government on all infrastructure projects to be funded from Restart NSW. These include:

- Major NSW government-led projects.
- Local and community infrastructure projects being delivered by councils, non-government organisations and other entities.

Restart NSW local and community infrastructure projects include vital upgrades to rural and regional road and rail networks, the development of infrastructure to boost tourism, projects which address infrastructure constraints in mining communities, the provision of safe and reliable water services, and infrastructure which drives economic growth and productivity. There are currently more than 600 projects which have been allocated more than \$1.6 billion through the Restart NSW local and community infrastructure funding programs. The total project budget for these is approximately \$2.8 billion. Many of these projects are currently active and in various stages of delivery. Projects within Gwydir Shire that has successfully obtained funding from the Big River Dreaming – Water Weaving Way project scheme are below. Council is contributing \$700,000 in labour and plant for these projects.

Projects include:

- Big River Dreaming - Walking Track
- Big River Dreaming - Trails and Rest Stops - RFS1
- Big River Dreaming - Trails and Rest Stops - RFS2
- Big River Dreaming - Trails and Rest Stops - RNS3 Sheep St Creek
- Big River Dreaming - Interpretive Centre – The Living Classroom
- Big River Dreaming - Gwydir River Ghats aka Pontoon
- Big River Dreaming - Trail Markers
- Big River Dreaming - Splash Park – Bingara Pool Precinct
- Big River Dreaming - Activity Centre – Bingara Pool Precinct
- Big River Dreaming - Information Station Signage

### **State Drought Stimulus Package**

The main objective of the \$170 million NSW Drought Stimulus Package is to mitigate the employment and income effects of the current drought in regional NSW by delivering economic stimulus. The first focus will be on fast-tracking existing local infrastructure projects that will boost local economies, with a number of projects already announced. Other initiatives will be rolled out and these will keep money flowing and people working in local towns and villages.

All projects and initiatives will focus on putting dollars into local pay packets. Tradespeople, suppliers and project workers will receive new work and spend money in local businesses such as cafes, retail stores and with service providers.

Projects include:

- Warialda Golf and Bowling
- Bingara Swimming Pool Improvements
- Cunningham Park new toilet block
- Cunningham Park BBQ and Shelter
- Warialda footpath Naroo to Stephen Street
- Bingara footpath Pool to Bridge

### **COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Package – Phase 1 & 2**

On 22 May 2020 the Australian Government announced a new \$500 million Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (LRCI Program).

Through the 2020/2021 Budget, the Australian Government announced a \$1 billion extension of the LRCI Program, following strong community and local government support.

This program supports local councils to deliver priority local road and community infrastructure projects across Australia, supporting jobs and the resilience of local economies to help communities bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The LRCI Program aims to assist a community-led recovery from COVID-19 by supporting local jobs, firms, and procurement. It is expected that councils will use local businesses and workforces to deliver projects under the LRCI Program where possible to ensure stimulus funding flows into local communities. The scope of the LRCI Program supports a broad range of Eligible Projects so communities can fund the infrastructure that they need, support businesses, and create employment opportunities across their communities.

- - Projects under this funding include the below and will all be completed in 2022.
  - Batterham Lookout
  - Warialda dog Pound
  - Warialda Medical Centre
  - Dog Parks - Warialda and Bingara
  - 50K Warialda - shade structure in New green space area - Commercial
  - 50K Bingara - shelter and picnic tables - Gwydir River foreshore
  - Nicholson Oval Warialda sports field lighting
  - Selected gravel re-sheeting, North Star NSW 2408
    - Sheeting / Re-sheeting
    - SR61 Peates Rd Import gravel, crush on situ and lay new 6m wide pavement.
    - SR68 Goat Rd Import gravel, crush on situ and lay new 6m wide pavement.
    - SR40 Blue Knobby Rd Import gravel, crush on situ and lay new 6m wide pavement.
  - Drainage
    - SR62 Hibernia Rd construct 2 new causeway structures with all-weather approaches.
  - Selected gravel re-sheeting Pallal NSW 2404
    - Sheeting / Re-sheeting
    - SR31 Eulourie Rd import local shale, lay new 6m wide pavement.
    - SR17 Back Creek Rd import local shale, lay new 6m wide pavement.
  - Cunningham Street, Bingara
    - Traffic improvement
    - Junction Street to Riddell Street, construction new centre media with semi advanced trees.



## **Drought Communities Programme**

The objectives of the program are to deliver support to targeted drought-affected regions of Australia by funding:

- local community infrastructure and
- other drought relief projects.

The intended outcomes of the program are to:

- increase employment in regions by providing work for locals and/or farmers and farm labourers/ staff/contractors whose employment opportunities have been affected by drought
- improve levels of economic activity in regions
- increase productivity in regions
- enable better retention of businesses, services, and facilities.

With Council being successful in 2 rounds of funding between 2019 & 2021, projects under this programme include:

- ReRoofing of Gravesend Community Hall
- Installation of Solar Panels and Outdoor Lighting to the North Star Sports Club
- Renovation of Upper Horton Tennis Courts and Upgrading to Multi-Sports Courts
- Installation of Solar Panels & Battery to Warialda Rail Sportsground Clubhouse
- Installation of Flag Poles & Flags x 24 to Warialda & Gravesend
- Development of an All Abilities Recreation Area at Warialda Hospital Park
- Warialda All Abilities Park - outdoor music equipment
- Installation of Toilet at Warialda Cemetery
- Installation of Fence at Warialda Airstrip
- Installation of Toilet at Warialda Airstrip
- Reedy Creek Foreshore Improvements - Litter removal, weed control re-vegetation
- Installation of Flag Poles & Flags at Bingara
- Installation of Fairy Lights at Bingara
- Gwydir Foreshore Improvements - Access Way Sealing, Weed Control & Signage
- Purchase of a commemorative CWA Statue leading upto the 100th Anniversary in 2022
- Co-contribution for resurfacing at Maitland St Bingara Intersection
- Gravesend Recreation Ground cricket nets
- Upper Horton Water Augmentation
- Bingara Swimming Pool Improvements
- Koorilgur Walking Trail Improvements
- Warialda Youth Hub
- Reedy Creek- Hope Street Rest Area
- All Abilities Park - Turfing and Shade Shelters
- Landscaping and fencing at Cunningham Park / Pool and Footpaths
- Tree Planting – Warialda

Other grants that Council have been successful in obtaining are:

Restart NSW – Warialda HPV Route & Warialda HPV Truck Washing Facility

RMS – Warialda HPV Route & Warialda HPV Truck Washing Facility

- BBRF – Gwydir Oval Bingara, Sports Field Lighting upgrade
- DPIIS – Bingara Hatchery Facility upgrades
- Bushfire Resilience – Small Business Grants, SMS alert burst, Why Leave Town gift card promotion & Business advertising
- OLG – Crown Lands Plans of Management
- DPI CRIF – Bingara Caravan Park amenities upgrade

- 
- Sports Australia – Aus Sport – Bingara Pool Precinct
  - Showground Stimulus – Bingara showground amenities & grandstand
  - Dept of Health – Naroo kitchen upgrade
  - FRRR – Gwydir Fitness Centres equipment upgrade
  - Fixing Local Roads – Horton Road upgrade

The volume of grant funding accessible to Council has meant that we have been able to deliver a great many projects from 2019 to date with many more still to be completed in 2022.

## Our achievements through our Section 355 Committees

### Bingara Community Op Shop

Council staff assisted in the set up and establishment of the Bingara Community Op Shop committee. This included providing advice regarding finances, lease, governance, risk management, induction of volunteers, and the provision of Council's music license.

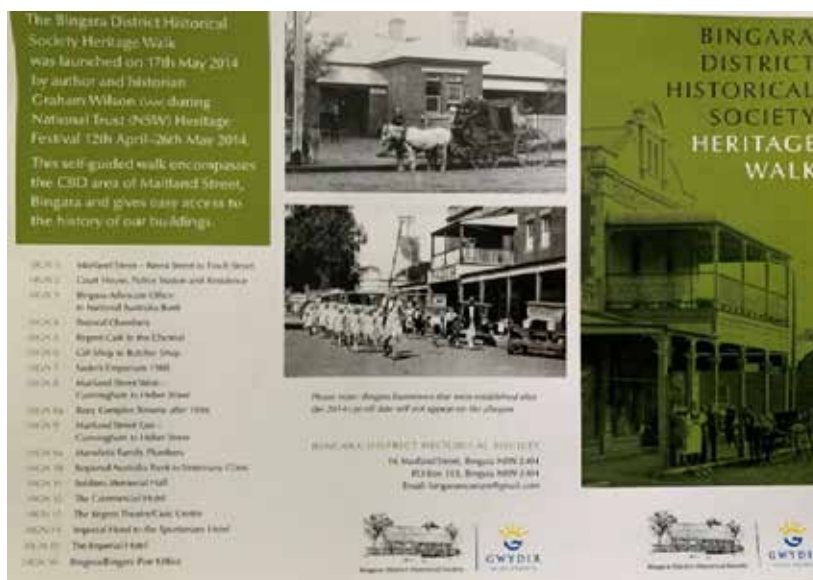
### Bingara Anglers' Club

Council staff attended the Bingara Anglers' Club Annual General Meeting and again committed to the role of Secretary. At this meeting, the Committee decided to organise and host Easterfish 2021 which, once again was extremely successful.

### Bingara District Historical Society

The Bingara Historical Society Heritage Walk was launched at the opening of the Orange Festival Carnival on Saturday 26 June. A presentation was made to Ted Sparke for his tireless research into the history of the buildings in Maitland Street. Council staff has assisted the Historical Society complete this project and compiled a tourist brochure to provide guidance of the location of these signs.

*Right: The Bingara District Historical Society Heritage Walk brochure.*



### North Star Hall

Over the term the Hall has been used by the Tharawonga Mobile Present and adjacent Primary School.

The Hall Committee was in recess for much of the reporting period but now boasts an active and positive group who have successfully gained external funding for air conditioning, and hardwood floor renovations. The group is now making the Hall available for hire again and is an essential community hub.

### Coolatai Sportsground Committee

The Committee is a champion and has collaborated with Council to develop the grounds and its infrastructure.

Coolatai is renowned for its annual Tractor Pull and horse sporting events which should be back and bigger than ever in 2022

## Our achievements in Planning and Development

During the 2020/2021 financial year Council received 49 Development Applications and 4 s4.55 Modifications with a total value of \$5,438,298.00. The types of development applied for were 12 new dwellings, 22 applications for residential ancillary developments (such as dwelling additions and alterations, garages, carports verandahs, pergolas, patios, shipping containers and swimming pools), 3 commercial applications, 2 rural subdivision, 2 Feedlots, 5 quarries and 3 miscellaneous applications (including an RFS Shed, extensions to the Bingara Pre-school and an Inland Rail Crib facility at Croppa Creek).

Development Locations:

Locality	No	Locality	No	Locality	No	Locality	No
Baflours Peak	1	Crooble	1	Gravesend	3	Upper Horton	3
Bangheet	1	Croppa Creek	1	North Star	2	Warialda	13
Bingara	19	Delungra	1	Pallamallawa	1	Yallaroi	1
Copeton	1	Gineroi	1				

The total number of development applications approved for the year was 49 as seen in the below table which also includes various other applications and approvals issued under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

	Development Applications	S4.55 Modification Applications	Subdivision Certificates
Applications Received	49	4	3
Applications Refused	0	0	0
Applications Withdrawn/Closed	3	0	0
Total Applications Approved	49	3	4
Applications Approved by Delegation	44	2	4
Applications Approved by Council	5	1	0
Application Approved by Regional Planning Panel (RPP)	0	0	0
Applications Approved by Private Certifier	-	-	0

Throughout the 2020/2021 year Council also issued one hundred and ninety 10.7(2) Certificates (formerly known as 149(2) Certificates), thirty three 10.7(5) Certificates (formerly known as 149(2) Certificates), twenty four Outstanding Notices Certificates under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (formerly known as s735A Certificates) and twenty eight s121ZP Certificates (Outstanding Notice under the Local Government Act 1993). In addition, Council replied to seventy four requests for Drainage Diagrams.

## Our Achievements in Technical Services

### Major Grant Funding Works

During the 2020/2021 financial year, Council was successful in securing \$26.5 million of grant funding through various State and Federal grant programs for road upgrades over the next two-year period. The grant funds will be matched by \$2.36 million of Council funds from its recurrent road funding budgets. The grants will see 48.3km of gravel road upgraded to sealed formation and 27km of road re-sheeted with a dust suppressant binder.

### Oregon Road Re-sheeting – Fixing Local Roads Round 2

\$1.79 million has been secured from Round 2 of the Fixing Local Roads Program to upgrade 27km of Oregon Road. The funds will be matched with \$315,975 of council funds and will see significant re-sheeting take place with the incorporation of a dust suppressing binder. The project commenced late in the 2020/2021 financial year and is expected to be completed by December 2021.

### IB Bore Road Sealing - Fixing Country Roads Program and Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

19.987km of IB Bore Road (the entire unsealed section within Gwydir Shire) will be upgraded to a sealed formation suitable for road train traffic. \$9.54 million has been granted to Council via the state government's Fixing Local Roads Program and a further \$2.00 million granted from the federal government's Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program. Construction is expected to commence in October 2021.

### Sealing – Roads of Strategic Importance

In January 2021, Hon Michael McCormack MP and Hon Mark Coulton MP announced \$8.18 million of funding under the Roads of Strategic Importance Program to seal 12.3km of County Boundary Road. The allocation will be matched by \$2.05 million of Council funding. The project will commence in late 2021 and is expected to take up to 18 months.

### Horton Road Sealing – Fixing Local Roads Program Round 1

Works on this \$5.88 million project commenced in May, which will see 16km of gravel road from Upper Horton to Killarney Gap Road sealed. \$5 million was granted to Council under the Fixing Local Roads Program. \$800,000 will be spent from Council's recurrent roads budget on the project, with a further \$80,000 in kind donation of gravel made by local landholders.



## Gravel Resheeting

In a massive turnaround from last financial year's challenging drought conditions, this financial year saw challenging conditions of an opposing nature, where extreme weather events caused flooding through the Shire. Continuous rain then put a hold on much of the years gravel resheeting program, some of which had to be delayed into next financial year.

The following table gives the details of gravel resheeting that was completed throughout the Gwydir Shire during the 2020/2021 Financial Year. Council resheeting works were funded largely by the Federal Government's Roads to Recovery program.

Road Name	Location	Length (km)
Trevallyn Road	5.00km to 6.50km from Tamworth Regional LGA Boundary	1.50
Back Creek Road	9.00km to 11.40km south of Killarney Gap Road and 1.58km to 3.08km north of Killarney Gap Road	3.90
Gineroi Road	10.00km to 11.00km from Fossickers Way	1.00
Eulourie Road	5.61km to 9.79km from Killarney Gap Road	4.18
Blue Nobby Road	20.90km to 22.90km from North Star Road	5.20
Oregon Road	12.3km to 16.3km and 17.0km to 20.0km from Warialda Road	7.00
Kurrajong Hills Road	0.0km to 4.0 km and 11.0km to 12.27km from North Star Road	5.27
Mosquito Creek Road	25.18km to 30.18km from Stephen Street Warialda	5.00
Peates Road	25.0km to 28.0km from Bruxner Way	3.0
Reserve Creek Road	0.0km to 3.0km from Adams Scrub Road	3.0

In total, Council resheeted 39.05km of unsealed roads. Crushed rock has been used extensively in the north of the Shire for its excellent performance in wet conditions during normal climatic conditions. The crushing process, undertaken using a tractor mounted implement, produces additional binding fines and reduces overall rock size. In the southern end of the Shire, shale and ridge gravel materials are predominantly used, which can be broken down easily using grid rollers. *Right: Completed gravel resheet on SR40 Blue Nobby Road.*

## Regional Roads Roadworks

All works carried out by Council on Regional Roads during the 2020/2021, including all maintenance, heavy patching, resealing, rehabilitation and new works, were funded entirely with grant funds from the Transport for New South Wales' (TfNSW) Block and REPAIR Program grants.

## Rehabilitation



North Star Road received 1.60km of full rehabilitation, 9.40km to 11.00km from RR63 Warialda Road. The unsuitable shoulder material was first boxed out and the existing pavement was then spread to a 9m formation and stabilised 300mm deep with hydrated lime. A new 150mm thick crushed rock sub-base layer was imported and compacted, followed by a 150mm DGB20 base course. Works were then completed with the application of an 8m wide 14/7 double/double C170 bitumen seal.

### **Resealing**

6km of North Star Road, from its intersection with Warialda Road was resealed and linemarked using TfNSW's Block Grant funding. This section of road was shoulder widened in previous years using drought stimulus funding.

### **State Roads (TfNSW)**

Within our Shire, Council maintains and completes ordered works on two state roads, MR63 Fossickers Way and HW12 Gwydir Highway. For these particular works, Council is bound by the Roads Maintenance Council Contract (RMCC) with Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW). All Work Orders issued by TfNSW are quality assurance, schedule of rates projects carried out by Council staff under the RMCC.

During the 2020/2021 financial year, Council staff undertook general maintenance activities throughout the year such as drainage/culvert maintenance, guardrail repairs, vegetation control (weed spraying, slashing, sucker bashing etc.), rest area servicing, fortnightly routine inspections, sign replacement and maintenance and bitumen repairs (potholes, edge breaks etc.). Ordered works this financial year included heavy patching works, reseal preparation, several rehabilitation projects and survey and design for several rehabilitation projects proposed for next financial year.

Heavy patching works undertaken on our State roads involves a stringent process that is pre-approved by the TfNSW before works commence to conform to their specifications. The patch extents are marked out and a stabilising additive (75:25 cement/flyash blend) is spread at a rate of 2.5% over the patch. Council's pavement reclaimer (pulvi-mixer) is then used to mill and incorporate the failed material with the additive and the new material is then re-compacting to form a new pavement. Once compacted, the patch is sealed with a double coat 7 mm emulsion seal using Council's Jetpatcher(s) and the line marking is reinstated, where required, by the TfNSW line marking crew. This year saw 3,300m<sup>2</sup> of heavy patching completed on MR63 Fossickers Way and 1,942m<sup>2</sup> on HW12 Gwydir Highway.

During the year TfNSW provided funding for the rehabilitation of pavement and drainage within segment 5255 on MR63 Fossickers Way, segment 8270 on HW12 Gwydir Highway and a safety upgrade project within segment 8265 on HW12 Gwydir Highway. The project within segment 5255 involved extending a culvert, ripping and recompacting 150mm of the existing pavement, including any shape correction, to form a new sub-base layer. A final 150mm DGB20 base layer was then laid and compacted to form a 10m wide pavement.

The project within segment 8270 involved boxing out the existing shoulders and replacing them with a suitable material, adding 60mm of fine crushed rock to the existing pavement and ripping and recompacting 150mm deep, including any shape correction, to form a new sub-base layer. A final 150mm DGB20 base layer was then laid and compacted to form a 10m wide pavement. The safety project within segment 8265 involved widening the existing shoulders with DGB20, to achieve 3.7m lanes and pavement widths around corners up to 11.9m. Guardrail was then placed around the outside of both corners and direction chevron signs installed around the worst of the two. Each pavement layer for the projects have been tested for material density and compaction prior to laying the following course to ensure that they conform to TfNSW specifications. A cutback bitumen primer seal with 7mm stone has been placed on each of the projects by Fulton Hogan to provide a 9m wide (or greater) wearing surface and line marking has been undertaken by

the TfNSW line marking crew. Table drains and mitre drains were all cleaned out and re-established and the disturbed areas of each work site were revegetated.

Right: Safety upgrade project within segment 8265 on HW12 Gwydir Highway.

Further to this, TfNSW also provided funding for the resealing of five segments (4310, 5270, 6125, 6185 and 6190) on MR63 Fossickers way, totalling 43,044m<sup>2</sup>, and ten segments (8050, 8055, 8060, 8075, 8080, 8137, 8156, 8160, 8235 and 8237) on HW12 Gwydir Highway, totalling 95,916.5m<sup>2</sup>, as well as funding for the preparation of these reseal segments. Survey and design projects included segments 4420, 5150 and 6120 on MR063 Fossickers Way. Works also started ahead of time, at the end of this financial year, on a rehabilitation project, segments 8140, 8145 and 8150 on HW12 Gwydir Highway, that will continue into next financial year.



### **Big River Dreaming Rest Stops**

This financial year saw the construction of several rest stops throughout the southern end of the Shire, as part of the Big River Dreaming project, part funded by Restart NSW. Each of the constructed rest stops also forms part of the Myall Creek Memorial and will also include detailed artwork and signage.

The Two Mile Hill rest stop is located at the intersection of MR63 Fossickers Way and MR134 Delungra Road and has included the installation of a 6m x 6m shade shelter with two picnic tables and a park platform, the installation of a waterless toilet cubical and the construction of a new carpark area. The Sheep Station Creek rest stop is of a similar calibre, with two 6m x 6m shelters with two picnic tables and a park platform under each, as well as a walking trail down to a creek plateau. The rest stop also features a large bitumen turn around area to accommodate large vehicles such as trucks and coaches.



The remaining rest stops are of a smaller nature and are both located on SR19 Whitlow Road. The first is located at the Bobby Whitlow fossicking area and includes a large walking trail along the creek, a bitumen turn around area and a single picnic table with seating. The second is located at the SR12 Upper Whitlow Road intersection and includes a large hardstand area on the edge of the creek with another picnic table and seating. Further to this, most of the rest stops incorporated sandstone blocks to complete their attire and link them to similar projects around the Bingara area.

*Above: Completed rest stops at Two Mile Hill and Sheep Station Creek, respectively.*

### **Cunningham Park Footpath**

This project was funded through the State Drought Program Funding. The scope of works was to replace the existing footpath between the Cunningham Bridge and the new pool entrance with an all accessible pathway. The total length for the pathway was 160m and the new path is 1.8m wide, allowing for all abilities access along the walkway. This path has significantly improved the aesthetics of Cunningham Park while also improving access to the park and Bingara Pool precinct.





This project involved numerous departments and employees throughout the process. The project would not have been the success it was without the significant input of all parties involved. This addition is a wonderful new asset for the community.

## Stronger Country Communities – Round 3 Grant Funded Works

### Warialda Street Tree Planting

Street tree plantings in Warialda on Stephen St, Hope St and Geddes St have been completed at a cost of \$60,000, funded from the Stronger Country Communities Fund - Round 3. The trees are advanced Chanticleer Pears and it is hoped that a wet winter has given the trees time to acclimatize and get ready for spring. The trees will provide summer shade and enhance amenity in the village for many years to come.





*Left and below:  
During the process*



*Left and below:  
Completed work.*



The Gravesend Recreation Ground Tennis court upgrade has been completed with the old sand court upgraded with new base and a synthetic grass multi sports surface with a new net. The project was completed at a cost of \$61,000 and was funded by the Stronger Country Communities Fund - Round 3.

### **Nicholson Oval Lighting**

The Nicholson Oval sports field lighting project is underway with the dedicated new power supply commissioned. The project will provide sports field lighting that is designed to meet the standards of a number of sports including cricket, rugby league, touch football, league tag and athletics.

Installation of the four light towers have been significantly delayed by wet weather and COVID-19 supply/ border shutdown issues. Most materials are now on site and work is expected to start by early October 2021. The project estimated cost is \$481,000 and is funded by the Stronger Country Communities Fund - Round 3 and COVID-19 Stimulus funding

### **Hope Street Warialda Rest Area**

The Hope Street Rest Area project on the banks of Warialda Creek is well underway however has been significantly affected by poor weather and is now expected to be completed by the end of September 2021. The rest area will provide a sealed parking area for caravans with access to covered seating. The first stage of a link path along the edge of Warialda Creek has also been incorporated into the project, which will provide a path from the rest area to Market St. The project estimated cost is \$110,000 and is funded from a Drought Relief Grant.



### **TfNSW Natural disaster claims**

Council's road network suffered significant damage from two flood events in the 2020/2021 year that were declared Natural Disasters by the State Government. Ongoing wet weather during winter has hampered Council's ability to carry out repairs and attend to emergency works on many roads.


Staff have successfully submitted natural disaster claims to TfNSW for the December 2020 Horton Flood Event and the March 2021 Shire event to the value of \$13.094 million. Council completed dozens of emergency works to open up our road network and the majority of restoration works will be completed over the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 financial years. This will require a significant sustained effort by our outdoor staff and significant planning and coordination is required to complete these works efficiently and on time.

### **Local Emergency Management Committee**

The Committee continues to hold regular meetings that are well attended. A desktop training exercise was recently carried out where the recent flood event in Moree and a possible similar event in Bingara were discussed. These discussions were considering the COVID-19 supplement to the Evacuation Management Guidelines developed by Resilience NSW. Fortunately an Emergency Operations Centre for flooding or COVID-19 was not required in the 2020/2021 year.

### **Warialda Truck Wash**

January 2021 saw the \$1.3 million Warialda Truck Wash facility opened. Co-funded by Council, the state government and the federal government, the state of the art facility features two wash bays for removing stock effluent from trucks as large as 36.5m road trains. In addition to the wash bays, the facility includes a



number of effluent dump points for on board effluent tanks, an amenities block with showers and toilets and a small truck parking area.

The opening of the facility has seen an elimination of illegal roadside dumping of effluent and a dramatic reduction in effluent spillage on roads within the Gwydir Shire.

Primary effluent treatment takes place onsite, where solids are removed from waste in a 3 stage filtration bunker. Waste water is then pumped offsite to two nearby dewatering lagoons which allow for settling of residual suspended solids and recycling of water back into the facility, if required.

The truckwash has seen excellent take up by the stock carting industry, with approximately 70 trucks washing down per month.

## Our Achievements in Social Services

### Gwydir Toy Libraries



Both Toy Library services strived to ensure all attending children were engaged in developmentally appropriate exploration of play. Each month, the Toy Library's provided enriched play and learning experiences. Produced intentionally, these experiences encouraged the children's emergent skills in; childhood communication, literacy and numeracy, personal, social and emotional development, cognition, physical, fine and gross motor progression, creative skills and developing an understanding of their world.

Bingara Toy Library remained operational each Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday with the routine services sessions between 10am and 12noon. In May 2021, operation on a Monday ceased.

Warialda Toy library remained operational each Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday between the hours of 8.30am – 3pm, with routine service sessions being catered for between 10am and 12noon.

Furthermore, parents and carers were provided with information or feedback regarding their developing child. Support services are sought via referral where required. The Toy Library promoted an inclusive service for all, encouraging family engagement and play exploration in a safe, confidential and supported play environment. The Toy Library actively promoted and acknowledged the value and impact of providing support to families, facilitating family networking opportunities and successfully promoted positive mental health for parents and carers alike.

Finally, during 2020/2021, families were not only provided with literature and brochures regarding childhood development, health and wellbeing, but were provided also, with opportunities to engage with professional service providers such as, family and parenting support services, dietetics, speech pathology, dental care, early intervention support services, financial management, first aid education, baby massage/chiropractic services and baby wearing mentorship. Access being made possible while visiting routine play sessions sets out to accommodate the busy schedules of families while ensuring services are accessible for all.

### Festive Events/ celebrations

The Toy Library's continued to appreciate festive celebrations through service promotion and celebration of all mainstream festive events such as, Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Grandparents Day, NAIDOC week, Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. These celebratory days were catered for with special morning teas/ parties, whereby families accompanied their children to the service, engaging in specified festive craft activities, egg hunt, cooking, story and music times. Special celebratory guests in 2020/2021 included Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny and grandparents of some of the children attending the service in celebration of Grandparents Day.



### Children's and Families Week 2020/2021

In November of 2020, Warialda Toy Library promoted the rights of all children, celebrating Children's week in the park. Children's Week is a national celebration of children's rights, talents, and citizenship. Families were extended invitations through the preschool, primary school and toy library service memberships to attend this event, recognising and collaboratively celebrating the rights of all children. The Bingara Toy Library Celebrated Children's Week and promoted the rights of Children in October 2020.

Families Week promoting the diversity of families, was an event whereby all families were encouraged to attend the service to participate in a teddy bears picnic morning tea, craft and dance session. Each child was invited to bring along a plate of food and their special teddy from home for this event. Literature for families about supporting family relationships, and the importance of embracing various family cultures and groups within our community and the country was promoted throughout this event.



### Birth Certificate Applications/ presentations

Expecting parents or parents/carers, residing in the Gwydir Shire with a child born on or after March 17, 2004, (The date in which the Gwydir Shire was formed) are eligible to receive a certificate. Applications are issued upon request by Erin Hall, Supported Playgroup Development Worker, Tania Brennan, Bingara Toy Library coordinator, or handed out by the local Child and Family Health Nurse during the initial point of contact the family have shortly after the birth of their child. Presentation ceremonies are then organised as required, and an invitation extended to either the Mayor or a Councillor to present the certificates to families.

In 2020/2021, Warialda Toy Library held their ceremony on Monday 7 September with Councillor Marylin Dixon (OAM) presenting the certificates to the Families. Bingara Toy Library held their ceremony on Wednesday 5 August 2020 and Thursday 6 August 2020 with Councillor Catherine Egan presenting the Families with their certificates. Families are provided with a gold certificate, a parent pack including a six-month Toy Library membership voucher. A light morning tea and play session follow the presentation.



Application Recordings 2020/2021	
Bingara	10
Warialda	18

### Future projections

Warialda Toy Library is committed to supporting families within the area, facilitating the emergent development of all children having access to the services. A focus for the 2021/2022 financial year, is to ensure adequate promotion creating an inclusive service for all is achieved. A letterbox drop is being arranged, to secure broad contact, making certain that all families have equal access to information and ensuring families are made aware of the services provided at the Toy Library. The information received in this mail out, will directly invite all families of children aged 0-6yrs within the area to become members, facilitating family support, and ensuring continued and further growth of active memberships and service participation.



Hunter New England Area Health Service has recently appointed a new Child and Family Health nurse in Melissa Toms. Correspondence with Melissa has already taken place, to ensure information is being provided to all parents during Melissa's first point of contact with these families, after welcoming a newborn into their home. Melissa will commence attending service sessions this August 2021, to support families requiring blue book screenings or checks. Melissa will also be available during these service visits to answer any health or baby development queries any parents may have. It is anticipated that Melissa will do in service visits each month. Melissa aims to be able to provide immunisations as required to attending members in the very near future.

Family referral services will remain a priority in service delivery and continue to be provided for where required. Education and awareness of service providers, and the services they offer to families within our local area, will remain a significant area of professional interest and continued development moving forward.

### **Kool Skool Kids Program**

The program continued this year on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons with great success and due to demand for care from working families but unfortunately Monday afternoons were cancelled once numbers reduced to only one child attending.



The children were given the opportunity to help with the planning of the activities that they would be involved in this year during the Kool Skool Kids Program. During the program the children were about to do participate in cooking experiences: puff pastry scrolls, mini pizzas and hot chocolates, ranges of craft, sensory guessing games, ball skill games both inside and outside, watching movies with popcorn, thread pulled placemat with Hessian, the children also created a hanging bird feeder out of paddle pop sticks. The children also celebrating special occasions such as Children's week, Mother's Day Craft, Father's Day Craft, Christmas Craft & Halloween Craft.

The children also participated in conversations about fire safety routines, addresses and road safety. Conversations also arose about the things, people and opportunities they have and how they are grateful and thankful for those.

Each afternoon during the program, the children also had access to Lego, board games, puzzles, loom bands, listening to songs on Spotify which they have chosen themselves for the staff to pick out, and books. Homework help is also available during the program for those who need it.



### **Bingara Preschool**

Bingara Preschool has enjoyed another successful year, even with the added challenges of being COVID safe. The team of educators have implemented a child led and child focused curriculum involving all educators, children, their families and the wider community.

### **Educational Program:**

Bingara Preschool facilitated a wide range of educational experiences during the year, with the focus being on delivering a play-based curriculum. Learning through play is one of the important, underpinning philosophical values of Bingara Preschool as the children learn so many skills through this practice.

Skills include problem solving, learning from others, conflict resolution, language, cognitive awareness, friendship building and creating/abiding by a set of rules. The team of educators liaised with the children and their families when reviewing the Bingara Preschool Philosophy. The new look service Philosophy showcases the underpinning practices and values of Bingara Preschool, it is also easy to read and understand for all stakeholders. The Philosophy articulates the services underpinning values which are:

- Learning through play.
- Children are encouraged to make their own choices.
- Developing respectful, reciprocal relationships with families and the wider community.
- Consistent and effective health and hygiene.
- Respect for diversity and inclusion.
- Sustainability.



The new look and revised Philosophy have been shared with other early childhood services and inclusion support services. The feedback from all stakeholders has been extremely positive and feel that this is a user-friendly resource for all involved.

#### **Transition to School Program:**

The transition to school program is implemented in terms two, three and four of each year.

**2021:** Bingara Preschool and Bingara Central School has extended their comprehensive transition to school program. The Kindergarten Teacher from Bingara Central School visited Bingara Preschool each Friday, for the first four weeks of term two (2021). From week five of term two, the Bingara Preschool children (who attend school in 2022) visited Bingara Central School each Friday from 9am – 10am to attend a transition lesson.



At the end of term one, Bingara Central School invited the preschool families and educators to attend a 'Meet and Greet' session. The preschool educators attended this event and found it very useful in extending their knowledge in relation to school readiness skills that are recommended for preschool children. During term two of this year, Bingara Preschool and Bingara Central school discussed the importance of a holding a meeting with each family who has a child who is commencing school in 2022. Bingara Preschool helped to organise these meetings with the preschool families.

**2020:** During term three the children attended regular transition excursions to Bingara Central each Friday and continued this into term four. To complete the transition program for the children who commenced school in 2021, two full days of transition at Bingara Central School were facilitated. The preschool educators and staff at Bingara Central have also developed an individual transition statement, outlining the children's individual strengths, interests,





fears and concerns. The feedback that has been received from the school and their families is very positive and it has been identified that this comprehensive transition program benefits the children, their families, the educators and the teachers.

### **Excursions and Events:**

Bingara Preschool has continued to build, strong positive relationships with the community and its surrounds. Over the past year the children have attended the following excursions and events: The Infants Frolic (Bingara Central School), The Orange Picking Ceremony (Community event), The Easter Hat Parade (Bingara Central School), The Orange Festival (Community event), Infants Sports Day (Bingara Central School), excursion to the local Bingara Library (multiple excursions), the Bingara Multi-Purpose Service and the Cultural Day (Bingara Central School). Bingara Preschool also celebrated Children's Week by celebrating and discussing similarities and differences. Also, the children voiced their opinions on what makes them happy whilst at Bingara Preschool.

Due to the restrictions in place with COVID-19, the Bingara Preschool was unable to attend the community Christmas Carnival or hold a presentation evening, where families are usually invited. The Bingara Preschool educators did however facilitate a special graduation ceremony where the board walk area at the Bingara Preschool was transformed into a 'High Tea'. The local Gwydir News Journalist attended and took a photo of each of the graduating children for their families. These graduating photos were also printed in the local edition of the Gwydir News for December (2020).

### **Visitors:**

Bingara Preschool has welcomed a variety of visitors to the service during the last year. This included the Project Manager from The Living Classroom. The Project Manager spoke to the children about how to grow vegetables and how to look after the plants. He also brought in some plants for the children to explore through using their senses: taste, touch and smell.

Bingara Preschool celebrated 'National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Day' by inviting two local Indigenous artists to the service. The two local artists spent two days with the children teaching them about the Indigenous Culture. The children were able to explore a wide variety of culturally based experiences including dancing, storytelling and the creative arts. The children brought items from their home environment to create their own meaningful artworks to share with their families.



Bingara Preschool also welcomed the Library Officer from the Bingara Library. The Library Officer visited the service several times throughout the year, reading the children their favourite stories. She also incorporated the Bingara Preschool service into 'The Great Gwydir Book Hunt'.

Bingara Preschool during term two invited the local Family Day Care educators to visit every Tuesday. The Family Day Care educators facilitated weekly excursions with their children in care to Bingara Preschool where they engaged with the curriculum on offer. These excursions provide an excellent opportunity for the early childhood educators within the community to network, and for the younger Family Day Care children to start their transition to Bingara Preschool. Other visitors to Bingara Preschool included a local community member who came in and cooked with the children. She shared her cooking expertise and told the children stories about living in Bingara as a child.

**Grants:**

Capital Works Grant: In November 2020, Bingara Preschool secured a Capital Works Grant for the amount of \$157,000. The funds will be used to build an extra room onto the facility. This room will add thirteen extra places each day, to the Bingara Preschool’s capacity.

Landcare/ Woolworths Grant: In June 2021, the Bingara Preschool was successful in their application for the Landcare/Woolworths Grant. This was for the amount of \$1,300. The funds will be used to create an Indigenous Bush Tucker Garden, with a Yarning Circle as the focal point of the area.

**Fundraising Events:**

Bingara Preschool have supported three charities within the last financial year. They are as following:

The first event was ‘Talk Like a Pirate Day’ which was held on Friday 21 September 2020. The children and educators dressed up as Pirates and explored the Pirate Day experiences. They also enjoyed the game of ‘walking the plank’. The service set up an online donations page which received a total of \$353.88. This amount was donated to the Children’s Cancer Foundation.



The second fundraising event was ‘Pink Day’ which raised funds for the Breast Cancer Foundation. This event was founded by three school aged children at Bingara Central School. The school children invited the Preschool children to be part of the event. On Wednesday 28 October 2020, the children and educators showed their support by wearing pink to Preschool. There was a donation tin placed near the sign in sheet and by the end of the day, the service had raised \$125. This donation was given to the three school children who added it to their community total.

‘National Hamburger Day’ was celebrated on Friday 28 May 2021. The children were able to enjoy a hamburger and donate to the Asthma Foundation. All the ingredients for the hamburgers were donated by the educators and the service’s families. The service raised a total of \$155.75 for the Asthma Foundation. We look forward to another year full of fun at Bingara Preschool.



## THARAWONGA



### Tharawonga Mobile Resource Unit

Tharawonga has seen many changes this year particularly in relation to educators resigning from the service to pursue their careers and future adventures. Tharawonga has also welcomed another two educators. There has been a change in

Directors and the service has a new appointed Director from Term 2 2021. With the limited educators available we have had to adjust the days of operation at Gravesend and North Star.



### Gravesend

no longer operates on Friday and North Star no longer operates on Thursday. Staff have received training in updating their CPR, First Aid, Child Protection and Behavior guidance. We have allocated additional resources to each venue for the purpose of further meeting the children's needs and interests giving educators other resources or options readily available at all venues. We have had some challenges with our rural and remote venues due to weather conditions however other venues such as Yetman and North Star have seen positive connections built with the schools and working in collaboration to build positive community connections.



### Educational Program

The Educational leader has been working collaboratively with the educators to implement a sound pedagogical program. We have further extended and improved the current curriculum. With the focus being implementing meaningful and educational transitions to promote individual connections with children during the daily routine at each of the venues, we are focusing on building our respect for diversity and our communities through our daily acknowledgment of country which the children are encouraged to participate in and each term program and planning for specific national days of significance. The daily program is evaluated and critically reflected to facilitate improvements and changes required for the children's needs and interests. This year we have incorporated experiences to allow for periods of self-selected play, group times to build our sense of belongings and purposeful intentional teaching that focuses on specific developmental needs of all children. Sound and flexible routines have been implemented at each venue which assists the children in becoming familiar with the daily routine enabling them to further develop their sense of belonging, being and becoming. Sustainability practices have now been deeply embedded in the service throughout every venue to further develop the children's understanding about being responsible for and caring for their environment. To gain a board perspective of teaching styles in the service each educator is allocated a teaching day at every different venue.

### Transition to School Program

Tharawonga builds connections with the remote schools where possible. At our Gravesend venue the school and Preschool were actively involved in meetings, visits and discussions for the children attending formal schooling. Through effective communication and collaboration, the North Star school has commenced a transition program for the children Term 3, 2021. Yetman school collaboratively networks with the service to plan their school transition for Term 4. Nineteen children are transitioning to school in 2021.

### Compliance Visit

In July 2021, the service had a visit by a Department of Education representative. This visit was to provide support and assistance to the service for preparation for the Assessment and rating process. Each venue that the service operates at will have one visit in Term 3 to enable the representative to discuss our venue management plans and other appropriate and relevant service practice and information. As a result of our first visit to the North Star venue the representative provided us with informative and positive feedback on our plans and practices.



### Excursions and Events

The public Librarian visited the Gravesend service they provided craft related activities from the stories that were read to the children. A local Healthwise representative visited the Gravesend and North Star venues to provide the children with education about nose blowing, hand washing and dental health. All venues held their own presentation and graduation day at the end of term 4 2020. In term 4, 2020 the Gravesend, North Star and Yetman services participated in an excursion to the local post offices to post cards to other children attending the service or family members to build on their interest of letters and posting and building the concept of how the mail works by sending to community members. The Gravesend service participated in many excursions in term 4, 2020 to the local school to build the children's understanding about attending formal school, further develop their sense of belonging and actively participate in their own community to develop an understand and reciprocal relationships while understanding responsibilities necessary for community participation and to develop a collaborative partnership.



The Gravesend service visited the local rural fire brigade to develop a collaborative partnership with community organisations and to further extend the children understanding about fire safety and what to do in emergencies. This is embedded into the service practice as the children and educators regularly are involved in practicing emergency evacuation procedures.

The educators at North Star implemented an extension opportunity of a significant community event for the children to participate in as part of clean up Australia day.

This opportunity was offered to the children through a recorded observation and the child's interest. The Gravesend service had a visit from Cleanaway to educate the children about rubbish sorting, actively engaging the children in taking turns of sorting the rubbish, providing the children with activities of sticking the rubbish onto the truck template for the correct bins. This is a daily practice that is embedded within our service. This organisation was scheduled to visit other venues, but these were postponed until further notice.

### COVID-19

The reinstatement of the COVID-19 restrictions in Term 3 2021 saw the service need to make changes to be in line with the current public health orders. The service has a QR code for each of the venues that we operate from or a hard copy



form for the families to sign in on, temperature testing for children, educators and visitors, social distancing between adults, ensuring that hands are sanitised as required particularly at arrival to the service, frequently washing hands, regularly cleaning surfaces and wearing masks.

### Vacation Care

Vacation Care was held during the September/October, December, January, and April school holidays. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Vacation Care did not run through the 2020 July School Holidays. The program covers several key developmental areas for children, including gross motor development, creative skills, social development, and fine motor skills.

Bingara Vacation Care	Warialda Vacation Care
12 Families	16 Families
20 Children	24 Children
11 Girls	11 Girls
9 Boys	13 Boys
<b>Points of Contact: 63</b>	<b>Points of Contact: 111</b>

Each Vacation Care program was held at Bingara Preschool and Warialda Sport and Recreation Ground or Warialda Town Hall, this gave children from both towns an opportunity to attend the activities. During the January school holidays, Vacation Care only ran in Warialda.

Some of the day's activities included sand craft, beading, team challenges, minute to win it challenges, pie face, cooking, limbo, stuck in the mud, wink murder, bon bon making, Mr. Squiggle, sardines, hide & seek, and various ball games.

All facilities used were perfect for the children, as they had the opportunity to be outside and active using their gross motor skills, and were also perfect for weather conditions, whether it be hot or cold, raining, or sunny.

### Youth Services

During 2020/2021 the Gwydir Shire Youth Officer has been working with the schools and assisting young people who have been having trouble with school and out of school. This also involved helping some with resumes, or Centrelink claims.

### Youth Council

Young people from Bingara Central School and Warialda High school have combined to form the 2020/2021 Gwydir Shire Youth Council. Ben Perry, Rachel Coulton, Jackie Woodward, Alex Smith, Abbie-Jewel Kent, Anthony Francis, Emily-Kate Rattray, Sarah Dennis, Marshall Bond, and Andrew Bancroft are the 2020 Youth Council. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the original event scheduled for the end of 2020 to celebrate Nation Youth Week had to be changed into an online event. The Youth Council hosted a Trivia Night via Kahoot, which enabled participants to join in the comfort of their own home. For the latest National Youth Week event, the Youth Council held a colour run in Warialda. Participants had a lot of fun, and it was great to see participants from both Bingara and Warialda.



### Youth Council – My Life, My Town Photo Competition

Throughout the June/July school holidays “My Life, My Town” Photo Competition took place. It was open for all ages. This event was perfect for the COVID-19 restrictions that were in place, as this activity could be done individually, without a mass grouping of people. It worked in well as some entrants had planned to be away, but these plans were cancelled last minute so they then participated in the event. As there were only around 10 participants, plenty more were viewing the photos. We also found this was a great opportunity to provide feedback to see what people would like to change in their towns.



Above: Aiden Price “Add a Splash Park”



Above: Emma Elizabeth “Winter”

### Youth Council – Treasure Hunt

Throughout the June/July school holidays, the Gwydir Youth Council held a Treasure Hunt. The Treasure hunt was conducted around both Bingara and Warialda, with pieces of historical information placed around iconic or historical locations. Each day, the participants had to send in their photos via social media, of which places they had found. They were given clues to help also find the locations. There were no participants for Bingara which was unfortunate to see, as we thought this would be a great opportunity for families to go out together in their own time during school holidays. 5 families from Warialda participated and gave great feedback of what a great activity it was to do with the family, and COVID safe.



### Youth Exchange

In previous years, the Gwydir Shire Youth Council have participated in the Willoughby Gwydir Youth Exchange. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, during 2020/2021 the Youth Exchange could not go ahead. We are hoping next year we will see minimal interruptions and it is able to go ahead.

### Youth Council Conference

In previous years, the Gwydir Shire Youth Council have attended the Youth Council Conference in Goulbourn. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the 2020/2021 Youth Council Conference could not go ahead. We look forward to attending the next Youth Council Conference.

# Naroo Frail Aged Hostel

## Refurbishment of the Naroo Kitchen

Under the Commonwealth Government's Aged Care Regional Rural & Remote Infrastructure Grant commenced in June 2020. There was a delay in works due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Work was completed in August 2020 and the new kitchen is now operational delivering meals to our Residents that reside in Naroo. The kitchen has greatly improved the working conditions of staff working in the kitchen and has allowed for meals to residents suffering from Dementia to be delivered to the unit and remain in a temperature controlled box until they are ready to eat thereby complying with all food safety regulations.

## Quality Indicators

Naroo continues to submit Quality Indicator data quarterly to the Department of Health. The Quality Indicators have expanded to include:

- pressure injuries
- physical restraint
- unplanned weight loss
- falls and major injury (new)
- Medication management (new) including polypharmacy and anti-psychotics.

## Lounge room and Dining area renovations

The Naroo committee generously donated monies to upgrade the furniture in both the lounge and dining area. Naroo purchased new blinds for both areas and new flooring. Naroo is very fortunate to have a committee invested in improving the lives and living environment of our residents.

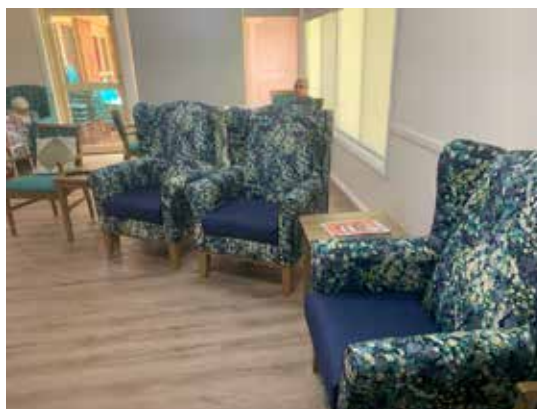
## Person Centred Software

A new electronic documentation system was purchased and implemented for Naroo. This system allows staff to document in real time on a device that they carry with them at all times. This has allowed for an improvement in documentation and more time being spent with the residents rather than sitting at a computer documenting at the end of each shift. The system also allows for a Carer gateway in which families and carers can log in and see what their loved one has been doing for the day and what cares have been given.

## Royal Commission

There is a total of 148 recommendations that have already commenced with changes such as SIRS reporting and management of residents requiring chemical and/or physical restraint.

There is a much greater emphasis on the Boards understanding and input into aged care for the clinical delivery of services.



The SIRS requires every residential aged care service to have in place an effective incident management system – a set of protocols, processes, and standard operating procedures that staff are trained to use.

This means adopting a systematic approach to minimise the risk of and response to incidents that occur in a residential care setting. An incident management system is vital in supporting residential age care services to effectively manage risks to their consumers, visitors and staff.

Under the SIRS, there are 8 types of reportable incidents:

- Unreasonable use of force – *for example, hitting, pushing, shoving, or rough handling.*
- Unlawful sexual contact or inappropriate sexual conduct – *such as sexual threats or stalking, or sexual activities without consent.*
- Psychological or emotional abuse – *such as yelling, name calling, ignoring a consumer, threatening gestures, or refusing a consumer access to care or services as a means of punishment.*
- Unexpected death – *where poor quality clinical care is provided to a consumer resulting in their death, or where the actions of a consumer result in the death of another consumer.*
- Stealing or financial coercion by a staff member – *for example, where a staff member coerces a consumer to change their will to their advantage or steals valuables from the consumer.*
- Neglect – *for example, withholding personal care, untreated wounds, or insufficient assistance during meals.*
- Inappropriate physical or chemical restraint – *where physical or chemical restraint is used without prior consent or without notifying the consumer's representative as soon as practicable; where physical restraint is used in a non-emergency situation; or when a provider issues a drug to a consumer to influence their behaviour as a form of chemical restraint.*
- Unexplained absence from care – *where the consumer is absent from the service without explanation and there are reasonable grounds to report the absence to the police.*

The Commission must be notified of all reportable incidents. This includes incidents that occur, or are alleged or suspected to have occurred, and includes incidents involving a care recipient with cognitive or mental impairment (such as dementia).

**Restraint** – please see letter on the following page received from the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner. [A printable version of this letter can be downloaded from our website.](#)

### **Call bell Security System**

With advancements in technology and an outdated nurse call system, a tender was sought to supply and install a more advanced system that was capable of providing a solution to meet our resident needs, making safety and high-quality care a priority.

Naroo now has a state of the art system that notifies staff when a resident gets out of bed or falls through the night via Optical Sensors in the ceiling of rooms. Duress pendants worn by staff and residents increases safety providing faster response times.

Security cameras installed in communal areas providing further surveillance and assistance to support resident and staff and review of incidents by management. Reports for accreditation purposes can also be downloaded such as response to call times.

### **Bed Occupancy**

Naroo's bed occupancy has remained above average throughout the year and is indicative of the quality care given to residents and the good name it has in the area.





28 June 2021

Dear Board Chair and CEO

**Re: Important changes relating to the use of restrictive practices**

I am writing to advise all Board Chairs and CEOs of residential aged care approved providers of important changes regarding the use of restrictive practices. These changes have been introduced by the Australian Government in response to the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

From 1 July 2021, approved providers have more specific responsibilities under the Aged Care Act 1997 and the Quality of Care Principles 2014 relating to the use of any restrictive practice in residential aged care and short-term restorative care in a residential care setting.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission) has issued a [Regulatory Bulletin](#) which sets out your new responsibilities and provides important information for you and your staff to help you ensure that your care and services accord with the changed requirements.

The [Regulatory Bulletin](#) outlines the requirements that must be met before and during the use of any restrictive practice and the resources to support providers to meet these requirements. It also outlines how the Commission will monitor compliance and manage any identified non-compliance with these requirements, as well as a provider's performance against the Aged Care Quality Standards.

The Commission will continue to monitor providers' use of restrictive practices through complaint handling processes, responding to notifications made under the Serious Incident Response Scheme, and as part of quality assessment and monitoring activities, including accreditation audits.

Providers who are currently compliant with their legal obligations with respect to restrictive practices are well placed to address the new requirements. In other words, if you already have in place systems, procedures, staff training and care practices that are aimed at minimising restraint, this is the best starting point for your implementation of the new arrangements.

I strongly encourage you to review and carefully consider the changed requirements, and to support your staff in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the older people in your care.

Yours sincerely,

*J. M. Anderson*

**Janet Anderson PSM**  
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner

1800 951 822  
[agedcarequality.gov.au](http://agedcarequality.gov.au)

### Retention Bonus

The Australian Government announced a \$234.9 million COVID-19 Aged Care Workforce Retention Payment on 20 March 2020. Payments of up to \$800 per quarter of 2 quarters to be directly paid to care workers to reinforce the workforce which has been facing staffing challenges due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Naroo Management successfully applied ensuring that staff receive this bonus in accordance with the guidelines.

### Audrey Finney turns 100

Residents at Naroo celebrated Audrey's birthday with a beautiful high tea. Audrey grew up on the property between Warialda and Gravesend. Later married and lived in the Sydney area to work as telephonist/clerical worker at Essential Services. After retirement Audrey and her husband moved to back to the area and called Inverell home.

### Funding

Joblink Plus upskilling existing staff. Naroo has applied for a grant to support upskill training for existing staff for improvement and enhancements of knowledge and education which supports the facilities direct needs in conjunction with Joblink Plus. Management have identified specific training opportunities, such as First Aid Certificates, CPR Training, Medication and Palliative care. The funding was successful, and training provided to staff in April 2021.

### Grant Application

The Aged Care Manager is currently working on 2 grant applications:

- ACFR- Aged Care Approvals Round. This year's application is around building a new room for Activities and Leisure and to cover in the internal courtyard so it can be used all year round for activities and special events.
- BIF – Business Improvement Fund – to assist Aged Care facilities that are financially struggling but not considering closure. A separate audit was required which has been completed by PwC. Application completed and still awaiting confirmation.

### Leisure and Lifestyle program

Naroo has a robust Lifestyle and leisure program in place lead by a fulltime Activities coordinator. This program has been invaluable during the COVID pandemic and lock downs to continue supporting our resident's mental health, socialisation and overall wellbeing. Carers and families are much happier seeing their loved ones being engaged and happy and having quality of life.



All Care staff are empowered and encouraged to be involved in activities with residents to provide a flexible and varied program including over the weekends. We feel it is very important to be able to integrate those residents with decreased cognitive ability into the daily activities. Too often residents suffering from Dementia and other illnesses that reduce cognitive ability are under stimulated and unengaged in their life. Meaningful activities for people suffering from Dementia provides mental stimulation and has been demonstrated to improve cognitive function.

### Impact of COVID-19

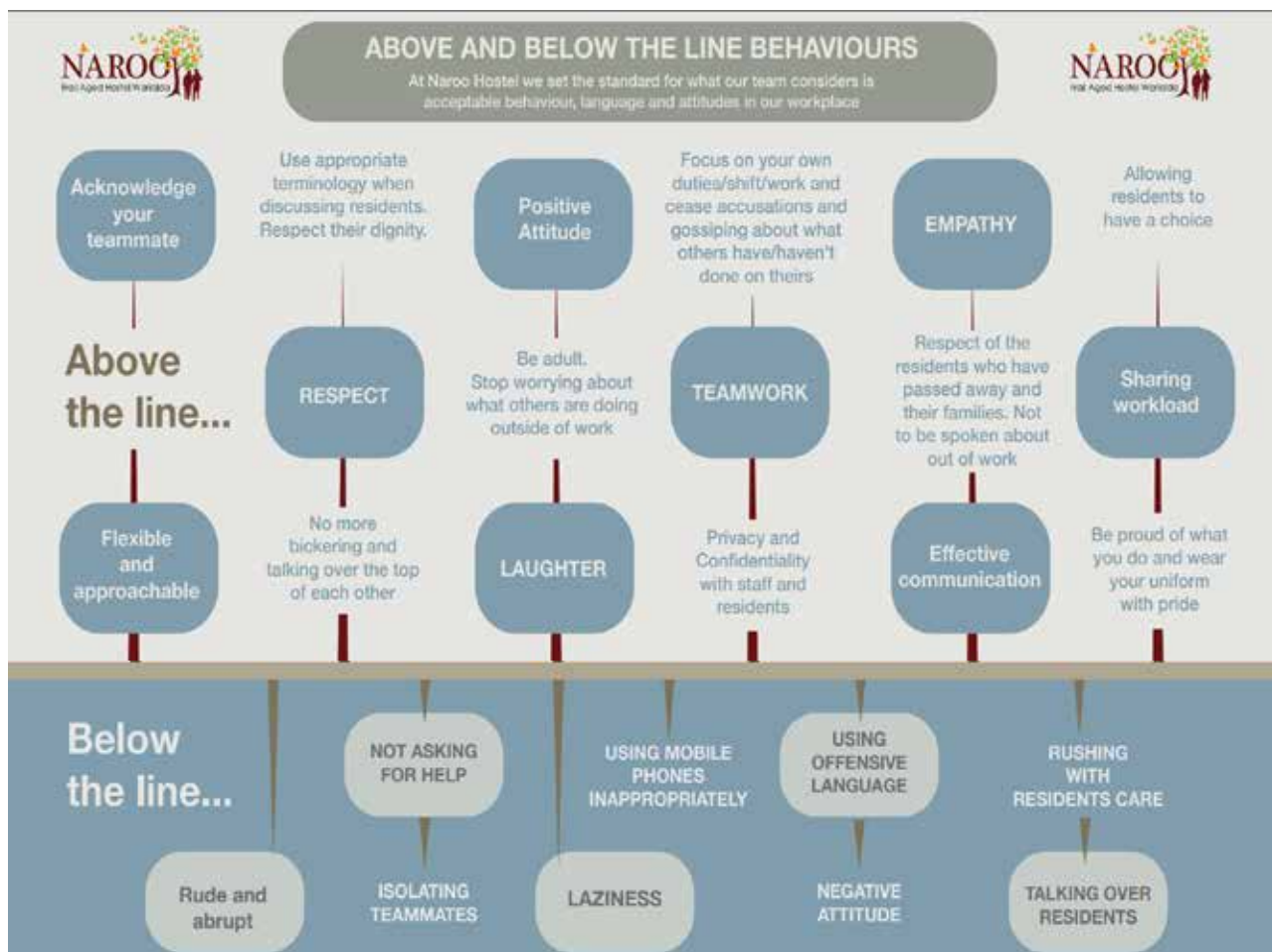
All residential aged care facilities are required to engage an onsite clinical lead to provide leadership and increase capacity in relation to infection prevention and control. The Australian Government is providing a second payment of the COVID-19 supplement to assist facilities in meeting the additional costs of preparing for and responding to COVID-19.

Outbreak plans are in place for the management of general outbreaks and a COVID-19 outbreak and are kept up to date by the Aged Care Manager.

### Naroo Team Standards

Naroo staff developed “Above and Below Behaviours” in 2018 and these are reviewed annually. At the last staff meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> February the behaviours were revisited and discussed with all staff and changes made accordingly.

The “Above and Below Behaviours” promotes acceptable behaviour, language and attitudes in our workplace and encourages staff to speak up in a respectable manner.



## Bingara Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)

The past year has been greatly affected by COVID-19 interrupting our services, particularly Group Social Support Activities. Looking back through our photos it is amazing the things we did manage to do.

In the months we weren't locked down or services not operating, we visited Copeton Dam and had lunch in the kiosk area. Clients also enjoyed a BBQ on the Bingara Golf Course. We had planned a lunch at the Bingara Sporting Club Chinese Restaurant, a trip to Maggie Mays in Manilla and a visit to the Library for a Movie and finger food lunch but all outings unfortunately had to be cancelled. These outings will be on our agenda for this year as soon as it is possible.

While we could hold our Tuesday Morning Tea/lunches, we celebrated special events such as Melbourne Cup, Christmas, Australia Day, St Patrick's Day, Easter, Mother's Day and we introduced a monthly Birthday party for everyone who celebrated their Birthdays during that month. The Ladies are missing their Tuesdays in the Lingalonger room and until the lockdown in August we have been delivering morning teas and keeping a check on our clients making sure everyone is Ok and has everything they need. We are currently ringing clients regularly to keep in contact particularly with those who have no family in Bingara.

While attending morning tea/lunch, the Ladies have been knitting. They have contributed to some very worthwhile causes while doing something they love. The many squares Knitted by the Ladies were sent to "Wrapped with Love" and made into blankets. The finished products are distributed to homeless people. Baby Jackets, beanies and booties knitted were sent to "Life's Little Treasures" for premature babies. The knitting continues at home.

Transport to out of town Medical Appointments has continued through the pandemic with very few appointments being cancelled. Volunteers have remained devoted to the cause looking after our clients in an exceptional manner.

The Access Bus travelled to Inverell twice a month when possible. The bus was also utilised for medical appointments when both other vehicles were in use or when several clients had appointments booked and Social Distancing rules needed to be adhered to.

Bingara's elderly population have been supporting the COVID-19 vaccination program with many of our clients using our local transport to the Bingara Medical centre for their vaccines. Most of our Clients and volunteers have had both of their AstraZeneca shots. Staff have one shot due in October.

An unusually wet year has also contributed to an increase in the use of local transport.

Bingara CHSP centre	Data
No. clients receiving services	215
Transport trips provided	2070
Meals on Wheels provided (in home)	2301
Meals provided in centre	357
Group social support hours provided	1620 hrs
Individual social support hours provided	3902 hrs

Meals on Wheels service has serviced up to eighteen clients during the past twelve months, levelling at twelve clients at the end of the financial year. Salads were very popular during summer months. Volunteers all underwent online training with help from staff. Volunteers remain at around twenty for the Meals on Wheels deliveries.

## Warialda/Delungra Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)

Commonwealth Home Support Program provides services to clients in and around our Local Shire areas. Providing Meals on Wheels (fresh/frozen) Day Centre meals, activities and transport local and out of town, social support (group and individual), including monthly outings, organising Day Centre groups and annual Christmas parties.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions brought in, our facility had to cease all services for a few months. Clients, volunteers, and staff were all impacted by this closure. Volunteers were unable to offer their time to drive clients to appointments etc. nor were they able to come into the centre to help with functions. Clients were greatly affected as they were not allowed to visit the centre at all, and during the statewide lockdown many were unable to leave their homes. This time was particularly horrific for our clients as often, visiting our CHSP offices is the only social outing that they have. Bus trips to Inverell also ceased and staff had to take over the delivery of Meals On Wheels, and some transport trips. CHSP staff also attended Naroo to assist with afternoon activities. Warialda CHSP are doing their bit to keep our community safe and are following regulatory standards with PPE, sanitising, hand washing, use of mask, sign in sheet, and temperature checks.

During the COVID-19 pandemic all day trips were suspended, greatly impacting on the social and mental welfare of centre clients. To help combat this, staff took the time to do weekly “welfare checks” on clients, by making time to speak to them individually on the phone. Staff also made contactless deliveries of morning and afternoon teas to try and lift the spirits of clients.

During the year the centre, when COVID-19 has allowed and with the help of volunteers, the CHSP bus takes clients to Inverell for their fortnightly jobs, shopping and other appointments. This service has a regular stream of clients that utilize the opportunity to spend the day out of town once a fortnight.

Client care plans are continuously updated, and all other relevant reporting requirements are adhered to in a timely manner, including police checks.

Newsletters are distributed to clients monthly to keep them informed of what is happening at the CHSP office and birthdays are celebrated monthly for our special clients and volunteers. These celebrations give everyone something to look forward to and bring joy to our clients.

Warialda CHSP staff would like to take this opportunity to say our services would not survive without our volunteers who help daily.

Warialda/Delungra Day Centres	Warialda Data	Delungra Data
Clients receiving service	87	16
Transport trips provided	886	160
Meals on Wheels provided in home	711	-
Meals provided at centers	1567	601
Group social support	2621 hrs	1277 hrs
Individual social support	702 hrs	31 hrs
Volunteers	44	1
Outings	1	1
	Salt Cave Bingara	Bingara RSL Club Bingo & Luncheon

## Our Achievements in Building Services

Council's Building Services Business Unit comprises six full time, 1 part time and school-based trainee staff members and is responsible for, but not limited to providing the following services to the community:

- Building approvals, certification, and inspections
- Swimming pool compliance and inspections
- Sanitary plumbing and drainage approvals and inspections
- Building repairs and maintenance
- Capital works construction

### Building Certification and inspections

Building Services staff provide an effective and affordable building approval, certification, and inspection service to the community. Services extend to the assessment and issuing of construction certificates, building certificates and occupation certificates. Staff also carry out critical stage mandatory building inspections during the building process to ensure that buildings and structures are compliant, safe, and fit for purpose.

Our Business Unit also provides information and advice to members of our community in relation to various building related issues.

Building Services staff respond to complaints received in relation to illegal development, building safety and other matters and carry out investigations and enforcement action where necessary.

### Swimming Pool Inspections

Building Services have a private swimming pool inspection program in place where all known swimming pools in Gwydir Shire are inspected once every three years. The program is designed to ensure that owners



Above: Swimming Pool inspections aim to protect our young children from accidental drowning

of private swimming pools maintain their pools and pool barriers in an effective manner to ensure the safety of all pool users. We are now into our 4th year of the swimming pool inspections with every known swimming pool within Gwydir Shire having been inspected at least once. In the 2020/21 financial year Council inspectors carried out 51 pool inspections. Of those 51 inspections, 47 pools were found to be compliant on the first inspection, with 2 pools being compliant on reinspection. There were 2 swimming pools which remained non-compliant at the end of the 2020/2021 financial year and Council inspectors are working with those pool owners to ensure compliance. Gwydir Shire Council issued 49 swimming pool compliance certificates.

### **Sanitary plumbing and drainage approvals and inspections**

Gwydir Shire Council is the delegated authority by Fair Trading NSW to issue approvals for and inspections of sanitary plumbing and drainage within the Gwydir Shire Local Government Area. This includes the installation of all sanitary plumbing and drainage and includes the installation of on-site sewerage management systems (OSSM) where there is no access to a reticulated sewer system.

Council regularly conducts inspections on OSSM systems for the sale of properties to ensure that systems have been installed properly and are operating effectively to ensure health of the occupants, adjoining properties, and the environment.

All sanitary plumbing and drainage work must be carried out by an appropriately licensed plumber.

### **Building Repairs and Maintenance**

Building Services carried out over 50 planned maintenance activities and responded to in excess of 100 reactive repairs and maintenance requests across approximately 200 Council owned building assets. Staff also responded to after-hours security calls and emergency repairs to Council buildings.

Staff carried out refurbishments to our aged units at Whitfeld Place, Holden Street & Plunkett Street.

### **Capital Works**

Our regular Capital Works program for 2020/2021 was again deferred to allow Building Services staff to undertake projects under the Stronger Country Communities Grant Funding program and other Grant funded projects.

These projects included the following:

- Bingara Pool Complex – Construction of new entry/kiosk building
- Cunningham Park – Construction of new amenities building
- The Living Classroom – Construction of new livestock shed
- Warialda Recreation Ground – Bar/BBQ Function Centre



*Right: Warialda Recreation Ground Bar/BBQ Function Centre*

## Project Management

There were a number of projects which were carried out by external contractors which were project managed by Building Services staff under a number of different grant funding streams. These included:

- Warialda Medical Centre refurbishments
- Warialda Golf & Bowling Club improvements
- 47 Hope Street alterations, repairs & maintenance
- CWA Hall improvements
- Crooble Hall improvements
- Warialda Catholic Convent painting
- Warialda Anglican Church Hall improvements



*Above: Warialda Golf & Bowling Club – Renovated commercial kitchen*

## Training

Council's Building Services staff continue to undergo mandatory training to ensure their ability to maintain a safe and compliant workforce which includes:

- Safe working within proximity of power lines training
- First aid training
- Asbestos removal

Staff also participated in CPD training to ensure their ability to maintain accreditation where required under relevant legislation.

## Summary

The Building Services Business Unit continues to work collaboratively and cooperatively with other Business Units within Gwydir Shire Council to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of our goals for our community.

There are a number of exciting Capital Works projects that are in the advanced planning stages which will be delivered in the 2021/2022 financial year and we look forward to reporting on these in the next annual report.



# Our Achievements in Environment and Sustainability

## **Noxious Weeds**

This year marked the first year of the new 5 year Weed Action Plan. The plan ranks noxious weeds according to their impact and prevalence in the region, with the highest ranked referred to as Priority Weeds. The Shire is divided into 5 areas with section A starting at the southernmost area of the Shire. Properties in Section E and A were inspected and control information and advice given to landholders regarding their biosecurity duties. Routine inspections, reinspection's, education, weed control and identification was completed for the period.

The weeds team purchased a trailer for the Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV). This will allow staff to take the UTV to sites across the Shire that is difficult to access by motor vehicle.

The department is running Chartis software for GPS capturing and reporting weeds data to the standards required by the Department of Primary Industry (DPI).

Priority weeds were successfully controlled in hotspots identified around the Shire and across our road network. Working closely with the Local Lands Service, Landcare, North West Weeds and bordering Shires. The Harissia Cactus containment line at North Star was held, with control works done across the area. Staff continue to attend the Harrisia working group meetings.

The weeds unit in partnership with Landcare, run cochineal bug propagation in the purpose-built greenhouse at The Living Classroom. Bugs are available for landholders to control tiger pear, rope pear and prickly pear. The weeds unit renovated the site to replace the shade cloth roof with alsynite. Biological control continues to be monitored on cat's claw creeper on the Gwydir River in Gravesend. The department also coordinated weed control across the Gwydir River camping areas in Bingara, including the expanded Faithful camping areas.

A major Parthenium outbreak was detected at Croppa Creek. A regional rapid response team inspected and immediately undertook control. The Department of Primary Industries provided funding and a response was coordinated with the Weeds Unit and the Local Land Services. This included expanded inspection areas to identify the extent of any spread and ongoing control of any weeds detected. The other parthenium weed hot spots were routinely checked and plants were detected, destroyed and reported.

A project to remove willows was coordinated by the weeds team. Technical services mechanically removed willows from the middle of the Gwydir River. This improves river flow, improves habitat and removes competition for native species. The project attracted a lot of attention on social media. The council responded to these inquiries by providing information about willow's detrimental effects on river systems.

## **Educational activities**

The weeds officers attended two parthenium and one harrisia cactus field days. The usual display occurred at the Bingara and Warialda show. There was a great response to the stall at the Bingara show this year with a line up occurring. Information was provided to residents and landholders about priority weeds.

## **Private works**

The following are part of funded regional activities for intensive weed control and eradication and containment.



New England Weeds authority Macleay Valley tropical soda apple and Bingara general.  
August and September 2020 \$4511.00 + GST

### **Compliance**

The department conducted camping inspections along the Gwydir River. Inspections of camping areas is done daily through the working week and staff attending call out after hours as required. Across the year there was a daily average of 19 caravans and motorhomes visiting the Gwydir River campgrounds. There were no major incidents in the camping areas. There have been minimal camps set up outside the designated areas. There were six camping complaints received. Sandstone blocks were also installed to prevent vehicles driving along the riverbank at speed towing persons on the water.

Staff distributed brochures to campers promoting local goods and services. The general behaviour of campers was compliant and there were no public order or safety issues. However, small amounts of rubbish were left at camp sites and verbal warnings were given to not cut firewood.

COVID-19 public health orders saw the camping areas shut to new arrivals for times during the period. During the closures temporary signage and barriers were erected and staff monitored the areas. There were no reported incidents related to the pandemic. A very small number of permanent travellers were effectively stranded without a residence to return to. Their status was verified and there were no issues with them remaining on site until they could continue to other destinations as they were opened.

The Regulatory officers seized 13 dogs that were microchipped and registered with current owner contact information. This enabled them to be reunited with their owners with a warning instead of going to the pound.

A further five dogs were seized and transferred to the impounding facility. Three were rehomed within the area and to rehoming organisations. The staff have networked with several rehoming organisations across the state ensure that the maximum number of unclaimed suitable pets find a new home.


The Regulatory officers seized seven domestic cats in the period. Three were rehomed within the area and to rehoming organisations. Feral cat control was undertaken at the landfills as well as cat traps set and monitored. The council partnered with the Local Land Service in two programs. A feral cat monitoring program at the landfill at Warialda and Warialda Rail. This saw the deployment of monitoring equipment to determine numbers at these sites. As well as a wild dog baiting program covering part of the Warialda region. The baiting occurred along Mosquito Creek Road Warialda through to Gravesend.

Routine surveillance was conducted at rest stops for litter and truck effluent release. Staff also regularly monitor unauthorised access to the remote landfills.

During the period 5 goats were impounded and released back to their owners after the impounding fees were paid. Council received seven abandoned vehicles reports and identified owners who were notified to remove them. The remaining unclaimed vehicles did not reach the value threshold so were taken to the landfill for scrap as provided for under the Impounding Act.

In the period 17 dog barking and two other noise complaints were reported and investigated. Six dog roaming reports and eight nuisance animal reports were investigated.

Staff dealt with ten non-companion Animal matters. Including requests concerning horses, cows, chickens, roosters and a duck. One smoke and burning and two public health requests about septic issues were also investigated and one notice of intention was issued. All matters were resolved.



Council received 31 overgrown and untidy block reports in the reporting period. These were inspected along with proactive patrol of the villages and 46 notices of intention were issued. 14 of these went to order.

With the higher rainfall and more available feed there was a steep decline in the number of grazing permit concurrences processed. Three grazing permit concurrences were processed for the period compared to 42 for the proceeding period. The better condition also led to a decline in 'stock on road' calls for the period.

### **Dog Attack Statistics**

Known dog attacks reported and investigated by Council's Regulatory officers are entered into the Companion Animals Database, in accordance with the requirements of the Companion Animals Act 1998. During 2020/2021 there were 6 incidents involving 8 dogs reported to Council. All incidents were investigated and reported through the Companion Animals Database portal. All incidents were resolved.

In the villages backyard burning is only permissible with a permit. Council undertook an 'approval to burn' promotion. Materials were produced and distributed. Three approvals to burn applications were assessed and approved.

Staff undertook the required inspection of the approved breeding facility in the shire. Compliance staff also undertook native animal spotting during bypass construction. The Ranger's Conference was cancelled this period due to COVID-19.

### **Penalty Notices**

Companion animal (dog) 7 penalties issued  
fail to comply with order 5 penalties issued  
Animal Unattended in a public place 1 penalty issued

### **Food**

COVID-19 restrictions again meant that the inspection program was suspended for times during the reporting period. This also meant that a number of events were also cancelled. All 27 medium and high-risk food businesses had an annual inspection, except for the school canteens. Mobile food vans and stalls that did make it to the shire were also inspected. The yearly food inspection survey was completed and submitted to the Food Authority.

Information was distributed to food businesses including food authority fact sheets and a regional food safety calendar. People seeking information about starting a food retail business, mobile and home food businesses were given the relevant information. Three complaints were received for the period. They were investigated and the appropriate actions were taken. Staff attended remote regional meetings and training sessions with the Food Authority.


### **Water sampling**

Weekly water sampling was conducted for Bingara and Warialda, fortnightly for Gravesend and monthly for North Star as per the NSW Health requirements.

### **Electricity**

Electricity consumption continues to be monitored through the Azility portal. The total electricity expenditure was \$447,604. Down 21% from last year for a saving of \$93,298. Usage also dropped from 7,643GJ for the previous period to 5,881Gj.

Council's 3 large sites (Naroo, Bingara Water Treatment Plant and the Warialda Sale Yard Bore) are contracted through Origin, Street lighting is through ERM, and all the small user sites are through AGL. The



contracts are made through Local Government Procurement who negotiate for the best price and stability in the volatile energy market. All three contracts are up for renewal at the end of 2022.

Solar systems are operational at Naroo, the Bingara Council Chambers, Warialda Council Chambers, Warialda Works Depot, Warialda Sewerage Treatment Works and the Roxy theatre.

Building services continued to roll out LED lighting which significantly reduces power consumption.

### **Cemeteries**

Annual cemetery reporting was completed for the period for the operating cemeteries. The total internments were 28 for the period, 13 at Warialda and 15 at Bingara.

Seven inurnments were made. In Warialda, two were made in grave sites and one in columbarium. In Bingara, one was made in a grave site and two in the columbarium.

## Our achievements in Waste

Through the hierarchy of Avoid, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle the Gwydir Shire Council aims to achieve sustainability and the responsible use and disposal of resources within the region.

The Shire provides Landfill and Transfer sites services at 7 facilities across the Shire. Warialda and Bingara have a fully staffed landfill operating 7 days a week. There are remote landfills at Coolatai, Croppa Creek, Gravesend, Warialda Rail and Upper Horton, and a transfer station facility at North Star. All residents and ratepayers across the Gwydir Shire have access to a landfill or transfer station.

Gwydir Shire Council provides households with a 3 bin system consisting of general waste, recycling and food and kitchen organics (FOGO). Commercial and Non Rateable properties have a general waste, recycling service and food and kitchen organics upon request as needed.

There are Public Place Bins in parks, ovals, and rest areas all across the Shire. Commercial and domestic 'Cardboard cage' recycling services are located at Bingara, Croppa Creek, Gravesend, Warialda and Upper Horton. The Gwydir Shire Council also provides a range of specialised recycling and disposal services such as Asbestos, DrumMuster, Mobile Muster, Printer Cartridge, E-Waste, Petroleum and Cooking Oil and Household Chemical Collections.

Council is a member of the Northern Inland Regional Waste Group. This group was formed in 1998. Northern Inland Regional Waste (NIRW) is a collaboration of Councils from the New England and North West region of New South Wales who are focused on delivering cost effective and sustainable waste management options for the regional community. Armidale Regional Council hosts the positions of the NIRW Executive Officer and Program Coordinator. Current member councils are Armidale Regional Council, Glen Innes Severn Shire, Gunnedah Shire, Gwydir Shire, Inverell Shire, Liverpool Plains Shire, Moree Plains Shire, Narrabri Shire, Tamworth Regional, Uralla Shire, Tenterfield Shire and Walcha Shire.

### Waste Collection

Collection reminders and education have been sent via push notification through the waste app. The education campaign targets improvement of recycling habits and increased use of FOGO bin (Food Organics Garden Organics Bin).

- An average of 329 kg per service was collected in the Red bin over 1563 services down from 263 kg up, +25%.
- An average of 112 kg per service was collected in the Yellow bin over 1563 services down from 126 kg, -11%.
- An average of 147 kg per service was collected in the Green bin over 1373 services up from 129 kg, +14%.

The continued drop in recycling was expected with better diversion through the container deposit scheme. There is a good incline in green bin mass which may be due to education and promotion. Leading to a better uptake of use as well as more people spending time at home and in the garden due to COVID-19 restrictions.

### Landfills and Transfer Stations

Landfills and Transfer Stations were operated successfully during 2020/2021. Due to a restructure Landfill staff were moved to Engineering Services and staff from this area have been successfully providing relief staff to cover annual leave and sick leave of the rostered Landfill Operators. The two manned Landfills continue to provide services 7 days a week and there is 24 hour access to all of the unmanned Landfills.

## Our Achievements in Town Utilities

### Water

Gwydir Shire Council provides water supply to Warialda, Bingara, Gravesend and North Star.

Warialda's water supply is sourced from groundwater from five bores. The water is aerated and disinfected with sodium hypochlorite before being delivered to residents.

Bingara's water supply is sourced from the Gwydir River via bank infiltration chamber; the water is then treated using dissolved air floatation/filtration process and disinfected with chlorine before delivery to reservoirs where the water gravitates to users.



Gravesend water supply is sourced from the Gwydir River via bank infiltration bores located north-east of Gravesend. Water is disinfected with sodium hypochlorite before being delivered to residents.

North Star's water supply is sourced from sub artesian

ground water. The water is aerated and then treated using Reverse Osmosis and disinfection with sodium hypochlorite before being delivered to residents. *Above: Bingara water treatment plant laboratory*

### Water Operations and Maintenance

In 2020/2021 a total of 701ML of water was treated and delivered to users in the Shire.

Two new water connections were installed during 2020/2021. Fourteen water service lines were replaced from main to meter and 136 service lines repaired.

A total of 38 water meters were replaced due to age limit or faults and 38 water main breaks were repaired. A new drinking fountain was installed in Fays Park in Bingara.

Council's four water supplies operate under a Drinking Water Quality Management system which involves placement of multiple barriers of protection to ensure water quality is maintained. Inspection and testing of water quality occurs on a daily basis and protocols are followed. As an independent check, Council's Environmental Department collects water samples from the reticulation system of the four supplies and these samples are provided to NSW Health laboratory for analysis. In 2020/2021 there were two water quality incidents at Gravesend due to rainfall in the catchment area causing high turbidity in the Gwydir River. Water quality parameters could not be maintained and as a result Gravesend was placed on a Boiled Water Alert from 18 December 2020 to 28 January 2021 and 23 March to 23 April 2021.

### Water Restrictions

During the 2020/2021 Financial Year Level 1 water restrictions remained in place to encourage the efficient use of water.

### Water charges

Water charges have an access component and a usage component with a two-part tariff. Water usage less than 600KL is charged at \$1.50/KL and water usage over 600KL incurs a charge of \$2.10/KL. Water billing is undertaken on a quarterly basis.

### Warialda Rail Water

During the reporting period, Council undertook a survey and community consultation of residents and ratepayers of Warialda Rail to determine the level of support for a reticulated water supply to the village of Warialda Rail. The results highlighted that the majority of residents and ratepayers of Warialda Rail are self-sufficient with their water supply with either bores or rainwater tanks and are happy with the current situation. No further investigation to extend Warialda's water supply to service Warialda Rail will be undertaken.

### Grant Funding

Council received a grant from NSW Department of Industry and Environment (DPIE) under Safe and Secure Water Program (SSWP) for \$45,000 for the investigation of Gravesend water quality. The study was undertaken by Hunter H2O, and the report has been submitted to Council for review. The report will be used for future funding applications for the improvement of Gravesend water quality.

Council received a second grant from DPIE under SSWP for \$57,750 for Automation, Monitoring and Telemetry. The main objective of this project is to determine the requirements to improve water treatment instrumentation, monitoring and automation at the four water supplies and two sewerage plants. Council has received the draft report which will be used for future funding applications.

Water Supply Capital improvements 2020/2021 included:

- Water Meter replacement program
- Bingara Swimming Pool – water installation
- Bingara raw water pump station footbridge replacement
- Upper Horton Water Supply Improvements – grant funded
- Replacement of submersible bore pump at Gravesend
- Bingara water treatment plant eastern side skillion construction
- Telemetry upgrade – including backup server and remote monitor
- Water main replacement Copeton Dam Road 475m of 150mm



*Bingara water pump station footbridge replacement*

### Upper Horton

Upper Horton's water supply was greatly enhanced with the installation of a new 350KL storage tank and pipework. The work included installation of the storage tank, construction of a new bore, connecting pipework and diesel generator. The project was funded by the Federal Government's Community Drought Program.



*Upper Horton storage tank*

## Sewerage Systems

Gwydir Shire Council operates two sewerage systems. Warialda's sewerage system was built in 1969/1970 with a design size of 1500EP (equivalent population). Warialda operates under Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) Licence L584 for small treatment plants with an allowable discharge of 250ML/year into Reedy Creek. The yearly inflow into the sewerage treatment was 180ML; 55ML of treated effluent was recycled and used at the local Golf Course to irrigate the fairways and tees. Bingara sewerage system was commissioned in 1971 and has a design capacity of 2000EP. The Bingara system operates under EPA licence L586 for small treatment plants with an allowable discharge of 250ML/year into the Gwydir River. The inflow for Bingara sewerage treatment plant was 45ML and 5ML of treated effluent was recycled and used on site.

Council's residential sewer access charge is \$500/annum, non-residential sewer access charge is \$425/annum, non-residential sewer customers also pay a usage charge based on their water consumption and a sewer discharge factor. Non-residential customers have a trade waste charge levied each year.

The extension of Bingara's sewerage service is in progress with property audits completed, geotechnical investigations completed, costings obtained, a business case developed, and a submission prepared for funding from Safe and Secure Water Program.

Annual Returns for both Warialda and Bingara sewerage treatment plants were submitted in December 2020.

The EPA licences for both sewerage treatment plants require monthly water testing to be undertaken at the discharge to the Gwydir River and Reedy Creek. These results are published on Council's website every month.

Capital Works Sewer during 2020/2021 included:

- Truckwash ponds at Warialda
- Telemetry Alarms at Warialda truckwash
- Bingara sewerage extension – design report and business case
- Installation of a sewerage pump station at Bingara pool precinct
- Renewal of sewerage and water lines at Warialda Memorial pool
- Installation of 10Kw solar system at Bingara Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP)
- Refurbishment of Bingara STP trickle filter distributor



*10Kw solar system at Bingara sewerage treatment plant*

## Warialda Truckwash

The construction of lagoons adjacent to the Warialda truckwash was completed during the reporting period.

Council installed a decanter chamber at the Warialda truckwash which allows for drainage of the ponds for recycling the effluent.



*Construction of the truckwash ponds, Warialda*



The Warialda truckwash facility opened in January and is proving to be well utilised with an average of 45 trucks washed per month. The average wash time is 72 minutes using an average of 5KL water per wash.



**Warialda truckwash in use**



*Decanter chamber at the truckwash*

### **Parks and Gardens**

Gwydir Shire Council operates and maintains 15 parks, 3 sports fields, 11 playgrounds, 12 reserves and numerous gardens. Two separate work crews operate in the north and south of the shire. The northern crew maintains parks and gardens in the Warialda, Gravesend, Warialda Rail, Coolatai and North Star regions. The southern crew maintain parks and gardens in Bingara, Upper Horton, the Glacial Area and Myall Creek memorial site. Facilities in these areas are frequented by numerous visitors and Council aims to keep these areas in prime condition.

Council purchased two defibrillators for Gwydir Oval and Warialda Recreation Ground during the reporting period. Part funding for one defibrillator was obtained through the NSW Office of Sport.

As part of Council's ongoing maintenance program, Gwydir Oval was top dressed with soil in September 2020, repairs were carried out to the drainage system at Warialda Recreation Ground and the irrigation system at Nicholson Oval.

### **All Abilities Park, Warialda**

All Abilities Park in Warialda is very popular and well used. Ongoing improvements made available through the Federal Drought Program funding include shade sails, turf and irrigation. The landscaping of the western end of the park with rock terrace had some delays caused by wet weather and is scheduled to be completed in August 2021.



*Right: All Abilities Park Warialda*

### **Cunningham Park, Bingara**

In 2020/2021 Cunningham Park in Bingara underwent major improvements including installation of a new amenities block and picnic shelters and a BBQ and tables. The existing footpath was replaced from Campbell's bridge to the Pool precinct. In addition to these works, the fencing around the pool was replaced. This project was funded by NSW State Drought Program and has greatly improved the aesthetics of the area. The original toilets in Cunningham Park that were built in the 1960s will be removed from the site in 2021/2022 and replaced with new amenities.

*Right: Cunningham Park Bingara picnic shelter*



### **Captain Cook Park, Warialda**

Two shelters, picnic tables, barbeque and bench seats were installed in Captain Cook Park during June 2021 with funding provided through the COVID-19 stimulus program.

*Right: Captain Cook Park, Warialda*



### **Nicholson Oval, Warialda**

Two picnic shelters and tables were installed at Nicholson Oval during June 2021 with funding provided through the COVID-19 stimulus program.

### **Bicentennial Park, Bingara**

An entrance to Bicentennial Park off White Street and an access road were constructed during the reporting period as Stage 1 of proposed improvements. Future works in Bicentennial Park will include footpaths, shelters and tables.

*Right: Access road into Bicentennial Park, Bingara*



### **CWA Park, Bingara**

Additional shelters were installed at CWA Park in Bingara during 2020/2021. A grant application was submitted to the State Government's "Everyone Can Play" funding program for upgrades, with specific access and inclusive play spaces for the park. The outcome will be announced in October 2021.



### **Gwydir Oval, Bingara**

The new amenities at Gwydir Oval were officially opened on 28 November 2020. Further improvements include a concrete footpath linking the grandstand and amenities and replacement of the surface in the carpark.

*Right: New amenities at Gwydir Oval  
Below right: Car Park at Gwydir Oval*



### **Junction Park, Bingara**

A new picnic table and shelter were installed in Junction Park during the reporting period.

### **Railway Park, North Star**

North Star community group has established a blue tree in Railway Park for mental health awareness. Council provided assistance with tree trimming and cherry picker hire to paint the tree. *Right: North Star blue tree for mental health awareness*

### **Town Beautification Program**

During the reporting period, trees have been planted in Warialda and Bingara to maintain the towns' beautification program. Sturdy tree guards made from recycled plastic were installed to protect the trees. Trees were planted in West, Riddell and Junction Streets in Bingara. In Warialda, advanced street trees were planted in Geddes, Stephen and Hope Streets. Over 100 native Callistemon trees have been planted in Riddell Street, Bingara leading to the cemetery. *Right: Tree guards, West Street Bingara*

### **Gwydir River Foreshore Developments**

Under the Big River Dreaming Funding Program, Council installed a floating pontoon for access to the Gwydir River for fishing and kayaking in 2020. Following on from this project a pathway with handrail and seat was constructed to link the Gwydir River foreshore area to the Pool precinct. *Right: Gwydir River Foreshore pathway*

Further improvements on the foreshore included the construction of picnic tables and shelters near the pontoon. Sandstone blocks were strategically placed to ensure safe parking. These improvements to the foreshore have ensured a continual high usage of the area.

### **Batterham's Lookout Bingara**

Major works are being carried out at Batterham's Lookout under the COVID-19 Stimulus Funding Program. These works include guard rails, barrier fencing, improvement of walkways and signage, along with the installation of new tables and chairs. The works will be completed by December 2021. *Right: Gwydir River Foreshore picnic shelters*



*Right: Construction of track on eastern side of Batterham's Lookout*

### **Bingara Showground**

Gwydir Shire Council is the trustee for Crown Land Reserve D560019 Bingara Showground. The showground is maintained by Council in consultation with four main user groups: Bingara Show Society, Bingara Pony Club, Bingara Polocrosse and Bingara Jockey Club. The showground is popular for holding large regional equestrian events due to the size and excellent facilities available onsite. While some events were cancelled due to COVID-19, a number of scheduled events were able to proceed during the 2020/2021 year:

- Bingara 2020 Pony Camp
- Pony Club 2021 mini camp
- 2021 Bingara Show
- Numerous one day equestrian events



Council was successful with Phase 1 Showground Stimulus Funding from the NSW State Government in June 2020, enabling five small projects to be undertaken at the showground. The total project funding amount was \$25,340.66. These projects included:

- Replacement of a motor and repairs to the cool room motor located underneath the Grandstand at Bingara Showground.
- Construction of a 3m x 3m awning over the cool room located at the Polocrosse canteen.
- Supply and installation of LED spotlights and energy efficient lighting in the main pavilion at the showground for display items.
- Electrical lighting and power points in the general purpose shed.
- Repairs and maintenance identified from Aurecon inspection in October 2019.

Phase 2 Showground Stimulus Program was released in October 2020 and Council secured funding of \$85,378.25 to refurbish the Bingara Showground Grandstand. The project was under construction by 30 June 2021 and will be completed in August 2021.

*Right: Grandstand refurbishment under construction*



Phase 2B Showground Stimulus Program was released in March 2021 and Council secured funding of \$380,158.14 for two projects:

- Extension and refurbishment of existing amenity building (\$152,348.26)
- Supply and installation of LED Lighting to the show arena (\$227,809.88).

### **Community Assistance**

Council constructed a Yarning Circle at Bingara Central School for use by the school prior to the annual Myall Creek Memorial Service.



*Yarning circle at Bingara Central School*

### Bingara Fish Hatchery

Council purchased a new bogey axle trailer for the Bingara fish hatchery with funds from the Native Fish grant program. The trailer will be used to transport fingerlings to Gwydir River.

*Right: New trailer for Bingara Fish Hatchery*



### Workshop and Plant

Council operates two workshops. Warialda workshop operates from the Warialda Depot with a Workshop Supervisor, one fulltime mechanic, one fabricator/welder, two apprentice mechanics and one school-based trainee mechanic.

The Bingara workshop consists of a Workshop Supervisor and one apprentice mechanic.

During 2020/2021 the workshops completed 285 services and carried out a total of 1,181 repairs to individual items of plant.

Council's fabrication section constructed a new gate for Anzac Park in North Star, frames for signs in Junction Park, Bingara, mesh cages for gas bottles at Gwydir Oval, a decanter chamber for use at the Warialda truckwash, handrail for Gwydir River foreshore and regular plant welding repairs.

*Right: Fabrication of frames and cages*

New workshop tools and equipment purchased during the reporting period included:

- Hydraulic pipe bender
- G-Scan diagnostic tool
- Bingara Workshop switchboard was replaced in the 2020/2021



Council's heavy plant fleet consists of the following equipment:

Description	Number
Graders	7
Excavators	4
Front end Loaders	3
Backhoes	3
Skid Steer Loader/sweeper	2
Rollers – smooth drum	3
Roller – padfoot	2
Roller – rubber tyred	1
Tractor – Grid roller combination	3
Tractor – Slasher combinations	5
Compactor – Landfill	1

Rock Crusher	1
Zipper	1
Road Reclaimer	1
Trucks	Number
Primemover/lowloader	1
Tipper and pig trailer	2
Jetpatcher	2
Watercarts	5
Lime Spreader	1
Medium tipper trucks	5
Light trucks	5

Three of Council's graders are equipped with grade control equipment introducing technology into the road construction process, leading to more accurate road construction and design and minimising material wastage. *Right: Council's graders*



### Plant replacement Program

The following new items of plant were purchased in 2020/2021:

- P1986 – Caterpillar 313 excavator
- P1989 – Hustler zero turn mower (Cranky Rock)
- P1995 – Toro 6000 series zero turn mower (North Star)
- P1994 – Agrifarm 180 ACS slashers x 3
- P1981 – Toro – 7210 zero turn mower
- P1980 – Flextool sludge pump
- P1974 – Tandem axle ATV trailer



*Right: P1986 – new Caterpillar 313 excavator – based in Warialda.* Council purchased a second-hand Versatile tractor and rock crusher on a hire to purchase plan due to the limited availability of this type of machinery.

*Right: P1963 Versatile2210 with Kirpy rock crusher* Council continues to assist local service clubs with the donation of replaced mowers as they are upgraded. During the 2020/2021 year Council donated mowers to Warialda Rotary, Warialda Jockey Club and the Warialda Aeroclub.



A sale of excess goods and equipment was held in November 2020 to move plant and equipment and items no longer required.

During the reporting period, the following Council equipment was disposed of via private sale, sold through Grays online or Pickles auctions:

- |                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| P1470 - Case MX155 tractor | P1702 - Holden Caprice |
| P1697 - VW Multivan        | P1660 - Ford Ranger    |

Portable toilets: Council has three portable toilets available for use on road works and private hire. The use of the toilets was donated to several community events during the previous year including:

- |                                  |                             |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Model aeroplane fly in           | Pulse of the Earth festival |
| Anglers club fishing competition | Upper Horton Rodeo          |
| Copeton Fresh Water swim         | Upper Horton trail ride     |
| Coolatai campdraft               | Landcare field days         |
| Coolatai tractor pull            | Warialda Show               |
| Warialda Races                   | A number of private rentals |

# Our Achievement in Marketing and Promotions

## Events

The Gwydir Shire Council Events team were able to deliver a small number of community events during the 2020/2021 reporting period, striving to achieve Gwydir Shire Council's strategic outcome of a healthy and cohesive community by nurturing a community which is an inviting and vibrant place to live.

These events included the Bingara Orange Festival, Bingara and Warialda Christmas events and the Bingara Australia Day Celebrations, Unfortunately, due to poor weather conditions the March Honey Festival had to be postponed to September and then COVID-19 restrictions in September meant that the festival had to once again be abandoned. Committee and staff are looking forward to being able to bring the community their annual festival again in 2022.

This year's Bingara Orange Festival was hailed a resounding success with record crowds and extensive media coverage including, TV, Radio, Facebook, and print. The theme of Rock n Roll/ 50's 60's was continued from 2017, and a bumper crowd turned up to celebrate in their costumes.

A change of location of the main stage and children's rides were trialled this year, and feedback regarding the change was very positively received. Organisers will take this feedback on board for next year's festival. The Festival on the Saturday saw record crowds and the support of sub-events such as the Saturday evening dance hall at the Bingara RSL Club were all well attended even though COVID-19 restrictions were brought in with just 2hrs notice. Unfortunately, dancing was not allowed, and masks became mandatory, however club patrons were happy to sit and enjoy the music.

Due to be held in October 2021 was the Caravan and Motor Home Club of Australia's rally. Planning was busily being undertaken in the reporting period due to the size and nature of the rally, however CMCA organisers made the heartbreaking decision to postpone the rally due to the uncertainty of COVID-19. The rally will return to Bingara in 2022 and the community and rally goers, are eagerly awaiting this.

Staff and event committees are looking forward to a more positive 2022 and being able to bring back all the events that we look forward to throughout the Shire.

## Gwydir Newspaper

A difficult decision was made by Council late 2020 to close the Gwydir Newspaper after it failed to find someone to purchase the business and the current staff were not able to continue running the paper.

After community feedback, it was clear that something was needed to keep the community informed about goings on within their local community. From this, the Gwydir Newsletter was born, staff have worked tirelessly to produce this newly formatted version which is offered both digitally and in hard copy form. The paper-based version attracts a small fee to cover printing and postage costs, however the digital subscription is available to all for free.

Feedback for the newsletter has been extremely positive and locals have been eagerly contributing information and imagery from around the Shire.

A massive congratulations must go out to staff who have worked extremely hard and within tight deadlines to create and regularly produce this monthly newsletter.

## **Communications**

The communications team spent a lot of time during the reporting period building the Shire's new website, this website is now live and can be found at [www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au) this website is just the beginning of what is to come regarding the Shire's digital presence. Staff are to be commended on their hard work in building this website from scratch.

Throughout the reporting staff have also been working on building Council's social media presence to ensure that they are able to reach a broader demographic within the community.

Council's use of relevant and up to date communication channels are important in being able to provide information to its community within a timely manner. This is of even greater importance now that the weekly newspaper has transformed into a monthly newsletter publication.

## **Visitor Information Centres/Tourism**

Our Visitor Information Centres were once again significantly impacted by the restrictions of COVID-19. Visitor numbers were reduced as ongoing lockdowns, travel restrictions and border closures continue to impact services. During the reporting period the Bingara Visitor Information Centre had 6232 visitors and Warialda saw 13990 (this includes Café and Service NSW customers) come through the doors. COVID-19 saw doors close in March, April & May, and staff were kept busy with phone calls, emails and ensuring that both centres were clean and well stocked ready for when doors were able to open again.

Gwydir Shire is widely considered as the go to place for many RV's, many who return regularly to enjoy one of the many pristine camping spots on offer throughout the Shire. Travel restrictions and the forced closure of many camping sites have meant that travellers have been unable to enjoy the beautiful Gwydir Shire, and the flow on affect to other services within Council plus local businesses is evident throughout.

Staff are looking forward to a more positive 2022 which will see the return of travellers and preparations for the upcoming CMCA rally, where they will assist with organising tours, merchandise and providing local information.

All VIC staff provide exceptional customer service, and their local knowledge is widely regarded by anyone who enters our centres.

## **Services NSW**


Services NSW continues to operate out of two main centres, Bingara on Monday and Thursday and Warialda on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday.

During this reporting period the Bingara branch undertook 3138 transactions, which is significantly up on last year and Warialda 5119, another significant increase on last year's transactions.

The services on offer through these branches include driver licence transactions, vehicle registration transactions, driver testing, boating licences and vessel registrations, contractor licence applications, applications for birth, death and marriage certificates, Seniors card applications, birth registrations, form lodgements for Fair Trading, owner builder permits, Working With Children Check, National Heavy Vehicle work diary and photographic advice for Firearm licence.

COVID-19 required several changes to be made to the service to ensure the safety of customers and staff. Staff continued to service the public uninterrupted despite the challenges of COVID-19, consistently going above and beyond to assist the community, particularly our elderly customers who were at times extremely overwhelmed with all of the changes occurring and the need for use of technology.





Agency operators are very well suited to the delivery of an excellent customer experience and consistently provide such service within the regulatory operating parameters and should be congratulated on the continued quality of service.

### **Roxy Theatre**

Our beloved Roxy Theatre endured a lengthy period of shutdown during the reporting period. Shows and other planned functions had to be either postponed or cancelled entirely.

Staff did manage to bring Margaret Fulton the Musical to the Roxy Theatre in May 2021, and theatre goers thoroughly enjoyed seeing the centre alive with music again. Theatre goers were able to use the Service NSW Discovery vouchers issued by the NSW Government to subsidise the purchase of their tickets and enjoy an afternoon/evening at the theatre.

The Northwest Theatre Company's Film Club held various movie nights throughout the reporting period when restrictions allowed, club members were stringent in adhering to any COVID-19 restrictions that were in place at the time.

Throughout the reporting period, Council and The Northwest Theatre Company also formed a partnership, which will see NWTC assist Council in the purchase of future productions and shows for the Roxy. They will also offer assistance and training when required for the use of sound and lighting in the Theatre, particularly when functions and events are on.

Council looks forward to working with NWTC to ensure the Roxy Theatre complex is used to its full potential.

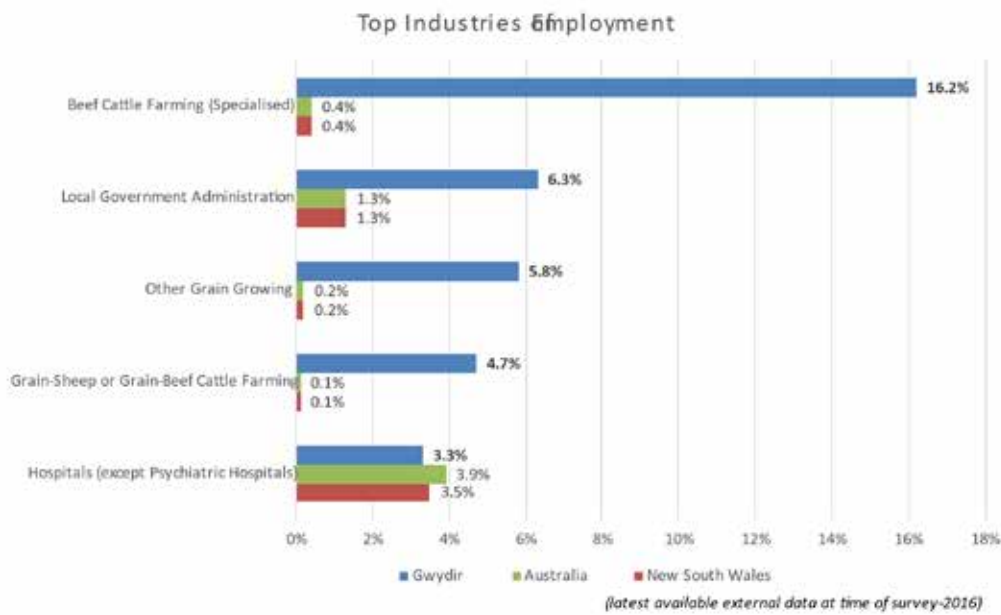
During the reporting period Council have also engaged a consultant to undertake a conservation management plan for the theatre. This plan will provide some extra controls over the work that needs to be carried out at the complex to ensure that it complies with the State Heritage requirements. As the Roxy Theatre is now a heritage listed building, it is hoped that this plan will assist Council when applying for grant funding for the complex.

The Roxy Theatre is looking forward to welcoming back some big productions, concerts and other various functions and events in 2022. One notable concert occurring in November 2021 is an Amber Lawrence concert and tickets are already being eagerly snapped up by locals and others throughout the region.

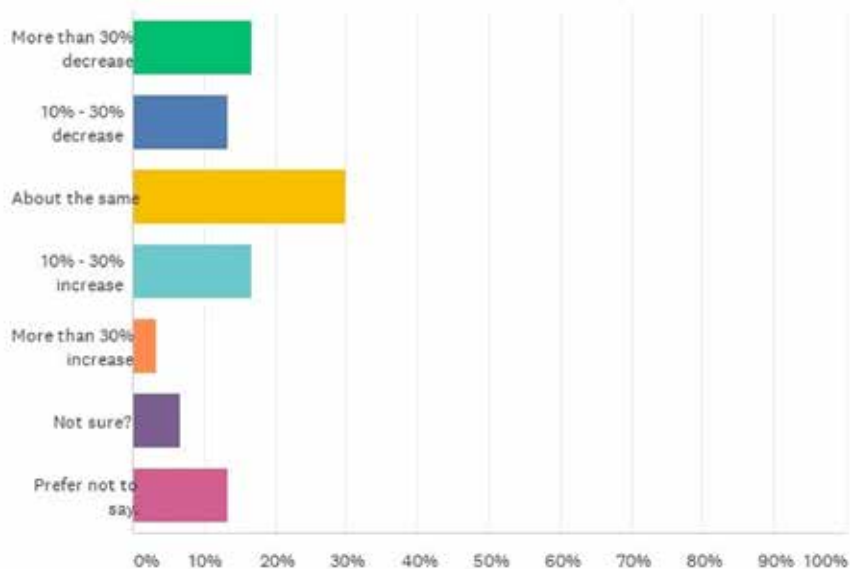
# Economic Development

In order to maintain an accurate understanding of the Gwydir Shire Economy, identify key Economic Development Strategies and provide effective support to local businesses, Council conducted a high-level review of the economy, including research into the impact of COVID-19 and the drought.

## Gwydir Economy Sectors

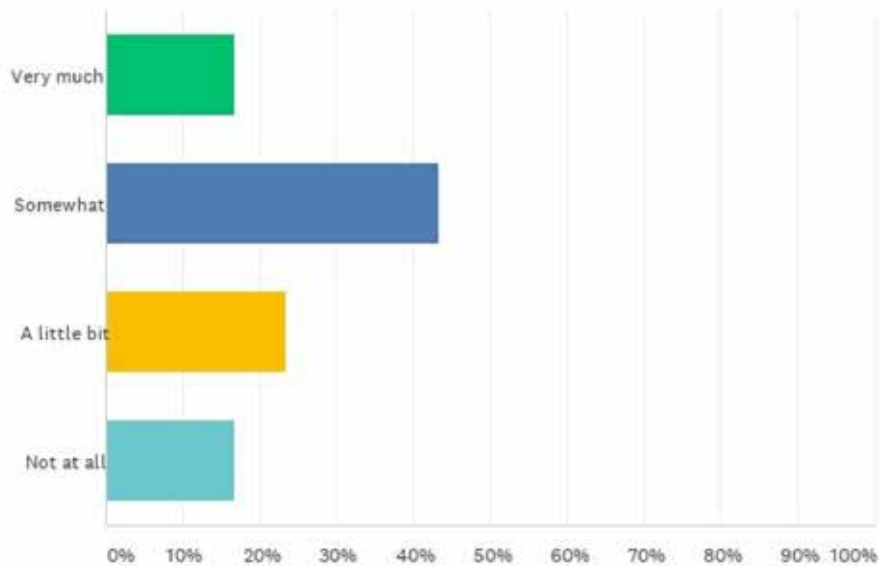


## Covid-19 impact on sales (as at March 2021)

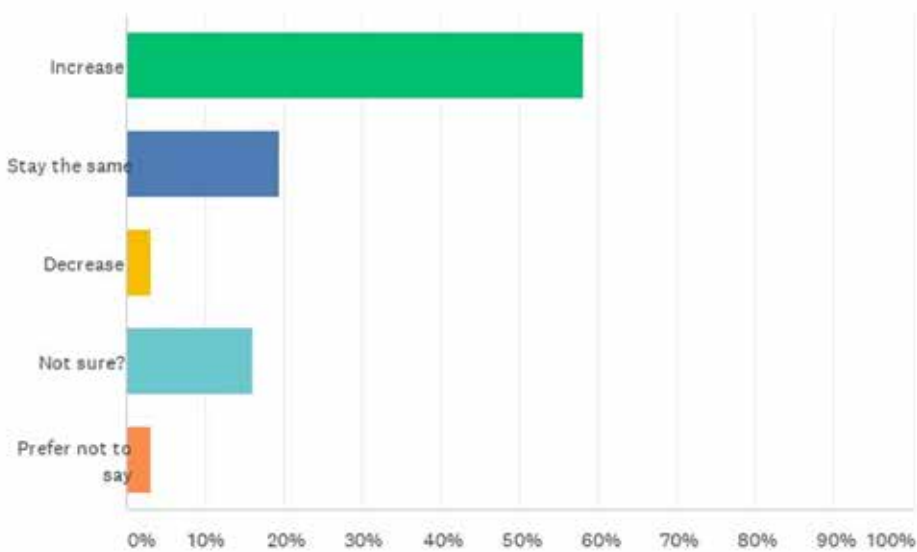


“[It has been] very varied. Incredibly discriminatory in its affect. Some doing quite well and some doing poorly....” Participant quote regarding COVID-19 Impact.

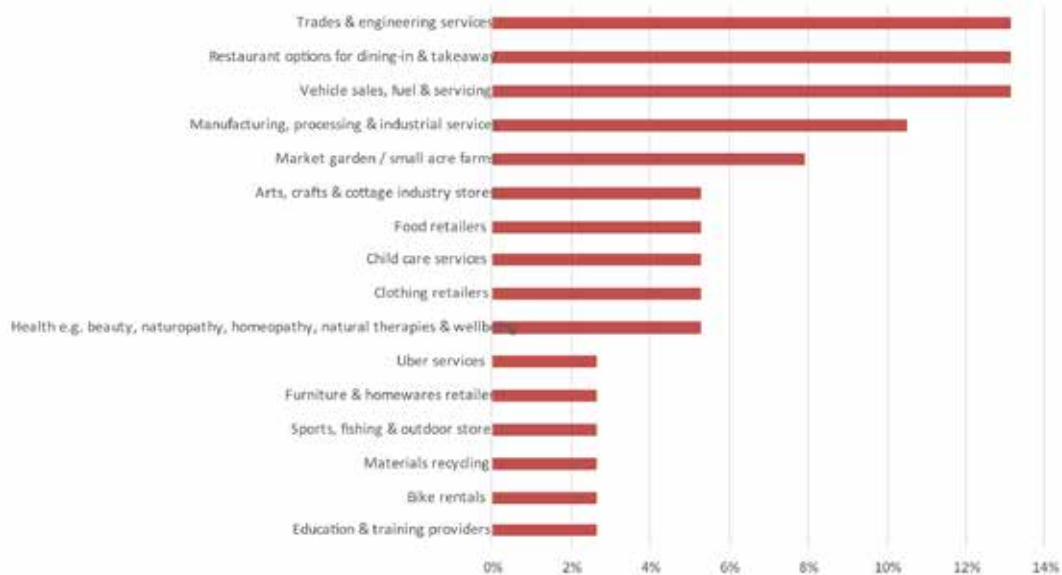
### Perceived continued Drought Impact (as at March 2021)



### Business sentiment regarding sales and economic growth over the coming 12 months



## Businesses people want to see more of



## Perceived barriers to further business growth

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Attracting people to the area	42% 10
Telecommunications network	33% 8
Finding suitable local staff	29% 7
Availability of housing	29% 7
Insufficient child care services	29% 7
Cost and provision of utilities (i.e. water, energy, gas, internet)	25% 6
Council development application processes and cost	25% 6
Local training and education opportunities	25% 6
Availability of suitable industrial land	21% 5
Access to markets / customer base	21% 5
Access to suitable premises (e.g. retail)	13% 3
Proximity to larger centres	13% 3
Total Respondents: 24	

As a result of the Economic review and ongoing partnerships with local businesses and business networks several initiatives to grow the economy have been undertaken.

### Shire wide marketing

Already facing the challenges of a small and somewhat dispersed population and following anecdotal evidence that the drought had negatively impacted population, increasing the Digital Presence and exposure of Gwydir Shire in order to attract new residents and further increase tourism was identified as a priority to drive population growth. Bushfire Community Economic Recovery Funds from the NSW State Government were directed towards a Shire Wide digital and print marketing campaign.



 unlock the secrets of the **Gwydir Shire**

**PLACES TO VISIT**

- Warialda/Bingara Museums
- Visitor Information Centres
- Copeton Dam
- Rocky Creek Glacial Area
- Myall Creek Memorial

- The Living Classroom
- Ceramic Break Sculpture Park
- Cranky Rock
- The Roxy Theatre Tours and Greek Museum Tours

**THINGS TO DO**

- Fossicking
- Bird watching
- Fishing
- Walking trails
- Golf/Tennis/Bowls
- Cycling
- Horse riding

Bingara Office  
02 6724 0066  
Warialda Office  
02 6729 3037  
[gwydir.nsw.gov.au](http://gwydir.nsw.gov.au)



**GWYDIR**  
SHIRE COUNCIL

Print and online advertisements inviting people to “Discover the Secrets” of the Gwydir Shire were run to targeted demographics with the goal of securing 2500 subscribers to a monthly newsletter promoting the benefits of living in the Gwydir Shire.

Outcome: 3400 subscribers to the “Gwydir Tree Change Newsletter”

The newsletter introduced subscribers and invited them to request a call back from the Gwydir Shire “Concierge” – the Concierge then qualified these leads, identified strong prospects and worked with them to secure accommodation, employment and social connection to make their Tree Change a success.

Outcome: 59 engaged with the Concierge to explore a Tree Change to the Gwydir Shire.


Subscribers received engaging monthly newsletters highlighting what was on, lifestyle benefits, opportunities and importantly – where to go for more information and support to transition

### DO WE HAVE WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR?

**4 Reasons why you should live here:**

- Lifestyle**  
Here, comutes are a thing of the past. Spend that time doing things that you love! From fishing and camping spots to top-notch restaurants and relaxed cafes – the Region can provide all manner of lifestyle delight.
- Job Opportunities**  
There are jobs and business opportunities in Retail trade, education, health, business service, the building sector, agriculture and information technology.
- Affordable housing**  
There are local incentives for you to buy land and build in the Region. This may be the hand you need to start a new life in the country.
- World-class education at your doorstep**  
Exceptional educational facilities are available within the Region, catering from preschool, primary, secondary, special needs to tertiary VET or university.

### DISCOVER MORE OPPORTUNITIES




[Click here to request a callback.](#)

**Chris Turner**  
P: 02 4724 3000  
E: [cturner@peachtree.com.au](mailto:cturner@peachtree.com.au)

#### HOUSE & LAND PACKAGES

Look to see all the local and state agents and find out how effective housing in any part of the region.


Click here to view more.



#### FEATURED BUSINESS

**Wade Horse Riding**

Wade Horses Bingara is not only renowned for the quality of their horses and horsemanship, but for the scenic beauty of Bingara's natural environment. Riders don't just take in the scenery, they become part of it.




**767824\*** • Ad Impressions on Facebook

**18946\*** • Link Clicks / CTR 2.46%.

Our advertisements were seen by 767,824 people

- 18,946 people clicked on the ads to find out more about the Shire
- Discover the secrets of the Gwydir performance
- Subscriber Numbers
- Goal: 2500
- Status: 3,400
- Performance: 136%
- Responsive Lead Generation
- Goal: 24 in 6 months
- Status: 59
- Performance: 246%
- Engaged Lead Generation (people seeking to make a Tree Change to Gwydir Shire)
- Goal: 12 in 2 years
- Status: 14 in 6 months
- Performance: 117%



Two families have already moved to the Shire and taken up “hard to fill” employment opportunities across aged care and hospitality, a third is in the process of moving and will seek to establish a Market Garden business on their arrival. The three families represent five adults and seven children joining our community. A further nine families continue to work closely with the Tree Change Concierge.

### **Support existing and attract new business**

Council has partnered with the Warialda District Chamber of Commerce and the Bingara Business Support Group to enhance business opportunities across the Shire, including in, but not limited to the Warialda and Bingara Central Business Districts.

This has included:

- Utilising funds from the NSW Bushfire Community Economic Recovery Fund to provide \$20,000 in small grants to businesses houses in Bingara, Croppa Creek, and Warialda to beautify and promote their businesses.

Securing funding from the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to underwrite and launch the “Grazing on the Gwydir” Street Fair and Music Festival. The festival aims to profile food and other produce from across the Shire as well as provide a platform for local and visiting performers and groups to join in with the community in a fun and relaxed environment that focusses on the great lifestyle benefits of living in the Gwydir Shire.

Partnering with the Warialda District Chamber of Commerce on the “Empty Shop Front Project” – through which seven new businesses opened and continue to trade in the Warialda CBD. The project has seen the re-opening of the Commercial Hotel along with the White Sage Coffee and Juice Bar, Ooh laa laa lashes, Bliss beauty lounge, Gwydir freight and storage, Anthony’s Mowing Service and Eyes by Elisha.

“I feel the empty shop project was a success, with 7 new businesses opening in Warialda in 10 months”.  
Tom Smith, President Warialda District Chamber of Commerce

### **Residential land supply**

The Blue Hills and Jacaranda residential land subdivisions have been brought to market, with local real estate agents reporting this highly needed development is already attracting a lot of interest both locally and outside of the Shire. Thanks to the hard work of Council’s Community Asset’s Manager, Carmen Southwell finalisation of electricity to the blocks has allowed the blocks to come to market at a time when moving to regional NSW from the cities and the coast is at an all time high.

### **Small scale industrial land development**

Participants in the review of the Gwydir Shire Economy identified the need for spade ready industrial land. With land already secured, Council remains highly committed to the proposed Industrial Estate in Warialda (which forms part of the broader Circular Economy Proposal, including the Bio-Char power generation and Green House Project). To date funding for the full scale development of the site has not been secured.

### **Gwydir Grant Finder**

In an effort to assist local businesses, community groups and individuals to seek and apply for grant funding the “Gwydir Grant Finder” has been developed and added to the Council Website:

<https://gwydir.grantguru.com.au/>

The site lists virtually every grant available in Australia and is searchable across sectors (Industry, Arts, Business etc.) and includes grant writing tips and support as well as links to professional grant writers.

## Our Achievements in Community Assets

### Swimming Pools

The 2020/2021 swimming season was very busy and, thankfully, safe. The free pool entry for Gwydir Shire residents proved to be exceptionally well received by the community with continued positive feedback. Warialda also hosted many paying visitors from Moree as its 50-metre pool remained closed over the season.

Warialda recorded a total of 9270 patrons, and following its opening on 25 November, Bingara saw 6717 patrons check in. Both pools attracting both local and visitors from outside the Shire. COVID-19 Safety Plans and QR codes have been utilised as required.

Bingara and Warialda pools hosted many swimming programs/schools for local and surrounding district schools throughout the season. The pools also conducted learn to swim intensive programs over the school holiday period with good numbers in attendance. The Warialda lessee also delivered regular water exercise classes throughout the season.

Staff from the Bingara Multi-Purpose Service delivered the 'Breaking the Drought, using water to reduce falls in Rural Communities'. It was very worthwhile and won the 2021 HNE Health Excellence Awards - Keeping People Healthy category.

### Bingara Pool

Construction of a new 25 metre pool, splash program pool, kiosk and activities room, all access amenity, and upgrade to the existing amenities continued throughout winter and spring. The project also included the demolition of the existing pools, and plant room; the construction of new pump and plant rooms; the installation of a skillion, privacy screens, concourse, shade sails, starting blocks, fencing, bench seating, gardens and turf.

In accordance with the Big River Dreaming NSW Government Tourism Grant, an artist and zoologist were commissioned to create artworks and interpretive signage for the Bingara Pool Precinct site. The installations tell the story of the animals which live on, near and above the Gwydir River. The commissioned artist value added to her project by collaborating with Bingara's children and youth through workshops held at the preschool, library, and school.

Community consultation for the project included staff presentations at playgroup, liaising with swimming club members, the pool lessee, swimming instructors and community members. Engagement was through media releases and a social media messenger group.







Four sets of the tables and chairs, plus the two barbecues, were relocated to Cranky Rock Reserve. The Reserve's caretakers have agreed to renovate them for use at the reserve.

Representatives from the Department of Regional NSW interviewed stakeholders, regarding the Bingara Pool Precinct grant applications, onsite during November as part of its Drought Stimulus Package online promotion. The project was chosen to showcase the success and effectiveness of the funding program.

The upgraded Bingara War Memorial Baths were officially opened by The Hon Adam Marshall, MP on Saturday 28 November 2020. He then joined the winners of a local children's competition in being the first to jump into the pool.

A water wheelchair is available for adult and child use due to the generosity of the Bingara Lions' Club and the Lions' Club NSW/ACT Public Healthcare Foundation.



### **Warialda Pool**

Renovations of the amenities block at the Warialda Swimming Pool were completed in October. Works included installation of a hot water system, construction of two all access amenity areas, installation of new privacy partitions, installation of new toilets and sinks, installation of new guttering in the female internal amenity area, floor tiling, painting, installation of benches, and replacement of external stormwater and sewage systems.

The pool opened on Saturday 24 October, a little later than normal due to the extended renovation works. The new renovated upgraded amenities at the Warialda Swimming Pool were officially opened on 25 January 2021 by The Hon Adam Marshall, MP.

Moree Diggers Club and Moree Swimming Club used the Warialda Pool during the 2020/2021 season due to the temporary closure of the Moree Pool.

### **Caravan Parks**

Council staff continued to enact its COVID-19 Safety Plans throughout the year. QR codes are being used at both caravan parks for checking in visitors as per government regulations. Both caravan parks experienced a steady influx of visitors especially when the state borders were closed.

Bingara and Warialda Caravan Parks hosted two university medical students in December as part of the Bush Bursary Program, whilst they did their practicums in Bingara and Warialda hospitals/medical centres. The park accommodation was also used by university students studying nursing, education, social services, medicine, and physiotherapy.

### **Bingara Riverside Caravan Park**

Council staff continue to be in regular contact with caravan park permanent residents. This contact has proven to be mutually beneficial, as not only do they receive a regular friendly call, but Council obtains requests so that assistance can be given in a timely and effective manner. During the term, permanent residential lease agreements were renewed, along with Park Rules for Long-Term Residents and Site Condition Report template.

Two new Speed Queen washing machines were purchased and installed in July. One cabin was sold and removed from site during August.

Pool construction workers stayed at the caravan park during the construction of the Bingara Pool Precinct project. The accommodation income was offset against construction costs.

New kitchen items were purchased for the Bingara Caravan Park's cabins in September.

Casual caretaker positions were advertised, interviewed, and offered in December.

The land where the Bingara Caravan Park cabins lie was transferred from the NSW Government to Council. As a cost saving measure, the caravan park caretakers have expanded their work tasks to include mowing designated park and roadside areas, cleaning the Bingara public amenities every second weekend and maintaining the adjacent pool's front garden bed. These changes were made in consultation with Council's Town Utilities and Plant Manager and will be ongoing.

Responses to Council's request for quotation for the supply and installation of the new residence and office were received, assessed, and determined during April. Plans for the new building have been finalised and it is expected that it will be installed in February 2022.

A grant application under the Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program (Round 3) was submitted on 12 April 2021. This successful application of \$300,000 was approved for an overhaul and upgrade of the electricity supply to the caravan park and adjacent pool, and the installation of overhead sporting lights.

### **Warialda Caravan Park**

Council staff assisted a young family who were required to self-quarantine. They arrived at the park on 28 July and stayed until 7 August. Assistance included organising delivery of groceries and liaising with the Warialda Medical Centre.

New linens were purchased for the Warialda Caravan Park in July.

### **Cranky Rock**

On 29 July 2020, the reserve was partially closed due to the commencement of repair works to the lookout track and footbridge. Footbridge works included replacement of girders and treads, and painting. A pathway was constructed to the lookout. The area is now much safer for visitors to the area.



The Reserve and its facilities are always very well presented and clean.

The Reserve Caretaker, and her family, are providing a fantastic service with high bookings and many repeat visitations. The positive feedback is continually being recorded on camping websites and application such as WikiCamps Australia.

### **Myall Creek Massacre Memorial Site**

Council continues to maintain amenities, gardens, Amphitheatre, and pathways at the Memorial site. A native garden was planted by members of the Friends of Myall Creek committee on 17 September 2020. This also included the installation of plant identification signage.

The Deputy Mayor, Cr Catherine Egan and Council staff attended the official opening by The Hon Adam Marshall, Member for Northern Tablelands, of the Myall Creek Massacre Memorial Cultural Precinct on Saturday 6 February 2021. This project was the initiative of the Friends of Myall Creek Memorial Committee of which Council supported. Council also contracted to undertake the civil works. Over this weekend Council staff also attended a Friends' two-day governance workshop.

Council staff attended another Friends of Myall Creek Memorial Committee governance workshop on 24 April 2021.

Council was successful in obtaining a Federal Government grant of \$30,000 to assist in the running of this year's annual Myall Creek Memorial Ceremony and the hosting of the Sounds of Country concert at Gwydir Oval. The grant was through the Bushfire Tourism Recovery Initiatives Program.



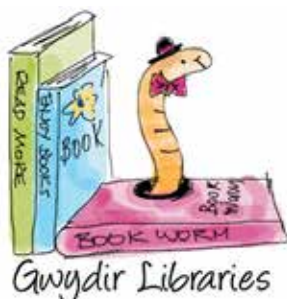


Over the long weekend in June the Friends of Myall Creek Committee organised and held a Sounds of Country concert at the Gwydir Oval, Bingara, and the annual Memorial Ceremony onsite. Over 400 people attended the concert on a very bleak and cold Saturday afternoon, and over 600 attended the ceremony on Sunday.

The annual Myall Creek Memorial Ceremony was held at the new amphitheater on site.

The Sounds of Country concert was moved to the Gwydir Oval on Saturday 12 June due to the wet conditions.

A new shelter was installed during June to provide protection and preservation from the weather of the comments left by visitors.



### Libraries

During the year, Gwydir public libraries services changed to deal with the implications of COVID-19 including loan limits and periods, online delivery of reference services and public programs, significantly boosting eBook collections, implementing direct communication channels with library users and communities, and implementing home delivery and/or click and collect access to collections. Unfortunately outreach visits had to be suspended.

Bingara Library has a screen and projector, and Warialda a large computer screen both of which are used for multiple purposes including highlighting the Shire, library website, exhibitions, and events.

Some in branch highlights of 2020/2021 include:

- Crocheting and knitting with Teens at Warialda Library
- Bingara Library Story Circle: older members of the community gather to chat about old days
- Gwydir Libraries Oral History Project “Remember When” collecting the voices and memories of seniors
- Be Connected – internet tutorials for the over 60s along with Zoom chat sessions
- Old Days Old Ways; older residents chat with the Book Club children about their childhood
- Toddler Maker Space; games, puzzles, and stories
- Bingara Lego Challenge
- Baby Book Time; 1000 Books Before School
- Golden Oldie craft sessions with aged care residents in both communities
- After school programs include digital learning, library catalogue tutorials, craft, Book Club, murder mystery, and research
- Home delivery service
- Click and Collect service

- Street Libraries (trolleys with free books) were setup outside both libraries and at information centres
- Facebook pages used for promotion and online CNRL activities
- Partnership with Bingara School to support students
- Steady usage of wi-fi both in and outside the library buildings
- University and external students' study in the Bingara Library study spaces and quiet room
- Residents of Touriandi Lodge visit the Bingara Library each month as a social outing. Morning tea is provided followed by a chat with residents of the community
- Bingara Opportunity Shop volunteers meet in the library each month
- Gwydir Ark meet in the Bingara Library monthly
- Bingara Library Book Group meet monthly
- Bingara Library hosts ability sessions each fortnight for people with disabilities
- Bingara Library hosted the film "Looby" which was touring Australia to mark 100 years of the Archibald Art Prize
- Warialda Library hosted the Innovation Studio for a Robot Soccer School Holiday workshop and Secret Agent workshop.

#### Outreach:

- Visits by staff to outer villages for story time and craft sessions were suspended due to COVID-19
- Be Connected tutorials for seniors offered across the Shire via Zoom, email, and phone tutorials
- Bingara Library Zoom weekly topic chat sessions ensuring residents remain connected and not feel isolated
- Pen Pal relationship between Warialda Book Club children and residents of Naroo
- Visits to Bingara MPS nursing home, Touriandi Lodge and Naroo hosting on-line newspaper tutorials and e-resources
- Promotions at toy libraries and preschools
- Storytime visits to local schools and preschools
- Home delivery to residents in both communities. The criteria for delivery were relaxed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

#### Funding Grant applications:

- Bingara Library successfully gained \$7,500 funding from Good Things Foundation for their Be Connected program. \$5,000 was spent on iPads and prepaid sim cards to be used in tutorials and to lend to seniors enrolled in tutorials. \$2,500 assisted with costs associated with hosting sessions in the villages.
- Gwydir Shire Council successfully gained \$10,000 funding from the NSW Government's Regional School Holiday Activities Fund to assist with school holiday and youth programs across the Shire. The funding enabled Council to purchase 9 iPads and 2 gaming laptops which will be used in both branch libraries and youth spaces.

#### Training:

- Branch staff meetings were postponed due to COVID-19. Both staff members participated in several on-line training courses recommended by Central Northern Regional Libraries and Gwydir Shire Council.
- Bingara staff member completed several on-line training modules with e-safety, Be Connected and State Library NSW databases.
- Bingara staff member participated in several webinars, Zoom sessions and one full day on-line conference.

Achievements:

- Warialda Library staff member received a community recognition statement from The Hon Adam Marshall, MP. Part of which states “I congratulate her for her inspiration and creativity that has made Warialda Library a popular learning centre for the community”.

Both libraries continue to adhere to the strict COVID-19 Safety Plans and Protocols, including the use of Service NSW QR codes, sterilisation of books, computers, surfaces, and equipment.

Council’s Community Assets administration staff member has been trained in the basics of the library systems and works at each library when required.

The Bingara Library had new safety signage, plaques, street flag and ceiling vent installed.

The Warialda Library received a sewing machine for public use.

The generous donation of shelving from Willoughby City Council arrived in August. This has enabled Council to provide shelving for book exchange in its outer villages, caravan parks and tourist spots, schools and the historical societies in Warialda and Bingara.

A household recycling station has been installed at the Bingara Library. In this, residents can deposit old batteries, smoke detectors, ink cartridges and fluoro globes.


During the reporting period Cr Catherine Egan, Deputy Mayor and Council staff attended the Central Northern Regional Library meetings.

Statistics	Bingara 2020-2021	Warialda 2020-2021	Outreach
Door Count	17608	11597	454
Loans	9989	5753	
PC usage	2506	880	
WIFI usage	3560	1709	
Programs	327	246	63
Adult Program attendees	1051	413	
Children Program attendees	2919	1017	
Home Delivery	152	113	
Institution Delivery	41	66	
Registered Be Connected seniors	18	8	6

**Cleaning**

OneScope terminated the contract with Gwydir Shire Council effective 15 November 2020. Council is now employing six casual cleaning staff to ensure cleaning is carried out at Council’s sites. This transition of moving from contract to employee cleaning has proved positive with Council facilities being kept to a high standard.

Council’s cleaning staff have received an induction and training including first aid, white card, and chemical course. Probation interviews were also conducted. Council staff have purchased cleaning items and products and utilised a space for safe storage of these.



The past twelve months has been a challenging one for cleaning seeing many changes throughout the reporting period. Extra cleaning was undertaken during the height of the pandemic. Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) staff commenced cleaning their own buildings.

Changes to council office cleaning work practices were trialed and changed so that indoor staff now empty their bins and clean/disinfect their work area/desk. This reduced contracted cleaning times significantly. Parks and Gardens staff are now cleaning the public amenities with caravan park caretakers doing them every second weekend.

Most Council sites were professionally cleaned (e.g., carpets and hard floors) throughout the reporting period.

### **Property Management**

Council leases and manages 52 properties.

Council staff continued to be in regular contact with aged unit residents throughout the year. This contact has proven to be mutually beneficial, as not only do they receive a regular friendly call, but Council obtains information and requests so that assistance and any necessary repairs can be given in a timely and effective manner.

Rental increase notices were issued to Council's residential and commercial tenants in March, which will come into effect from July 2021.

### **Medical Services**

Council again provided \$3,000 sponsorship for the Bush Bursary Scholarship Program through the NSW Rural Doctors Network. Students stayed at the Bingara and Warialda Caravan Parks in December during their internships at the local hospitals and medical centres.

The Bingara Medical Centre had all new floor coverings installed in September 2020.

123 High Street, Warialda was converted and occupied by the Warialda Medical Centre for several months whilst renovations took place at their usual premises. Investigations took place for the house to be used as a long daycare centre, but this was deemed financially unsustainable. It has now been placed back up for sale with local real estate agents.

Warialda Family Practice was formed due to Rural and Remote Medical Services (RaRMS) withdrawing their services in Warialda during the month of April. Council now leases the Warialda Medical Centre to the Practice.

### **Attract, Connect, Stay Pilot Program**

In May Council was approached by Dr Cath Cosgrave (PhD) with an opportunity to address the healthcare challenge of attracting and retaining health professionals.

Council hosted a workshop on 8 June 2021 which was delivered by Dr Cosgrave. Nineteen stakeholders attended and at the end of the evening the room resolved to submit an Expression of Interest to be considered a pilot community for the 'Attract, Connect, Stay program which is funded through the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal.

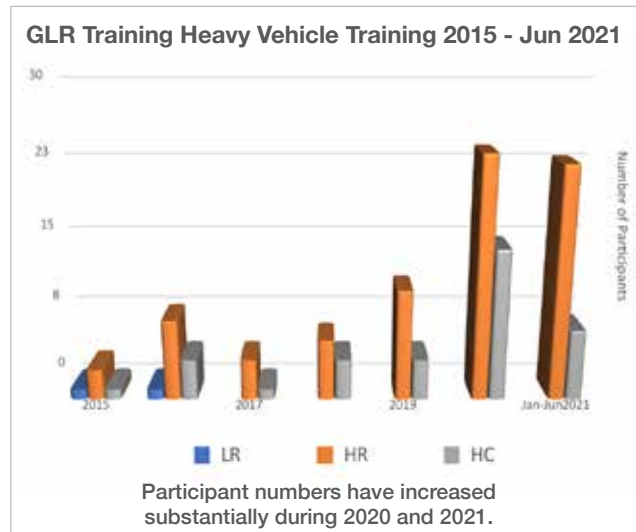
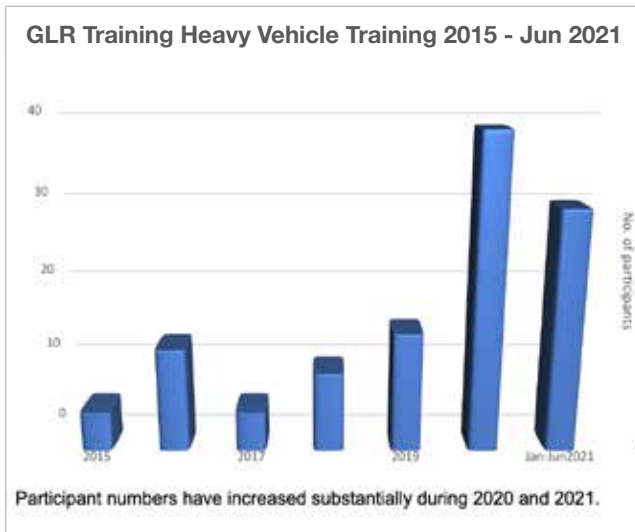
The Expression of Interest was lodged on 16 June 2021.

## Gwydir Learning Region Training (GLR)

Although COVID-19 restrictions have had a significant effect on our community, it is very encouraging to see the increased number of enquiries and participants undertaking Heavy Vehicle Training and Assessment with Gwydir Learning Region Training.

In December 2019 Gwydir Learning Region Training was successful in applying to become a 'Smart and Skilled' training provider through Training Services NSW. This enables eligible clients to apply for full funding to undertake their heavy vehicle qualification.

- Competencies on GLR Training's scope:
- TLILIC 2014A – Licence to drive a Light Rigid Truck
  - TLILIC 2015A – Licence to drive a Medium Rigid Truck
  - TLILIC 2016A – Licence to drive a Heavy Rigid Truck
  - TLILIC 3017A – Licence to drive a Heavy Combination Truck
  - TLILIC 3018A – Licence to drive a Multi-Combination Truck



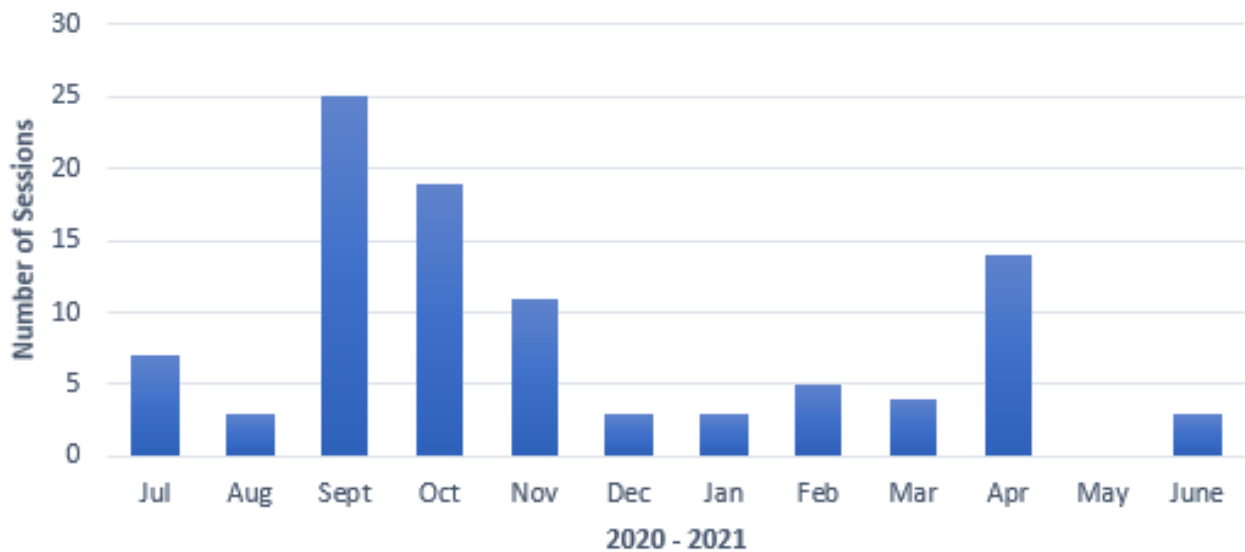
In addition to Heavy Vehicle Training, Gwydir Learning Region Training continues to provide expert tuition to learner drivers.

Learner driver training numbers have declined in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions placed around driver training, particularly for students.





## GLR Learner Driver Lessons



### Country Education Foundation of Gwydir Learning Region (CEF of GLR)

Gwydir is one of 40 local foundations across the country providing support to school leavers to achieve their study and career goals through the Country Education Foundation (CEF).

We provide much needed financial assistance to enable local youth to achieve their post high school education, training and vocation aspirations.

The cost for rural and regional students to access further education can be very high and at times prohibitive. We want all of the youth in our area to have the opportunity to reach their full potential. It's our way of saying "we believe in you and want to support your goals".

Country Education Foundation of Gwydir Learning Region fundraises throughout the year and accepts donations from local residents and businesses in order to provide financial grants to students who need an extra helping hand to cover accommodation, study and general living expenses. The funds come directly from our local community. *Right: CEF of GLR Committee*  
 There are currently nine (9) successful recipients in 2021 of CEF of GLR grants. Grants have been distributed to recipients to assist with educational expenses including Course fees, textbooks and reference materials, accommodation costs, fuel and travel expenses, stationary, clothing, equipment and utilities.



Total Income received (grants, donations, co-funding) 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 - \$23,750.00.  
 Unfortunately, it was necessary to cancel fundraising activities planned within this period due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Total Grants distributed 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 - \$32,786.70

CEF has partnered with MH Premium Farms to offer one scholarship to a CEF student undertaking studies in the agricultural field. Chelsea Stevenson is the very deserving recipient of this scholarship in its first year.

Our goal was to find a smart young person with the drive to succeed. Despite some early life setbacks, Chelsea demonstrated to us that she has a strong work ethic and desire to achieve her goals. *Ed Dunn, Chief Executive Officer – MH Premium Farms*



Chelsea displays a level of maturity and responsibility beyond her years and we are delighted to have her as an ambassador of CEF Gwydir. *Robyn Phillips, Secretary & Public Officer – CEF Gwydir Learning Region*

Louisa Gilmore was successful in gaining the Dunmore Lang College scholarship at Macquarie University. Louisa made the big move to Sydney early in 2021 to study her dream course, a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Media and Communications.



“This accommodation scholarship will alleviate so much financial burden. The assistance will allow me to focus on my double degree without financial stress and pressure to also work while I find my feet in Sydney. It will also take the burden off my parents as we sold our family farm and relocated to another property due to the drought in 2020. I am so appreciative for the support.”

### **Gwydir Career Start Program**

Council introduced the Gwydir Career Start Initiative, which is providing an exceptional opportunity for local school students and job seekers to gain valuable skills and work experience in a Local Government environment while studying to obtain a nationally recognised qualification.

The program exemplifies Council’s corporate vision, to be the recognised leader in Local government through continuous learning and



sustainability, and gives Council the ability to train, develop and mold our trainees and apprentices into valuable and productive employees. Simply, we can 'grow our own'.

GSC's 2020/2021 cluster of Gwydir Career Start recruits include:

- 7 School based trainees
- 3 Trainees
- 5 Apprentices

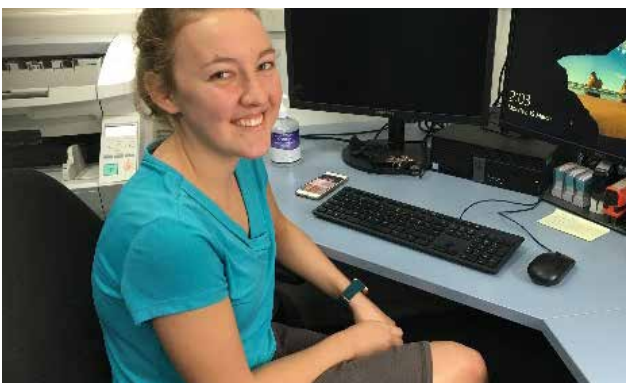
Council's School Based Trainees continue their schooling at the local high Schools, this incorporates the theory component of their chosen TAFE course, as well as gaining vital on-the-job skills and experience while working in one of Council's dynamic teams one day per week and throughout the school holidays. This is a joint effort between school staff, TAFE NSW, Gwydir Shire Council and the student. School based trainees are paid for their on-the-job hours, and performance reviews are carried out regularly.

How does Gwydir Shire Council support their trainees and apprentices?

By providing:

- Mentoring and expert supervision
- Workplace Inductions
- Study Leave approved to attend training blocks
- All training costs covered by Gwydir Shire Council
- Allowances provided for training which requires nights away from home
- Six (6) monthly reviews
- Nominations for Gwydir Learning Region Training Awards
- Recognition at Training NSW – New England Training Awards

Gwydir Shire Council's commitment to staff development and continuous learning ensures they have the right people in the right places with the right skills doing the right jobs at the right time!

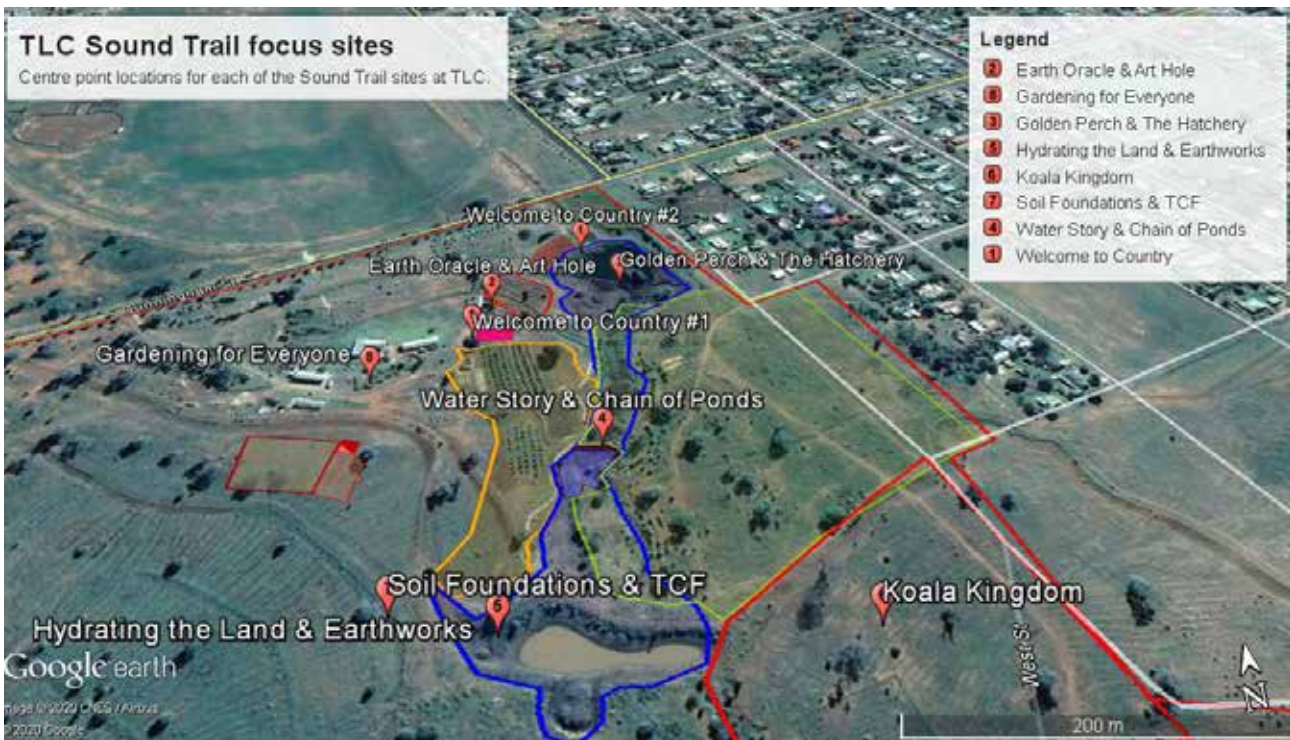


*Left: Ruby - 2021 Training Services NSW New England Region - Trainee of the Year Regional finalis*

*Right: Anthony - 2021 Training Services NSW New England Region - Trainee of the Year Regional finalist*

# The Living Classroom

Gwydir Shire Council and Vision2020 conducted a review of Sound Trails and the digital technology system for tourism and promotion at The Living Classroom. The supplier was Hamish Sewell. The Sound Trail for The Living Classroom has now been completed with eight storyboards triggered on the phone app by walking through the site from the Great Lake to the Koala Tree plantings.



The pad for the Interpretive Centre at The Living Classroom was laid down.

The availability of the excavator at The Living Classroom presented an opportunity to commence work on the Spiral Hill & Hollow project. This will be a turfed playground area proving a performance area and a sample of spirals, Fibonacci numbers and the ‘golden ratio’ in nature.

The Livestock ‘Red Shed’ was completed along with yards, crush and loading ramp. The Bingara Central School Cattle Club’s project has commenced with five head of cattle currently residing at the site. An opportunity was taken during the laying of the Interpretive Centre pad and the Cattle Club barn to re-sheet the entrance road into The Living Classroom with the white ‘Cranky Rock’ gravel.



NBN Co contractors installed fibre optic cable from Killarney Gap Road to the Classroom. Also, during the year, a 6KW Solar system was installed onto the Bunkhouse.



During the year, and prior to the COVID-19 lockdowns, many school groups visited The Living Classroom. They included, Croppa Creek and Gravesend Public, Byron Bay Steiner School, Home Schoolers NE and Bingara Central School. They were provided with a program of activities and studies to suit their needs. In the picture below, some of the students are honing their skills in the Kitchen Garden.

During the year many casual and organised visitor groups attended The Living Classroom. A number of varied activities also took place there. These included Weddings, Wakes, Conferences, Art Classes, Yoga Retreats, Embroidery Groups, and several regular regional Council meetings and Teacher training days.



Several Grant Applications were made during the year. Success was achieved via a co-operative Grant with The Carbon Farm. Several others, while not successful have paved the way for future projects.

Seasonal produce at The Living Classroom – Apricots, Mulberries, Peaches and a single Cherry (in 2020) indicate the future prospects for saleable produce from the site. In February, horticulturalist and photographer Amber Hall became part of the volunteer group at The Living Classroom. Amber is most impressed with the project and has set up a propagation system in the Nursery and a Research Garden near the Red Shed with an arrangement that sees her producing plants and edibles in exchange for a portion of sales.



A 150mm rain event over two days March 22-23 saw the entire The Living Classroom area saturated. All dams and ponds filled and for a few hours there was a spill-over from the Great Lake into the drain through the Showground. Unlike in previous times when that size rain event would have created nuisance flooding in the low-lying areas of the town, the backup of water was short lived. The capture and storage of water on The Living Classroom including the filling of the Main Dam and the Bingara Pool leaky dam of 2ML. Some over-flows took channels not intended so some minor repair and re-design work is required.

The drone photo below shows a saturated The Living Classroom. Top right is the Main Dam of 13ML, with the new Bingara Pool leaky dam of 2ML below it. The following photo shows the swale through the olive grove at right centre.



The propagation of edible plants and flowers at The Living Classroom Nursery has continued into Autumn 2021. Some were available for sale through the Bingara Op Shop. A large display and sale occurred at 'Grazing on the Gwydir' on the Saturday April 24 event in Bingara.

Several batches of biochar were 'cooked' at The Living Classroom in the ground 'Contiki' oven. The biochar product is used for plant propagation and composting. Pictured below, Mark Everett tending the Contiki Biochar Oven.





## Our Achievements with Gwydir Fitness Centres



Gwydir Shire Council operates and maintains two community fitness centres. The Gwydir Fitness Centres are 24-hour centres open for public membership. The Warialda centre is located next to the Warialda Library at 38 Hope Street and the Bingara centre is in the Bingara Sporting

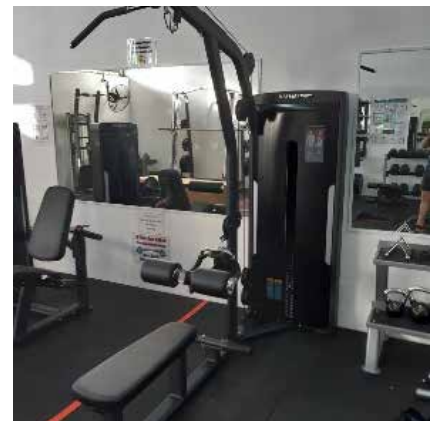
Club at 8 Bombelli Street. This is a community facility managed by Gwydir Shire Council. There is electronic entry and cameras installed to provide security for members. The Gwydir Fitness Centres contain a separate weight training, cardio, aerobics, and boxing area. These facilities are available to the community and visitors on a casual, monthly, or six-monthly membership.

The aim is to provide the community with a facility to help promote a healthy and active lifestyle, while also having the facility available to those who are working on rehabilitation or just keeping mobile.

In 2020/2021, both facilities were holding steady with 50+ members each at any given time. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the facilities were forced to close their doors in August under the directive of the public health order as they mandated hygiene marshals. Memberships were put on pause and reinstated once operations recommenced. The fitness centres were able to open again in late September.

New/replacement equipment for the financial year was achieved with the Friends of the Gwydir Fitness Centre's successful grant application through FRRR program, along with a Council contribution. The equipment included the introduction of the power rack and straight bar to the Warialda facility, along with a new Stair Master, Exercise Bike, and gym flooring. In the Bingara facility the old lateral pulldown machine was retired and replaced with a new one, along with the Leg Extension/Curl machine. A Stair Master was also introduced to Bingara.

Without the help of The Friends of the Gwydir Fitness Centre's successful grant application this would not have been possible this year, with COVID-19 restrictions having a big impact on income.







# Our Achievements in Work Health and Safety and Risk Management

## Work Health and Safety

### **Work Health and Safety Management System review**

Safety management systems can make a big difference to any business. Using a safety management system however, no matter how thorough and systematic it may be, is not sufficient to guarantee sustained safety performance.

A review of Council's WHS Management System continued during this reporting period. For a system to work properly it is necessary to develop organisational cultures such as 'thinking the unthinkable' and being intrinsically motivated to be safe, even when there seems no obvious reason to do this.

The review will involve redrafting the Management System and consultation to develop Management Plans for all business units so that it aligns to the current Australian Standard, AS/NZS 4801.

This type of management system is used to demonstrate, internally and externally (via third party certification), that Council is systematically and effectively controlling the risks to all persons affected by Council's activities.

## Risk

### **Statewide Mutual**

Council's insurer, Statewide Mutual was created in 1993 in response to NSW Councils' volatile risk portfolio which lead to spiralling insurance premiums and ultimately resulting in underwriters withdrawing their support to Local Government.

The Mutual is owned by 115 NSW Councils and run in accordance with the NSW Local Government Mutual Liability Scheme. It is managed by the Statewide Board of Management (the Board). The Board comprises senior level managers from Member Councils representing 11 regions in NSW and the Mutual is managed by Jardine Lloyd Thompson.

## Insurance Costs

Insurance Class	2021/2022	2020/2021
Environmental Impairment Liability	\$55,462.00	\$55,599.50
Workers Compensation	\$790,607.75	\$789,976.56
Personal Accident	\$3,993.28	\$3,962.48
Workers Compensation Top up	\$3,294.48	\$2,866.75
Accumulated Sick Leave	Now held within other policies	\$10,159.91
Casual Hirers Liability	\$5,698.77	\$5,065.58
Councillors and Officers Liability	\$42,004.34	\$38,185.76
Crime	\$13,170.42	\$10,914.38
Motor Vehicle	\$176,453.24	\$187,397.93
Motor Vehicle Adjustment	-\$2,847.22	-
Property	\$352,776.17	\$309,632.88
Public Liability - Professional Indemnity	\$233,927.58	\$207,935.63
Total exc. GST	\$1,674,540.81	\$1,621,697.36

## Business Improvement Committee

Definition: Business Improvement (BI): Refining or redesigning processes, services, and systems, to improve efficiency, effectiveness and quality, or address compliance matters, in alignment with strategy.

In April 2021 the Business Improvement Committee was formed with representatives from various departments within the organisation. The purpose of the Business Improvement Committee is to identify and prioritise business improvement initiatives which have a cross Council impact on people, process, and systems. This level of prioritisation is intended to improve efficiency, reduce inconsistencies, manage resource availability, and capitalise on opportunities which align with Council strategy. Initiatives will be prioritised based on strategic priority; relative value in relation to other initiatives; the impact of change considering resource requirements and departments impacted; and the benefit to the council and community as a whole.

The committee was formed to assist council in 4 key areas:

- Identify the need for change
- Analyse current processes
- Obtain commitment and support
- Create improvement strategy

## Section 2

# Statutory Reporting Requirements



## Amount of rates and charges written off during the year

Amount of Rates and Charges Written Off in 2020/2021 Year				
Pension Rebate Breakdown 2021/2022				
Pension Rebate - 2021/2022				
Rate Classification	Rebate Given	Govt	Council	Total (\$)
General Rates	Pensioner Farmland	-7,730.41	-6,324.82	-14,055.23
	Pensioner General	-43,329.55	-35,451.36	-78,780.91
		-51,059.96	-41,776.18	
Water & Sewer Rates	Pensioner Water	-23,843.46	-19,512.79	-43,356.25
	Pensioner Sewerage	-20,426.94	-16,716.81	-37,143.75
Waste Charges	Pensioner Domestic Waste & Disposal	-19,415.99	-15,885.88	-35,301.87
	Pensioner Waste Management	-15,065.26	-12,326.23	-27,391.49
		-34,481.25	-28,212.11	
	<b>Total Claim</b>	-129,811.61	-106,217.89	-236,029.5
			<b>-106,217.89</b>	

### Councillor Expenses

#### Details of overseas visits by Councillors, Council staff or other persons representing Council (including visits sponsored by other organisations)

There were no overseas visits by Councillors, Council staff or other persons representing Council during this reporting period.

#### Total cost during the year of the payment of expenses of, and the provision of facilities to, Councillors in relation to their civic functions.

There were no expenses in the 2020/2021 reporting period relating to the payment of expenses of and provision of facilities to councillors in relation to the civic functions.

#### Provision of dedicated office equipment allocated to Councillors

The total amount of expense relating to office equipment was for provision of Mobile Phones and iPads with a total cost of \$6951.79.

#### Telephone calls made by Councillors

Council does not pay the cost of telephone calls for elected members.

### Attendance of Councillors at conferences and seminars. Training of Councillors and provision of skill development (including interstate visits)

The total cost for the 2020/2021 year for Councillor skills development was A break-up of these costs is provided in the table below:

Details	Amount (\$)
Air Travel	\$306.70
Course Seminar & Conference Registration	\$8,113.19
Other Travel Related Costs	\$7,456.01
Overnight Travel Expenses	\$5,086.34
Plant Hire for travel to Seminars & Conferences	\$16,777.80
Travel Accommodation	\$10,374.35
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$48,114.39</b>

### List of interstate visits and number attending

There was only one interstate visits made by Councillors in 2020/2021 details are included in the table below:

State	Purpose	No Attending
ACT	LG National General Assembly	3

### Expenses involved in the provision of care for a child or an immediate family member of a Councillor.

There were no expenses involved in the provision of care relating to a Councillor during this period.

### Details of contracts awarded by Council

Gwydir Shire Council awarded eleven (11) contracts exceeding \$150,000 during 2020/2021. Total value of contracts exceeding \$150,000 during this reporting period is in excess of \$1,493,484.00

Gwydir Shire Council - Class 1 Contracts		
Name of Contractor	Purpose of Contract	Actual Expenditure Ex GST
Cleanaway	Waste Management	\$13,494.26
Roger Moore PTY Ltd	Supply of Fuel	Not yet completed
Johnstone Concrete and Quarries	To supply and deliver manufactured quarry products, as required, to a TfNSW specification	\$41,595.95
ERM	Electricity	Not yet completed
AGL	Electricity	Not yet completed
ORIGIN	Electricity	Not yet completed
Cleanaway	Waste collection and processing	Not yet completed
Fulton Hogan	Full service bitumen resurfacing.	\$1,438,394.19
Smartlux	Supply and Install sports field lighting	Not yet completed
Meador Constructions P/L	Improvements to the Warialda Golf & Bowling Club	Not yet completed
Smartlux - Precision Lighting	To upgrade the existing lighting infrastructure to increase efficiency and incorporate more sporting opportunities.	Not yet completed
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,493,484.40</b>

### Summary of the amounts incurred by the Council in relation to legal proceedings

There was two legal action against Council during the 2020/2021 period. Both have been resolved. The legal costs during the 2020/2021 are \$45,801.80 including GST.

### Summary of resolutions made under Section 67 concerning work carried out on private land.

Description	Number
Earthworks/Construction	13
Grading Access Road	29
Hire of Staff	3
Miscellaneous	2
Plant Hire	22
Private Works for RFS	6
Repair to Hire Plant	2
Reseal Driveway	1
Sale of Emulsion	1
Sale of Gravel	6
Sale of Miscellaneous Materials	2
Sale of Signs	3
Transport Equipment	7
Water Delivery	149

Weed control was part of funded regional activities for intensive weed control and eradication and containment. All projects were full cost recovery.

**Total amount contributed or otherwise granted under section 356 (financially assist others)**

There was a total of \$108,157 donated under Section 356. The table below includes information on the donations granted:

<b>2020/2021 Donation</b>	
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Amount</b>
All junior and school sports plus community groups	\$5,000
Anglican Church, North Star	\$707
Bingara Radiance Club	\$2,281
Catholic Church, Presbytery, St Joseph's Primary School and Convent	\$9,945
CWA North Star	\$1,249
CWA Warialda	\$2,998
Gravesend Showground	\$878
Gwydir Rugby Club	\$1,000
Presbyterian Church Warialda	\$1,624
Salvation Army Bingara	\$1,357
Scots Presbyterian Church, Bingara	\$1,107
St Johns Anglican Church, Bingara	\$2,669
St Mary's Catholic Church, Bingara	\$3,802
St Simon and Jude's Anglican Church, Warialda	\$1,899
Uniting Church, Bingara	\$1,132
Bingara Central School	\$5,000
Waiving Development Appln and other fees	\$1,500
Carinda House	\$3,133
Warialda P & A Association	\$6,897
Warialda Rail Recreation Reserve	\$829
<b>Sub Totals</b>	<b>\$55,007</b>

Donations < \$1,000	
Organisation	Amount
Upper Horton Rodeo and Campdraft	\$500
Warialda Sports Council Awards	\$350
Warialda High School	\$475
Bingara Central School	\$650
Warialda Primary School	\$300
St Josephs Primary School	\$300
Gravesend Primary School	\$300
North Star Primary School	\$300
Croppa Creek Primary School	\$300
Unallocated	\$10,575
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$14,050</b>

Donations > \$1,000	
Organisation	Amount
Barraba PA & H Association	\$1,500.00
Warialda P & A Association	\$1,500.00
Bingara Show Society	\$1,500.00
Gwydir Art Prize (Subject to being held)	\$2,500.00
Friendly Faces Helping Hands Foundation	\$1,000.00
Warialda Historical Society (Previous commitment by Council to 5 year project)	\$5,000.00
Bingara Sporting Club (If grant application is successful)	\$20,000.00
Bush Bursary NSW Doctors' Network	\$2,000
Warialda Rotary	\$1,100.00
Barwon Medical Scholarship	\$3,000.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$39,100.00</b>

Statements of all corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies in which Council held a controlling interest.

Gwydir Shire Council did not hold a controlling interest in any corporation, private company, partnership, trust, joint venture, syndicate or any other body in the year ending 30 June 2021.



### **Statements of all corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies in which council participated.**

The Council is involved in several co-operative arrangements with a non-controlling interest in the following entities:

- Fossickers' Way Promotion Committee
- Local Government NSW
- Traffic Committee
- Regional Tourism Committee
- Bush Fire Liaison (Service Level Agreement) Committee
- Border Regional Organisations of Councils
- Arts North West
- Namoi Joint Organisation
- New England Joint Organisation (Associate Membership)
- New England North West Regional Advisory Committee (Multicultural Advisory Group)
- Country Mayor's Association
- StateCover Mutual
- Statewide Mutual
- Central Northern Regional Library and Information Service

### **Statement of all external bodies that exercised functions delegated by Council.**

To better engage the community and reflect local community views and needs, Gwydir Shire Council delegates a range of its functions to volunteer committees:

- Bingara Historical Society
- Gravesend Community Group
- Naroo Advisory Committee
- Bingara Anglers' Club
- Bingara Showground Committee
- Bingara Special Events
- Warialda Tourism Committee
- Warialda Historical Society
- Coolatai Sportsground Committee
- North Star Hall Committee
- Croppa Creek Hall Committee
- Yallaroi Hall Committee
- Crooble Hall Committee
- Croppa Creek Hall Committee
- Warialda Rail Community Committee
- Warialda Cultural Community Centre – Carinda House
- Warialda Sports Council
- Warialda PreSchool
- Gwydir Health Alliance

### **Equal Employment Management (EEO)**

Gwydir Shire Council is committed to the principles of EEO. It aims to provide a work environment that fosters fairness, equity, respect for social and cultural diversity, and is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and vilification as determined by the legislation.

In fulfilling this commitment, Council:

- Fosters an organisational culture which recognises and respects the diversity in the social and cultural backgrounds of all staff and customers
- Provides equal opportunity by removing barriers to participation or progression in employment
- Safeguards merit-based systems of transparency so that decisions are made without bias
- Provides training to create an environment that promotes and supports transparent decision making
- Strives to ensure fair outcomes in all areas of employment, including recruitment, training and development, promotion, transfer, supervision and management of staff, access to information and conditions of employment
- Provides a workplace where all staff and customers are treated with respect and courtesy
- Clearly defines what is regarded as acceptable and unacceptable workplace behaviour

Gwydir Shire Council demonstrates its commitment to the principles of EEO through the development of processes to eliminate any potential discrimination, harassment or bullying in the workplace. Existing policies and induction programs highlight the importance of treating all staff and customers with respect and reinforce that discrimination in any form will not be tolerated.

Gwydir Shire Council also demonstrates a commitment to EEO principles through the development of systems and processes for recruitment and promotion. All decisions made regarding recruitment and promotion are based on merit not influenced by gender, disability, race, age, religion or any other attribute.

For existing employees, Gwydir Shire Council is committed to providing a supportive and inclusive workplace where decisions are made equitably without any discrimination.

During this reporting period a Draft EEO Management Plan has been developed through consultation with key stakeholders.

Council has several trained EEO Contact Officers who have been trained by the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW to assist with the application of EEO policies and procedures and provide support and guidance to staff.

### **Statement of the total remuneration comprised in the remuneration package of the General Manager**

#### **General Manager Remuneration Package**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount (\$)</b>
Salary	305,178.99
Superannuation	28,992.06
Non-Cash Benefits	20,800.00
FBT	0.00
<b>Total Package</b>	<b>354,971.05</b>

Senior Staff Members Remuneration Package

Not applicable. The only staff member classified as Senior Staff is the General Manager.

#### **Stormwater Management Services**

Council levied a Stormwater Management Service Charge (SWSC) of \$25 per residential property, \$12.50 for residential strata lots, and \$25 per 350sq.m for business properties capped at a maximum charge of \$1,000. The total received funds in the 2020/2021 financial year was \$39,375. Council's stormwater works program for the financial year included routine repairs, cleaning of gross pollutant traps and removal of debris from grates and inlets.



### **Coastal Protection Services Provided**

Not applicable. Council did not levy any charges for coastal protection services.

### **Report on Capital Works Projects**

There were nil capital works project reports submitted during the reporting period.

### **Swimming Pool Inspections**

Building Services have a private swimming pool inspection program in place where all known swimming pools in Gwydir Shire are inspected once every three years. The program is designed to ensure owners of private swimming pools maintain their pools and pool barriers in an effective manner to ensure the safety of all pool users. In the 2019/20 financial year Council inspectors carried out 33 pool inspections and issued 33 swimming pool compliance certificates.

The 2019/20 financial year saw the commencement of the 2nd round of the 3-year rolling program for inspections which means that all known swimming pools within Gwydir Shire have now been inspected at least once. The program will continue to be undertaken on a yearly rolling basis as required by the NSW Government.

## Statement Of Activities Companion Animals Act 1998 And Regulation 2008

### Companion Animals management

Gwydir Shire Council employs two Regulatory Officers who are responsible for administering the Companion Animals Act 1998. The officers patrol the region to provide companion animal owners with support, education and regulation. A summary of the activities undertaken in 2020/2021 are listed below.

### Pound data / Collection returns

Council reports annually on impounded animals in the Gwydir Shire region. This information is provided to the Department of Local Government, and forms part of the Survey of Council Seizures of Cats and Dogs. Council lodged its pound data collection return in August 2021. A summary of the pound data collections for the year is presented in the table below.

ACTIVITY	CATS	% change	DOGS	% change
Total Animals Seized	40	+29%	18	-22%
Returned to owner	0	-200%	13	+260%
Impounded	40	+38%	5	-72%
Surrendered	0	0%	0	-200%
Released to Owners	0	-100%	1	0%
Released to rehoming organisation	4	+400%	3	-73%
Euthanised unsuitable for rehoming	3	+300%	1	-66%
Euthanised unable to rehomed	0	-200%	1	-80%
Euthanised feral	36	+38%	0	0%

### Nuisance Orders

Four dogs (two residing at the same property) were put on a 6-month nuisance orders for barking or escaping property issues.

### Menacing Dog Declarations

Five dogs (two pairs residing at the same property) were placed on menacing dog declarations. One dog residing at another property remains on a menacing dog declaration from previous years for an attack.

### Dangerous Dog Declaration

One dog remains on a dangerous dog declaration from the previous year for an attack.

### Microchipping and Registrations

494 Dogs and 14 Cats were microchipped in the period. Of these 11 microchips were implanted by the Regulatory staff. 82 Dogs and 13 Cats were registered in the period for a total of \$15,391.

### Microchipping and Registration Totals

	ID Microchip Only	% change	Registered	% change	Total	% change
Cat	322	+14%	177	+14%	499	+14%
Dog	3347	+20%	1671	+7%	5018	+16%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3669</b>	<b>+20%</b>	<b>1848</b>	<b>+8%</b>	<b>5517</b>	<b>+15%</b>

## The top ten registered breeds in The Shire

### Dogs

Breed	Registered
Australian Kelpie	301
Jack Russell Terrier	256
Labrador Retriever	174
Border Collie	144
Australian Cattle Dog (Blue)	136
Maltese	101
Unknown	97
Chihuahua (Smooth)	92
Cocker Spaniel	91
Dachshund (miniature)	91

### Cats

Breed	Registered
Domestic	309
Ragdoll	43
Birman	26
(Other)	14
Burmese	10
Domestic	10
Russian Blue	9
Unknown	7
Ragdoll	7
Persian	7

### Dog Attack Statistics

Known dog attacks reported and investigated by Council's Regulatory officers are entered into the Companion Animals Database, in accordance with the requirements of the Companion Animals Act 1998. During 2020/2021 there was 1 incident involving 2 dogs reported to Council which was investigated and reported on the Companion Animals Database. All incidents were investigated and reported through the Companion Animals Database portal. All incidents were resolved.

### Funds spent on Companion Animal management and activities

Funding spent by Council in 2020/2021 totalled \$118,656

This figure includes the employment of Regulatory officers, the operation and maintenance of Council's Companion Animal Impounding facility, as well as educational and awareness activities.

### Educational activities

The Strategic Companion Animal Management Plan (SCAMP) contains objectives for undertaking companion animal awareness and educational activities. This year saw a continuing use of social media for a range of Companion Animal Management Activities including education, reuniting lost pets, and rehoming pets. The free microchipping strategy uses this face-to-face contact to educate people on their roles and responsibilities as a pet owner. The Shire also produces a range of factsheets for companion animal owners which are distributed physically, and the information is available online at Council's website.

### Strategies to promote the desexing and permanent identification of companion animals

It is recognised that the desexing of cats and dogs helps to reduce nuisance behaviours such as roaming, aggression and the production of unwanted litters. We promote desexing to our customers highlighting these advantages both socially and financially.

### Strategies to reduce euthanasia rates

Council operates a Facebook page and eligible impounded animals are advertised for rehoming. This allows the community to view and share that information and reach a wider audience. Partnerships have been developed across the region with rehoming organisations such as Luck paws, Animal Welfare League

(Moree), PetRescue - Macintyre Pet and Animal Rescue – Goondiwindi. The companion animals that are not rehomed locally are shared with these organisations and available to a wider population for rehoming. A total of eight dogs have been euthanised as they were unable and unsuitable to be rehomed. All the euthanised cats were feral cats.

If companion animals are not able to be rehomed locally, the Compliance officers work with Luck paws, Animal welfare league (Moree) PetRescue - Macintyre Pet and Animal Rescue – Goondiwindi to rehome them further afield.

The dogs that were euthanised were due to behavioural unsuitability.

### **Off-leash areas**

Council provides five designated off leash areas in the region. Council secured funding via the Stronger Country Communities grant program to upgrade the off-leash areas. The upgrades include fencing areas at Triangle Park, All Nations Hill and the Gravesend reserve. The fenced areas will also include seating, a water drinking fountain for dogs and their owners, shade plantings and dog litter bag dispensers and bins. Upgrades have commenced and will be completed in the new year.

Regulatory signage is erected at all the off-leash areas detailing what behaviours are permitted and prohibited.

**Bingara** Bicentennial Park including part Bingara River Common Crown Reserve area under Council management and All Nations Hill, Hill Street, Bingara.

**Warialda** Pioneer Cemetery Park and Long Street Triangle Park corner of Long St and Mosquito Creek Road (triangle reserve).

**Gravesend** Off leash Reserve Gwydir Street Gravesend.



### **Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 and Regulation Information included on GIPA Activity**

During the 2020/2021 period, Council received two requests under the Government Information (Public Access) Act, 2009. Both were dealt with in the period required and the information requested was provided.

### **Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979**

#### **Particular of compliance with and effect of planning agreements in force during the year.**

There were no Planning Agreements in force during this reporting period.

### **PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE ACT 1994 AND REGULATION**

No disclosures were made during the reporting period. Council's Privacy Management Plan is available at [www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au) to view or download. During the reporting period Council had planned to engage NSW Ombudsman staff to undertake training of Council employees. Twice this training was postponed, due to fires and COVID-19. When this training is complete, and employees are appointed as PID officers then Council will review its policies.

### **Compliance with the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010**

The relationship between carers and the persons for whom they care is recognised and respected within the Gwydir Shire. Carers are considered to be partners with all other care providers in the provision of care and are treated with dignity and respect.

Gwydir Shire acknowledges the important role carers play within the community and aims to provide timely and appropriate support. Aged Care within the Gwydir Shire involve carers in the ongoing health management by way of inclusion in Case Conferences and being consulted about new program proposals that are directed to carers or the person they care for.

The new Aged Care Standards incorporate the importance of Carers in the industry, and it is expected that organisations partnership with the consumer and their carer/s. Consumers Dignity and Choice is supported by allowing consumers to make decisions about when family, friend's carers or others should be involved in their care. Consumers often continue to receive care and support from unpaid carers when entering residential care such as family and friends. These people have been supporting the consumer over a period of time, before they accessed care and services and continue to be recognised by the Gwydir Shire Council. Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) services celebrate Carers week. Carers are also involved in our Disability Inclusion Committee undertaking a consultative role.

Naroo Frail Aged Care facility continues to recognise family and carers on a monthly basis by holding a BBQ each month to celebrate the resident's birthdays and inviting them to attend.

National Carers week is celebrated each year and is about recognising and celebrating the outstanding contribution family, friends and carers make to our shire.

### **Educational Strategies**

Staff awareness and education is available through various programs such as Dementia Australia and Golden Carers. Staff also have access to webinars providing information and education on programs such as the new Integrated Carer Support Service Model.

A copy of the NSW Carers charter is displayed in Gwydir Shire Council units within the shire. Carers play an integral part within the Gwydir Shire Council and are recognised and involved in the day-to-day care of residents residing in the Aged Care Facility owned by the Gwydir Shire Council as well as services provided through Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) and NSW Transport.

### **Consultation and liaison with Carers**

Consultation and liaison with Carers occurs within the Residential Aged Care facility and CHSP services on a daily basis. Carers are identified and kept informed with any changes or deterioration of their loved ones. Gwydir Shire seeks input and feedback from consumers and their carers and has access to various methods for raising and resolving complaints. This feedback is actively reviewed, and the service is improved as appropriate.

Work continues on implementation of Dementia Friendly communities within the shire. The Dementia Friendly Committee has been integrated with the Disability Inclusion Committee which has brought strength and increased scope to the combined committee. This committee is made up of people in the community who are interested in helping to make their community or town more disability and dementia friendly.



### **Staff who are carers**

Carers leave is available to all staff working for the Gwydir Shire Council and is supported by the Gwydir Shire Councils Sick and Carers Leave policy adopted on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020. This policy is due for review in March 2022.

### **Disability Inclusion Act 2014**

The Gwydir Shire Council recognises that people with a disability have the right to exercise choice and control in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their support and services. The aim is to provide people with disability opportunities for access and participation, consistent with that provided to other community members.

Council has developed its Disability Inclusion Plan and has built the actions in this plan into Delivery Program Actions. We continue to plan to address the issues that we need to as an organisation to ensure that people with a disability in our community are not disadvantaged.

During this reporting period Council was successful in seeking funding for an all abilities recreational area adjacent to the Warialda MPS and Naroo Aged Care Facility. This recreation area will provide an exciting recreational space for people of all abilities. The space was designed utilising the Everyone Can Play Principles developed by the NSW Government.

In developing this park Council has demonstrated its commitment Gwydir Shire to implementing the Act by way of constructing a recreation/play space for people of all abilities. The design includes wide paved walkways, wheelchair friendly, access to raised garden beds and access to a wheelchair swing. This specific equipment has been incorporated with gym equipment and playground equipment ensuring that all community members have the opportunity to access these facilities together.

Also included in the design is varied styles of seating, outdoor music equipment, passive recreation turf spaces and a native plantings of bird attracting plants.

Gwydir Shire Council has also formed a Disability Access Committee and usually meets regularly to discuss the needs of the community. However the impact of COVID-19 has slowed the progression of this committee for 2020/2021 but will be reinstated as restrictions ease.

### **Fisheries Management Act 1994**

Gwydir Shire Council has not been identified as responsible for the implementation of measures in any Recovery Threat Abatement Plan.