



ECONOMIC AND
TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY
2009-2012

ADOPTED on: 24 June 2009



FORWARD:

“A community in charge of its future”



The combining of Economic Development and Tourism Development into one strategic plan is an important milestone for the Wentworth Shire Council, as we seek to expand the economic capacity of our region. The reality of our economy, like any other economy is that one of three things can happen:

- it can expand
- it can stagnate or
- it can contract

As a council we want to see our economy expand, creating and maximising every opportunity for growth and development within our community. There can be no denying that our community is being effected by the consequences of the prolonged drought, and we are also cognisant of the fact that we may not yet have seen the full implications of the global financial crisis.

However, Council has a very strong view that in difficult times community cohesiveness determines the capacity to shape the future, and so to construct this plan we have looked at economic and tourism development from a community perspective, believing that collectively we can and will achieve long lasting and sustainable results.

Never before has the Council embarked on such a bold strategy to propel it forward into the future, exploring ways to harness the energy and drive of the community as a whole, working together to achieve lasting economic development across the Shire.

Margaret Thomson,

Mayor
Wentworth Shire Council.

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Mastrippolito, P, 2009, *Wentworth Shire Council Economic & Tourism Development Strategy, 2009 - 2012*, prepared for Wentworth Shire Council, April, 2009.

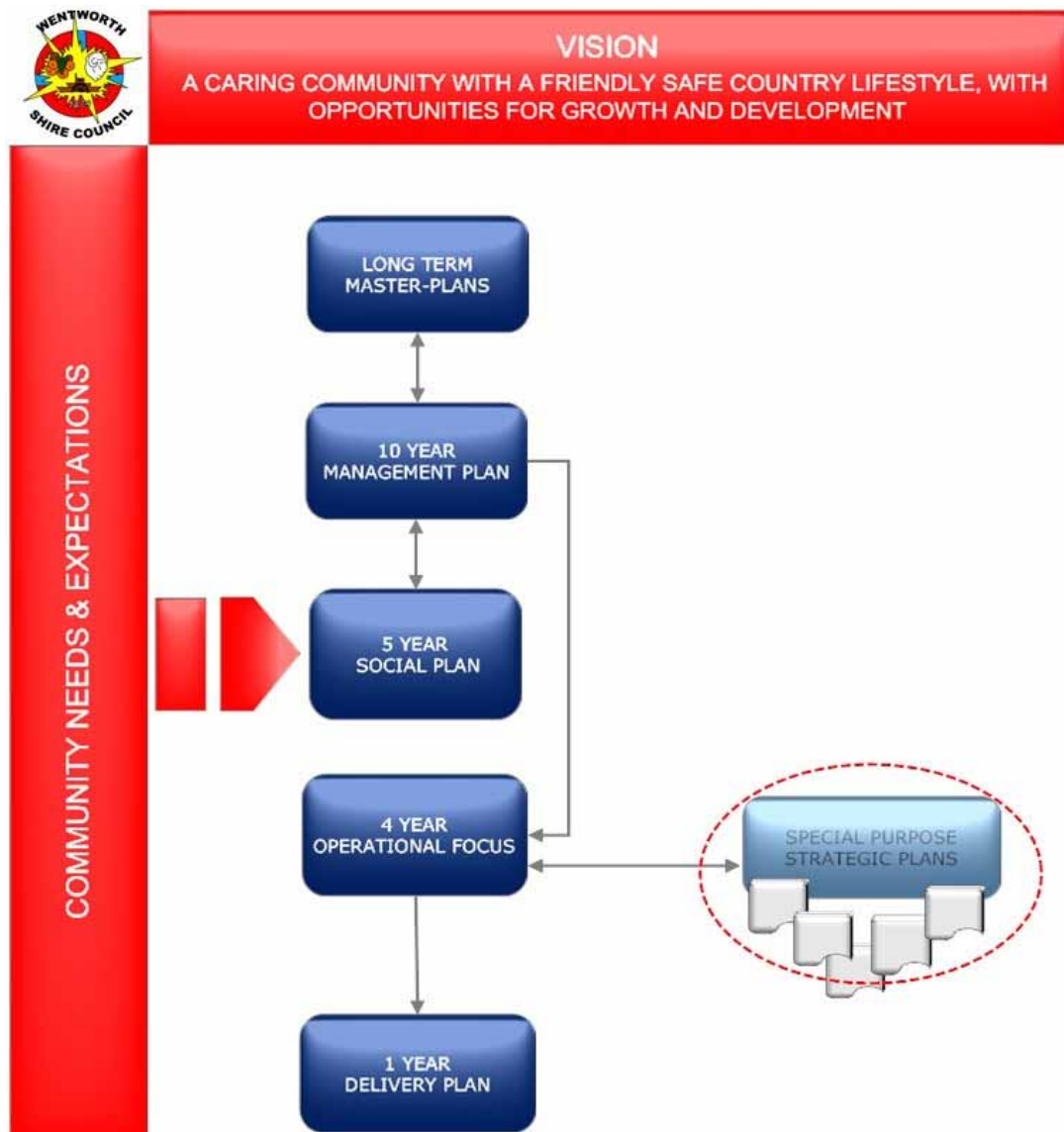
THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Planning Process

The Wentworth Shire Council has a rigorous planning process to ensure that it achieves its strategic vision.

This plan is considered to be one of a number of special purpose strategic plans of the Wentworth Shire Council and as such the strategies will have a four year operational focus.

This high level strategic plan has been purposely designed to provide the Council with a framework to progress the development of economic and tourism activity within the region.



WENTWORTH REGION - FAST FACTS



The Wentworth Shire is located within the Lower Murray Darling Basin region of NSW, in the far south-western corner of the state, close to both the Victoria and South Australia borders.

Distance to capital cities:

- Adelaide SA – 408 kilometres
- Melbourne, VIC – 578 kilometres
- Sydney, NSW – 1040 kilometres
(kilometres by road)

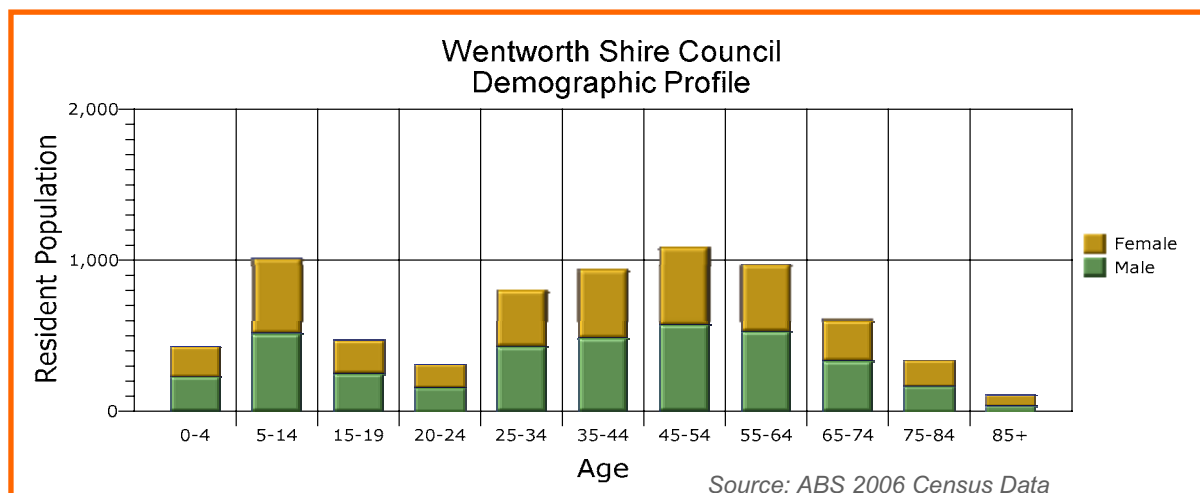
Nearest large population centres:

- Mildura, Victoria (49,817 population ABS 2006) – on the Murray River which is the border between Victoria and NSW, less than 1 kilometre across the Murray river from the Shire
- Broken Hill, NSW (20,139 population ABS 2006) – 281 kilometres from the historic township of Wentworth and 212 kilometres from Pooncarie. (Broken Hill operates on Central Australian Time).

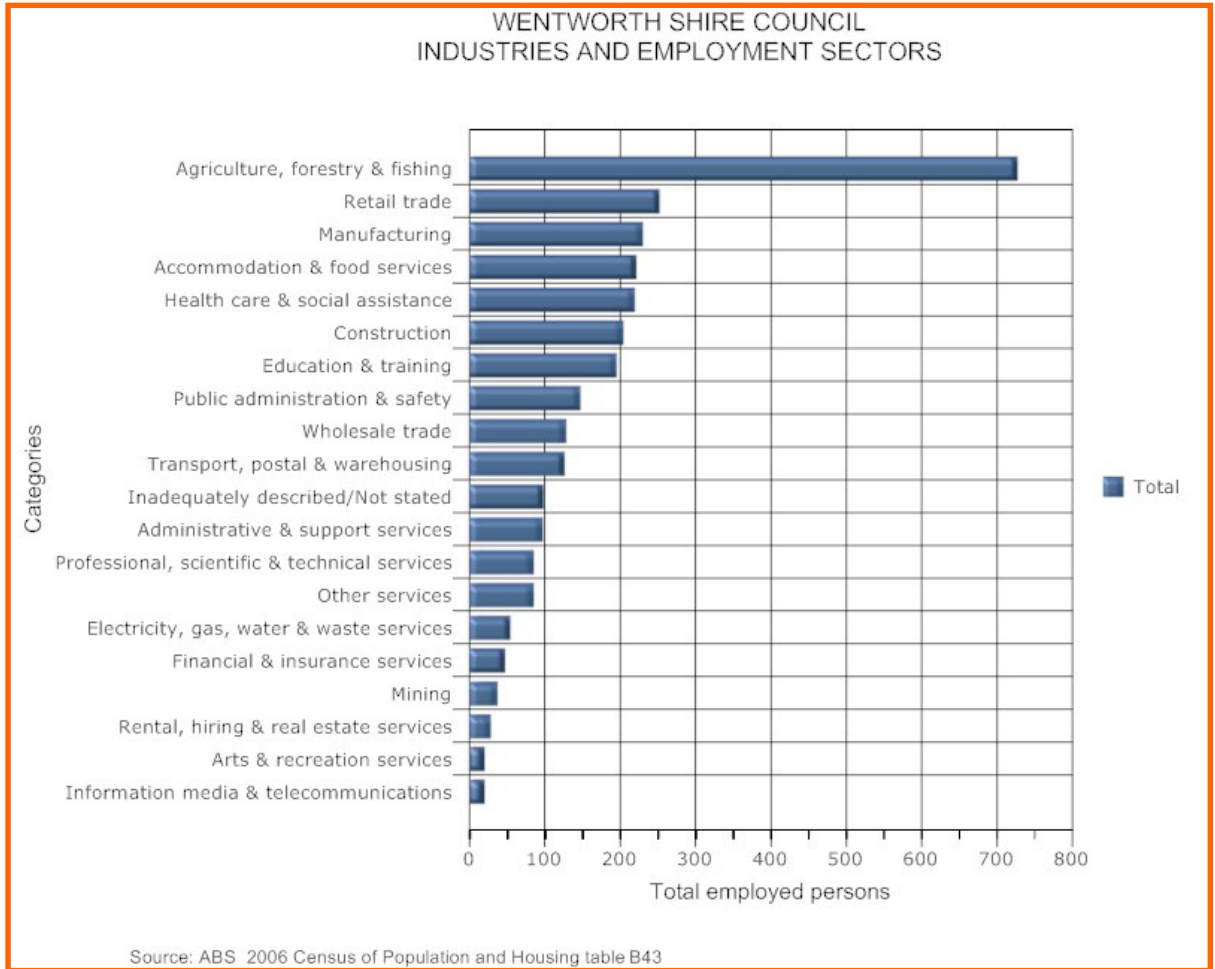
Accessibility/Remoteness Index: 4.6244
(moderately accessible, but significantly restricted in accessibility to goods/services and opportunities for social interaction)

Total Resident Population	7079
Median Age	40
Mean Household Size	2.6
Median Weekly Household Income	\$775
Median Monthly Housing Loan Repayment	\$900
Median Weekly Rent	\$105
Dwellings fully Owned*	37%
Dwellings being purchased*	31%
Dwellings being rented*	25%
Lone person households	24%
Lone Parent household	11%
Household Internet connections	54%
Post secondary qualification	23%
Employed Full-time	2114
Employed Part-time	1031
Looking For Work	171

Source: ABS 2006 Census Data



WENTWORTH REGION - FAST FACTS



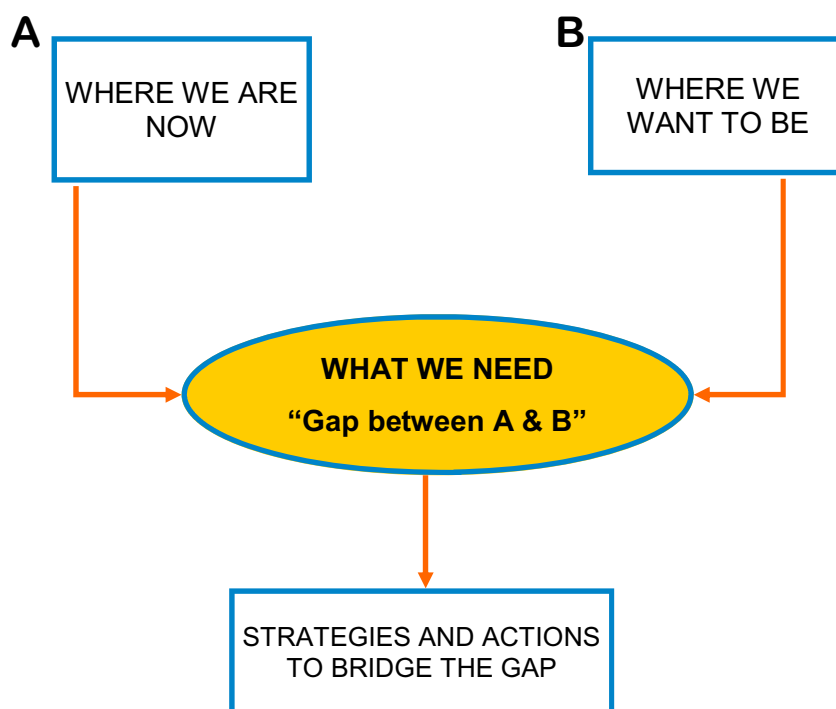
DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

What is economic development?

The N.S.W. Department of State and Regional Development define economic development as being a process of identifying and harnessing local and regional resources and opportunities to stimulate economic and employment activity. It is about communities utilising their human, physical and financial resources to maintain and enhance their unique strengths and their quality of life.

Forman and Mooney (n.d.) define economic development as being a program, a group of policies, or activity to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community, whilst Holladay (1992) defines economic development as the creation of wealth.

Regardless of the definition, the fundamental basis for any plan is to understand where we are now, where we want to be in the future, and addressing the gap between the two points. Once we understand and appreciate what our needs are, then we can work together to bridge the gap.



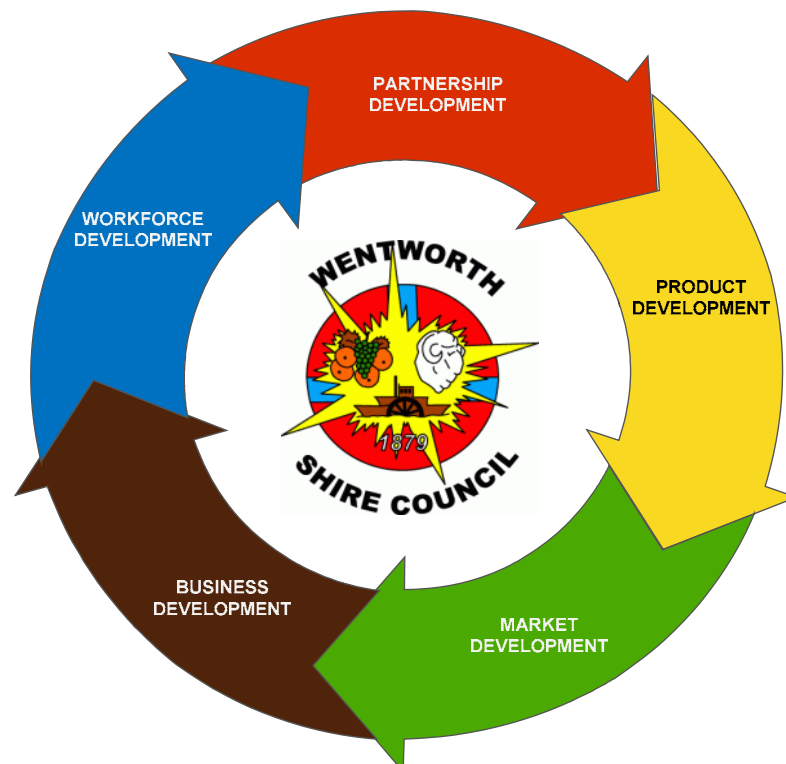
DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Rather than focussing on one single element of economic development, this framework has been developed around five interconnecting components. Each of the components interacts with the other to develop a holistic approach to economic and tourism development. Unless specifically individualised, the strategies and actions that have been developed apply equally to both economic development and tourism development.

The five interconnecting components of economic and tourism development

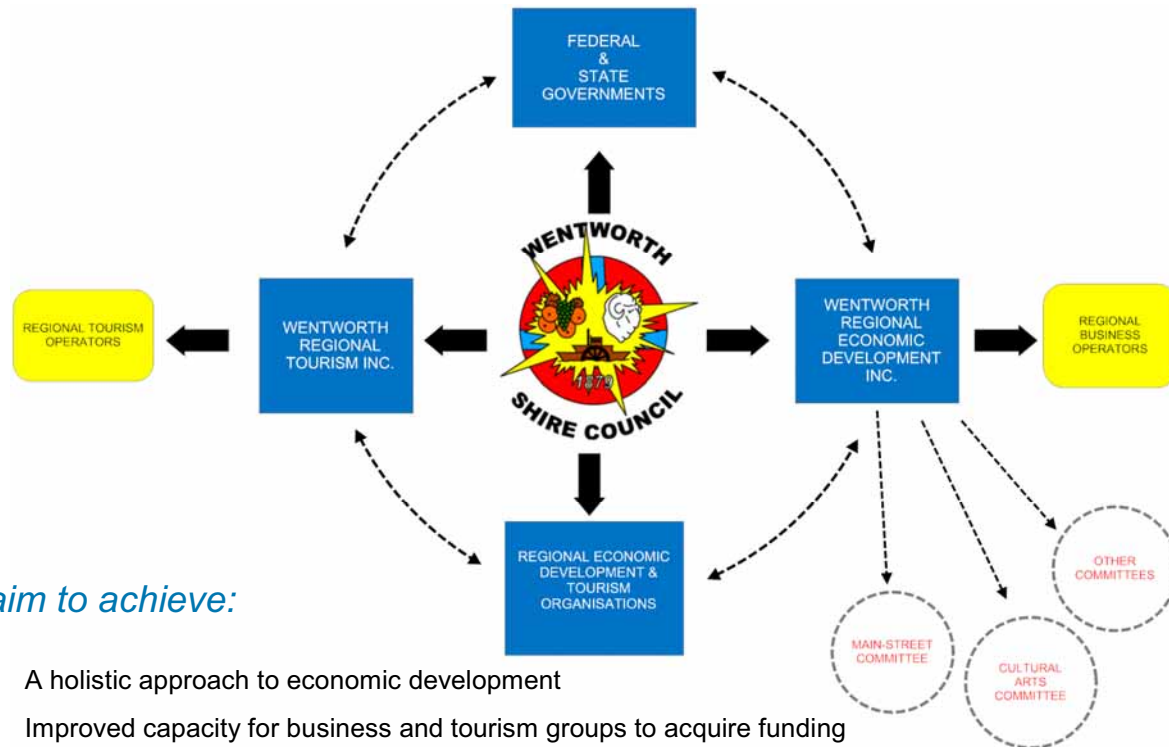
Partnership Development	<i>Collaborative partnerships provide a legitimate forum for exchanging ideas, addressing the needs of the community and raising funds in an efficient manner.</i>
Product Development	<i>Product development is about what we have to offer potential new residents, businesses and visitors, and how we communicate this. This section looks at development of infrastructure, business and technology parks and township and precinct development.</i>
Market Development	<i>Market development is about activities that focus on attracting new residents, visitors and businesses who will bring long term economic benefit to our region.</i>
Business Development	<i>Programs that nurture business growth and investment, including business attraction, retention and expansion, tourism, and start up and emerging businesses.</i>
Workforce Development	<i>Building the skills of the local workforce, including partnerships between business, education, and government so all residents can be contributing members of the local economy.</i>

Adapted from: Forman M., and Mooney J, *Learning to Lead :A Primer on Economic Development Strategies*, Washington State Community, Trade and Economic Development, USA



PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Partnership development is a critical component of harnessing the strength, drive and capacity of the community. This section is about communities utilising human, physical and financial resources to maintain and enhance their unique strengths and quality of life. In this way, rather than economic and tourism development being the exclusive responsibility of Council it becomes everyone's responsibility. (fig. 1)



We aim to achieve:

- A holistic approach to economic development
- Improved capacity for business and tourism groups to acquire funding
- Broad community involvement in economic and tourism development

The way forward — what we will do

Actions	Timing
Consolidate partnerships with Wentworth Regional Tourism Inc., Wentworth Regional Economic Development Inc., Mildura Development Association, and Mildura Tourism. Encourage diversified representation to encompass each township within the Local Government Area and the greater Sunraysia region.	ongoing
Foster collaborative development approaches with major employers, education sector, health sector finance sector, employment organisations, environmental groups, and public authorities	ongoing
Foster local business knowledge and enhance strategic linkages between buyers and suppliers. (Understand and improve the value chain)	ongoing
Promote and support networking activities	ongoing
Facilitate and promote opportunities for business and community to engage in capacity building initiatives.	ongoing
Promote engagement, transparency and accountability as integral values of Economic and Tourism Development	ongoing
Implement a communications plan to disseminate grant information to stakeholders	09/10
Maintain strategic partnerships at a regional, State and National level with other Local Government Areas, economic development bodies, and leading Tourism Organisations.	ongoing

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Product development is about what we as a community have to offer to potential new residents, businesses, and visitors, and how we communicate this. Therefore product development encompasses a variety of activities such as infrastructure development (power, sewer, water, communications etc), the development of business and technology parks and township and precinct development. This section is about understanding and developing the current and future physical support needs and requirements of our region.

We aim to achieve:

- Improved business and tourism infrastructure
- Increase in visitor numbers and spend within the region
- Increased business investment into the region
- Expand and improve the liveability, and sustainability of the entire community by attracting employment, shopping, recreation and social activities.

The way forward — what we will do

Actions	Timing
Conduct a commercial and industrial land use study in Wentworth, Buronga Gol/Gol and Dareton to determine capacity and constraints.	09/10
Conduct consumer research and competitor analysis to identify the region's strengths and opportunities for development	09/10
Encourage the development of tourism product, including festival and event product and experiences that enhances the region's competitive strengths.	ongoing
Source and disseminate industry research data to the marketplace and represent the tourism industry and the region's interests as a lobbyist for appropriate sustainable infrastructure and services	ongoing
Build the image of the region through strong brand positioning for both tourism and business investment. Explore an overall community theme, supported by themes for each township	10/11
Develop a "Gateway Project" for each township. This will enhance the entrance ways to each of the townships, giving the viewer a positive image of the community and encouraging appropriate types of development.	10/11
Establish a "Revitalisation Program" for each township to expand and improve the liveability, and sustainability of the entire community by attracting employment, shopping, recreation and social activities.	10/11
Establish "Focal Points" for development through the creation of business parks and commercial precincts.	10/11
In conjunction with Regional Tourism Organisations and Wentworth Regional Tourism, enhance the visitor experience by reviewing and updating local signage, and interpretative signage across the Region.	09/10
Support product development strategies focussed on the region's core and emerging strengths	ongoing

MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Market Development is all about attracting new businesses, residents, and visitors and to our region. The actions in this section are aimed at assessing the potential of our region to attract future residents, ratepayers and visitors and then developing a campaign to bring them to our region, ahead of other regions. To achieve this we need to understand what will motivate people to either move or visit our region, and how we can retain and engage them within our community.

We aim to achieve:

- Increased critical human mass to support retail, commercial and industrial development within the Shire.
- Broad community involvement in economic and tourism development

The way forward — what we will do:

Actions	Timing
Fully assess the potential to attract new residents to the region. This will include assessing available amenities, resources, capacity, competition, attraction and target groups	10/11
Engage representative groups of community leaders, developers and estate agents, education and services sector to assist in the capacity assessment and in the development a new resident attraction program.	10/11
Develop an understanding of the “borrowed landscape” ie creating partnerships with the Mildura region to develop amenities that can service both sides of the river, rather than each developing services in isolation	10/11
Explore and develop collaborative marketing arrangements with other like minded Councils and Shires	10/11
Establish a “New Residents Attraction Program” targeting specific individuals or groups with disposable income to support commercial activity within the community.	11/12
In conjunction with Wentworth Regional Tourism Inc. support the development of regional tourism marketing strategy and promotional literature for the Wentworth Shire.	10/11
Enhance the visitor experience by improving industry professionalism and customer service.	ongoing

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Business development is about business retention and expansion, attracting new business and encouraging start up and emerging businesses within our area. Existing businesses provide jobs for local residents, and so business retention and expansion is firmly aimed at encouraging local businesses, building relationships, improving competitiveness, increasing markets, and enhancing the operating environment.

We aim to achieve:

- Job growth and business stability
- Improved understanding of the needs and perspectives of local businesses.
- Closer relationship with the business community
- Early warning of business concerns and impediments
- Increased local capacity to create and retain jobs.
- Increased number of businesses operating in the region.

The way forward — what we will do:

Actions	Timing
Secure support and involvement of the business sector, local community, and State and Federal Governments.	09/10
Partner with Department of State and Regional Development to conduct a Business Retention and Expansion Survey (BRE Survey) across the Shire. The BRE Survey will work with businesses within the region and incorporate tools such as business inventory, trend analysis, interviews and surveys.	09/10
Follow up the BRE survey with business development workshops, specialist workshop, community retail workshop to improve competitive positioning. (Based on the results of the BRE survey, determine the types of assistance the business community would find helpful for increasing competitiveness and for removing local barriers. For example, technical assistance, business seminars, business roundtables, export assistance, information on procurement and tendering, leakage prevention.)	10/11
Develop a “Business Attraction” strategy to supplement other economic development activities. This will include preparing the strategy, targeting specific potential new entrants, marketing to potential new entrants and selling our region ahead of others for their investment.	10/11
Actively market our region to attract new business entrants to the region.	10/11
Encourage and support new and start-up businesses by providing them with contacts, resources and information that will assist them through the developmental stages of their business.	ongoing
Utilise support tools such as REMPLAN to assist in analysing market and supply chain gaps.	09/10

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce Development is all about improving the productivity level of workers to allow companies to grow in the future, and providing meaningful employment opportunities to attract and retain younger workers to the region.

We aim to achieve:

- Increases in the skilled workforce
- Improved youth retention
- Improved education outcomes for school leavers


The way forward — what we will do:

Actions	Timing
Liaise and take an active involvement in the education reform agenda and the development of the Trade Skills Training Centre.	09/10
Partner with employers, educational institutions and community based organisations to develop a school to work transition program, aimed at preparing young people for a high-skill, high-wage economy.	09/10
Establish a youth entrepreneurship program aimed at skill building activities that enhance students awareness of economic and employment issues and encouraging their entrepreneurial spirit	10/11
Host an annual forum of local employers, job agencies and educators to identify the deficiencies and challenges within the local workforce. Develop a co-ordinated approach to developing the skills base within the region.	ongoing
Partner with employers, employment agencies and community based organisations to encourage the employment of graduates within our region.	10/11
Establish a marketing campaign designed at attracting graduates to take up employment in our region	10/11
Work with Higher Ed. Providers to encourage businesses to invest in the skill development of employees	10/11

STRATEGY SUMMARY

Measuring outcomes from community development activities can be a difficult and somewhat subjective process. A range of qualitative and quantitative measures can be incorporated in the delivery of various elements within this 2009 - 2011 framework. Longer term high level measures and targets that link with demographic studies such as census data can also be incorporated into Councils 10 year strategy. Examples of these 10 year strategic objectives and measures are provided below.

The Economic and Tourism Development Plan as outlined in this document signals just the beginning of the journey. Together as a community we need to use the strategies and actions outlined in this plan as a guide to shaping our future over the next four years. Council can facilitate the process, but ultimately the community will determine the outcomes.

	Sustainable Economic Development & Growth - 10 Year Strategy & Measures			
	Objectives	Measures	Targets	Initiatives
Partnership Development	Improve capacity to apply for funding across the Shire	Increase in successful grant applications	+ 20% in grant revenue into region	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved communications 2. Workshops, business forums, business round-tables
Product Development	Improve business & tourism infrastructure and product offerings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase visitor no's numbers & spend 2. Increase in business infrastructure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. + 10% visitor spend 2. +2% infrastructure development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Infrastructure Gap analysis 2. Precinct Development 3. Main street Development
Market Development	Increase critical human mass to support retail, commercial and industrial development within the Shire	Net Increase in resident population (abs data)	+3% resident pop.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Lifestyle" branding and marketing of the Wentworth Shire
Business Development	Increase business retention & expansion and attract new & diverse business to the region	net jobs growth net business growth diversity across industry sectors	+5% employed persons +3% net businesses improved business mix	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BR&E survey (inventory & trends) 2. business marketing & communication plan
Workforce Development	Increase skilled workforce and improve youth attraction & retention	increase in education attainment (abs data) increased employment opportunities	+3% post secondary level + 5% increase 20-24y.o residents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Skill development for displaced workers 2. Skilled resident imports 3. Gen Y. marketing campaign