

2018-19 ANNUAL REPORT



WENTWORTH SHIRE COUNCIL

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“We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we live and work, and pay our respects to their elders, past and present.”

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SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

MAYOR AND GENERAL MANAGER'S FOREWORD

As Mayor of the Wentworth Shire Council for the second term and as the newly appointed General Manager, after acting in the role for most of the year, it is our pleasure to present the Wentworth Shire Council 2018/19 Annual Report.

There is no doubt that this has been our year of resilience and we have risen well to the challenges. We have stood strong in the face of drought, water issues, doctor shortages and all this through changes in our senior management.

Our appreciation goes to Peter Kozlowski who resigned in August last year after 11 years' service with Council as General Manager. Peter left the Council with a solid foundation for future growth and we thank him for his contribution to Council.

Throughout the past year we have had a strong focus on the wellbeing of our communities. With the declaration of the drought we instigated emergency water carting which, with the support of the Federal Government, we have been able to continue throughout the year. Additionally, we have tirelessly lobbied for improved water security and ongoing drought support for our residents.

Early this year we were faced with a potential crisis with the closure of all the medical centres in the township of Wentworth. Council entered into an agreement to ensure the local clinic stayed open for a further 12 months, to provide time for a long term solution to the doctors' crisis.

From a financial perspective, council recorded a positive net operating result for the year and continues to outperform several of the financial performance benchmarks set by the Office of Local Government and the NSW Audit Office.

The original budget for 2018/19 outlined expenditure totalling \$45,601,941 consisting of \$22,160,172 of capital expenditure. Council later adopted a further \$1.305million in variations related to capital drought funding projects. While we endeavoured to deliver our planned activities in 2018/2019, our capital works program felt the impact of our resource gaps, with some projects rolled forward for completion next financial year.

We have faced these challenges while maintaining our core council business and maintaining and improving our infrastructure. This has only been possible because of the people at Council. We sincerely thank our Councillors, Directors and all our team members for their commitment and dedication.



CR MELISA HEDERICS
MAYOR



KEN ROSS
GENERAL MANAGER



"There is no doubt that this has been our year of resilience and we have risen well to the challenges"



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FINANCIAL STATEMENT SUMMARY

The 2018/2019 financial year saw Wentworth Shire Council post a \$6,460,000 surplus. This was an increase of \$4,479,000 on the 2017/2018 result, and was \$4,407,000 less than what was originally budgeted. Highlights include:

- 50% prepayment of the 2018/2019 Financial Assistance Grant totalling \$3,213,000
- Capital Grants of \$3,170,000 received from Developers for dedicated assets received as part of new subdivisions
- \$1,461,000 being Council's share of the Far West Joint Organisation (FWJO) of Council's financial result

Revenue for the year was \$5,594,000 up on the previous year. Notable revenue figures included user fees and charges being \$637,000 over budget as a result of increasing revenue from the Buronga Landfill operations and increased revenue from the operation of the Willowbend Caravan Park.

Overall Grants and Contributions increased by \$4,607,000 on last financial year, but was still \$2,858,000 under budget. Despite the additional grants received, capital grants and contribution was still under budget by \$3,638,000 as the budget included a number of capital grants that Council was intending to apply for, but was unsuccessful. There was also a timing difference between when Council anticipated receiving Capital Grants and when the grants were actually received.

Income Statement

Operating Result

	2019 \$m	2018 \$m	Variance %
Rates & annual charges	8.64	8.28	4.5
Grants & Contributions revenue	16.26	11.65	39.6
Operating result for year	6.46	1.98	226
Net operating result before capital grants & contributions	(0.08)	0.48	(117)

Expenditure for the year was \$1,115,000 more than the previous financial year. The main contributor to this was depreciation and amortisation, which increased \$1,423,000. The reason for this are because Council revalued its Buildings in 2017/2018. This resulted in a large increase in the current replacement cost of Council's building assets. The largest increase was due to the Wentworth Civic Centre, which contributed an additional \$420,000 depreciation.

Other notable expenditure includes employee benefits and on-costs which were \$573,000 up on last year and over budget by \$759,000. This was due to unexpected termination payments of \$300,864 and \$414,611 in leave entitlements paid out which was \$100,000 more than last year. In addition there was an \$800,000 unfavourable movement in capitalised wages compared to budget.

Materials and contracts fell by \$1,109,000 on the previous year. This was due to a reduction in the use of consultants of approximately \$600,000.

Balance Sheet

The balance sheet details a summary of Council's total assets, liabilities and total equity as at 30 June 2019. The net assets of Council (total assets less total liabilities) have increased by \$7,983,000 during the 2019/20 financial year.

Total current assets have increased by \$874,000 overall with cash and investments increasing by \$3,046,000 and receivables decreasing by \$2,210,000.

Infrastructure property plant and equipment increased by \$16,800,000, reflecting asset purchases, capital works and revaluations being greater than the increase in accumulated depreciation. Council's total infrastructure assets are written down to 65% of their current replacement value. There was a \$1,461,000 increase in non-current assets that reflects the book value of Council's equity in the FWJO of Council's.

Current liabilities include payables, borrowings and employee leave entitlements. The overall current liabilities have decreased by \$10,000.

Non-current liabilities increased due to an increase by \$162,000, due mainly to a \$462,000 increase in long term employee leave entitlements.

Available cash and cash equivalents

The available working capital of Council has increased from \$1,197,000 at 30 June 2018 to \$2,327,000 at 30 June 2019. Investments increased by \$1,000,000 to \$28,000,000. It is considered that \$2,237,000 is more than adequate to manage day to day operating requirements and

provides Council with capacity to respond to unforeseen events and opportunities.

The spread of investments throughout a large number of financial institutions allows Council to spread its risk while endeavouring to maximise its returns. It also allows for ready access to funds due to multiple maturity dates.

The comprehensive Financial Statements are included in Section 4, but a summary of the statements is provided below.

	2019 \$ '000	2018 \$ '000
Income Statement		
Total income from continuing operations	33,994	28,400
Total expenses from continuing operations	27,534	26,419
Operating result from continuing operations	6,460	1,981
Net operating result for the year	6,460	1,981
Net operating result before grants and contributions provided for capital purposes	(84)	476
Statement of Financial Position		
Total current assets	34,146	33,272
Total current liabilities	(4,381)	(4,391)
Total non-current assets	424,420	417,159
Total non-current liabilities	(5,796)	(5,634)
Total equity	448,389	440,406
Other financial information		
Unrestricted current ratio (times)	7.19	7.93
Operating performance ratio (%)	(6.83)%	1.33%
Debt service cover ratio (times)	16.25	16.94
Rates and annual charges outstanding ratio (%)	10.98%	9.96%
Infrastructure renewals ratio (%)	73.58%	58.53%
Own source operating revenue ratio (%)	49.38%	58.45%
Cash expense cover ratio (months)	17.86	16.28

Financial indicators

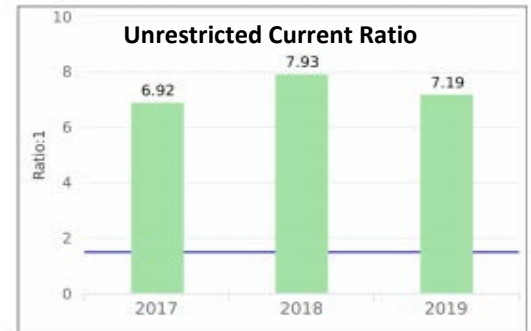
There are a number of key ratios included in the financial reports that provide an indication of

liquidity and financial capacity of Council. These are presented below and graphically illustrate the movement over the last three years.

Unrestricted current ratio

This ratio provides an assessment of the adequacy of working capital and the ability to satisfy obligations in the short term for the unrestricted activities of Council. The ratio measures current assets (less restricted assets) divided by current liabilities (less specific purpose liabilities).

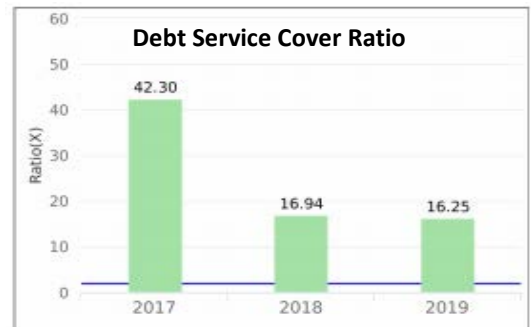
The benchmark figure for this ratio is 1.50x. This ratio decreased during the 2018/19 financial year to 7.19x and continues to be well above the benchmark ratio.



Debt service cover ratio

The Debt Service Cover Ratio measures the availability of operating cash to service debt including interest, principal and lease payments. The ratio is calculated by dividing the operating result before capital excluding interest and depreciation by total loan payments for the year (principal and interest).

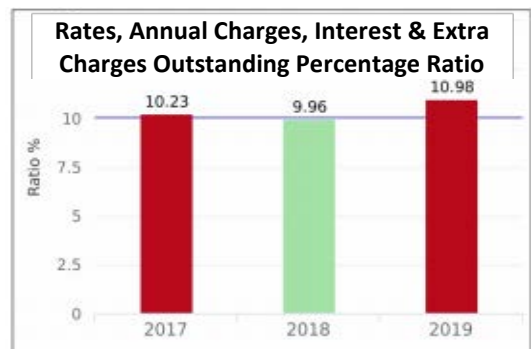
The benchmark figure for this ratio is 2x. Council continues to have sufficient operating cash to service current debt levels.



Rates, annual charges, interest and extra charges outstanding percentage ratio

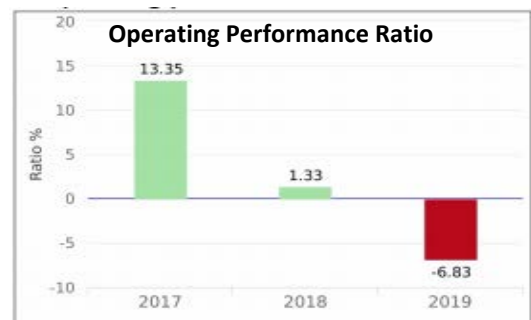
This ratio assesses the impact of uncollected rates and annual charges on Council's liquidity and the adequacy of recovery efforts. The ratio is calculated by dividing rates, annual & extra charges outstanding by rates, annual & extra charges collectible.

The benchmark figure for this ratio is 10%. Council's efforts to continually monitor outstanding rates and annual charges has seen this ratio remain stable at 10% for the last three years which is right on the industry benchmark.



Operating performance ratio

This ratio measures Council's ability to contain operating expenditure within operating revenue. This ratio is calculated by dividing total continuing operating revenue excluding capital grants and contributions minus operating expenditure by totalling continuing operating revenue excluding capital grants. The benchmark figure for this rate is 0%. Council's result for 2018/19 was -6.83%.



Own source operating ratio

This ratio measures fiscal flexibility. It is the degree of reliance on external funding sources such as operating grants and contributions. This ratio is calculated by dividing total contributing operating revenue less all grants by total continuing operating revenue. The benchmark figure for this ratio is 60%. The ratio for 2018/19 decreased to 49%. This result fluctuates with movements in grants and contributions. While revenue increased by \$5,594,000 this offset by a \$5,039,000 increase in capital grants and contributions and the inclusion of Council's share of the FWJO.



Cash expense cover ratio

This liquidity ratio indicates the number of months a Council can continue paying for its immediate expenses without additional cash inflow. The ratio is calculated by dividing the current year's cash and cash equivalents plus deposits by payments from cash flow of operating and financing activities. The benchmark figure for this ratio is 3.0.



Reserves

The following table represents all transfers in and out of Council's reserves

Reserves Transfer Schedule 2018/2019				
Reserve	Opening Balance	Transfer to Reserve	Transfer from Reserve	Closing Balance
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Developer Contribution Reserve	548	71		619
Plant Replacement Reserve	2,200			2,200
Future Development Reserve	1,113			1,113
Tip Remediation Reserve	903	463		1,366
Asset Revaluation Reserve - General	342,033	759		342,792
Asset Revaluation Reserve - Water	23,556	476		24,032
Asset Revaluation Reserve - Sewer	18,282	288		18,570
Crown Land Reserve	308	25		333
Unexpended Grants Reserve	246	997		1,243
Capital & Major Project Reserve	1,000			1,000
Domestic Waste Management Reserve (DWM)	105			105
Bank Guarantee Reserve	30		19	11
	\$ 390,324	\$ 3,079	\$ 19	\$ 393,384

WENTWORTH SHIRE COUNCILLORS

Mayor Councillor Melisa
Hederics



Deputy Mayor Councillor Tim
Elstone



Councillor Greg Evans



Councillor Stephen Heywood



Councillor Jane MacAllister



Councillor Don McKinnon



Councillor Susan Nichols



Councillor Peter Nunan



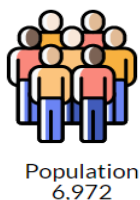
Councillor Bill Wheeldon, OAM



WENTWORTH SHIRE OVERVIEW

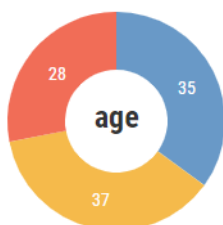
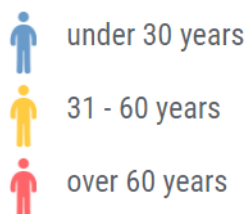
Wentworth Shire is situated on the junction of the Murray and Darling Rivers in south western NSW. The southern boundary (along the Murray River) has the greatest population density in the townships of Wentworth, Dareton, Buronga and Gol Gol.

In the late 1880's, Wentworth was bustling with river trade as Australia's busiest inland port. Tourism is strong with attractions including the Mungo National Park and the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area.¹

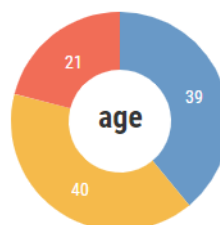


Area (Km ²)	26,256.20
Council Classification	Large Rural
OLG Group	10
State Planning Region	Far West

Demographics of Population



Council Population (%)



State Population (%)

↑ 2.2%

Population Change Last 5 Years



Your Local Population (%)

Your Local Economy	Result	Group Avg.
Unemployment Rate (%)	11.6	5.9
Avg Taxable Income (\$)	38,231	46,967
Avg Household Size (No.)	2.4	2.4
Value Of DA's Determined (\$'000)	N/A	N/A
Active Businesses In LGA (No.)	764	842

¹ <https://yourcouncil.nsw.gov.au/council-data/wentworth/2017/at-a-glance/>

THE INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 Councils across New South Wales (NSW) are required to produce a Community Strategic Plan covering a period of at least 10 years, with the plan to be updated in line with each Council election cycle (every four years).

The Community Strategic Plan is the highest level of plan that a Council will prepare and the purpose of the plan is to identify the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future and to plan strategies for achieving these goals.

The four year Delivery Program is Wentworth Shire Council's commitment to assisting the community to achieve the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027. It is a high level plan that maps out the

Council's strategic business direction. This is the point where the community's strategic goals are systematically translated into actions. These are the principal activities to be undertaken by council to implement the strategies established by the Community Strategic plan within the resources available under the Resourcing Strategy.

Council is also required to have an annual Operational Plan, adopted before the beginning of each financial year. The Operational Plan outlines the activities to be undertaken that year as part of the Delivery Program. The Operational Plan includes the Annual Statement of Revenue Policy. The following diagram shows how the various levels of the planning framework are connected.²

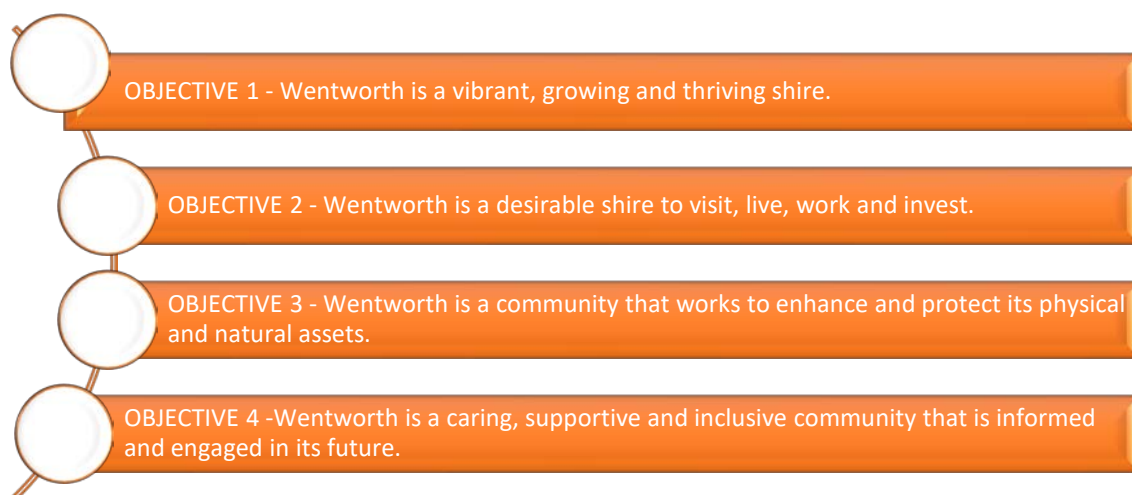


² Integrated Planning and Reporting Manual for local government in NSW, NSW Premier & Cabinet Division of Local Government, March 2013.

THE 2027 VISION

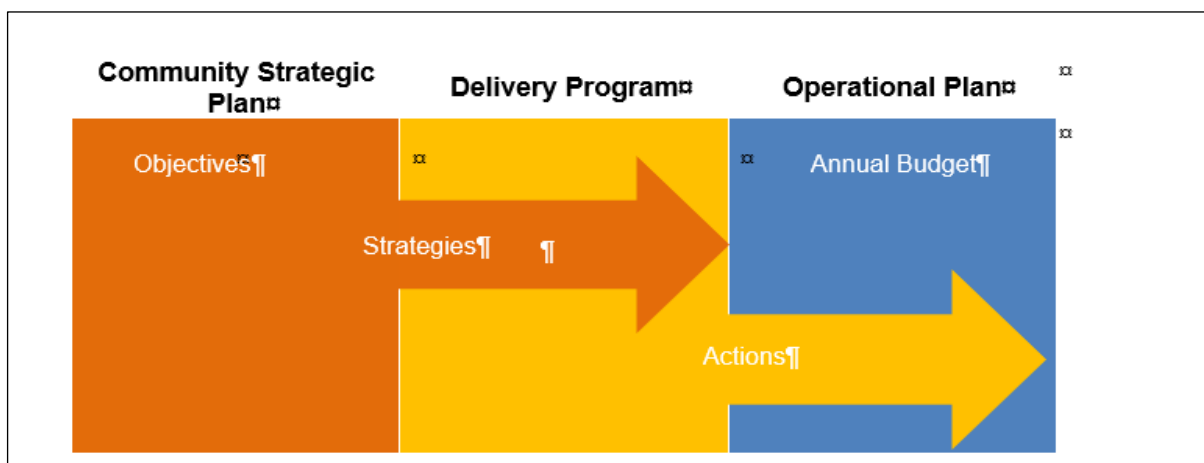
A thriving region, supported by a robust economic base, distinctive open spaces, and strong local governance and leadership

The consultation and engagement activities undertaken to inform the Wentworth Region Community Strategic Plan resulted in the formation of the 2027 Vision. This is underpinned by four strategic objectives, each of which have been developed around the quadruple bottom line (social, environmental, economic and governance).



Underpinning each objective is a range of supporting strategies that outline high-level approaches to achieving the objectives and delivering the vision.

The following diagram highlights how the objectives of the 10 year Community Strategic Plan are translated into strategies in the four year Delivery Program and actions in the one year Operational Plan.



Section two of this report provides details of the activities undertaken by council during the 2018-2019 financial year to support the community in achieving the 2027 Vision, highlighting our achievements for 2018/2019.

SECTION 2 - RECORDING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

OBJECTIVE 1 - WENTWORTH IS A VIBRANT, GROWING AND THRIVING SHIRE

Objective 1 is underpinned by the following two strategies:-

- 1.1 Grow the potential for business and industry to develop and expand
- 1.2 Encourage and support population growth and resident attraction

Some of the highlights for 2018/19 under objective 1 are detailed below.

Creating growth and development opportunities

Development Approvals

The Planning Division had a busy year with approximately **235 new residential lots created from subdivisions** approved by Council in the 2018/2019 financial year. These subdivisions were located throughout the Shire, with the majority located in Buronga and Gol Gol.

The new residential lots will attract approximately 564 new residents to the area. This will cause a flow on effect to surrounding businesses frequented by the new residents, e.g. retail shops, childcare centres, restaurants, etc.

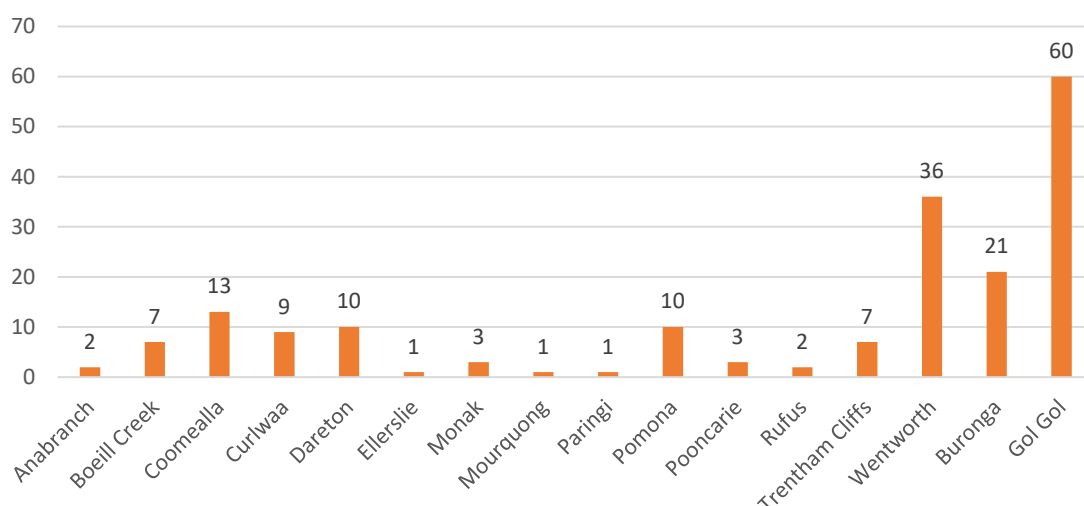
Eight fully serviced commercial buildings were also approved by Council on the corner of Melaleuca

Street and Hendy Road. The commercial buildings will be utilised by a wide range of commercial businesses who will be attracted to the area by the increasing number of residents in the Shire, as evidenced by the number of approved subdivisions.

In the 2018/2019 financial year over **20 new industrial lot subdivisions** were approved in Wentworth Shire. The new industrial lots show the Shire has a range of opportunities for a number of industries to move to the area. The new industrial lots are all serviced by sewer, water, stormwater and electricity.



Approvals by Area for 2018/2019



Growing business opportunities

Small Business Expo 2018

The Small Business Expo 2018 was held in October 2018 at the Midway Centre Buronga. It was the first of its kind run by the Wentworth Shire Council and has been evaluated as a success with 13 exhibits, 26 exhibitors, 5 free workshops and 31 registered attendees. Positive feedback was received from both the exhibitors and attendees.

The event, funded by the NSW Government was designed to:

- Facilitate the provision of general and specialist business advice and government information to small businesses
- Promote small business growth through innovation that improves resilience and boosts productivity
- Support digital readiness and increase industry capabilities to reach new markets and support regional development

Attendees were given the option to attend five free workshops on the following topics:

- Managing Payroll and BAS within your Business
- Work Health & Safety – General Duties & responsibilities
- How to protect partners in Small Business
- The ART of HR Management
- Establish your Small Business Digital Footprint



Capital works

In 2018/19, Council submitted a Capital Expenditure Review to the OLG for the redevelopment of the Wentworth Civic Centre project. As at 30 June 2019 Council had appointed a project manager to the project. The project manager will review Council's preferred option, prior to preparing tender documents and appointing a principal contractor to undertake the works.

Council also submitted a Capital Expenditure Review to the OLG for the Wentworth Aerodrome Upgrade Project, and are awaiting a response from the OLG.

Other capital works

Total expenditure on capital works in 2018-19 was approximately \$14,459,000. Projects included:

Building renewals

- Asbestos Management Plan
- Building Renewals Program
- Curlwaa Hall
- Refurbishment Dareton and Wentworth Swimming Pools toilet and change facilities
- Review & implement Cooling Systems at Short Street Depot
- Toilet and Amenities Upgrades
- Wentworth Showgrounds Upgrades - Barrett Pavilion

Information technology renewals

- IT Infrastructure Renewals

Loan repayments

- General Loan Repayments
- Sewer Loan Repayments

Miscellaneous renewals

- Library Assets
- Office Equipment Replacement Program
- Painting Dareton Pool
- Painting Wentworth Pool
- Pool Tiling Upgrade - Dareton
- Pool Tiling Upgrade - Wentworth
- Wentworth Streetscape & lighting upgrades

New projects

- 100,000 Tonne EPL Upgrade Buronga Landfill
- Animal Shelter upgrades
- Bollard replacement
- Burial Equipment Storage Shed at Gol Gol Cemetery
- Buronga/Gol Gol Trunk Drainage
- Carramar Drive Sporting Complex - Oval Lights
- Dareton Wharf Flood Repair
- Develop and implement strategy to replace Waste Bin surrounds
- Asset management plans for WSC water reservoirs
- Develop Implementation Plan for Water and Sewage Strategies and finalization of Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy
- Drinking Fountains Installation (Shire wide)
- Electrical Upgrades at Crown Reserves
- George Gordon Oval Netball Courts
- Land Acquisitions
- Implementation and construction of Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan
- Pedestrian Refuge in William Street Gol Gol
- Pipeline Camera
- Protection of Assets Pooncarie Water Treatment Plant
- Standpipe hard stand area
- Veranda - Team Leaders offices
- Wentworth Showgrounds Upgrades - carpark sealing
- Wentworth Skate Park
- Wentworth Sporting Complex Upgrade
- Willowbend Caravan Park Redevelopment

Parks & gardens renewals

- Netball Courts Repainting - Alcheringa
- Street furniture upgrades

Plant renewals

- Minor Plant Replacement Program
- Plant and equipment replacement

Road renewals

- Footpaths/Shared ways Replacement Program
- Road Renewal Program

Sewer renewals

- Hendy Road Main Replacement (construction stage 2)
- Repair & Replacement of Sewer Pit Lids
- Sewer Design works
- Sewer Main Refurbishment
- Sewer Renewal Program
- Sewer Replacement, Neville Street
- Wentworth and Dareton Sewerage Scheme Rationalisation Upgrade
- Work Health & Safety Upgrade - Sewer Facilities

Stormwater renewals

- Stormwater Renewals Program

Upgrades/Replacements

- Construction of Buronga Effluent Disposal System Upgrade
- Curlwaa Boat Ramp Upgrade
- Depot Fuel Bowser
- Integrated Management System

Water renewals

- Gol Gol Water Treatment Plant Lagoon and Filtration refurbishment
- Gol Gol Water Treatment Plant Upgrade
- Pooncarie Raw Water Pump Station (Design and Construction)
- Repair and Replacement of Water Stop Valves & Fire Plugs
- Water Renewals Program
- Wentworth Water Raw Main Replacement
- Wentworth Water Treatment Plant Electrical / Process Upgrade
- Work Health & Safety Upgrade - Water Facilities

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OBJECTIVE 2 - WENTWORTH IS A DESIRABLE SHIRE TO VISIT, LIVE, WORK AND INVEST

The strategies supporting Objective 2 are:-

- 2.1 Grow visitation to the Shire by developing a quality visitor experience and promoting our destination
- 2.2 Enhance access to local health and aged care services
- 2.3 Enhance access to maternal and child health services, child care centres and pre-school services
- 2.4 Enhance access to education, skills and training
- 2.5 Maintain/create desirable open spaces and recreation facilities

Tourism promotion

Visitor Information Centre

The Visitor Information Centre focus over the year has been to promote the Wentworth Region as a short-break destination to active couples and families wanting to experience and explore the history, culture and natural attractions of being in the outback.

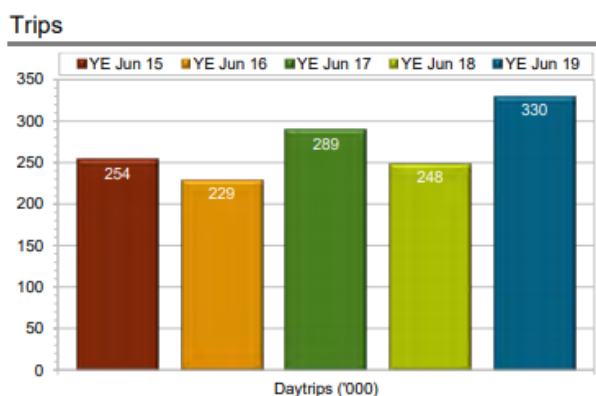
The goal this year was set to overcome much of the negative publicity surrounding the drying of the Menindee Lakes System and the Darling River. This has had a devastating impact on tourism, one of the region's most vital economic drivers within the small townships.

Some of the strategies aimed to encourage overnight visitation and increase length of stay among visitors included:

- Assisting with the ticketing sales, organisation and promotion for events hosted by local community groups such as Junction Rally 2020, Wentworth Xmas Eve Street Party, Murray Darling 110, Junction Junk Garage Sale, Wentworth Traders Market Days, Country Music Festival, WASP, Wentworth Show Society, PS Ruby, Silver Lining Tour, Wentworth District Racing Club and the Wentworth Rotary Op Shop
- Providing administrative support for the Memorial Rooms User Groups like the Wentworth Senior Citizens, Sunraysia Knitters Association, Wentworth District RSL Branch, Wentworth District Ladies Auxiliary, One Vine Community Church Group, Dareton Primary Health Services, Wentworth Uniting Church Exercise Group, GP Group, Darling Junction Country Women's Auxiliary, Wentworth Meals on Wheels, West Darling Arts, Local Meet the Makers and Community Artists
- Organising, promoting and hosting exhibitions in the Great Hall for local Artisans and Makers
- Creating and distributing local dining and shopping guides for business traders so visitors can discover distinct and individual shops and restaurants to visit whilst supporting the local economy and the employment of local people. Shopping locally allows local businesses to thrive and encourages both the health and future sustainability in the community
- Updating the Visit Wentworth website to provide information about the region and all the excellent places to visit and explore in a more engaging and visitor-centric way
- Increasing authentic and organic content on social media channels to improve social media engagement and encourage content sharing by showcasing the incredible tourism experiences visitors can have in the Wentworth Region, that are distinctive and memorable enough to share with their family and friends
- Engaging in a clear partnering plan with Mildura Regional Tourism Board (MRTB) aimed at increasing coordination and collaboration with both NSW and VIC stakeholders (tourism boards, businesses, community groups and event committees, MRTB familiarisations)
- Collaboration with other council divisions to grow the regional visitor economy, such as:
 - Exhibiting at the Mildura Centro Plaza Community stand
 - Hosting the Landcare 30th Anniversary Celebrations at Junction Park
 - Erection of the George Chaffey and Wentworth Bridge flags
 - Meeting with TASCOS representative to improve tourism signage in the region

- Supporting local tourism industry operators at the 2019 Regional Tourism Awards nominations
- Engaging in Tourism Industry / Operator familiarisations:
 - MRTB familiarisations to local producer farm gates, wineries & paddle steamer cruises
 - MRTB Tour Operator familiarisations
 - Lake Victoria, Chowilla, Renmark, Old Mail Road, Locks 7, 8 & 9
 - Outback Beds Bindara Farm Stay, Kinchega NP, Menindee, Pooncarie

The success of these strategies in the growth of visitor numbers is shown in this chart.



Mildura / Wentworth received 330,000 domestic daytrip visitors – up by 32.9% on YE Jun 18.

(Source: National Visitor Survey, YE Jun 19, TRA.
Published by Murray Regional Tourism).

These results reflect the strength of our collaboration as a tourism region and highlight the necessity to continually encourage visitors to extend their stay to more than a day, increasing their expenditure in the local community.

Willowbend Caravan Park

Willowbend Caravan Park abuts, the Darling River, just west of the Bridge at Wentworth. Wentworth Shire Council leases this piece of community land from the Crown in order to provide a Public Caravan Park in the township of Wentworth.

In 2017 Council took on the management of the Caravan Park and appointed manager's to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Park. Council's objectives for the operation of the Park are to:

- Provide an attractive, accessible and family friendly tourist park that capitalises on the Park's location

- Attract a broader range of visitors to the Park
- Enhance the commercial capacity of the Park to ensure that the Park remains financially sustainable in the long term

Over the 2018/19 financial year, some of these improvements began to take shape at the caravan park. The old Caretaker's residence was demolished and a new one was built, as well as the commencement of the construction of a new Office. Fencing has been installed around the perimeter of the Park and minor improvements and upgrades have commenced on some of the cabins. To assist with the management and monitoring of information on the Park's performance, Council has commenced the implementation of a new booking system.

Promotion through sports sponsorships

● Willowfest

Council was a sponsor in the Willowfest Australian Cricket Club Championship in 2018. This was the event's 41st year of the event, with cricket teams participating from all over Australia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates.

● Ted Hurley Memorial Ski Classic

Wentworth, at the junction of two of Australia's most iconic rivers, the Darling and the Murray is the location for the Ted Hurley Classic Ski Race. Council is proud to be associated with this event which has been running since 2015. The event also includes a "show and shine" evening which is held in Dareton.

● Sunraysia Safari Rally

Council was also a proud sponsor of the Sunraysia Safari Rally this year. In the 2018 event a 50% increase in entries was reported. The organisers attribute this to it being based in Wentworth. They have estimated the economic impact of the event for the region to be \$570,000.



Enhancing access to our services

This year has been a strong year for community engagement with Council's staff looking for new ways to partner, deliver and support programs to enhance community wellbeing.

Active Libraries

Libraries have progressed beyond being simply a place for borrowing books. Libraries today are community spaces. Our libraries have been actively engaged over the year, delivering 4,907 programs to 3,897 participants. The increased opening hours at the Midway Library in Buronga have placed a lot more demand on library staff. The hours open to the public have increased from 16 hours/week to 42 hours/week with no associated staffing increase.

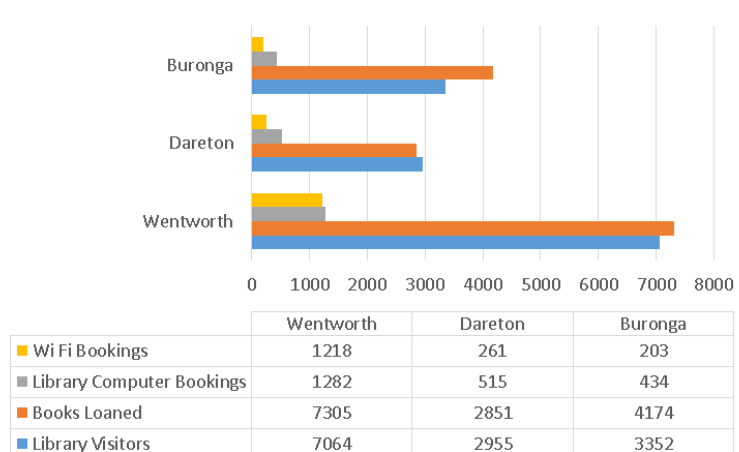
The library staff have thrown themselves into these roles with gusto, running programs and activities for the community and targeting different demographics including children and pre-schoolers, youth, new parents, indigenous and seniors.

Library programs and services

This year the library team members have actively promoted the library services in the community at the Wentworth Show and have engaged with the Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation and NAIDOC day event Programs delivered in the past 12 months include:

- Poetry Slam workshop
- Book club
- Book week
- Outreach programs to Pooncarie
- Storytime for Indigenous playgroup
- Partnership with Dareton Primary Health to offer early literacy programs to young indigenous
- Weekly Toddler Storytime
- School Holiday activities
- Indigenous writer's group at Dareton Library
- Australian Reading Hour – Wentworth & Buronga
- Craft groups
- Author visits – Fiona McCallum, Victoria Purman

Library Visits and Useage



Tech Help Program

Tech Help is a free service to assist patrons with their smartphones and tablets. The main aim of Tech Help is to help our customers to use our services such as our free Wi-Fi, BorrowBox and RB Digital. Where time/staffing permits staff also assist with:

- MyGov accounts – creation and linking services
- Email accounts – setting up and managing
- Online education/job search websites

The feedback we are receiving is that this is a vital service for our patrons. For the unemployed, people with a disability, people dealing with poverty or homelessness and the elderly it's virtually impossible to navigate modern life without having access to the Internet and email. The Libraries bridge the gap so that there is some equity and support for all people in the Wentworth Shire.



Creating desirable open spaces

Wentworth Skate Park

Council partnered with the Wentworth Area Skate Park Committee to deliver a skate park for the youth in Wentworth. The project comprised a professionally designed skate park, equipped with jumps, bowl and street sections suitable for skate, scooter and BMX riders. The skate park provides a family friendly facility, particularly for children aged 5-14 years.



Enhancing our reserves

Recognising the importance of creating places for friends and families to get together, Council has been focusing on upgrading its recreational reserves over the past year. The works done in our reserves have enhanced the natural beauty of our region and provide a range of recreational options for our residents and visitors alike. Projects undertaken include: Alcheringa Oval and Wentworth Sporting Complex

Curlwaa Riverfront upgrade

The upgrade of the Curlwaa Riverfront is identified in Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting 2017-2027 Delivery Program and 2017-2018 Operational Plan. It is also consistent in addressing issues identified in the Murray Riverina Regional Boating Plan which identified stakeholders greatest area of concern was the



condition of existing facilities.

The provision of well presented, accessible and safe boat launching and retrieval facilities across the region is essential to cater for increasing demand.

Such facilities contribute to community wellbeing and ensure positive tourism experiences, thereby promoting increased visitation to the region as a whole.



Curlwaa provides an alternative boat ramp, picnic and viewing area on the Murray River to other higher usage facilities located in the regional centre of Mildura and the local centres of Wentworth, Buronga, Dareton and Gol Gol.

Community consultation identified Curlwaa Riverfront as a key viewing location for the Mildura 100 ski race. This race, promoted as the fastest ski race in the world, attracts around 20,000 spectators to the region. Improving the amenity and capacity of viewing areas for key events on the Murray River, further supports tourism in the region.

The upgrade to the Curlwaa Boat Ramp has been funded through the NSW Government's Boating Now Grant and included installing the pre-cast boat ramp, retaining wall and extending the turning area. These major upgrade works commenced last year, continuing through 2018/19 it is anticipated that the community will be able to enjoy this upgraded facility early in 2020.

Growing local sports

Sports participation is a vital tool for community connection and wellbeing. Therefore, Council is committed to growing opportunities for local sports through continued enhancement of its existing facilities and sponsorship of sporting events.

Wentworth Sporting Complex upgrade

Wentworth Sporting Complex is the township's primary sporting precinct, servicing half of the Shire's population with facilities for tennis, golf, bowls and general recreation.

Upgrades to lighting, tennis court surfaces, playground, club rooms and precinct signage has transformed a once dilapidated facility into a valuable community asset. As the largest indoor social engagement venue in Wentworth the upgraded facility is a valuable resource for sports, community meetings and social functions.

Companion Animals

Interaction within the community was the main strategy this year to ensure compliance was met with the Companion Animals Act.

Wentworth Shire's details of impounded companion animals are compiled in a database register. This data is then uploaded onto the NSW Companion Animals website survey of Council's seizure activity for dogs and cats.

The database is updated as animals are impounded and released. All animals released to their owners, sold or sent to rescue for rehoming, are microchipped before leaving the pound. Dog attacks are also recorded under the Dog Attack function on the NSW Companion Animal Website.

During the 2018/19 financial year, Council continued its strong working relationship with many rescue groups including Starting Over Dog Rescue, Sunraysia Animal Rehousing Group, K9 Rescue and Cat Protection Society to mention just a few. These groups are paramount in rehoming unclaimed/surrender animals and Council's relationship with these groups are crucial, as evidenced by the number of rescued animals rehomed.

Companion animal community programs and desexing

Education programs within the Local Government Area are important to Wentworth Shire Council. In August/September Council managed to have Coomealla High School on board to trial students for volunteering. The students volunteered their time, which enable them to gain experience and also to meet the obligations of their study.

Responsible pet ownership within the Local Government Area is also important to Wentworth Shire Council. Such community interaction allowed Council to educate the community with information about the importance of desexing, vaccinations, microchipping and registration of pets.

Although desexing is not a requirement of selling a dog from the pound, Council offers a service through our rescue groups where the animal is released to the group for desexing and vaccination. The animal is then re-homed by the group at a rate which covers the veterinary work.

Section 64 requirements

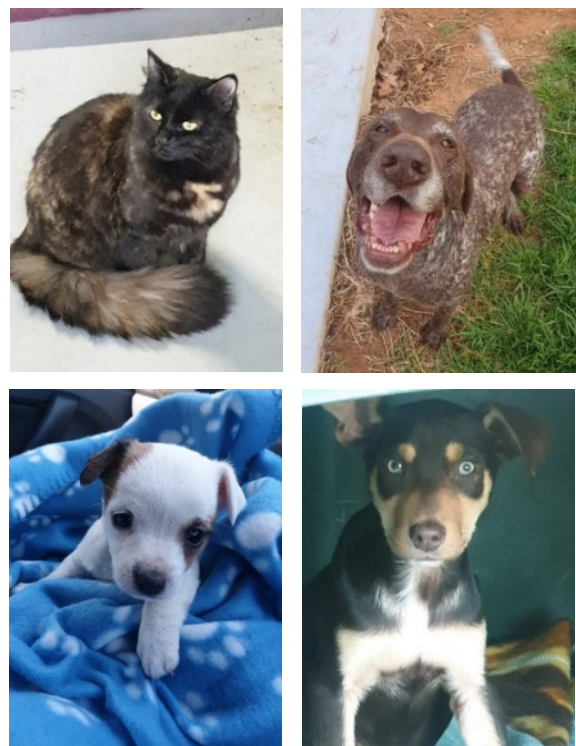
Companion animals seized by Council's Companion Animals Officer that are not permanently identified are conveyed to the Buronga animal shelter where they are kept for seven days. Photographs of unidentified dogs and cats are placed on Council's website to assist with animals being reunited with their owners. All identified cats and dogs are kept for 14 days, and every effort is made to contact the person registered to the animal's microchip.

Although most seized companion animals are successfully reunited with their owners and rehomed, there is a miniscule number that are not suitable for rehousing and have to be euthanised.

Within the Local Government Area, over the 2017/18 financial year, all complaints relating to companion animal management were investigated by Council's Companion Animals Officer. Nuisance animals were dealt with, focusing on management of the issues.

Off leash areas

Wentworth Shire Council understands the need to provide an off-leash area for dogs to play and run freely. This area is a must for basic social interaction and enrichment amongst the canine community. Council's Strategic Planning team are currently planning for an off leash park in 2020.



Funding Companion Animal activities

The total amount of expenses associated with Council's companion animal management and activities in 2018/19 was \$188,659.25. This expenditure covers animal shelter maintenance, veterinary services, operating costs and salaries.

Seized, abandoned or stray and surrendered animals

The number of cats and dogs which were seized, abandoned or stray and surrendered totalled 500 being 213 cats and 287 dogs. Actions taken are summarised in the following table.

Action Taken	Cats	Dogs	Total
Returned to Owner	11	89	100
Re-homed	93	158	251
Euthanised	74	12	86
In Council's Facility End of Year	35	28	63

OBJECTIVE 3 - WENTWORTH IS A COMMUNITY THAT WORKS TO ENHANCE AND PROTECT ITS PHYSICAL AND NATURAL ASSETS

The strategies supporting Objective 3 are:

- 3.1 Promote the efficient delivery of water supply, sewer and drainage services for the long term interests of future generations
- 3.2 Plan for and develop the right assets and infrastructure
- 3.3 Prepare for natural disasters, biosecurity risks and climate change
- 3.4 Reduce, reuse and recover waste

Commitment to water security

Murray Darling Association

There are 172 councils that sit within the Murray Darling Basin and whose communities rely upon water from within the catchment. The management of water and other Basin resources is a matter that is of significant interest to local government.

The Murray Darling Association (MDA) is currently arranged into 12 regions. Wentworth Shire Council is a member of Region 4 which comprises Broken Hill City Council, Central Darling Shire Council, Mildura Rural City Council, Wentworth Shire Council and Balranald Shire Council. At its Annual General Meeting in June 2019, Councillor Jane MacAllister was appointed for a further term as Chair of Region 4 and as Chair, Cr MacAllister is also a member of the MDA Board.

This year has seen Region 4 actively engaged advocating for improved environmental and water security outcomes for the region.

Region 4 submitted an impressive expression of interest to host the 2020 conference and

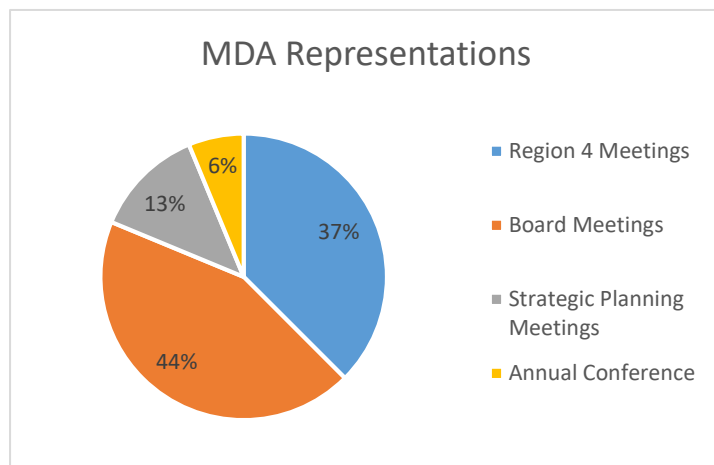
gracefully conceded to Shepparton's selection by the Board.

Water security remains a significant issue for the region. 2016 was the last time the Darling River was fully connected from Pooncarie to Bourke. A strategic planning meeting held in December was overshadowed by the first of four mass fish deaths, as the agenda turned to clean up and rescue logistics. Member councils passed motions to support RAMSAR listing of Menindee Lakes, then to endorse same as a region and seek further support at the MDA conference. There has been a determination from iPart about pricing water for Broken Hill customers, the Almond Board of Australia sought a moratorium on new development of greenfield sites.

Commitment to reserves

Crown Lands Management Act

The Crown Lands Management Act (2016) commenced 1 July 2018. It implements reforms identified through the comprehensive review of Crown Land management and follows over four years of engagement with the community on the future of Crown Land.



Representation	Meetings
Region 4 Meetings	6
Board Meetings	7
Strategic Planning Meetings	2
Annual Conference	1



Commencing 1 July the following Acts were wholly repealed and are no longer in force:

- Crown Lands Act 1989
- Crown Lands (Continued Tenures) Act 1989
- Hay Irrigation Act 1902
- Irrigation Areas (Reduction of Rents) Act
- Murrumbidgee Irrigation Areas Occupiers Relief Act
- Orange Show Ground Act 1897
- Public Reserves Management Fund Act 1987
- Trustees of Schools of Arts Enabling Act 1902
- Wentworth Irrigation Act 1890
- Western Lands Act 1901
- Western Lands Amendment Act 2009

The implementation of the Crown Lands Management Act brings a reduction in red tape in that the Crown Land formerly held in Trust with Council as Trust Manager and managed under both the former Crown Lands Act (1989) and the Local Government Act (1993) is now managed solely under the Local Government Act (1993).

The new arrangement requires Council's to prepare a Plan of Management (PoM) for the community land for which they are now Land Managers.

Commitment to Biosecurity

The drought has assisted with weed management, reducing general weeds maintenance. The Biosecurity Officer has had a focus on networking with other councils to share knowledge and has also been able to share his expertise, including

undertaking the High Risk Pathways Inspections at Balranald and Central Darling Shires.

The Biosecurity Officer attended the Macquarie Valley Weeds Committee (MVWC) Meeting and saw first-hand the incredibly obstructive Hudson Pear Cactus, and completed Mental Health First-aid training (MHFA). He has also been responsible for coordinating works for the Rural Fire Service, including:

- Clearing 5.5kms of Pine Camp Road to 30 metres wide on the Western side
- Clearing 6kms to 30 metres wide on both sides of Arumpo Road at Wamberra, and approximately 10kms of old Rural Fire Service clearing blade ploughed, also at Wamberra
- Instigation of 3 Gravel Pit Licences, 16.7Ha at Talgarry on Renmark Road, 19Ha at Wamberra on the Shire Boundary, and our first free hold land Gravel Quarry at Garston on Nob Road

Commitment to better roads

The Roads and Engineering Division have a planned approach to Road Construction, Road Maintenance. During the 2018/2019 financial year the following roads were constructed:

- Sandbar Road, Coomealla – included drainage upgrade
- Taplin Mail Road – included drainage upgrade
- Upgrade to Log Bridge Road – including pavement formation, drainage improvements and installation of a stock grid

- Major shoulder reconstruction of 25km Silver City Highway between Woodlands Road and the Shire Boundary
- Trawalla Road and Hollands Lake Road Coomealla – drainage improvement works
- Bligh Street Gol Gol – road widening, kerb and channel installation with storm water improvement works
- Road rehabilitation and drainage upgrade works on 1.1km Pitman Avenue, with pavement stabilization and bitumen sealing
- Reconstruction and drainage upgrade of 1km River Road, including bitumen surfacing
- Major repair works to sections of Ivanhoe Road
- Major construction of 4km Renmark Road including pavement upgrade, bitumen sealing and drainage improvements
- Reconstruction and upgrade 400 meter section of Sturt Highway Gol Gol, including pavement strengthening, drainage improvements, bitumen surfacing and new line marking

- Pavement upgrade and drainage construction on 4km Renmark Road with 2 coat bitumen sealing
- Major construction and upgrade Corbett Avenue and construction intersection with Silver City Highway

Maintenance grading also took place on the following roads:

Arumpo Road	Pooncarie/Menindee Road
Belvedere Road	Polia Road
Dockerty Road	Renmark Road
Gaston Road	Rufus Road
High Darling Road	Rufus River Road
Ivanhoe Road	Springwood Road
Karpa Kora Road	Taplin Mail Road
Nob Road	Top Hut Road
Old Wentworth Road	Wilkurra Road
Old Wentworth Road	Wamberra Road
Pine Camp Road	

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OBJECTIVE 4 - WENTWORTH IS A CARING, SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY THAT IS INFORMED AND ENGAGED IN ITS FUTURE

The strategies supporting Objective 4 are:-

- 4.1 Provide strong and effective representation, leadership, planning, decision-making and service delivery
- 4.2 Encourage locals to volunteer their time within their local community
- 4.3 Promote disability inclusion within the general community
- 4.4 Encourage the self determination of the aboriginal community
- 4.5 Encourage the self-determination of individual townships and community groups
- 4.6 Collaborate with others to achieve desired outcomes for the local community
- 4.7 Promote the celebration of the region's rich cultural and social heritage

Creating positive customer experiences

Our Customer Service and Compliance teams are committed to creating positive customer experiences for locals and visitors who may need to contact us for enquiries or issues they are experiencing.

Customer Service

Council has three customer service centres, one at the current Council administration building in Adelaide Street, Wentworth; one at the future administration building in Darling Street, Wentworth and one at the Midway Centre, Buronga.

Our customer service officers are highly skilled at dealing with customer enquiries, referrals and complaints. However, their responsibilities exceed these, being also responsible for taking payments,

venue bookings and cemetery enquiries. Their professionalism, often under pressure fielding phone calls, walk in enquiries and staff enquiries, is to be commended.

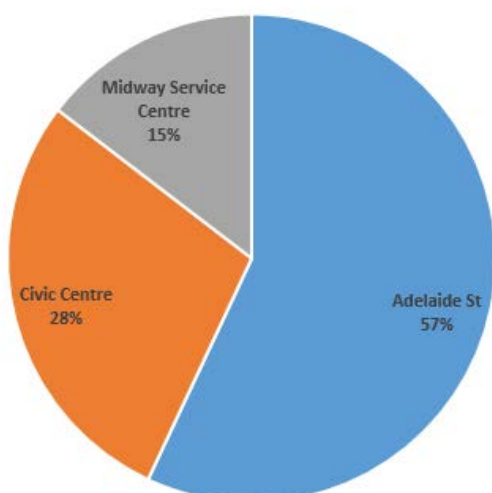
Customer Services Officers have handled a total of 38,108 enquires, 6,088 walk in enquiries and 32,020 phone enquiries.

Compliance

The Compliance function of Wentworth Shire Council not only covers contravention of legislation and regulations that Council has administrative responsibility for, but also deals with risk management and reduction for Council.

Compliance activities reduce risk for council and also have the potential to have a positive impact on the satisfaction experienced by internal and external customers. The Compliance Officer's role is a more strategic, high level role that deals with matters of great complexity and with high risk for Council.

Whilst the position was vacant for much of the reporting period, the role was filled at the end of April 2019. Despite this, the role was involved in many ongoing investigations including the high profile illegal dumping of industrial waste/asbestos on the Old Broken Hill Road. The investigation led to a demolition site in Broken Hill and from those inquiries to a contractor based in South Australia.





The investigation concluded with infringement notices being issued and the clean-up cost of \$32,000 being paid by the company. As a result of this investigation, the environmental impact was kept to a minimum and a clear message was sent out to the business community about Council's approach to this type of activity.

With the position now filled, Council is looking forward to an increasingly strategic and policy driven approach to compliance in year 2019/2020 and beyond.

Collaborating with others

Service NSW

In November 2018, Council agreed to partner with Service NSW for the delivery of its "Easy to Do Business" program.

The Small Business Commissioner and Services NSW have developed the program, which is a free program providing a number of benefits for Councils and community. These include:

- Opportunity for participating Council's to implement programs that support small business



- Increased productivity with 'decision ready' applications and reduced transaction costs
- Effective tools to help boost the local economy, enabling more jobs in the region – and assisting Council to deliver on its Economic Development & Tourism Strategic Plan

Previously cafes, small bars and restaurants would have to deal with up to 13 agencies, 75 regulations, up to 30 phone numbers and complete 48 forms, taking as long as 18 months to navigate. This program has seen this reduced to one digital application and one phone number, reducing the opening time for businesses to 90 days.

The initiative provides a customer, with a single point of contact within Service NSW who will help them navigate all the required approvals to operate the business, for example registering the business, obtaining an ABN, and required Council approvals.

In addition to the digital portal and free business concierge offering for Cafe, Restaurant and Small Bar, Service NSW is now helping tradies, builders and developers navigate the process. Letting them know what they need, saving time and money.

Roads & Maritime Services

The Road Safety Plan 2021, released in February 2018, recognises the critical role local government plays in reducing trauma on NSW roads. It includes commitments to significant investments in safety improvements on local roads as well as ongoing support for Road Safety Officers in Council's. The NSW Government has confirmed its financial support for the Local Government Road Safety Program up to 30 June 2021.

The primary focus of the Road Safety Officer (RSO) is to facilitate the Local Government Road Safety Program. This includes identifying road safety issues, fostering existing partnerships and encouraging wider community ownership and participation in road safety issues, including road closure for major events. Some of the programs and activities facilitated by the RSO include:

- **Heavy Vehicle & Agricultural Machinery Road Safety Forum**

The Heavy vehicle and Agricultural Machinery Road Safety forum was held in October 2018.

Industry experts from the national Heavy Vehicle Regulator, NSW Roads & Maritime Services and NSW Police presented at the forum.

- **Plan B Initiative**

The aims of the Plan B program is to raise awareness of Random Breath Testing enforcement and encourage drivers to change their attitude to

drink driving by promoting alternative transport options. Specific events were targeted for facilitating the Plan B Initiative including:

- Pooncarie Race Meeting
- Wentworth Show
- Wentworth Race Meeting

Initiatives included free breath screening and free inclusion in a raffle for a chance to win a beautiful swag.

- **Workshops**

The RSO also facilitated the following road safety workshops:

- On the Road 65Plus –free workshops with advice and safety tips to help seniors make safer choices when driving, riding, walking or using a mobility scooter
- Helping Learner Drivers Become Better Drivers

Caring about our future

Council representations

Council has been actively engaged with local, State and Federal government leaders, promoting the priorities for our region, predominantly highlighting the need for improved drought support, water management, health services and infrastructure.

Forty nine official meetings were attended by the Mayor and/or Councillors with Local Members, State and Federal Ministers.



Far West Joint Organisation

This year Council has been actively involved in the FWJO which comprises four member councils, namely Balranald Shire Council, Broken Hill City Council, Central Darling Shire Council and Wentworth Shire Council. With the commencement of the Chief Executive Officer in January this year, the FWJO has been focussed on identifying opportunities for collaboration and projects to be implemented under the NSW Government's allocation to the FWJO of \$5M to be used to fund tourism projects for the Far West NSW region.

Caring in crisis

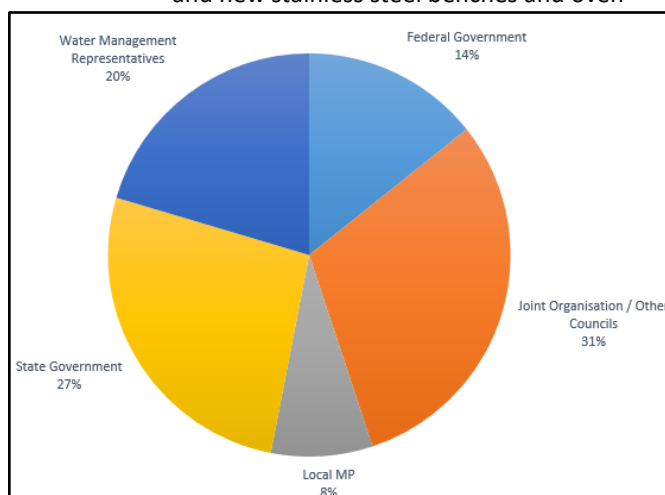
Drought support

Council has been actively involved in assisting our community through this time of drought. We commenced water carting in August 2018 and have carted a total of 2,404,532 kilolitres of potable water to property owners.

Council was awarded \$1 million under the Federal government's Drought Communities Program.

The objectives of the program were to deliver support to targeted drought-affected regions by funding improvements to local community infrastructure and other drought relief projects. Wentworth Shire Council undertook the following works under the funding, which commenced in this reporting period for delivery in 2019/2020:

- Pomona Hall upgrade includes demolition of the old section of the hall and replacement with an 11x12m lined shed like structure which will have reverse cycle air-conditioning and new stainless steel benches and oven



- Anabranch Hall upgrade includes a 3m extension to the hall, new 3m veranda, male and female toilet, a unisex disabled toilet and shower, two unisex showers and roof replacement
- Pooncarie Hall upgrade includes restumping the floor, remodelling the kitchen with stainless steel benches, Baine Marie, commercial dishwasher and a wider servery window, a walk in cool room was also installed in the kitchen and reverse cycle air-conditioning installed in the hall
- Wilkinson Hall upgrade includes installation of two internal toilets, sitting room, disabled ramp and a new roof. The community appears to be very happy with the final result and the Vintage Car Club have had meetings conducted there already.
- Alcheringa Sporting Complex upgrade included the installation of four light towers and electrical upgrades, funded through a combination of Stronger Country Communities fund and Drought Communities Program

Overall the results of these upgrades have been very beneficial to the communities involved. Providing spaces that create opportunities for people to come together, with various community groups having input in to what has been delivered at each location.



Wentworth Doctor's crisis

In May 2019, Council determined to enter into an agreement with Lime Medical to ensure the town of Wentworth maintained the services of doctors to meet the ongoing health care needs of the community. This was necessitated following the closure of the Tristar Medical Clinic in Wentworth and the impending closure of Lime Medical.

In an attempt to maintain the continuity of service to the community, Lime Medical was approached

to establish if there was any capacity within their business to continue to provide doctors to the community of Wentworth.

While not currently within Council's core business, the continuation of health care needs for community members quickly became a priority for Council. With an agreement in place until June 2020, Council continues to collaborate with the State and Federal governments, medical agencies, the Wentworth Shire Interagency Group and local community in an effort to find a long term solution to this critical issue to ensure the access to medical services in the community.

- **Wentworth Shire Interagency Group**

In April 2019, Council endorsed its support for the Wentworth Shire Interagency Group (WSIG). WSIG is an external Group which brings together key stakeholders who work in the areas related to social determinants of health, operating within the Wentworth Shire, to identify and pursue shared projects of interest and benefit to the communities.

WSIG has proved to be a vital link between Council and the community, providing valuable input and connections to the health sector to assist with addressing the shortage of doctors in the township of Wentworth. WSIG have formed a committee to investigate options and implement a long term solution to the shortage of doctors in the entire Wentworth region.

Caring for community

Council has been actively engaged in promoting healthy, resilient communities in the Shire of Wentworth. This engagement has been across all sectors where Council have been involved in supporting, sponsoring, participating and partnering to deliver desired outcomes for the local community. Some of the highlights for the year include:

Investing in Women

Wentworth Shire Council partnered with an external provider to deliver its “Work Readiness for Women” program. The program was funded by NSW Family and Community Services. It was aimed at building the confidence of women to be work-ready, to engage in the workforce or develop their skills further through training, with the aim of increasing the economic opportunity and advancement of women.



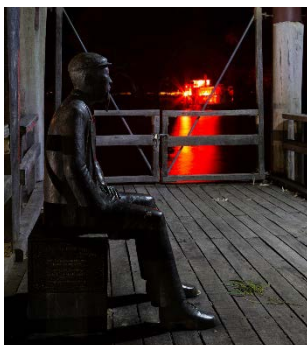
This project addresses priority areas of Council’s Community Strategic Plan in the following key areas:

- the regions deteriorating economic base
- the overall horticultural industry decline
- lack of jobs and job opportunities and
- diversity in employment

A total of 29 women attended the workshops and received mentoring to assist them to strengthen their capacity and build their personal skills to help them seek work or a workplace promotion.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (7), Women from CALD backgrounds (2), Young women (unknown), Women with disability (2), Older Women (unknown), LGBTQI (unknown). Nine of these women (31% of participants) gained either full-time or part-time employment as a result of the assistance provided.

Wellbeing initiatives



Wentworth Shire Council has promoted and engaged with a number of national campaigns throughout the year aimed at raising awareness of the

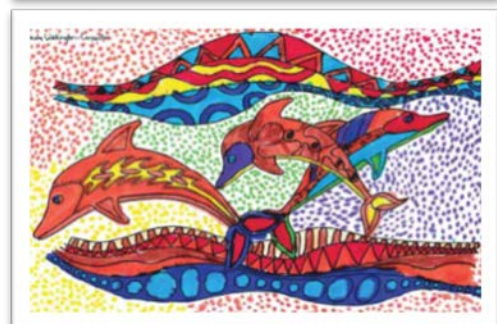
challenges facing communities. One of these was the Cystic Fibrosis National Awareness Day, where Council’s in Australia were asked to join by lighting up local landmarks in red. To show support for this worthy cause, the PS Ruby, an iconic landmark in Wentworth was lit up on the night in a “ruby red glow”. It proved to be very successful with many people taking the time to visit Fotherby Park in Wentworth and view our lady of the Darling, the Paddle Steamer Ruby, in all her red splendour.

Donations, Contributions and Grants Program

Koori Kids colouring competition

One of the many events that Council is proud to support is the Koori Kids Colouring/Short Story Competition. The initiative aims to enhance personal development and wellbeing by connecting people to Indigenous experiences of culture and reconciliation. This NAIDOC Week School Initiative program provides an educational component to NAIDOC Week celebrations and has promoted respect and harmony within schools and communities.

Taking part in NAIDOC Week is a great way to celebrate Indigenous culture and build bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. It encourages all school students to take this opportunity to think about Indigenous history, culture and society and to get involved in the NAIDOC Week School Initiatives.



Through Council's Donations Contributions and Grants program a total of \$169,638 was provided to the community during 2018/2019 as follows:

Organisation/Recipient	\$ Value
Arts Mildura	2,532
Australian Inland Botanic Gardens	45,000
Bottle Bend Reserve Land Manager	5,000
Box Rallies	1,449
Buronga Go Gol Senior Citizens Club	5,071
Buronga Saint Rocco Club	1,145
Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation	91
Coomealla High School	45
Coomealla Senior Citizens Club	9,190
Coomealla Senior Citizens Club	545
Dareton Community Creative Centre	3,647
Dareton Kennel Club	286
Dareton Men in a Shed	2,376
Dareton Men in a Shed	42
Dareton Youth & Community Centre	1,050
Deniliquin Land Council	122
Gol Gol Hawks Football Netball Club	351
Gol Gol Primary School	210
Gol Gol/Buronga Community Action Group	200
Great Murray Daring Junction Interpretative Facility	250
Isolated Childrens' Parents Association (ICPA)	5,513
Koori Kids	250
Men in Crisis	42
Mid Lachlan Aboriginal Housing	203
Mildura Vintage Vehicle Club	534
Millewa Football League	1,091
Murray Darling Eels Rugby League Club	79
Murray House Aged Care	6,419

Murray House Fundraising Committee	175
New South Western Standard Bulletin	6,637
NSW Rural Doctors Network	3,000
Palinyewah Public School	50
Pomona Public School	100
Pooncarie & District Community Christmas Tree	192
Pooncarie & District Development Committee	2,300
Pooncarie Gun Club	211
Pooncarie Outreach Children Services	79
Pooncarie Outreach Children's Services	79
Pooncarie Public School P&C Association	36
RFDS Operation Pelican	2,500
Rotary Wentworth Op Shop	9,872
Rotary's Wentworth Christmas Eve Street Party	1,653
St John's Anglican Ladies Guild	80
Sunraysia Aero modellers	322
Sunraysia Indigenous Church Ministry	379
The Salvation Army	121
Wentworth Branch National Trust of Australia (NSW)	5,000
Wentworth District Pre-School Play Centre	3,559
Wentworth District Racing Club	4,545
Wentworth District Rowing Club	2,534
Wentworth District RSL Sub Branch	7,732
Wentworth Family Doctor	11,500
Wentworth Pioneer Homes Committee	6,131
Wentworth Public School	250
Wentworth Regional Tourism	5,000
Wentworth Rotary Club	91
Wentworth Senior Citizens Club	2,775
Total	169,638

Councillors professional development activities

The following table details the professional development activities undertaken by councillors during the financial year.

Professional Development Activity	Attendance By								
	Councillor Evans	Councillor Elstone	Councillor Hederics	Councillor Heywood	Councillor MacAllister	Councillor McKinnon	Councillor Nichols	Councillor Nunan	Councillor Wheeldon
NSW Floodplain Harvesting Workshop – Dubbo Oct 2018					✓				
LGNSW Conference – Albury Oct 2018			✓	✓				✓	
MDA Conference – Aug 2018				✓	✓				
Drought Communities Program – Nov 2018				✓					
National Roads Congress Conference – Nov 2018				✓					
Floodplain Management Association National Conference				✓					✓
MDA Strategic Planning Workshop – Feb 2019		✓		✓	✓				
Western Division of Councils Conference – Feb 2019	✓	✓	✓					✓	
Healthy Rivers Healthy Communities Forum – Oct 2018				✓	✓				
MDA Connecting Catchments to Communities Feb 2019		✓		✓	✓				

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SECTION 3 – STATUTORY INFORMATION

In accordance with the NSW Office of Local Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements, Council must prepare an annual report within 5 months of the end of the financial year; provide a copy to the Minister for Local Government (via the Office of Local Government); and post a copy of the Annual Report on Council's website.

The annual report must include Council's achievement in implementing the Delivery program, as outlined in Section 2 of this report and include a copy of Council's audited financial report (Section 4). This section also includes other statutory information as required under the following Acts and Regulations.

Environmental upgrades agreements

Include particulars of any environmental upgrade agreement entered into by the council Act s 54P(1) q

No data to report for 2018/2019.

Special rate variations

Report on activities funded via a special rate variation of general income Special Rate Variation Guidelines* (SRV Guidelines) 7.1

Wentworth Levee Bank

In accordance with section 508 of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW), in June 2004, Council was granted approval by the Minister for Local Government to increase its general income to 7.18% from ordinary rates for the periods 2004/05 to 2023/24 to assist with funding the payments on a loan raised to construct a levee bank around Wentworth. The project cost was in excess of \$4 million with \$1 million to be repaid by the ratepayers.

A loan was taken out through Local Government Financial Services for the amount of \$1 million. In the current financial year the special rate variation contributed \$119,000 to this loan. The balance owing as at 30 June 2019 was \$0. At its meeting on 15 May 2019, Council resolved to no longer charge this levy now the loan has been repaid.

Tourism Special Rate

A tourism special rate of \$10 per assessment was approved by the Minister for the operation of the accredited Visitor Information Centre. The Council clearly reports the outcomes and expenditures incurred in its annual report for the term of the variation. This levy raised \$40,000 in 2018/2019.

Rates and charges written off

Amount of rates and charges written off during year Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 (Reg), cl 132

Total pensioner concession	\$189,021
Less Subsidy reimbursement	\$103,961
NETT Pensioner amount written off by Council	\$85,059
Concessions – additional pension rebate	0
Bad debts written off	\$32,406
Roundings	0
TOTAL	\$117,465

Overseas visits by Councillors

Details, including purpose of overseas visits by councillors, council staff or other persons representing council (including visits sponsored by other organisations) Reg cl 217(1)(a)

No data to report for 2018/2019.

Councillors payment of expenses and provision of facilities

Total cost during the year of the payment of expenses of, and the provision of facilities to, councillors in relation to their civic functions. Reg cl 217(1)(a1)
(i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), (vi), (vii), (viii)

Councillors payment of expenses and provision of facilities	
Provision of dedicated office equipment allocated to councillors	\$460
Telephone calls made by councillors (includes internet costs)	\$7,250
Attendance of councillors at conferences and seminars	\$13,075
Training of councillors and provision of skill development	0
Interstate visits by councillors, including transport, accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses	\$5,917
Overseas visits by councillors, including transport, accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses	0
Expenses of any spouse, partner or other person who accompanied a councillor in the performance of his or her civic functions, being expenses payable in accordance with the Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities for Mayors and Councillors	\$14,533
Expenses involved in the provision of care for a child of, or an immediate family member of, a councillor	0
TOTAL	\$41,235

Contracts over \$150,000

Details of each contract awarded for amounts greater than \$150,000 *Reg cl 217 (1) (a2) (i), (ii)*

Contractor	Good / Services Provided	\$
All State Earthworks	Wentworth Sewerage Rationalisation – Stage 2	\$2,166,257
Capogreco Excavations	Buronga Sewer Pump Station #1 &	\$723,549

	Hendy Road Sewer Stage 1 & 2 Upgrade	
Capogreco Excavations	Repairs to Lagoons at Gol Gol Water Treatment Plant	\$142,340
Coolibah Cabins	Construction of Office and Associated Veranda's at Willowbend Caravan Park	\$243,870
Express Engineers	Construction of Buronga Effluent Disposal Station	\$679,791.51
Grind Projects	Construction of Wentworth Skate Park	\$450,756.50
JCB Construction Equipment	Purchase of Loadall	\$214,000
JCB Construction Equipment	Replacement of CAT 910F Front End Loader	\$193,600
Mildura Holden	Replacement of 3 Motor Vehicles	\$168,409.26
SA Tractors	Replacement of CAT 428B Backhoe	\$214,720
SA Tractors	Purchase of Front End Loader	\$270,490
Waters Excavations	Dareton Sewer Rationalisation Project – Stage 1	\$3,068,486

Legal proceedings

Summary of the amounts incurred by the council in relation to legal proceedings *Reg cl 217(1)(a3)*

Legal Expenses	\$
Planning and Development	\$28,000
Debt Recovery	\$25,000
Other	\$20,000
Total	\$73,000

These legal expenses include:

- legal advice on two confidential planning matters (ongoing)
- representation at the Land & Environment Court for proceedings against Peregrine Corporation (matter now closed)
- debt recovery for payment of unpaid rates
- legal costs associated with the acquisition of a number of parcels of Crown Land (ongoing)

Works carried out on private land

Include resolutions made concerning work carried out on private land	Reg cl 217(1)(a4) & Act s 67, 67(2)(b)
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No data to report during 2018/2019.

Financial assistance to community under s356 of the local government act 1993:

Total amount contributed or otherwise granted to financially assist others	Reg cl 217(1)(a5)
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As reported in Section 2.

Statement of all external bodies that exercised functions delegated by council - section 355 committees

Statement of all external bodies that exercised functions delegated by council	Reg cl 217(1)(a6)
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At its meeting on 17 October 2018, Council resolved to dissolve the PS Ruby (Section 355) Committee.

Statement of all corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies in which council held a controlling interest

Statement of all corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies in which council held a controlling interest	Reg cl 217(1)(a7)
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Council is a member of the Far West Joint Organisation of Council's (FWJO).

Statement of all corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies in which the council participated in during the year

Statement of all corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies in which the council participated during the year	Reg cl 217(1)(a8)
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During 2018/2019, Council also participated in the following corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies:

- Far West Joint Organisation
- Wentworth Shire Interagency Group
- Murray Darling Association Region 4
- Bottlebend Reserve Trust
- Australian Inland Botanic Gardens
- Central Murray Regional Transport Forum
- Club Grants Funding Committee
- Country Mayors' Association of NSW
- North West Rail Alliance
- Wentworth Shire Liquor Accord
- Destination NSW

Equal employment opportunity and diversity initiatives

Statement of activities to implement its EEO management plan	Reg cl 217(1)(a9)
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Wentworth Shire Council is an equal opportunity employer, committed to ensuring our workplace is free of discrimination and harassment, where all employees can work in a positive, supportive environment. All employees, volunteers and contractors have the right to be treated with dignity and respect while working at Council.

Council embraces workforce diversity and endeavours to ensure in the application of Council policies, practices and procedures, that no discrimination takes place, diversity is encouraged and all employees are afforded equal access to opportunities.

Council's ongoing equal opportunity initiatives focus on prevention and include;

- Equal opportunity induction for new employees.
- Applying merit and equity principles in recruitment and the succession practices.
- Provision for flexible working arrangements and;

- Supporting an organisational culture that does not condone or tolerate acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or violence.

Council's commitment to equal opportunity is firmly on the corporate agenda, with ongoing initiatives focused on providing positive, measureable and enduring steps towards equality.

Council's workforce consists of the following:-

- 56% Male / 44% Female staff
- % identifying as aboriginal Torres Strait Islander – N/A at present as this information is not collected from employees
- 53% live within Wentworth Shire Council / 47% live outside

Through Council's Workforce Management Plan various Equal Employment Opportunity initiatives are available to staff. Wentworth Shire Council is committed to a workplace of equality and diversity where all workers are valued and respected and have opportunities to develop to their full potential.

To achieve this Council's objective is to create a culture displaying:

- A diverse and skilled workforce which reflects the diversity of the community
- A workplace with fair work practices and behaviours
- Opportunities of employment and participation by members of Equal
- Employment Opportunity (EEO) groups, which include:
 - Women
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
 - Members of racial, ethnic and religious minority groups
 - People with a disability

Implemented	% of staff participants
Regular part time work	11.8%
Rostered / accrued days off	23.6%
Unpaid leave for carers of people with special needs	0.7%

Council did not undertake an Employee Satisfaction Survey in 2018/2019.

Senior staff remuneration

Statement of the total remuneration package of the general manager and senior staff members	Reg cl 217 (1) (b) (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (v)
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In accordance with Clause 217 of the Local Government Act (General) Regulation 2005, details of the total remuneration packages of all senior staff members are shown in tables A and B. The General Manager figures represent the current General Managers package, while Table B expresses the gross remuneration of all senior staff. For reporting purposes the senior staff members are the General Manager and the three Directors.

Table A - General Manager remuneration package

Total value of the salary component of the package	\$235,300
Total amount of any bonus, performance or other payments that do not form part of the salary component	\$0
Total amount payable by way of the employer's contribution or salary sacrifice to any superannuation scheme to which the general manager may be a contributor	\$24,700
Total value of any non-cash benefits for which the general manager may elect under the package	\$10,000
Total amount payable by way of fringe benefits tax for any such non-cash benefits	
TOTAL	\$270,000

Table B - Senior staff members employed by Council

Total value of salary components of their packages	\$514,856
Total amount of any bonus, performance or other payments that do not form part of salary components of their packages	\$0
Total amount payable by the council by way of the employer's contribution or salary sacrifice to any superannuation scheme to	\$0

which any of the may be a contributor	
Total value of any non-cash benefits for which any of them may elect under the package	\$0
Total amount payable by way of fringe benefits tax for any such non-cash benefits	\$0
TOTAL	\$514,856

A statement detailing the stormwater management services provided (if levied)

<i>A statement detailing the stormwater management services provided (if levied).</i>	<i>Reg cl 217(1)(e)</i>
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Council is not required to provide a report in relation to stormwater management services as it does not levy a charge for such services.

A statement detailing the coastal protection services provided (if levied)

<i>A statement detailing the coastal protection services provided (if levied).</i>	<i>Reg cl 217(1)(e1)</i>
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No data to report for 2018/2019.

Companion Animals Act 1998 and Companion Animals Regulation 2008

<i>Detailed statement, prepared in accordance with such guidelines as may be issued by the Director-General from time to time, of the council's activities during the year in relation to enforcing, and ensuring compliance with, the provisions of the Companion Animals Act 1988 (CA Act) and the Companion Animal Regulation 2018</i>	<i>Reg cl 217(1)(f) Companion Animals Guidelines* (CA Guidelines)</i>
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Refer to the Companion Animals component of Section 2.

Capital works projects

<i>Report on certain proposed capital works projects where a capital expenditure review had been submitted</i>	<i>OLG Capital Expenditure Guidelines*</i>
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In 2018/19, Council submitted a Capital Expenditure Review to the OLG for the redevelopment of the Wentworth Civic Centre

project. Other significant Capital Works projects are listed in Section 2 of this report.

Carers Recognition Act 2010

<i>Councils considered to be 'human service agencies' under the CR Act (provide services directed at carers and/or people being cared for by carers) must report on compliance with the CR Act for the reporting period.</i>	<i>Carers Recognition Act 2010 (CR Act), s 8(2)</i>
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Does not apply to Wentworth Shire Council.

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

<i>Information on the implementation of council's Disability Inclusion Plan and give a copy to the Minister for Disability Services</i>	<i>Disability Inclusion Act 2014, s 13(1)</i>
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Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 was adopted by Council on June 2017. The Plan outlines Council's intended actions to ensure access and participation to all of our public buildings, spaces and events are able to be enjoyed by all residents, regardless of disability.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan was developed through a community consultation and research process. A review of council documents and government policy took place together with a staff survey. Community consultation involved talking with people from across the community and from a variety of stakeholder groups and members of the Shire including a pop-up information stand at our Australia Day celebration and the active encouragement of resident input at Community Engagement sessions held across the Shire.

Compliance with and effect of planning agreements

<i>Particulars of compliance with and effect of planning agreements in force during the year.</i>	<i>Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979, s 7.5(5)</i>
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Nil to report for 2018/2019.

Recovery and threat abatement plans in accordance with Fisheries Management Act 1994

<i>Recovery and threat abatement plans - Councils identified in a plan as responsible for implementation of measures included in the plan, to</i>	<i>Fisheries Management Act 1994, s220ZT (2)</i>
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report on actions taken to implement measures as to the state of the environment in its area.

Council, to its knowledge, is not identified in a recovery and threat abatement plan as being responsible for implementation measures under the Fisheries Management Act 1994; therefore a report is not required.

Inspections of Private Swimming Pools 2018/2019

Details of inspections of private swimming pools *Swimming Pools Act (SP Act) 1992, s 22F(2)*
Swimming Pools Regulation 2018 (SP Reg) cl 23

Information included on government information public access activity. *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, s 125(1)*
Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018, cl 8, Schedule 2

In accordance with Section 125 of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA) and regulation, the number of GIPA requests for the year are reported in the table below.

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1994 and Regulation 2011

Information included on public interest disclosure activity.

Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994, s 31

Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2011, cl 4

Section 31 of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994*, requires each public authority, within four months after the end of each reporting year, to prepare an annual report on the public authority's obligations under the Act for submission to the Minister responsible for the public authority. A copy of this report is to be provided to the Ombudsman.

Private Swimming Pool Inspections 2018/2019

Inspections of tourist and visitor accommodation	0
Inspections of premises with more than 2 dwellings	0
Inspections that resulted in issuance a certificate of compliance under section 22D of the Act	6
Inspections that resulted in issuance of a certificate of noncompliance under clause 18BA of the Regulation	4

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 and Regulation

GIPA Report 2018 - 2019

GIPA requests received	4
Contraventions by Council of an information protection or of a privacy code of practice, or disclosure of personal information kept in a public register under Part 5 Section 33	Nil

Public Interest Disclosures - Annual Report 2018/2019	Made by public officials performing day to day functions	Under a statutory or other legal obligation	All other PIDs
No of public officials who made public interest disclosures to your public authority	0	0	0
No of public interest disclosures received by your public authority	0	0	0
Of public interest disclosures received, how many were primarily about:	0	0	0
Corrupt conduct	0	0	0
Maladministration	0	0	0
Serious and substantial waste	0	0	0

Government information contravention	0	0	0
Local government pecuniary interest contravention	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0

No of public interest disclosures (received since 1 January 2012) that have been finalised in this reporting period **0**

Have you established an internal reporting policy?	Yes
Has the head of your public authority taken action to meet their staff awareness obligations?	Yes
If so, please select how staff have been made aware:	
Staff undertaking that they have read and understood your organisation's internal reporting policy	Yes

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SECTION 4 – AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Audited Financial Statements accompany the annual report and are available as a separate document.

WENTWORTH SHIRE COUNCIL

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