



WENTWORTH SHIRE COUNCIL END OF TERM REPORT 2016-2021

WENTWORTH
SHIRE COUNCIL

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**Wentworth Shire Council would like to
acknowledge the Traditional Custodians
of the Land and pay its respects to Elders
past, present and emerging.**

WENTWORTH SHIRE COUNCIL END OF TERM REPORT 2016-2021

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INTRODUCTION

Under the NSW Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, Council is required to produce a report on its progress in implementing the Community Strategic Plan during each term of Council.

The End of Term report will assist the incoming Council to review the Community Strategic Plan and prepare Council's next Delivery Program.

The Community Strategic Plan is a whole of community document summarising the community's aspirations for the future. It is the primary driver of a suite of key documents developed by Council.

While Council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and maintaining the Community Strategic Plan it is not wholly responsible for its implementation. Other partners such as State agencies and community groups may also be engaged in delivering the long term objectives of the plan.

Council's Delivery Program outlines the priorities that Council will pursue to meet the aspirations of the Community Strategic Plan.

The Operational Plan includes Council's annual budget and provides information on the range of projects Council will undertake each financial year. After engagement and consultation with the community in 2017, Wentworth Shire Council adopted the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 in June 2017.

Having undertaken extensive consultation to develop the 2013 Community Strategic Plan, the focus of reviewing and updating this iteration of the plan revolved around ensuring that the plan continues to clearly articulate the goals of the community.

As a result of the consultation and engagement undertaken Council was able to formulate the following vision for the region:

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

Responding to issues raised throughout the community engagement process, the Community Strategic Plan was structured around four themes that are aligned to the quadruple bottom line which emphasises the balancing of social, environmental and economic wellbeing with good governance as the foundation for sustainable development and management.

These themes are clearly interwoven and impact upon each other.

They are the cornerstone for our community's progress and success.

1

Economic - Wentworth is a vibrant, growing and thriving Shire.

2

Social - Wentworth is a desirable Shire to visit, live, work and invest.

3

Environment - Wentworth is a community that works to enhance and protect its physical and natural assets.

4

Governance - Wentworth is a caring, supportive and inclusive community that is informed and engaged in its future.



Message from the Mayor

A WORD FROM WENTWORTH SHIRE MAYOR ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL

It is with pleasure that we present the Wentworth Shire Council End of Term Report for the 2016-2021 term of Council.

This End of term report includes the progression of Wentworth Shire Council towards the vision articulated in the Community Strategic Plan.

The vision of Wentworth being a thriving region, supported by a robust economic base, distinctive open spaces and strong local governance and leadership has been an encouraging impetus for Council over the last five years.

The last 18 months of Council's term has not been without its challenges as Council and the Community as a whole has come to grips with impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Capital Works investment has been significant during this term of Council with more than \$63 million spent on building, renewing and maintaining our assets.

This investment in our assets has been driven by an unprecedented increase in State and Federal grants.

Major projects that have been completed or are in progress include the following:

- More than a million dollars invested into infrastructure improvements at Willow Bend Caravan Park
- Completion of Stage two of the James King Park Master Plan
- Completion of Stage one of the O'Donnell Park and Curlwaa Boat Ramp Master Plan
- \$2,500,000 redevelopment of the Midway Centre in Buronga
- Supporting the Community to Construct a Skate Park in Wentworth

- \$4,500,000 investment to rationalise Sewer Treatment Plants in Wentworth and Dareton
- Installation of a bore and upgrade of the Pooncarie Water Treatment Plant to guarantee future supply of water to the Community
- Stage one of the Wentworth Aerodrome Expansion at a cost of more than \$7,000,000
- Significant upgrade of public amenities and halls
- Construction of a new hall at Curlwaa and the Wentworth Community Pavillion at the Wentworth Showgrounds
- \$13,800,000 million spent on road renewals, rehabilitation and upgrades
- In partnership with Transport for NSW \$10,200,000 has been spent maintaining and upgrading the Sturt and Silver City Highways.

Significant time has been invested in planning the following projects that will see a further \$20,000,000 invested in community infrastructure over the next 18 months.

These projects include:

- Pooncarie – Menindee Road
- Wentworth Civic Centre
- Willow Bend Caravan Park

Council's achievements have not only been limited to capital expenditure projects but as a Council we were successful in hosting the Murray Darling Association Annual Conference in May 2021.

The conference was an outstanding success, bringing many delegates to the junction of Australia's two greatest rivers for the first time, giving them the opportunity to witness first hand

the issues facing the Darling-Baarka River and the Menindee Lakes system.

Being located adjacent to the Victorian regional city of Mildura presents significant economic opportunities with potential for Council to increase employment and career pathways locally as well as within the region.

Council has developed a number of strategic plans in recent years with the aim to generate economic activity and development across our Shire.

Council has spent this term of office implementing recommendations from those plans which has seen an additional 261 properties created with a further 1,000 to come on board over the next couple of years.

While this growth has been encouraging, the pace at which it has occurred has created some challenges for Council to keep up with the speed of the development.

The new Council will need to be proactive going forward to ensure that it can provide the required infrastructure to ensure that this growth does not stagnate.

As Council commences the process of community consultation and revising the Community Strategic Plan it is hoped that this report will lay a sound platform for the review of the aspirations embedded within the Community Strategic Plan.

To our General Manager Ken Ross, thank you for your support, we are heading in the right direction, and while we are still encountering difficulties in some areas your pragmatic approach is helping to resolve these issues.

Also to former Mayor Melisa Hederics, who started this term in the position, thank you for your hard work and dedication to the region over your time on Council.

Finally to our staff, the Wentworth Shire Council is only ever going to be as good as the staff

we have, Council thanks each and everyone of you for your commitment to our Shire and its residents.

The past five years have been extremely busy, challenging, interesting and rewarding and we are proud of what Council has achieved and the strong financial position that Wentworth Shire Council is in.

This will allow Council to continue to meet the ongoing commitments to our community .

Going forward the new Council will continue to focus on ensuring that residents and ratepayers are proud of where they live, that they feel safe and engaged in the community and that they have equitable access to facilities that ensure that the community leads a healthy and enjoyable lifestyle.



Shire profile

The Wentworth Region – Australia's Murray Darling Heartland covers an area of 26,000 sq kms and has a population of approximately 8,000.

The southern boundary of the region has the greatest population density with the townships of Wentworth, Dareton, Buronga and Gol Gol.

The remote township of Pooncarie is located on the Darling-Baarka River, approximately 120km from Wentworth.

A couple of hours drive north of Wentworth is the historic town of Broken Hill.

The region is an area of great diversity and offers visitors the opportunity to explore an introduction to Outback Australia.

Combined with cross-border neighbour Mildura, the closest commercial centre to Wentworth, the region attracts over 300,000 visitors annually.

At the heart of this wonderful region is the confluence of Australia's two greatest rivers the Murray and Darling-Baarka, leaving Wentworth

sandwiched between their flowing waters and the world heritage Willandra Lakes region, encompassing the culturally-significant Mungo National Park.

Wentworth Shire is home to vibrant communities, a diverse agricultural sector, unique natural environments, and significant Cultural Heritage.

Strategically located bordering NSW and SA, and at the cross-roads of the Sturt, Silver City and Calder Highways, Wentworth Shire provides important linkages to the major ports of Sydney (1,075km), Melbourne (585km) and Adelaide (420km).





End of term report

END OF TERM REPORT 2016-2021

This End-of-Term report provides comments about Council's role, achievements and progress during the life of the Delivery Program.

During the life of the Delivery Program, Council identified 248 actions to be undertaken as either an annual action across the life of the program or an individual action to be undertaken in a particular year.

Across the life of this delivery program Council has successfully completed 164 actions resulting in a completion rate of 66%.

31 actions were still in progress at 30 June 2021, a number of these actions will carry forward to the next delivery program.

What we achieved

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Planned Actions 248 | ✓ Completed 164 |
| ? In Progress 31 | ✗ Not Commenced 53 |

As part of the Community Engagement process for the development of the new Community Strategic Plan, consideration will need to be given to the 53 actions that did not commence to see if they are still a priority for the Community.

Council has worked towards achieving the objectives and goals as set out in the Community Strategic Plan through the implementation of the four year Delivery Program, Resourcing Strategy and annual Operational Plans.

To measure the progress of those actions the following symbols have been used:

- ✓ Project has been commenced and completed
- ✗ Project has not commenced or had action taken
- ? Project is in progress

2017-2018 – 2020-2021

| | | ✓ | ? | ✗ |
|-------------|-----|----|----|----|
| Economic | 17 | 7 | 3 | 7 |
| Social | 57 | 43 | 4 | 10 |
| Environment | 100 | 75 | 11 | 14 |
| Governance | 74 | 39 | 13 | 22 |

Contributing factors for actions not completed by the due date include:

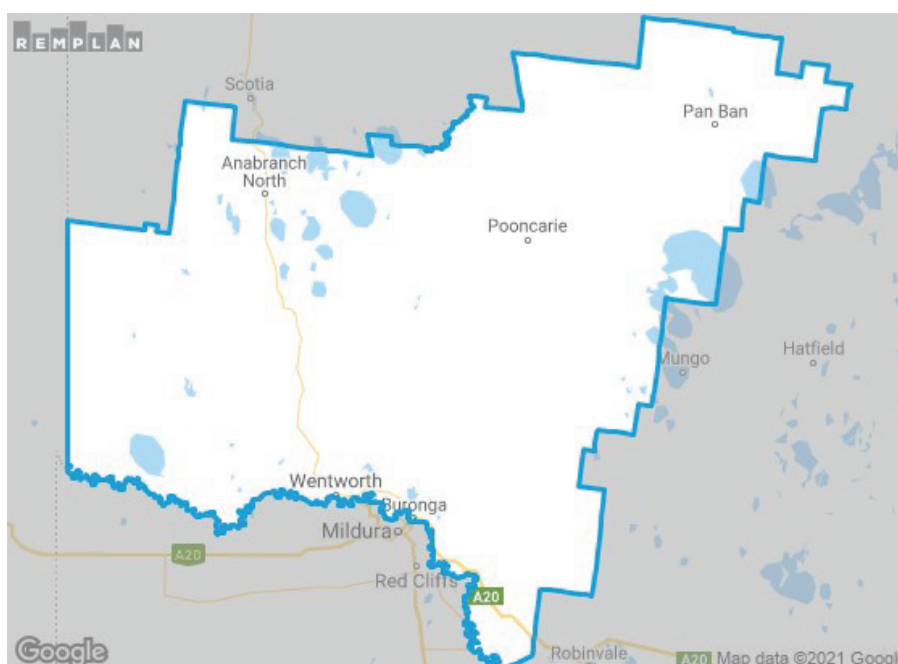
- Delays caused by weather/external partners or staff resources
- Change in Council priorities
- Significant change in State and Federal policy (substantial increase in available grant funding)
- COVID-19 Pandemic

The end of term report incorporates the 2020-2021 financial year due to the postponement of the Local Government Elections until 2021 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Demographic Overview

The following report provide a demographic overview for Wentworth (A). Headline data and information is provided regarding the areas key statistics for population, age structure, education, employment and housing.

Wentworth (A)



This area is defined by the boundary of Wentworth (A) (LGA 18200)

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| ABS 2020 Estimated Residential Population: | 7,090 |
| ABS Census Place of Usual Residence Population: | 6,798 |
| Annualised Population Growth Rate (2011–2016): | 0.6% |
| Land Area (ha): | 2,625,623.98 |
| Census Population Density (persons / ha): | 0 |
| Median Age: | 44 years |
| Median Weekly Income: | \$555 (\$28,871 pa) |
| Labour Force Participation Rate: | 53.72% |

*Data provided by Remplan



**WENTWORTH IS A VIBRANT,
GROWING AND THRIVING SHIRE**

Our economy

Council commitment

A robust local economy is important for the future of the region. Council plays a key role in community development with the aim of assisting to grow resilient, vibrant and thriving communities.

Council has a very important role to play in setting the right conditions to allow business to flourish and in encouraging people to move to town or to visit as tourists.

However, it is important to realise that Council has limitations in its role in economic development which is influenced by a number of external trends that are often beyond Council's influence.

What the community told us

- Streamline development process to encourage developers to the region
- Increase new and diversified industry to increase employment opportunities
- Attract, retain, maintain facilities and capitalise on opportunities
- Create a place where people want to come and live

Delivery Program progress

| Number of actions | 2017-2018 – 2020-2021 | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| | ✓ | ? | ✗ |
| 17 | 7 | 3 | 7 |

Achievements

Notable actions undertaken include:

- Completed Buronga – Gol Gol Structure Plan
- Purchased and operated the Willowbend Caravan Park Business
- Development of the Local Strategic Planning Statement and the Community Participation Plan
- Continued to contribute to the ongoing activities of Murray Regional Tourism
- Contributed to the development of the Western Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy
- Contributed to the development of the Destination NSW Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan

| Top 4 Industry sectors based on economic output ^{*1} | | |
|---|----------------------------------|-------|
| Industry Sector | Wentworth (A) (2019 Release1) | |
| | \$M | % |
| Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing | \$283.438 | 24.3% |
| Manufacturing | \$204.518 | 17.6% |
| Mining | \$189.784 | 16.3% |
| Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services | \$75.194 | 6.5% |
| Top 4 Industry sectors based on employment ^{*1} | | |
| Industry Sector | Wentworth (A) (2019 Release1) | |
| | Jobs | % |
| Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing | 789 | 27.8% |
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 220 | 7.8% |
| Manufacturing | 214 | 7.5% |
| Education & Training | 207 | 7.3% |

^{*1} Source www.remplan.com.au.au



**WENTWORTH IS A DESIRABLE
SHIRE TO VISIT, LIVE, WORK AND
INVEST**

Our community

Council commitment

To sustain a community, we need to sustain the people living there and enhance their wellbeing and quality of life.

Valuing and respecting the contribution of all community members regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnicity, cultural background or length of residency; and generating opportunities for the active participation by all residents in community life are important cornerstones for Council to encourage and support.

Council manages community spaces, including formal and informal areas within the shire that allow people to gather for a variety of purposes. Council's role involves providing equitable

public facilities, responding to leisure and recreation needs of residents, maintaining public facilities to ensure that they are presentable and safe, as well as advocating for a range of recreation resources and facilities.

What the community told us

- Celebrate and promote our unique location.
- Improved promotion of the region for tourism, employment, work and living
- Involve our youth in everything we do
- Nurture the talents and capabilities within our Shire

Delivery Program progress

| | 2017-2018 – 2020-2021 | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---|----|
| Number of actions | ✓ | ? | ✗ |
| 57 | 43 | 3 | 11 |

Achievements

Notable actions undertaken include:

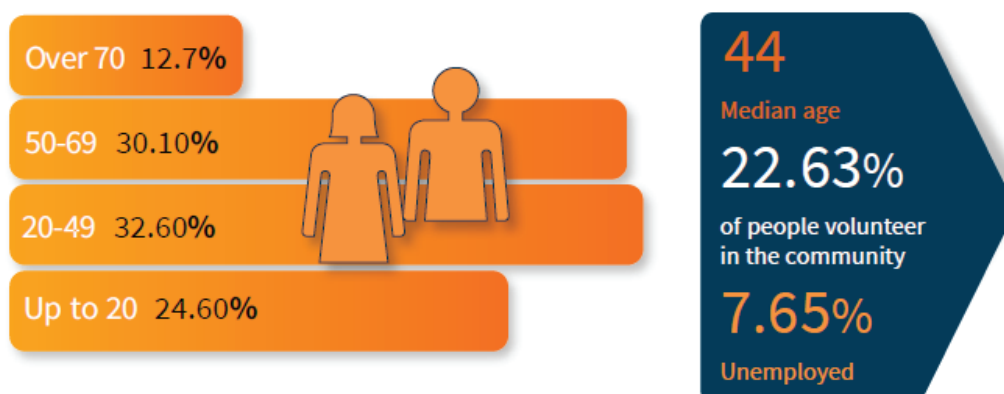
- Maintained Visitor Information Centre Operations
- Investigated expanded VIC operations in the new Civic Centre Redevelopment
- Undertook a full review of the PS Ruby Operations
- Undertook agreed maintenance of PS Ruby
- Celebrated the PS Ruby 110th Birthday
- Advocated for the inclusion of Arumpo Road into Regional tourism plans
- Investigated and installed RV Dump points in Pooncarie and Wentworth
- Continued to advocate for additional aged care facilities within the Shire
- Supported Wentworth Pre-school to expand services in line with recommendations of

Wentworth Child Care Study.

- Completed redesign of Palm Island traffic Island at Wentworth
- James King Park Stage 2 development
- O'Donnell Park and Curlwaa Boat Ramp Stage 2
- Midway Centre Re-Development
- Supported the Skate Park Committee for proposed Skate Park in Wentworth and secured funding for its installation
- Installation of new shared ways and footpaths
- Held a Seniors Expo
- Held a Youth Expo
- Held a Small Business Expo
- Acquired land for development of a 2nd Oval at the George Gordon Sporting Complex
- Continued to support the NSW Rural Doctors Network through the annual Bush Bursary Scheme
- Advocated for and partnered with stakeholder

groups for the provision of Health Services in Wentworth

- Supported the work of the Wentworth Interagency Group
- Delivered road safety program initiatives
- Partnered in the delivery of the Work Readiness for Women Program
- Constructed Skate Park in Wentworth
- Continued to deliver Library Service across the Shire
- Willowbend Caravan Park Infrastructure upgrades



| Community Assets | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Sporting Facilities 10 | Halls 7 |
| Boat Ramps 10 | Public Amenities 50 |

**WENTWORTH IS A COMMUNITY
THAT WORKS TO ENHANCE AND
PROTECT ITS PHYSICAL AND
NATURAL ASSETS**



Our environment

Council commitment

As a region we are the custodians of our environment.

We are clear on our resolve that our future generations will enjoy the benefits of our considered land use and inherit a healthy natural environment that is not compromised by the economic imperatives of maintaining our community.

Elements of spaces that are conducive to healthy community interaction include natural and built features of the environment.

A healthy natural environment encourages physical activity, social connections and can

affect a community's health and wellbeing.

Our community values the natural and built environment, it values history and the efforts of those who have helped to create this community.

What the community told us

- Better utilise and promote our natural attractions
- Provide safe, reliable water supply and water management
- Our historic past needs to be retained and promoted

Delivery Program progress

| 2017-2018 – 2020-2021 | | | |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|
| Number of actions | ✓ | ? | ✗ |
| 100 | 75 | 11 | 14 |

Achievements

Notable actions undertaken include:

- Completed Buronga – Gol Gol Drainage Strategy
- Carbone Court Retention Basin Conversion
- Hendy Road Sewer Main Upgrade
- Buronga Sewer Pump Station upgrades
- Secured funding for Buronga and Wentworth EDS upgrades
- Completed Sewer Treatment Plant Rationalisation project
- Pooncarie Water Treatment Plant upgrade
- Repainted the Darling-Baarka River Bridges at Pooncarie
- Continued to advocate for the development of rail freight links to Broken Hill
- Continued to advocate for the construction of a second bridge crossing over the Murray

River

- Finalised business case for future expansion options for the Wentworth Aerodrome
- Secured funding for Wentworth Aerodrome Expansion.
- Undertook expansion of Wentworth Aerodrome.
- Annual Building Maintenance Program
- Completed scope of works and Secured funding for Curlwaa Hall Replacement
- Upgraded Public Amenities
- Commenced process to upgrade capacity of Buronga Landfill
- Continued to support the activities of the Murray Darling Association
- Continued to lobby for the sustainable management of the Menindee Lakes
- Undertake actions as outlined in the Western Weeds Action Plan
- Undertook upgrade of Pooncarie, Pomona,

Anabranh and Wilkinson Halls

- Installed new Lights at Carramar Drive Sporting Complex
- Commenced upgrade of Wentworth Sporting Complex
- Replaced Barrett Pavilion and renamed to Wentworth Community Pavilion (below)
- Installation of additional netball courts at

George Gordon Sporting Complex

- Secured funding for upgrade of Pooncarie – Menindee Road
- Hosted 2021 Murray Darling Association Annual Conference
- Completed Curlwaa Hall Replacement
- Dareton Street Light Upgrade



**WENTWORTH IS A CARING,
SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITY THAT IS INFORMED
AND ENGAGED IN ITS FUTURE**

A photograph of a modern building with a light-colored, grid-patterned facade. The building is illuminated by warm lights, and the sky is a deep blue with some pinkish clouds. In the foreground, there is a concrete ramp with metal railings. The text "Service Centre & Library Entrance" is displayed on the building's wall.

**Service Centre
& Library
Entrance**

Our Leadership

Council commitment

Listening to the needs of the community and ensuring that the decisions that Council makes are fair and equitable for the whole community.

Council strives to empower community members through involvement in decision-making and by applying principles of fairness, equity, transparency and probity in all its dealings.

The concept of diversity involves acceptance and respect of individual differences.

Acceptance and inclusiveness of diversity demonstrates that a community has respect for a range of lifestyles and beliefs.

Social inclusion of this nature is vital in ensuring that groups are not disadvantaged through marginalisation.

Council aims to be a highly effective local government body, providing best value to residents and ratepayers by delivering quality services, identifying innovative solutions to issues, supporting local groups and

organisations, prudently managing resources and safeguarding community assets.

Council staff and elected representatives act as a conduit between the community and other tiers of government plus other strategic partners to lobby and advocate for the delivery of services to the local community.

Civic leadership is a key pillar to establishing an ecologically sustainable future embracing the principles of sustainable management and development. As such, it is integral to the ongoing prosperity of our community today and in the years ahead.

What the community told us

- Councillors need to listen more, be more visible and involved in what the community wants
- Enlist the support of all levels of government to resolve issues
- Inform and advocate for everything that we do. Celebrate what we achieve as a Council and a Community
- Recognition of the traditional custodians and tribal heritage

Delivery Program progress

| | 2017-2018 – 2020-2021 | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----|----|
| Number of actions | ✓ | ? | ✗ |
| 74 | 39 | 13 | 22 |

Achievements

Notable actions undertaken include:

- Redesigned and updated Council's website
- Developed Midway Centre Customer Service Centre and Library operations
- Reviewed Contractor Management practices
- Continued to work with the Cross Border Commissioner to identify and resolve cross border issues
- Continue to undertake Citizenship Ceremonies

- Partnered with Services NSW for delivery of Easy to Do Business program
- Advocated for a new Wentworth Hospital
- Ongoing advocacy for the community on Murray-Darling Basin Issues
- Advocacy to ensure regional councils continue to be sustainable
- Advocated for and supported Pooncarie residents on water issues
- Developed the Council's first Disability Inclusion Action Plan

**WENTWORTH
SHIRE COUNCIL**

Our values: Honesty and Integrity | Accountability and Transparency | Respect | Quality | Commitment