



ANABRANCH
BURONGA
COOMEALLA
CURLWAA
DARETON
ELLERSLIE
GOL GOL
MONAK
POMONA
POONCARIE
RUFUS RIVER
TRENTHAM CLIFFS
WENTWORTH

State of our Shire Report

2024



IMPORTANT | ENGLISH

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INTERPRETER SERVICES



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ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ | ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ

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ΣΗΜΑΝΤΙΚΟ | ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ

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Bu belgeyi okuma ve anlama konusunda yardıma ihtiyacınız varsa, Wentworth Shire Belediyesi'nin müşteri hizmetleri personeli, ücretsiz tercümanlık hizmetinin ayarlanmasında yardımcı olmaktan mutluluk duyacaktır. Bir tercüman ayarlamak için lütfen 03 5027 5027 numaralı telefondan Belediye ile iletişime geçin veya aşağıda listelenen bir Belediye Ofisini ziyaret edin.



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Jika anda memerlukan bantuan membaca dan memahami dokumen ini, kakitangan perkhidmatan pelanggan Wentworth Shire Council berbesar hati untuk membantu dalam pengatur perkhidmatan tafsiran percuma. Untuk mengatur jurubahasa, sila hubungi Majlis di 03 5027 5027, atau lawati Pejabat Majlis yang disenaraikan di bawah.



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Nếu bạn cần trợ giúp để đọc và hiểu tài liệu này, nhân viên dịch vụ khách hàng của Hội đồng Wentworth Shire sẵn lòng hỗ trợ sắp xếp dịch vụ thông dịch miễn phí. Để sắp xếp một thông dịch viên, vui lòng liên hệ với Hội đồng theo số 03 5027 5027 hoặc đến Văn phòng Hội đồng được liệt kê bên dưới.



Midway Community Centre
3 Midway Drive
Buronga NSW 2739



**Wentworth Visitor Centre
Main Administration Office**
61 Darling Street
Wentworth NSW 2648

COUNCIL
OFFICES



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



The Kiilalaana group (Shantelle Thompson dancers) portraying the connection of the land and water through dance at Namatjira Water Tank Commissioning event, Dareton.

Our Objectives



Wentworth Shire is a vibrant, growing and thriving region

ECONOMIC



Wentworth Shire is a great place to live

SOCIAL



Wentworth Shire is a community that works to enhance and protect its physical and natural environment

ENVIRONMENTAL



Wentworth Shire is supported by strong and ethical civil leadership with all activities conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner

CIVIC LEADERSHIP



Wentworth LGA

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Images in this document were sourced from Council's Image Library unless otherwise stated. Cover image: Wentworth Caravan Park Redevelopment.

The State of our Shire Report forms part of the Annual Report 2023/2024. These documents have been prepared in accordance with Section 406 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

This document was compiled by Wentworth Shire Council.
Copies of this program can be viewed online at wentworth.nsw.gov.au

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Introduction

This term of Council has been marked by the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, but just as we were starting to recover, a significant flood event struck in late 2022 and early 2023. The community’s response to these challenges demonstrated remarkable passion and resilience.

Due to the postponement of the 2020 Council elections until December 2021, this Council’s term has been shortened to 33 months instead of the usual 48. Throughout this time, our plans have been shaped by the voices of our residents, prioritising what matters most to the people of the Shire. As this term draws to close and we prepare for the next four-year term, it is an ideal moment to reflect on both our achievements and the works still ahead.

Whilst maintaining essential infrastructure and services, Council also delivered a range of high-quality projects aimed at creating long-term benefits to the community. By working closely with governments, financial institutions and businesses, Council secured over \$53 million in funding, which enabled the delivery of transport and infrastructure projects. To date, more than \$81 million has been spent on new and renewed capital works, with an additional \$26 million allocated for future projects.

These initiatives, along with a sound financial strategy, ensure Council’s continued financial sustainability and reflect the community’s current and future needs.

The State Government has also contributed to community aspirations through projects like the

HealthOne facility in Buronga, completed in 2022, and the ongoing construction of a \$30 million hospital in Wentworth, set to replace the 80 year facility by 2025.

Recognising the vital role of community groups, Council provided \$598,684 in financial assistance to support these organisations over the term, improving the quality of life for residents, workers and visitors alike.

Additionally, collaboration between Wentworth Shire Council and Mildura Rural City Council was strengthened, with both working towards mutually beneficial outcomes for the region.

Looking forward, Council remains committed to engaging with the community to fulfill Wentworth Shire’s vision, ensuring continued progress and value. Being a Councillor offers a unique opportunity to contribute to decision-making and shapes the strategic direction of the Shire.

The incoming Council faces the important task of adopting a Community Strategic Plan in 2025, ensuring it reflects the views and aspirations of the Shire’s residents. By securing further funding and building on existing partnerships, Council can continue delivering projects that improve the community’s future.

It is essential that social, environmental, economic and civic leadership goals remain at the forefront of Council’s agenda.



Ken Ross
General Manager
Wentworth Shire Council



Daniel Linklater
Mayor
Wentworth Shire Council

Wentworth at a glance



8.04% of our population identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (State average is 3.44%)

Proclaimed a Shire on 23 January
1879

Area (sq. km)
26,256



7,487
Estimated Residential Population (2021)

Largest industry of Employment is Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing with **23.5%** of the population



27.9%
Mining is the largest industry sector with (\$363,285,000) gross revenue



3 Libraries

1 Hospital

8 Schools

1 TAFE Campus

2 Aerodromes

29.51% of homes are owned outright



45.48%

Working age Residents (30-64 yrs old) : **2,860**
(state average is 45.46%) : Employed Residents

4.5% Unemployment Rate (2022)

Year 12 education as the highest form of education

Wentworth Shire residents
28.7%

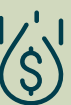
vs.

Other areas of NSW
52.13%

\$75,544
per capita Gross Regional Product



The Median Wage for Households:
Wentworth
\$1,066/wk



State (excl. Greater Sydney)
\$1,434/wk



Greater Sydney
\$2,077/wk

The individual median wage is **\$716** per week with **28.1%** of people earning over **\$1,500** per week.

43 years old

is the Median Resident age (State median is 39)

28.54% of Residents are aged under 25 (State average is 30.05%)

20.42% of Residents are aged over 65 (State average is 17.59%)



29.99% of families earn over \$130,000 vs. state average of 43.86%

WORTH SEEING WORTH DOING!
WENTWORTH and surrounds



422km
ADELAIDE

583km
MELBOURNE

1,044km
SYDNEY

599km of sealed road

1,429km of unsealed road

Based on data from the 2021 Census data. *Data collected from Remplan and ABS

Purpose and Context of Report

The State of our Shire Report focuses on how effective Council has been in delivering the community's aspirations and visions as articulated in the Community Strategic Plan 2032 – Wentworth Shire: Our Future in Focus.

This report is a snapshot of Council's performance during the term and how we moved towards achieving the long-term goals and aspirations of the Community.



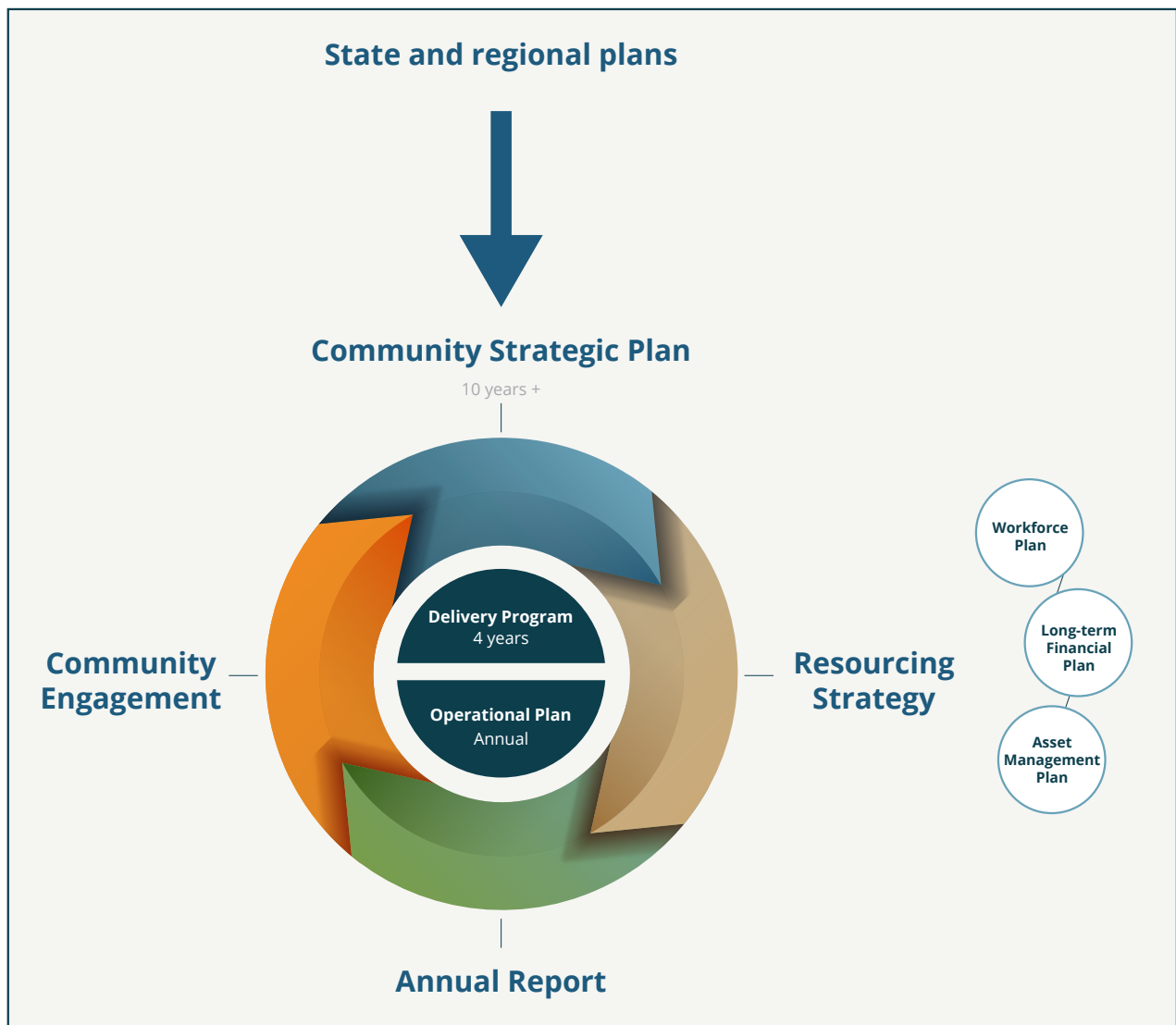
Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

In line with the Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework each NSW Council is required, by legislation, to prepare a range of plans and integrate them to obtain the maximum leverage from their effects to plan for the future.

The IP&R Framework includes the Community Strategic Plan, Resourcing Strategy, Delivery Program, Operational Plan and the Annual Report.

The aim of the IP&R Framework is to ensure each Council takes a long term, strategic approach to its activities and that these represents the needs of the community.

The relationship between community input and Council's plan is outlined in the following diagram of the IP&R Framework.



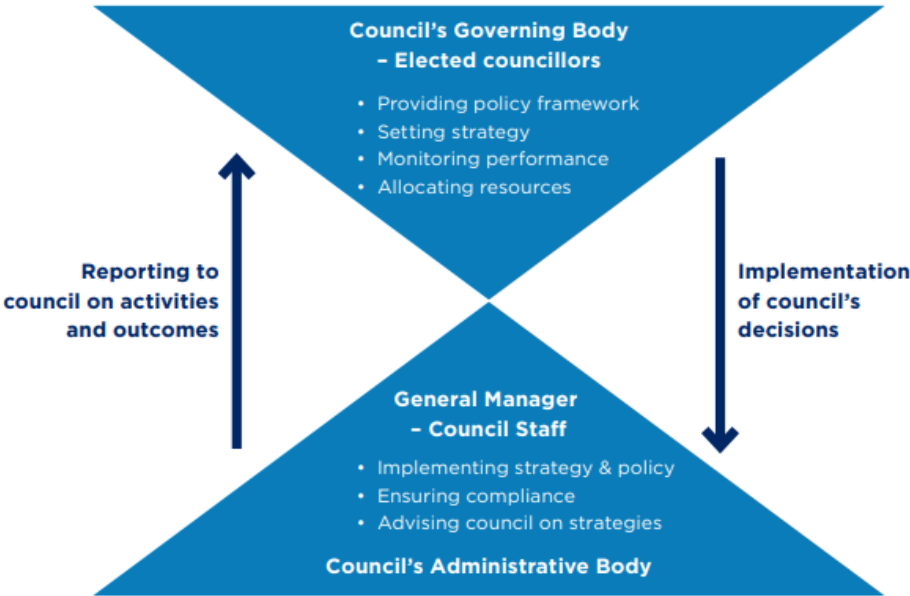
Councillors

Wentworth Shire is represented by nine Councillors who are elected every four years.

The Councillors elect the Mayor every two years.

As the community’s representative the role of a Councillor is to:

- Be an active and contributing member of the governing body;
- Make considered and well-informed decisions as a member of the governing body;
- Participate in the development of the Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework;
- Represent the collective interests of residents, ratepayers and the local community;
- Facilitate communication between the local community and the governing body;
- Uphold and represent accurately the policies and decisions of the governing body;
- Make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform the role of a Councillor



Cr Daniel Linklater
Mayor



Cr Susan Nichols
Deputy Mayor



Cr Brian Beaumont
Councillor



Cr Steve Cooper
Councillor



Cr Peter Crisp
Councillor



Cr Jane MacAllister
Councillor



Cr Tim Elstone
Councillor



Cr Jo Rodda
Councillor



Cr Steve Heywood*
Councillor

* Cr Heywood passed away
7 February 2024

CSP Themes

The purpose of the Community Strategic Plan is to outline the future vision and aspirations of the community to assist with long term planning, prioritisation and decision making. Council does not have sole ownership of all actions. Most are completed in partnership between government, businesses and the community to ensure that the community's hopes and aspirations are at the heart of everything we do.

Community consultation is integral to the preparation of the Community Strategic Plan.

In reviewing past versions of the Community Strategic Plan and developing Wentworth Shire: Our Future in Focus 2022-2032, Council provided numerous opportunities for the community and key stakeholders to provide formal and informal comment and feedback.

The consultation process allowed the community and relevant stakeholders to identify various pertinent issues as being important for the future development, growth and sustainability of the Shire. An outline of the consultation process is outlined below.

Engagement Strategy

In April and May 2021 Council reviewed and updated its Community Engagement Strategy. Through its Community Engagement Strategy, Wentworth Shire Council works hard to establish opportunities for valuable two-way communication with the community.

Community Survey

An online survey was placed on Council's website for a six-week period from 1 November 2021 to 12 December 2021. The survey asked respondents to rank Council's performance and service delivery, how they feel about living in the Wentworth Shire, and the opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses for the community and where they would like to see the community in ten years' time. There were 112 respondents.

Community Consultation Sessions

A series of 8 consultation sessions were held between November 2021 and March 2022 in the following locations:

- Wentworth
- Dareton
- Gol Gol / Buronga
- Curlwaa
- Anabranche
- Pooncarie
- Pomona
- Ellerslie

A total of 106 residents attended the sessions which provided an opportunity to discuss the future of the Wentworth Shire and the actions required to achieve this future. Attendees were asked to identify what they felt were the top priorities going forward.

Targeted Consultation

Workshops and/or focused meetings were held with the following organisations:

- Bendigo Community Bank Board
- BMEET
- Coomealla High School
- Coomealla Memorial Sporting Club Board
- Coomealla Working Party Namatijira
- Dareton Senior Citizens
- Dareton Public School
- Gol Gol Public School
- Gol Gol Senior Citizens
- Mildura Base Public Hospital
- Mildura Rural City Council

Targeted Consultation (continued)

- Murray House Board
- Wentworth Shire Interagency Group
- Wentworth Public School
- Wentworth Senior Citizens

In addition to above, the General Manager also undertook a number of individual consultation sessions with residents.

Feedback was collated and sorted into a series of themes which have been the source of the future directions outlined in the Community Strategic Plan.



The consultation and engagement activities resulted in the formation of the following concise and ambitious vision for the region:

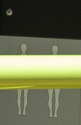
**WENTWORTH SHIRE WILL WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE A THRIVING,
ATTRACTIVE AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY.**



Fit for Parks
Body Pulls



Fit for Parks
Push Ups



INSTRUCTIONS
1. Place one hand on the starting point of the bar.
2. Lean forward toward the central pillar with both feet.
3. Lower your body keeping it straight.
4. Keeping it straight, push your body back up to the starting point.

REPEATS
5 - 20 based on fitness level

More info and a range of workouts at
ospace.com.au/fitness



IMPORTANT: If you have a medical condition, or are pregnant, please consult your doctor before using this equipment. The equipment is designed for use by people aged 16 and over. Please do not use the equipment if you are under 16 years old.

Our Economy

Wentworth Shire is a vibrant, growing and thriving region



In order to have a strong, sustainable economy it is important that existing core businesses and industries are enabled and encouraged to grow and prosper and that businesses are attracted to the region. Further economic development can be achieved by seeking out opportunities to increase tourism and innovation, which will in turn provide more local employment, urban renewal and economic growth.

The visitor economy is a significant economic contributor for the Wentworth Region with a number of local tourist attractions and events. The community is concerned that more needs to be done to promote the benefits of the region

and to clearly define a clear point of difference in order to continue to attract tourist and visitors.

In terms of economic development, Council has both a direct and indirect role. Council provides employment for many residents as an employer of choice. Indirectly, Council can assist development by providing infrastructure and advocating on behalf of the business community.

Wentworth Shire is a growing region with an expanding sense of opportunity and there is a desire to capitalise on those possibilities for the benefit of all.

Community Outcome

We are a growing region with an expanding sense of opportunity, and we want to capitalise on those possibilities for the benefit of all.

Economic opportunities and partnerships facilitate growth of our local and regional economy, attracting investment to the region and fostering local business and employment.



Objectives

1. Promote the Shire as an ideal location for investment and the establishment of innovative, sustainable and diversified industries.
2. Promote the Wentworth Region as a desirable visitor and tourism destination.
3. High Quality connectivity across the region.
4. Encourage lifelong learning opportunities
5. Encourage and support initiatives that improve local employment opportunities.

“

You told us what you wanted

- Major employment opportunities for businesses.
- Build other infrastructure and services to attract visitors to enhance the tourist experience.
- Make our riverfront a feature.
- Promote the natural attractions within the Shire.
- More riverfront attractions and improved wetlands and national parks.
- Completion of the Willow Bend Caravan Park as it's vital for tourism in the region.
- Bring tourist dollars to the town and the local community and business.
- Continuing to grow as it has over the last three years.
- Bigger and more developed with additional services.
- We need money spent here and not in Victoria.
- Larger population, more tourists.
- The vision must be for economic change to the community.

”

What is done on an annual basis

- Advocate for the local business on issues which further business and career opportunities for all.
- Ensure that land is suitably zoned, sized and located to facilitate a variety of development that is supported by a strategic and affordable infrastructure.
- Provide Visitor Information Centre Services.
- Support the activities of Murray Regional Tourism, Destination NSW-Riverina Murray and Wentworth Regional Tourism Inc.
- Advocate for the ongoing provision of quality transport and freight links.
- Advocate for improved region-wide internet and mobile phone connectivity.
- Undertake a program of activities and services that facilitate learning opportunities at Council's Library services.
- Advocate for community access to a wide range of learning spaces, resources and activities for education and employment pathways that support local growth.
- Advocate for and promote initiatives that promote sustainable and resilient economic growth.

Specific achievements

- ✓ Advocating for post flood recovery relief and support for local business impacted by the 2022 flood.
- ✓ Far South West Joint Organisation Destination Management Plan
- ✓ Post COVID Economic Recovery Program incorporating Wentworth Winedown Music, Food & Wine Festival
- ✓ Successful grant application with the Department of Planning to employ a cadet planner.
- ✓ Renewed Memorandum of Understanding with Murray Regional Tourism
- ✓ Contributed funds to Wentworth Regional Tourism Inc for the production of Wentworth & Darling Outback Official Visitor Information Guide and the Why Not Winter in Wentworth Campaign

Projects in progress

- Fibre Optic Symphonic Orchestra – Bruce Munro Art Installation
- Wentworth Economic Development Strategy
- Wentworth Tourism and Events Strategy
- PS Ruby State Heritage Recognition and Preservation opportunities
- Willowbend Caravan Park Redevelopment
- Willowbend Caravan Park Lease





Our Community

Wentworth Shire is a great place to live



We have a unique community with a strong desire to have an input into the future of the region. While there are many common features and pastimes which people enjoy, there are also many differing needs and priorities across a variety of demographics and segments of the community.

It is essential that all people, wherever they live, have access to services which enable them to feel included, to do what they love and to participate in cultural, sporting and social activities. It is through these interactions that we are able to maintain a strong sense of community.

The community expect to live in a safe and healthy community that offers equitable access to health and specialist services and supports the needs of the aged, disabled and disadvantaged. We all need to provide opportunities for people to contribute to their community to build our sense of place and connection.

The challenge for Council is how we adapt to the changing requirements of our evolving community while advocating for the provision of essential social services in an equitable and affordable manner.

Community Outcome

We are committed to strengthening our diverse population by creating new opportunities for connection, creativity and inclusion by encouraging initiatives that strengthen our collective sense of self.

Social connectedness is a very strong indicator of perceived quality of life and happiness in a community. Council hopes through the Delivery Program, to contribute to community connectedness in the Shire.

This will be reflected in the pride that residents have in telling people where they live, their good relationships with their neighbours, their participation in community life, how safe they feel, how much they volunteer, and their sense of history and identity.



Objectives

1. Continue to create opportunities for inclusion where all people feel welcome and participate in community life.
2. Work together to solve a range of social and health issues that impact community wellbeing and vulnerable people.
3. To have a safe community.
4. A well informed, supported and engaged community.
5. To have a strong sense of place.

“

You told us what you wanted

- Better access to healthcare services and facilities.
- Another school in Buronga or Gol Gol to accommodate growth in the area.
- More aged care facilities to accommodate our aging population.
- Stronger police presence.
- An enhanced events calendar so residents have more to do.
- Childcare facilities for families.
- Better communication and engagement with the community.
- Continued improvement of the Shire's presentation.
- More public artwork that improves Wentworth's presentation.

”

What is done on an annual basis

- Acknowledge and celebrate the contribution that people from all backgrounds make to our community
- Support opportunities to promote and celebrate Wentworth Shire as a welcome and inclusive community focusing on diversity, access, inclusion and capacity building.
- Actively engage with and include the perspectives and knowledge of the local indigenous community.
- Support a broad program of Civic and Community Events
- Support cultural, recreational and community interaction opportunities through the Financial Assistance Program
- Deliver a program of activities and services that facilitate opportunities for vulnerable members of the community at Council's library services
- Collaborate with Government Agencies and other organisations to support the provision of health services across the Region.
- Advocate for the provision of social services that meet the needs of all our community including families, children, youth, people with disability and the aged.
- Our buildings and spaces are designed to be inclusive and accessible to all community members.
- Regulatory Compliance functions
- In partnership with Rural Fire Service to undertake hazard reduction works
- Engage with the Local Area Command on key community safety issues
- Facilitate the Local Emergency Management Committee to ensure a co-ordinated approach by all agencies having responsibilities and functions in emergencies.
- In partnership with transport for NSW identify and resolve road and pedestrian safety issues.
- Communicate the role of Council, its achievements, activities, services, policies and plans to the community.
- Community funding opportunities available to the community
- Maintain and update the amenity of the Shire to meet community expectations for clean and well-presented public spaces and townships that enhance health living and promote active lifestyles.

Specific achievements

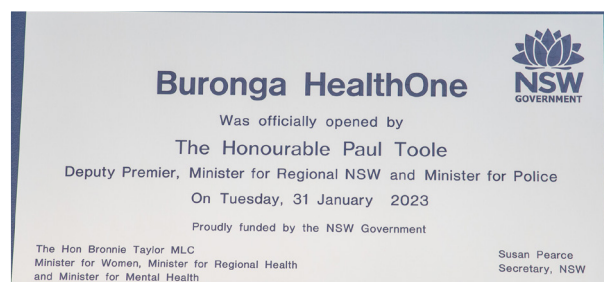
- ✓ Introduction of a Heritage and History Committee
- ✓ Active NSW footpath upgrades in Buronga and Gol Gol
- ✓ Wentworth Extended Day Care
- ✓ \$598,684 contributed via the Financial Assistance Program
- ✓ 40kph speed limit reduction - Wentworth CBD
- ✓ Wentworth Riverfront Mooring Sites/BBQs
- ✓ Dareton Travellers Rest
- ✓ Buronga Pump Track Stage 1
- ✓ PRAM Ramp Upgrades
- ✓ Dareton Men in a Shed Building
- ✓ Buronga Wetlands Sharedway
- ✓ Flood Preparation, Response and Recovery works
- ✓ New Rural fire Service Fire Station at Para
- ✓ Namatjira Water Tower Public Art Project
- ✓ Junction Island Bridge Replacement
- ✓ Supported Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation and Wentworth Medical Clinic Inc for improved medical services in Wentworth
- ✓ Buronga HealthOne
- ✓ Council and Wentworth Pioneer Homes Memorandum of Understanding approved
- ✓ Murray House agreed to purchase old Council Chambers and Library site to expand operations

Projects in progress

- New Wentworth Hospital
- Implementation of NSW Child Safe Standards
- Wentworth & Balranald Drought Resilience Plan
- Dareton Active NSW Footpath upgrade
- James King Park Beach upgrade
- Buronga and Pooncarie Toilet Block Installation
- Ski Reserve Rehabilitation
- Council is working with Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health to lease the old Council Administration building in Adelaide Street, Wentworth, to establish a Health Workforce Education and Learning Hub
- New Rural Fire Service Station at Boree Spring Hill

What hasn't been done

- ✗ PCYC facility in Dareton
- ✗ Buronga Wetlands Standpipe
- ✗ Buronga Pump Track Stage 2
- ✗ Open Spaces Upgrades
- ✗ Greater Junction Viewing Platform





Our Environment

Wentworth Shire is a community that works to enhance and protect its physical and natural environment



The distinctive landscape and environment across the region is a key part of our lifestyle. It is important that measures and programs are in place to help our community adapt to ensure that future generations can enjoy the environment in which we live.

Council plays an important role in adopting sustainable practices itself and promoting them in the community. The community has expressed a desire to live more sustainably through improved resource management.

As a community there is a concern with the effect that the Region's growing population is having on the existing amenity of the Shire. Council's strategic planning will focus on protecting the community from the effects of development and the need for infrastructure that reflects our current population profile and anticipated demographic changes.

Our infrastructure makes daily life possible, and it is essential that our infrastructure is maintained in a way which enables us to function in an effective and efficient manner as a community.

Community Outcome

Creating liveable communities means striking a balance between activities that support infrastructure development and others that enhance our quality of life.

As custodians of this land for future generations, we have an obligation to treat the natural environment with care and to minimise human impact on the surrounding environment to ensure a sustainable and healthy community.



Objectives

1. Ensure our planning decisions and controls enable the community to benefit from development.
2. Ensure that community assets and public infrastructure are well maintained.
3. Minimise the impact on our natural environment.
4. Use and manage our resources wisely.
5. Infrastructure meets the needs of our growing Shire.

“

You told us what you wanted

- Better planning for infrastructure to support growth
- An environmentally sustainable Shire
- Proper monitoring and management of projects to ensure timely progression and reporting
- A better waste management system that incorporates recycling and green waste bins
- More green spaces included in new developments
- Better maintenance of Council assets and infrastructure
- Stronger effort to protect our natural environment and waterways
- Better water pressure and quality

”

What is done on an annual basis

- Delivering timely services for the assessment of Development Applications and planning proposals
- Maintaining transport network including Roads, Bridges and Footpath
- Maintaining community facilities including halls, ovals, pools and other sporting facilities
- Undertaking actions identified in the Western Weeds Action Plan
- Monitor and investigate Illegal Dumping Activities as required
- Supporting the activities of the Murray Darling Association
- Advocating for the sustainable management of the Darling River and the Menindee Lakes
- Provision of Water, Waste Water and Stormwater Management infrastructure
- Providing and promoting resources recovery and recycling initiatives
- Encourage business and the community to be socially and environmentally responsible
- Advocate to the Federal and State governments for adequate funding for the delivery of key projects and the provision of essential infrastructure for the Region
- Planning for appropriate infrastructure and services that support current and future needs.

Specific achievements

- ✓ 2,698 free green waste vouchers and 94 free hard waste collections provided to residents and rate payers
- ✓ Trentham Water and Sewer Installation
- ✓ Rezoning of Thegoa Lagoon
- ✓ Fixing Local Roads Projects
 - Punt Road
 - Fletchers Lake Road
 - Bridge Road
 - Little Manly Road
 - Native Ridge Lane
 - High Darling Road
 - Old Wentworth Road
 - Fletchers Lake Road
 - Keenans Drive
- ✓ Pooncarie Menindee Road Upgrade
- ✓ Lighting Upgrade - Wentworth & Dareton Pools
- ✓ Pooncarie Telegraph Building Renovation
- ✓ Wentworth Showgrounds
 - Running Rail
 - Female Jockey Change Rooms
 - Sewer Extension
 - Tower & Shade Extension
- ✓ Pooncarie Aerodrome Lighting
- ✓ Wentworth Aerodrome Upgrade
- ✓ George Gordon Oval Carpark, Netball Courts and Female Changerooms
- ✓ Wentworth & Buronga Effluent Disposal Stations
- ✓ Alcheringa Tennis Courts and Lighting
- ✓ Wentworth Sporting Complex upgrade
- ✓ Carramar Drive Sporting Complex Cricket Nets and Electronic Scoreboard
- ✓ Buronga Landfill Regulatory Approval and Licence Upgrade
- ✓ Mourquong Filtered Water Main
- ✓ Flood Preparation, Response and Recovery works
- ✓ Stormwater Upgrades
 - Wurlong Drive
 - Midway
- ✓ Sewer Infrastructure
 - Sewer Pump Station #5
 - Wood Street & Kingridge Sewer Main
 - Darling & Beverly Street Main Repairs
- ✓ Worked in partnership with Mildura Rural City Council around a regional approach to Waste Management.

Projects in progress

- Wentworth Shire Council Flood Study
- Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan
- Buronga Landfill Expansion
- Pink Lake, Rose Street and 3 Sisters Stormwater
- Wentworth Rowing Club Extension
- Arumppo Road Upgrade
- Wentworth Civic Centre Redevelopment
- Buronga/Gol Gol Sporting Master Plan
- Dareton Main Street Upgrade
- George Gordon Oval Lighting
- Community education regarding introduction of Food & Organics Collection
- Tender with NSW LG Procurement to secure a 7 year renewable energy supply contract
- Water Leakage and District Metering Program

What hasn't been done

- ✗ Rural Residential Strategy
- ✗ Stormwater Upgrades
 - Crane Drive
 - Wilson Drainage Reserve
 - Kingfisher Road
- ✗ Sewer Upgrades
 - Corbett Avenue Sewer Pump Station
 - Kingfisher Road Sewer Pump Station





Australian Government



Pooncarie-Menindee Road Reconstruction

Jointly funded by the Australian and NSW Governments



Our Leadership

Wentworth Shire is a community that works to enhance and protect its physical and natural environment



The community will benefit from a strong Council which delivers tangible outcomes, advocates and builds successful partnerships, with the leadership, culture, people and capabilities to meet community expectations. It is important that opportunities are available for people to have a say in decision making, and that access to local representation is made possible.

The community have expressed the need for timely, improved and transparent communications and community engagement from Council in decisions that impact everyone and the need for Council to be responsive to community needs.

The Local Government Act provides guiding principles for Council in terms of its functions, decision-making and community participation, as well as principles for sound financial management and integrated planning and reporting. Council is required to ensure that it:

- Is accountable and makes sound decisions;
- Meets its statutory obligations;
- Is sustainable as an organisation;
- Provides effective and efficient services; and
- Consults, involves and is accountable to the community.

Community Outcome

We are a responsible Council, committed to building strong relationships. We value transparent and meaningful communication and use community feedback to drive strategic decision-making.

In order to operate a large organisation with a diverse range of services, a large portfolio of assets and a multitude of statutory requirements, Council must have a robust and well-managed governance framework and administration functions.

Council is committed to creating a well-managed and operated organisation that is equipped with the resources required to deliver effective services.



Objectives

1. Consistently engage and consult the whole community to ensure feedback is captured and considered as part of decision making and advocating processes.
2. A strong, responsible and representative government.
3. An effective and efficient organisation.
4. Provide strong leadership and work in partnership to strategically plan for the future.
5. Adopt practices of prudent asset, financial and human resources management across Council to ensure long term sustainability and efficiency.

“

You told us what you wanted

- A council that's in tune with the needs of the community
- Transparency, honesty, integrity in the Council and its staff
- A council that looks after all its constituents in a similar manner
- A more diverse council to reflect the current Shire demographics
- Good decision-making by all who are in charge of our future
- More community boards to support local businesses
- Inform the community and get community input
- Staff who are capable and passionate about the area
- Proactive councillors, those who can make a vision reality, and be willing to influence change
- Broader community consultation

”

What is done on an annual basis

- Support local decision making through transparent communication and inclusive community engagement
- Ensure that Council is accountable to the community, meets legislative requirements and supports the Councillors to undertake their civic responsibilities
- Support Councillors to undertake ongoing professional development
- Engage the community on a regular basis to ensure that Council is providing services that deliver value for money and are relevant in meeting the changing needs of the community.
- Staff are supported to deliver high quality services to the community
- Ensure the organisation is well led and managed through the implemented of Good Governance, Risk Management and Compliance Frameworks
- Support the work of the Wentworth Shire Interagency Group
- Foster strong partnership with all levels of government, peak bodies, agencies and the community
- Maintain a strong financial position that supports the delivery of services and strategies and ensures long term financial sustainability
- Be the best employer that we can by attracting, developing and retaining skilled to ensure a capable and effective workforce
- Implement sound asset management practices to ensure adequate provision is made for the maintenance and long-term replacement of Council's infrastructure assets.

Specific achievements

- ✓ Audited Council website to ensure compliance with Website Accessibility Guidelines
- ✓ Procurement & Purchasing Service Review
- ✓ Waste Management Operations Service Review
- ✓ Implemented Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee
- ✓ Implemented Internal Audit Function
- ✓ Health & Well Being Strategy

Projects in progress

- Monitoring compliance with NSW Modern Slavery Guidelines





Financial information

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Inflows:					
Rates and annual charges revenue	10,410	9,755	9,529	9,164	8,822
User charges revenue	10,109	8,807	9,600	7,582	7,798
Interest and investment revenue (losses)	2,318	1,706	280	245	586
Grants income - operating and capital	26,271	32,759	20,828	22,088	18,463
Total income from continuing operations	50,354	54,578	41,855	40,306	36,921
Sale proceeds from Infrastructure, Property, Plant & Equipment	412	164	272	314	279
New loan borrowings and advances	8,000	1,000	2,400	2,000	-
Outflows:					
Employee benefits and on-cost expenses	10,066	9,964	9,665	8,792	8,790
Borrowing costs	578	343	316	375	206
Materials and contracts expenses	12,665	13,118	11,235	9,553	10,623
Total expenses from continuing operations	34,135	33,463	30,478	27,985	29,286
Total cash purchases of IPPE	33,891	20,539	15,577	18,280	15,711
Total loan repayments (incl. leases)	983	829	625	273	245
Operating surplus/(defecit) (excl. capital income)	528	4,022	2,662	597	(665)
Financial position figures					
Current assets	56,932	57,431	48,634	42,700	34,656
Current liabilities	21,164	16,892	12,009	11,985	7,385
Net current assets	35,768	40,539	36,625	30,715	27,271
Available working capital (unrestricted net current assets)	2,385	4,496	6,670	4,675	4,813
Cash and investments - unrestricted	2,282	4,063	6,523	5,284	4,337
Cash and investments - internal restrictions	14,318	15,897	14,089	10,928	10,583
Cash and investments - total	49,482	51,211	43,708	38,393	28,418
Total borrowings outstanding (loans, advances and finance leases)	14,984	7,967	7,796	6,021	4,294
Total value of IPPE (excl. land and earthworks)	662,607	595,375	551,096	497,777	473,938
Total accumulated depreciation	305,361	283,187	236,169	245,423	234,023
Indicative remaining useful life (as a % of Gross Book Value)	54%	52%	52%	51%	51%

Challenges

The local government sector faces a range of interconnected challenges. As these challenges intensify, councils will need to adopt innovative solutions, collaborate with other levels of government, and engage with their communities to ensure that they can continue to provide essential services and infrastructure. The ability of councils to adapt to these pressures will be crucial in determining long term sustainability and success.

Financial sustainability

Good financial management means ensuring sufficient resources are available to deliver on the community's vision and aspirations for the area for years to come. The local government sector plays a critical role in delivering essential services and infrastructure to communities. Some of the key financial challenges that can prevent councils fulfilling this critical role include:

- **Rate Capping**

While rate capping aims to protect residents from sharp rate hikes, it restricts councils' ability to generate revenue, particularly in growing communities where demand for services and infrastructure is increasing. As a result councils often struggle to cover rising costs associated with delivering services, maintaining infrastructure and addressing community needs.

- **Cost Shifting**

Cost-shifting occurs when higher levels of government transfer responsibilities to local councils without providing adequate funding to support these additional responsibilities. Local government frequently face the challenge of absorbing the costs of delivering services or maintaining assets that were once funded or managed by state or federal governments. This places additional financial pressure on councils as they are required to fund these services from their own limited budgets. Cost shifting forces councils to either divert funds from other areas or increase their reliance on grants and other external funding, which may not always be sufficient or reliable.

- **Economic Pressures in Regional Area**

Regional and rural councils face distinct financial challenges due to the economic conditions in their communities. These areas often have higher service delivery costs due to geographic isolation and the need to maintain an extensive network of assets across vast regions. Regional economies are also heavily dependent on industries such as agriculture, mining, and tourism, which can be vulnerable to economic downturns, changing climactic conditions and market fluctuations.

- **Revenue Diversification Challenges**

Local government is heavily reliant on property rates as their primary source of revenue. However, the capacity to increase rates is limited by rate capping and the economic capacity of ratepayers, particularly in low-income areas. Added to the growing reliance on grant funding from state and federal governments to finance major projects and support core services can impact on councils ability to plan for long term financial sustainability.



Workforce recruitment and retention

Councils across NSW are currently facing significant challenges in both recruiting and retaining skilled workers. Some of the challenges include:

- **Skills shortages**

One of the most critical challenges is the shortage of skilled workers in key areas such as engineering, town planning, environmental health and finance. The rapid growth in infrastructure projects and the increasing demands on councils to deliver complex services have led to high competition for workers with specialised skills, particularly in rural and regional areas with positions for qualified professionals often remaining vacant for extended periods.

- **Competition with the Private Sector**

The local government sector often struggle to compete with the private sector in terms of salaries and benefits, especially for highly sought after positions. This makes it difficult for Council to attract and retain workers, as many potential candidates opt for private-sector roles that offer higher pay and more flexibility.

- **Rural and Regional Disparities**

Councils in rural and regional areas face greater challenges in recruitment and retention than metropolitan councils. Geographic isolation, limited access to services and fewer career opportunities for family members often deter potential candidates from moving to these areas. This cycle of turnover places ongoing pressure on rural and regional councils to continuously recruit and train new employees.

- **Workforce Flexibility and Work Life Balance**

While local government often offers stable employment, they often lag behind other sectors in terms of flexible working

arrangement and work-life balance.

Many councils are working to adapt to the evolving expectations of a modern workforce that increasingly values remote work options, flexible hours and better work life balance.

- **Workload Pressures and Stress**

Council staff are often required to handle a broad range of responsibilities, particularly in smaller councils with limited staff. The complexity and scope of local government functions can place significant stress on workers. High workloads, tight deadlines, and limited resources can contribute to burnout and dissatisfaction, leading to higher turnover rates.

- **Changing Workforce Expectations**

The expectations of workers in terms of job satisfaction, corporate culture and values are shifting. Today's workforce, particularly younger generations, tends to prioritise job roles that align with their values, offer purpose, and contribute to societal outcomes. While councils inherently provide community-focused work, they often need to more actively promote these aspects to attract purpose-driven candidates. This challenge is compounded by councils traditional structures, which may not always align with modern expectations around workplace culture and innovation.

- **Funding and Budget Constraints**

The capacity of councils to recruit and retain staff is often restricted by limited resources. Many councils operate under tight budgets, with wage increases and recruitment efforts constrained by rate capping, cost shifting from other levels of government, and the rising cost of service delivery. These financial limitations restrict councils ability to offer competitive remuneration packages that could attract and/or retain talent.

Development and population growth

While growth can drive economic opportunities and enhance community vibrancy, it also creates significant pressures on infrastructure and services. These challenges are particularly pronounced in fast growing areas where councils must manage the balance between development and maintaining livability.

- **Infrastructure Strain and Funding Shortfalls**

One of the primary challenges is the increasing pressure on existing infrastructure which often struggles to keep pace with rapid growth, where existing assets are aging and new infrastructure is required to accommodate additional population. Funding this infrastructure relies on a combination of developer contributions, government grants and councils own limited budgets. The gap between what councils can afford and the cost of providing infrastructure and services is widening which can lead to long-term sustainability risks and concerns about the quality of services provided.

- **Social Services and Community Facilities**

As the population grows, so does the demand for community services and facilities. Councils are responsible for providing and maintaining many of these facilities, yet often lack the resources to expand services in line with population growth. Furthermore, urban development can sometimes create social fragmentation, with new communities often lacking a sense of cohesion. Councils play a key role in fostering community inclusion, ensuring that residents of new developments have access to opportunities that promote a sense of belonging. However, achieving this in rapidly changing environments can be difficult without adequate resources.

- **Balancing community expectations with development across the Shire**

Councils often face resistance from local residents concerned about the impact of new developments on neighborhood character. Striking the right balance between supporting growth and maintaining liveability requires careful planning, community engagement and a long term vision for urban development.



Renewable Energy & Critical Mineral Developments

The rapid growth of renewable energy projects and the exploration of critical minerals are reshaping local economies across NSW. These developments present significant opportunities for regional growth and the transition to a low carbon economy, but they also pose challenges for councils.

- **Infrastructure and Service Delivery**
Renewable energy and critical mineral projects often require new infrastructure. The development of this infrastructure can place additional strain on councils who are responsible for maintaining local infrastructure and managing the impact of construction activities on communities. In some cases councils may not have the resources or capacity to support the scale of infrastructure development required for these projects.
- **Community Consultation and Social Licence**
Renewable energy projects and critical mineral developments can face opposition from local communities concerned about the potential social and environmental impacts. Gaining a social licence to operate – the broad community approval or acceptance of a project is a significant challenge for both developers and councils. Councils play a key role in facilitating community consultation, ensuring that residents are informed about the benefits and potential risks of these developments. Councils must strike a balance between supporting economic development and addressing community concerns.

• Economic Development and Local Benefits

One of the key challenges for councils is ensuring that renewable energy and critical mineral developments deliver tangible economic benefits for local communities. While these industries can create jobs and stimulate economic growth, the distribution of benefits is often uneven, with many of the economic gains flowing to external investors or large corporations rather than local residents and businesses. Councils must work to maximise the local employment opportunities and supply chain benefits, however in many cases the workforce required for these projects are not available locally, leading to an influx of external workers and limiting the direct economic benefits for the community.

Access to Services

Regional and rural communities face numerous challenges in accessing essential services. These communities often experience geographic isolation, limited infrastructure and economic constraints which can exacerbate inequality and reduce opportunities for residents.

Councils are often responsible for providing or facilitating access to a range of services which are critical to the social and cultural fabric of the community, however the geographic spread of these rural populations makes it challenging to deliver these services efficiently and equitably. These constraints can limit the ability of residents to access essential services.

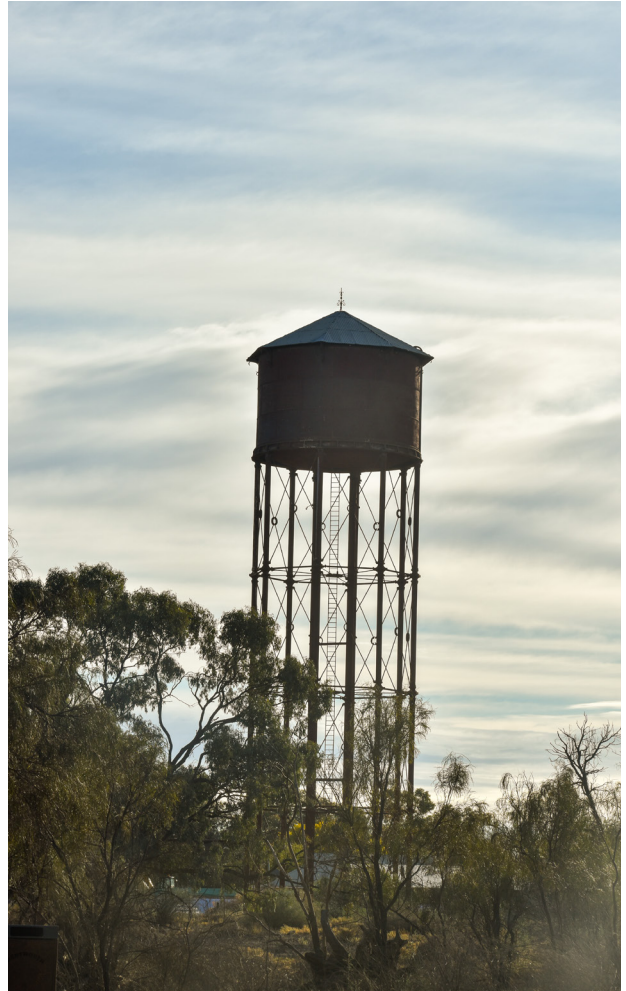
As a result many councils are being asked to step in and fill gaps in service delivery that have traditionally been the responsibility of other agencies, to ensure that their communities needs are met. While councils are often the closest to the people they serve, this added responsibility strains already limited resources.

The added burden of delivering these services leads councils with limited capacity to address local priorities. This mismatch between the provision of services and service expectations often puts councils in a position where they must choose between investing in new services or maintaining core functions leading to unsustainable financial practices.

Community Expectations and Engagement

Councils are often tasked with meeting rising community expectations for improved services, infrastructure, and amenity, while simultaneously working with constrained budgets and resources. This growing complexity of service delivery requires councils to be more responsive, efficient and transparent.

Engaging with diverse community groups and managing conflicting interest can be difficult, especially in areas where populations are growing or changing rapidly. Councils need to find innovative ways to engage with their communities, ensure public participation in decision making, and maintain a strong connection to local needs and expectations.





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