

# Community Strategic Plan 2026-2036



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COUNCIL OFFICES



**Midway Community Centre**  
3 Midway Drive, Buronga NSW 2739



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



*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.*

# 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 civic leadership with all activities conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner*

**CIVIC LEADERSHIP**



**Wentworth LGA**

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## Shire and Tourism Profile

Wentworth is the region's oldest town, located at the junction of Australia's two largest rivers, where the Darling ends and joins the Murray. Its location made Wentworth an important port in the paddle steamer era. Once the busiest inland port in NSW, it was considered as the site for the Australian capital.

In 1829 exploration parties headed out west of Sydney towards the then unknown Murray and Darling rivers in an endeavour to discover an inland sea. Although no inland sea was found, Captain Charles Sturt, entered the headwaters of a wide river which he named the Darling. On his return to Sydney a Government conceived expedition then sent Sturt to trace the Murrumbidgee River. It was during this expedition that he entered a mighty river which he named the Murray. In 1830, while navigating the Murray, he came across a river junction which he was convinced was the Darling.

Joseph Hawdon and Charles Bonney drove cattle overland from New South Wales to Adelaide along the Murray and arrived at the Darling/Murray junction in 1838. Other overlanders followed the route, which became known as the Sydney/Adelaide 'highway', and the river junction spot became an established camp site known as Hawdon's Ford. The actual junction at the time was called "The Rinty". The settlement was later referred to as the "Darling Junction".

A number of squatters established reign over the land along the Darling and Murray Rivers, expanding their holdings westwards from the Murrumbidgee area and north eastwards from South Australia. In the mid 1840's the settlement was known as McLeod's Crossing", named for the first white residents of the settlement.

With the arrival of the river steamers in 1853, the small European settlement found itself to be ideally situated as an administrative and commercial centre for the untapped wealth of the vast Outback. For many years Sydney was the only port in New South Wales to handle more cargo than Wentworth. The steamers brought a new sophistication to the rugged river towns. They carried the hopes and dreams of fragile communities for over three quarters of a century.

In 1857, Surveyor General Barney considered it time to establish a proper township. The town site was approved in 1859 and was named after the New South Wales explorer and politician William Charles Wentworth, on June 21, 1859. The area was proclaimed a municipality on January 23, 1879, and is the region's oldest settlement.

Throughout the prosperous river trade days Wentworth Shire suffered extremes in fortune and despair. The area suffered floods, droughts, rabbit plagues and overstocking which in turn caused erosion and land degeneration. Nonetheless, the settlements continued to thrive and grow at a reasonably rapid pace and by 1929 a series of locks and weirs, to assist navigation and pumping, had been completed on the Murray River.

In the early 1900's the first irrigation settlement in New South Wales was commenced at Curlwaa, seven kilometres east of Wentworth. Irrigation breathed new life into the district which led to pastoral properties being divided into smaller allotments (now referred to as "blocks").

An improved system of road networks, state-wide rail links and motorised transport reduced the need for riverboats as a source of transportation, communication and trade, thus forcing an end to the riverboat era.

Wentworth continues to be an important centre for the surrounding landholders. It is a town steeped in history and as a tourist area of great diversity. Wentworth has much to offer including; the Junction of the Murray and Darling Rivers, Locks and Weirs, Paddle Steamers and Houseboats, Water sports, Historic Buildings, The Old Wentworth Gaol, Pioneer Museum, Aboriginal Culture and Galleries, Wineries, Perry Sandhills. The Wentworth Shire boasts the Australian Inland Botanical Gardens, Mungo National Park and the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area, unique scenery and native wildlife as key tourist attractions.

Wentworth is considered the gateway to Outback NSW and is situated on the junction of the Murray and Darling Rivers in South-Western New South Wales.

Mildura, situated on the Victorian side of the Murray, is the nearest commercial centre of any size. Wentworth Shire is a region of great diversity and it offers you the opportunity to experience an introduction to Outback Australia.

The area can be an arid and harsh landscape or a landscape that is soft and serene in solitude. It is a land of rivers, creeks and lagoons; miles and miles of saltbush, acacia, casuarina and Mallee, wide flat plains, drifting desert sands, red roads and cobalt blue skies.

Remarkably for tens of thousands of years prior to Sturt naming the Darling river, the traditional owners who lived along it had called the river Baaka, hence their name Barkindji people, meaning 'Kinship to the river'.

In recent years, 'Baaka' the traditional name for the river has been more widely used by the broader community, giving back cultural recognition and respect to the First Nations

people. The rivers and water are vital to Aboriginal culture, spirituality, mythical identity and wellbeing. For this reason, the Barkindji Native Title Group Aboriginal Corporation (BNTGAC) are leading the way for the Baaka to be formally recognised as a dual name for the Darling River.

### The Canoe Tree

The magnificent canoe tree located in the Greater Murray Darling Junction Reserve makes for a grand entrance to Junction Island. These trees are remarkable examples of Aboriginal expertise and are the embodiment of the rich Aboriginal Cultural Heritage along the river.

To make a canoe, they would first make an outline of the shape required with cutting stones. Once the shape was decided, they would cut deeply into the tree to the heartwood (or xylem), prying the bark off in one piece with sticks or rocks. Some were made watertight by the addition of clay and grass in any leaky areas.



## The Sights and Experiences of Wentworth Shire



### Wentworth Visitor Information Centre

A world where history, culture and nature collide. Explore the audio-visual displays, shop local products and gather local information.



### Junction Park Viewing Tower

The Confluence of the Darling and Murray Rivers can be best viewed from the observation tower.



### Old Wentworth Gaol

Built in 1879-1881, the small single storey brick gaol with bluestone trim was designed by colonial architect, James Barnett.



### Junction Island Walk

Stand at the point of Junction island where the Murray and Darling Rivers meet. Walk between the rivers through a natural reserve.



### Old Wentworth Wharf

The Old Wharf on the Darling and the Captain John Egge Memorial. A short walk from the main street on the river front, once the scene of a busy river trade.



### Australian Inland Botanic Gardens

Be amazed at the array of Australian and exotic flora on display at the 50 hectare site. Explore the stunning gardens, soak up the solitude or join a tractor train tour.



### **Perry Sandhills**

A natural wonder of Wentworth. Explore the drifting sands of this ice-age formation, home to mega fauna fossils and second world war RAAF practice range. Enjoy a quiet stroll over the hills or go wild with the endless fun to be had up and down the dunes.



### **Pooncarie**

Visit the historic town of Pooncarie, once a thriving port town laden with wool plying the Darling downstream for South Australia.



### **Mungo National Park**

Visit Mungo National Park with around 40,000 years of living culture. Mungo National Park is situated within the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area; it is an area of international significance for its cultural, archaeological, and natural landscape features.



### **Fotherby Park**

Visit the Fergie Monument – a standing legacy to the wonderful tractor that saved Wentworth and surround during the 1956 floods.



**PS Ruby** Wentworth's flagship.



### **Wentworth Rotary Pioneer Museum**

Learn about the history of Wentworth and surrounds through interactive displays.

# Wentworth at a glance



**8.40%** of our population identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (State average is 3.44%)

Proclaimed a Shire on 23 January  
**1879**

**28.81%**

**Mining** is the largest industry sector with (\$445,500,000) gross revenue

Area (sq. km)  
**26,256**

Largest industry of Employment is Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing with **23.46%** of the population

**7,688**  
Estimated Residential Population (Remplan)



**29.51%** of homes are owned outright



**3** Libraries

**1** Hospital

**8** Schools

**1** TAFE Campus

**2** Aerodromes

**33.32%**

Working age Residents (25-64 yrs old) (state average is 35.70%) : **3,124** Employed Residents

**4.20%** Unemployment Rate (Sept 2024)

Year 12 education as the highest form of education

Wentworth Shire residents  
**31.40%**

vs.

Other areas of NSW  
**21.40%**

**\$95,330** per capita Gross Regional Product

The Median Wage for Households: Wentworth **\$1,987/wk**

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

Greater Sydney **\$2,077/wk**

The individual median wage is **\$696** per week with **16.25%** of people earning over **\$1,500** per week.

**43 years old**

is the Median Resident age (State median is 39)

**29.62%** of Residents are aged under 25 (State average is 30.03%)

**20.77%** of Residents are aged over 65 (State average is 17.65%)



**25.07%** of families earn over \$130,000 vs. state average of 37.59%



**422km**  
ADELAIDE

**583km**  
MELBOURNE

**1,044km**  
SYDNEY

662km of sealed road

1,360km of unsealed road

## Purpose of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP)

As part of the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, Wentworth Shire Council is required to develop a Community Strategic Plan (CSP). The purpose of the CSP is to outline the future vision and aspirations of the community to assist with long term planning, prioritisation and decision making.

This document is a forward-looking aspirational Plan, and while it recognises the rich and significant history of the region, it also explores new approaches to ensuring the community can move towards its aspirational vision through innovation, technology and strategic thinking.

Developing a CSP which reflects the vision of the whole community is a challenging task. As with any community, there are differing opinions and perspectives about where Council should use its limited resources to best meet the needs of the community.

In order to overcome this challenge, Council is committed to gaining as full an understanding as possible about the key issues and opportunities the region is facing in the future. This includes drawing on existing strategies and plans, staff knowledge, additional research, and most importantly – feedback received from the community.

Bearing in mind the purpose of the CSP is to outline and deliver on the vision and aspirations for the community, consultation feedback plays an essential role in guiding this objective. It is the input from the community which has shaped this document, and a successful CSP will see the fruition of an ongoing consultation process realising the desires and aspirations of the community into the future.

The CSP is also a reference point for decision making, so at any stage, elected representatives, members of the community and council staff can look to the CSP to help

support or review decisions being made on specific issues, and ensure these decisions align with the community vision.

As with any long-term plan, the CSP will be reviewed regularly to ensure that the direction it offers remains congruent with community needs which may change over time. Ultimately, this is the document which should ensure that the community is listened to and provided for in years to come.

The Community Strategic Plan is not able to be wholly implemented in one term of Council. The themes and directions outlined in the plan will inform Council's Delivery Program. The Delivery Program represents what the Council expects to achieve during the term of election for the Council, typically four years. The annual Operational Plan identifies the individual activities and projects that will be completed within the next financial year of the Delivery Program, which in turn drives the Council budget.

A long-term vision will not be achieved without formal identification and allocation of resources. The Resource Strategy outlines Council's capacity to manage assets and deliver services over the next ten years. It determines Council's capacity to manage its finances effectively, to sustain its workforce and manage the overall costs of community assets. The strategy is prepared under the following guiding principles:

- Our community is our responsibility;
- We strive for innovation and continuous improvement;
- We are informed and make decisions based on data and community involvement;
- We are resilient; and
- We facilitate smart local choices to be made at a local level.

It is important to track how we are progressing in delivering our Community Strategic Plan. Council will report back to the community at regular intervals on what has been achieved and how it is progressing. These reports include:

- **Regular Operational Plan Review** – Every three months Council will report on the progress that has been achieved in implementing the Actions identified in that year’s Operational Plan.
- **Annual Report** – This is a report to the community every year on the progress in implementing the Operational Plan and Delivery Program.
- **State of our Shire Report** – This is a report to the community that focuses on how effective council has been in delivering social, environmental,

economic and civic leadership objectives over the term of the previous council. It reports against the high-level strategies and priorities of the CSP and has a community focus, rather than a council one.

**“Balancing competing needs and principles is the most pressing challenge for all local government”**



*Official opening of the Wentworth Visitor Centre. Left to right: Helen Dalton MP, The Hon. Ron Hoenig, Minister for Local Government and Mayor of Wentworth Shire Council, Cr Daniel Linklater (March 2025).*

# Strategy at a glance

Our Economy | Our Community | Our Environment | Our Leadership



# Our Economy

Wentworth Shire is a vibrant, growing and thriving region



# Our Community

Wentworth Shire is a great place to live



## You told us you wanted:

- To make our riverfront a feature.
- To bring tourist dollars to the towns, local community and businesses.
- To promote natural attractions within the Shire.
- To support mining and renewable development

Objective	Council's role
1 Create a supportive Environment for business to invest and grow	Provide/ Advocate
2 Promote the Wentworth Region as a desirable visitor and tourism destination	Provide/ Collaborate
3 High quality connectivity across the region	Advocate

## Desired Outcomes

### Economic Growth and Opportunity

- A key desired outcome is the development of a robust and diverse economy that supports local businesses, attracts investment, and creates employment opportunities.

### Arts, Culture and Tourism Development

- A vibrant region thrives on a strong cultural and creative sector that promotes increased investment in tourism infrastructure, and marketing to showcase regional attractions leading to increased visitations.

### Infrastructure and Connectivity

- For the region to grow and thrive, it must have modern infrastructure and connectivity including reliable and efficient transportation networks and enhanced digital infrastructure to support businesses and residents.

## You told us you wanted:

- More facilities to accommodate our aging population.
- Access to housing
- Animal control
- Increased traffic and pedestrian safety

Objective	Council's role
1 Continue to create opportunities for inclusion where all people feel welcome and participate in community life	Provide/ Collaborate
2 The community has access to services and initiatives that contribute to well being across all stages of life.	Collaborate/ Advocate
3 To have a safe community	Provide/ Collaborate
4 To have a strong sense of place	Provide

## Desired Outcomes

### Safe and inclusive Community

- A great place to live is one where residents feel safe, welcomed and valued.

### Quality Housing and Liveability

- Ensuring that residents have access to safe, affordable and high quality housing.

### Health and Well-being

- A thriving community supports the physical and mental well-being of its residents.

### Education and lifelong learning

- A great place to live provides residents with access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities.

### Vibrant Community Life and recreation

- A great place to live offers a variety of recreational, cultural and social opportunities.

# Our Environment

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



# Our Leadership

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



## You told us you wanted:

- Stronger effort to protect our natural environment and waterways
- A better waste management system that incorporates recycling and green waste bins
- Better water pressure and quality

Objective	Council's role
1 An urban environment that maintains and enhances our sense of identity and place.	Provide
2 Our public assets are well maintained and able to meet the growing population demands.	Provide
3 Minimise the impact on our natural environment.	Provide/ Advocate
4 Use and manage our resources wisely.	Provide/ Collaborate
5 Infrastructure meets the needs of our growing Shire.	Provide/ Advocate

## Desired Outcomes

### Sustainable Land Use and Development

- Ensuring responsible urban planning and land use is essential for balancing growth and environmental protection.

### Waste Management

- Effective waste management reduction strategies are essential for a clean and healthy environment.

### Water Resource Management

- Preserving and managing water resources is essential for environmental sustainability and public health.

### Infrastructure Resilience and Maintenance

- A key outcome is ensuring that essential infrastructure is well maintained, resilient and capable of serving the community effectively.

## You told us you wanted:

- Better communication and engagement with the community.
- Broader community consultation
- Transparency, honesty, integrity in the Council and its staff

Objective	Council's role
1 A well engaged and informed community.	Provide
2 We value our civic leadership whose stewardship and decision making benefits present and future generations.	Provide/ Collaborate/ Advocate
3 Provide a governance framework that is transparent and builds trust in local leadership.	Provide
4 Manage public resources responsibly and efficiently for the benefit of the community	Provide/ Collaborate/ Advocate

## Desired Outcomes

### Ethical leadership, integrity & transparent governance

- The community must be lead by ethical leaders ensuring that all civic activities are conducted openly and with accountability.

### Inclusive decision making and community participation

- Ensuring that all voices are heard and valued is critical for fostering an engaged & inclusive community.

### Effective and responsible leadership

- Leadership should be proactive, adaptive & responsive to the evolving needs of the community.

### Collaboration and partnerships

- Building strong relationships between government, businesses and community organisations enhances civic leadership.

### Innovation and future planning

- Strategic foresight ensures that public resources are managed effectively for current and future generations.



'Beautiful, unique landscapes and attractions'

'Fabulous river right on our doorstep'

'Rural towns such as Pooncarie and Wentworth to draw in tourism dollars'

'Friendly'

## What you love about Wentworth Shire

'Close proximity to large shopping areas'

'Quiet country living'

'Safe'

'Great primary schools'

'Accessibility within the community (footpaths)'

'Lovely community'

'Peaceful atmosphere'

# The Plan

This Plan is the overarching strategy to guide Council. All other strategies, plans and policies developed by Council seek to support the implementation of this Plan.

These are aligned to this Plan to ensure that what Council does within its area of control is always moving towards the aspirations the community has articulated.

Specifically, the plan aims to:

- Inform Council’s priority setting and decision making;
- Set our principles and values that will guide our community;
- Inform the decision making of other agencies and organisations including State and Federal Governments;
- Inform stakeholders of the community’s long-term vision for the Shire; and
- Guide local and regional planning documents and initiatives.

## Integrated Planning and Reporting

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 efforts 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.



## Aligning our plan with other initiatives

Whilst our CSP depicts our community's aspirations for the future, the requirement of Federal and State governments will also influence Council priorities. By aligning our long-term planning with the priorities of the State Government and other relevant agencies, we build stronger partnerships, achieve greater coordination of decision making and ensure efficient use of available resources.

The following strategic plans provide further information about the planning context for Wentworth Shire Council's CSP:

### Far West Regional Plan 2036

The Far West Regional Plan is a 20-year strategic blueprint for the future of the region. The NSW Government's vision for the Far West is to create communities that can adapt to change, supported by a diverse economy, the right infrastructure and an exceptional natural environment. To achieve this vision, the NSW Government has set the following regionally focused goals:

- A diverse economy with efficient transport and infrastructure networks
- Exceptional semi-arid rangelands traversed by the Barwon-Darling River
- Strong and connected communities.

The 2036 Plan provides an overarching framework to guide subsequent and more detailed land use plans, development proposals and infrastructure funding decisions. It includes Local Government Narratives setting out priorities for each council within the region to guide further investigation and implementation. The Far West Regional Plan 2036 is under review to reset priorities and extend the plan's reach to 2041.

### Western Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) – 2023 Update (supporting the 20-year Economic Vision for Regional NSW)

Supporting the 20-year Economic Vision for Regional NSW, the Western Murray REDS sets out a place-based vision and framework for economic development for the region. The RED identifies the regions' endowments, industry specialisations and key vulnerabilities and opportunities, and outlines economic development strategies and actions to leverage these strengths. The RED was updated in 2023 to set out 4 key strategies:

- Drive growth in high-value agriculture and value adding in agricultural product manufacturing
- Recognise the role of the visitor economy in developing a more resilient and diverse economy
- Grow the mining and construction industries to capitalise on the region's renewable energy generation, storage and transmission opportunities
- Leverage cross border and training accessibility to diversify and grow key industries.

## NSW Water Strategy & Western Regional Water Strategy (complementing the 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW and the State Infrastructure Strategy)

The NSW Water Strategy is a holistic plan for improving the security, reliability, quality and resilience of our water resources and is underpinned by regional and metropolitan water strategies. The NSW Water Strategy guides the strategic, state-level actions that need to be taken. The Regional Water Strategies prioritise how those state-wide actions, as well as other region specific, place-based solutions, are to be staged and implemented in each region.

The Western Regional Water Strategy identifies the critical strategic challenges that need to be tackled over the coming decades as well as the priorities and actions that will set this region up to respond to those challenges:

- Declining water security for towns and small communities
- Insecure water supplies affect the viability of businesses
- Addressing barriers to Aboriginal people's water rights
- Declining health of natural systems
- Reduced connectivity impacts critical needs
- Poor water quality.

Three regional priorities are set out in the strategy to ensure the Western region is well-placed to meet future challenges, and associated actions to address those priorities:

- Improving water security for towns, industries and communities
- Improving the resilience of natural systems
- Improving connectivity across the Northern Basin.

## NSW Future Transport Strategy

NSW Government's current Future Transport Strategy resets NSW Transport's vision for safe, healthy, sustainable, accessible and integrated passenger and freight journeys in NSW. The Strategy includes ideas to revitalise cities, connect regional communities, encourage thriving local neighbourhoods, and build on the state's economic success, aiming to deliver on 3 high-level outcomes:

- Connecting their customers' whole lives
- Successful places for communities where the liveability, amenity and economic success of communities and places are enhanced by transport
- Enabling economic activity whereby the transport system powers NSW's future \$1.4 trillion economy and enable economic activity across the state.

Transport offers their strategy to all stakeholders to consider their needs including government partners, industry stakeholder, customers and communities and their own people, to help deliver coordinated collaborative outcomes.

Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 & 2030 Review; Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan 2020 – 2030; & Murray Region Destination Management Plan 2023

The NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 Review notes that by investing in a sustainable and resilient visitor economy, NSW should not just aim for numbers – it is about shaping the future of the state as a premier global destination and visitor economy powerhouse. The Strategy Review builds on strategies and actions to increase an annual visitor expenditure target from \$65 billion to \$91 billion by 2035 and addresses a number of priorities to reach that goal including that the NSW visitor economy should be elevated to a whole-of-government approach. Investment in future-ready visitor economy infrastructure is identified referencing the importance of upgrades to roads, rail, and digital connectivity to support NSW’s visitor economy and drive it forward into the future. This gives consideration to integrating the visitor economy infrastructure priorities into the State Infrastructure Strategy.

Destination Riverina Murray is one of 7 Destination Networks (DNs) in regional NSW. Its principal role is to represent and coordinate the growth and development of the Riverina Murray visitor economy. Its Destination Management Plan sets out 5 strategic objectives and an associated plan of action for the region from 2022 to 2030, reflecting current market trends and local priorities, and aligning with the State Government’s NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030:

- Road to Recovery
- Build the Brand
- Showcase our Strength
- Focus on World Class Events
- Facilitate Growth

The Murray Region Destination Plan provides a tourism strategy for the region based on collaboration between the Murray River communities and a cross-border partnership with NSW and Victorian stakeholders. In developing the plan the Murray Regional Tourism Board partnered with Destination Riverina Murray to align strategic initiatives across two complementary Plans for the region, in addition to alignment with the broader NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 and their 5 strategic objectives above.

### NSW Digital Strategy (supported by various other NSW digital strategies)

The NSW Digital Strategy is underpinned by 5 missions for digital transformation across the NSW Government, each dedicated to delivering accessible, inclusive, secure and integrated digital services that every person in NSW will be able to access and benefit from:

- Make digital services accessible, inclusive and connected for everyone in NSW
- Use digital to improve service delivery, support the local economy and drive productivity
- Underpin trust in government through reliable, stable digital services and sustainable Digital Infrastructure
- Keep NSW safe and resilient during emergencies online and in-person
- Uplift digital capability in the public sector workforce.

### NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 (supporting the further range of NSW government strategies and roadmaps guiding climate, energy and sustainability programs including Net Zero Plan Stage 1:2020-2030)

NSW is transitioning to a circular economy over the next 20 years meaning we will minimise what we throw away and use and reuse our resources efficiently, making them as productive as possible. The NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy acknowledges that there needs to be services and infrastructure in place to deal with our waste safely, to ensure it doesn't become a problem for future generations, and a need to work with consumers, industries and other governments to make the circular economy a reality.

The strategy outlines the actions to be taken in the first phase of the strategy to 2027 to deliver on long-term objectives. Some of the key reforms include:

- Phasing out problematic single-use plastic items
- Financial incentives for manufacturers and producers to design out problematic plastics
- Having government agencies prefer recycled content
- Mandating the separation of food and garden organics from households and selected businesses
- Incentivising biogas generation from waste materials.

NSW Government funding under the strategy will support local government actions including in part the rollout of new organics collection services; local government collaboration; the installation of landfill gas capture infrastructure; litter prevention programs and illegal dumping.

This strategy incorporates targets agreed to by Federal environment ministers and the Australian Local Government Association under the National Waste Policy Action Plan. In addition, the Strategy sets targets to commit to the goal of net zero emissions from organic waste by 2030 as laid out in the NSW Net Zero Plan Stage 1:2020-2030.

Additional strategies and supporting plans developed by various NSW government agencies also inform our CSP, including other NSW climate and environmental strategies and frameworks. These are designed to help achieve the NSW Premier's Priorities: a strong economy; highest quality education; well-connected communities with quality local environments; putting customers at the centre of everything we do; and breaking the cycle of disadvantage.

Links to those plans can be found at: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/engage-us/waratah-research-network/priorities-and-collaboration>

Additional strategies and policies at a Federal level inform both NSW strategies and policies and our own CSP. These include various Strategies and Plans from the Australian Government:

- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) such as the Murray-Darling Basin Plan; Net Zero
- The Treasury such as the National Housing Accord
- Department of Social Services (DSS) such as Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 (2024 update); The National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts such as the Regional investment Framework. This underpins the Regional Development Australia's Networks (with Wentworth LGA a part of the Murray RDA Network) where local leaders work across government, business and community groups with the shared goal to improve their local region; and regional funding programs (such as Building Better Regions Fund & the Growing Regions Program).

## Engagement Activities

Community consultation is integral to the preparation of the Community Strategic Plan. This has been done to effectively identify the issues and opportunities in the community from a broad perspective and to assist in forming a vision and strategic objectives for the community.

The specific intents of the community consultation process were to:

- Ascertain and understand community and stakeholder views and opinions to inform the Plan;
- Identify issues and obtain community input on ways to resolve them;
- Assist in developing a vision for the community;
- Communicate and inform the community and stakeholders of the process and key messages of the Plan;
- Obtain feedback and input throughout the Plan preparation process; and
- Encourage public ownership of the final Plan.

Council aimed to provide numerous opportunities for the community and key stakeholders to provide formal and informal comment and feedback to assist with the continued preparation of the Plan. The consultation process allows the community and relevant stakeholders to identify various pertinent issues as being important for the future development, growth and sustainability of the Shire.

The specific consultation activities undertaken were:

### Engagement Strategy

In December 2024 Council reviewed and revised 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 an eight-week period from 26 November 2024 to 24 January 2025. 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 43 respondents.

### Community Consultation Sessions

A series of 8 consultation sessions were held between November 2024 and March 2025 in the following locations:

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

A total of 87 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
- Coomealla Memorial Sporting Club Board
- Dareton Senior Citizens
- Dareton Community Action Team
- Gol Gol Public School
- Gol Gol Senior Citizens
- Murray House
- Wentworth Regional Tourism Inc
- Wentworth Public School
- Wentworth Senior Citizens
- Buronga Gol Gol Senior Citizens
- Wentworth Preschool

In addition to the above, Council has also received correspondence from 6 individuals

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

### **Where are we now?**

Determining where we are now allows us to more clearly identify what we, as a community, value about Wentworth and what issues we might face in the future. It helps in monitoring progress towards the community vision and provides a foundation for community discussion.

### **Where do we want to be?**

Understanding where we want to be in the future is vital in developing the Community Strategic Plan. It helps us to communicate a shared vision and a set of outcomes statements that describe the hopes and aspirations of our community and also provides the basis for our road map for the future.

### **How will we get there and who can help us get there?**

Delivering on a long-term community vision takes a thorough, thoughtful and coordinated approach. In exploring ‘how will we get there’ we looked in detail at what actually needs to be done and who might be able assist.

### **How are we tracking?**

With so many contributors to developing and delivering on this Community Strategic Plan it is crucial that we have a clear and effective way to measure and track its implementation. What are the key indicators we need to monitor and report against to measure progress.

The vision and commitment to the community objectives outlined in the CSP have been developed fundamentally from community feedback and engagement.

Although this is a long-term strategic plan, the state of change currently being experienced in Wentworth Shire in terms of population growth and development calls for ongoing and meaningful dialogue between the community and Council.

This CSP will be reviewed again at the start of the next Council term in 2028. This is an opportunity for Council and the community to build on the engagement which has taken place and shaped this plan.

This is also a chance to explore community-lead engagement, and how Council can support the community Vision articulated in this Plan.

The community is invited to continue providing ideas and feedback as Council works towards delivering the Vision set out in this Plan, and to keep Council accountable to the commitments it has made to the community.

## Social Justice Principles

The Community Strategic Plan has been developed in accordance with the NSW Government's social justice strategy, which is based on the following interrelated principles:

**Equity:** There should be fairness in decision making, prioritising and allocation of resources, particularly for those in need.

Everyone should have a fair opportunity to participate in the future of the community. The planning process should take particular care to involve and protect the interests of people in vulnerable circumstances.

**Access:** Everyone should have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life.

**Participation:** Everyone should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives.

**Rights:** Equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.

It is important that all communities have access to programs and services that support wellbeing, and have the opportunity to participate in the future of their region.

Participation helps build social cohesion and connectedness, and reduces isolation.

Many issues facing our community are beyond the direct control of Council, however, Council plays a lead role in advocating to government agencies and non-government organisations to address social wellbeing issues affecting the community's quality of life.

## Principles of good governance

Good governance is having the best possible processes for Wentworth Council's decision making:

- Accountability is a fundamental requirement of good governance. Local government has an obligation to report, explain and be answerable for the consequences of decisions it has made on behalf of the community it represents.
- People should be able to follow and understand the decision-making process. This means that they will be able to clearly see how and what decision was made – what information, advice and consultation council considered, and which legislative requirements (when relevant) council followed.
- Local government should always try to serve the needs of the entire community while balancing competing interests in a timely, appropriate and responsive manner.
- A community's wellbeing results from all of its members feeling their interests have been considered by council in the decision-making process. This means that all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, should have opportunities to participate in the process.
- Local government should implement decisions and follow processes that make best use of the available people, resources and time to ensure the best possible results for their community.

Anyone affected by or interested in a decision should have the opportunity to participate in the process for making that decision.

This can happen in several ways – community members may be provided with information, asked for their opinion, given the opportunity to make recommendations or, in some cases, be part of the actual decision-making process

# Our Values



## At Wentworth Shire Council we value:

### Honesty & Integrity

- ▶ We deliver on commitments.
- ▶ We act ethically.

### Respect

- ▶ We act professionally towards our community and our colleagues.

### Quality & Commitment

- ▶ We do our best to provide the highest standard of goods and services to our community.
- ▶ We are responsive to the needs of our community and always look for ways to better serve our community.
- ▶ We are dedicated to fulfilling the Shire's vision and goals.

### Accountability & Transparency

- ▶ We take responsibility for our actions.
- ▶ We communicate openly and respectfully with our community.

## Council's role and services

Council has a number of key roles in working towards a sustainable future for the Shire with a healthy and resilient community, as a leader, advocate, custodian, facilitator, educator, regulator and service provider.

In order to help the community achieve its aspirations, Council will play the following roles:

- **Provide** services and infrastructure to the community
- **Collaborate** with other levels of government, agencies and community groups on projects and issues
- **Support** other organisations and groups to achieve outcomes by providing resources or bringing stakeholders together
- **Advocate** to decision makers on behalf of our community to raise issues and opportunities and inform other levels of government of local and regional priorities.

Council is committed to achieving our current vision as well as contributing to the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

To do this, Council applies a Quadruple Bottom Line (QBL) approach that combines social, environmental, economic and governance considerations.

The Community Strategic Plan also uses a QBL approach so that our objectives and supporting strategies deliver outcomes in a balanced and holistic way.

Many parts of our vision cannot be placed under only one area, as they are interrelated and it is important to remember that an action in one area creates impact across each of the others.

Recognising interrelationships encourages us to come together to work towards shared goals and can also highlight otherwise unanticipated consequences of our actions.



## Achieving the vision for 2036

The consultation and engagement activities undertaken to inform the Wentworth Shire: Our Future in Focus - Community Strategic Plan 2026-2036 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.***

### Quadruple Bottom Line

The quadruple bottom line underpins the Community Strategic Plan, helping to categorise the priorities that have been identified by the community.

Our strategies link directly to the quadruple bottom line, which are as follows:



*Wentworth Shire is a vibrant, growing and thriving region*

**OUR ECONOMY**



*Wentworth Shire is a great place to live*

**OUR COMMUNITY**



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

**OUR ENVIRONMENT**



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

**OUR LEADERSHIP**

# Community Strategic Plan

Our Economy | Our Community | Our Environment | Our Leadership



# 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 tourists 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.

Objective	Council's role	Responsibility
1 Create a supportive Environment for business to invest and grow	Provide/ Advocate	Wentworth Shire Council, State Government and registered training providers
2 Promote the Wentworth Region as a desirable visitor and tourism destination	Provide/ Collaborate	Wentworth Shire Council, Murray Regional Tourism, Destination NSW Riverina-Murray
3 High quality connectivity across the region	Advocate	Federal Government, State Government and Telco providers

### What the community can do

- Start a small business
- Shop locally to support our economy
- Create opportunities for traineeships, work experience and apprenticeships
- Promote our Shire as a tourism and business destination
- Upskill yourself
- Be a local tourist
- Work with Council to make this a great place to invest, work and live

### What Council can do

- Communicate opportunities
- Land use and development control planning
- Support for major events
- Advocate for funding for economic infrastructure
- Tourism, promotion and visitor facilities
- Economic Development
- Support local businesses by shopping local where possible

### Links to various plans

- Far West Regional Plan 2036
- Western Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy
- NSW Future Transport Strategy
- Visitor Economy Strategy & Destination Management Plans
- Regional Investment Framework
- NSW Digital Strategy

### Other potential partners

- Business and Industry
- Developers
- State and Federal Government
- Department of Planning
- Department of Environment and Heritage
- Event organisers
- Far West Joint Organisation of Councils
- Regional Development Australia – Far West
- TAFE & Local Schools
- Destination NSW – Far West
- Murray Regional Tourism
- Mildura Regional Development

### Desired Outcome

#### Economic Growth and Opportunity

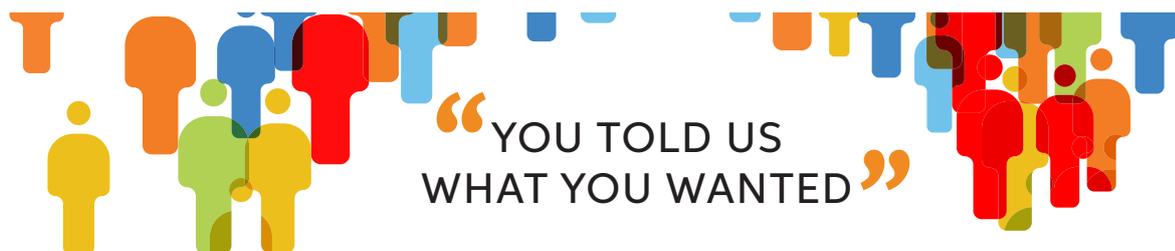
- A key desired outcome is the development of a robust and diverse economy that supports local businesses, attracts investment, and creates employment opportunities.

#### Arts, Culture and Tourism Development

- A vibrant region thrives on a strong cultural and creative sector that promotes increased investment in tourism infrastructure, and marketing to showcase regional attractions leading to increased visitations.

#### Infrastructure and Connectivity

- For the region to grow and thrive, it must have modern infrastructure and connectivity including reliable and efficient transportation networks and enhanced digital infrastructure to support businesses and residents.



- Bigger and more development with additional services.
- Major employment opportunities for businesses.
- Build other infrastructure and services to attract visitors to enhance the tourist experience.
- Larger population, more tourists.
- Continuing to grow the region
- We need money spent here and not in Victoria.
- Make our riverfront a feature.
- Support mining and renewable development.
- Promote the natural attractions within the Shire.
- Attracting young families to the area
- The vision must be for economic change to the community.
- Bring tourist dollars to the town and the local community and business.



## *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, where ever 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.

Objective	Council's role	Responsibility
1 Continue to create opportunities for inclusion where all people feel welcome and participate in community life	Provide/ Collaborate	Wentworth Shire Council
2 The community has access to services and initiatives that contribute to well being across all stages of life.	Collaborate/ Advocate	Wentworth Shire Council, Federal Government, State Government and NGO's
3 To have a safe community	Provide/ Collaborate	Wentworth Shire Council, NSW Police, Transport for NSW
4 To have a strong sense of place	Provide	Wentworth Shire Council

### What the community can do

- Attend, or live stream a Council meeting
- Use local facilities and services
- Participate in a community, sporting or cultural group
- Participate in local health lifestyle activities
- Be a responsible pet owner
- Volunteer
- Have a good work/life balance
- Show mutual respect and acceptance of others
- Report illegal and anti-social behaviour
- Become a mentor to a young person

### What Council can do

- Parks and open spaces
- Public amenities
- Road Safety initiatives
- Library Services
- Advocate for better health services
- Advocate for better educational opportunities
- Promote the availability of services and how to access them
- Partner with local police and other agencies to develop strategies to reduce crime and improve community safety

### Links to various plans

- Far West Regional Plan 2036
- Western Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy
- NSW Future Transport Strategy
- NSW Digital Strategy
- NSW Disability Inclusion Plan

## Other potential partners

- State and Federal Government
- Far West Local Health District
- Local sporting and community groups
- Health Care providers
- TAFE and Local Schools
- Tourism operators
- Department of Education
- Department of Primary Industries – Crown Land
- Destination NSW – Far West
- Murray Regional Tourism
- Far West Joint Organisation of Councils
- NSW Police
- Businesses and Industry

## Desired Outcome

### Safe and inclusive Community

- A great place to live is one where residents feel safe, welcomed and valued.

### Quality Housing and Liveability

- Ensuring that residents have access to safe, affordable and high quality housing.

### Health and Well-being

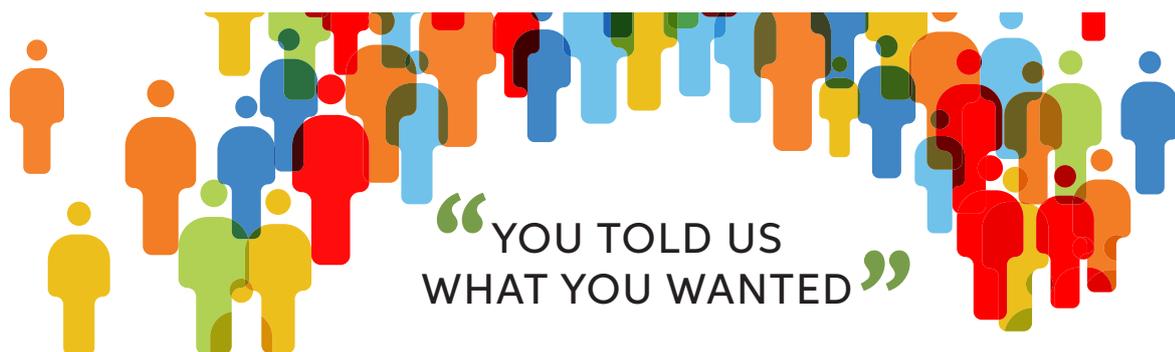
- A thriving community supports the physical and mental well-being of its residents.

### Education and lifelong learning

- A great place to live provides residents with access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities.

### Vibrant Community Life and recreation

- A great place to live offers a variety of recreational, cultural and social opportunities.



- Animal control
- Better access to services and facilities.
- Stronger police presence.
- More facilities to accommodate our aging population.
- Childcare facilities for families.
- Another school in Buronga or Gol Gol to accommodate growth in the area.
- Access to housing
- Public signage
- Public amenity
- An enhanced events calendar so residents have more to do.
- Increased traffic and pedestrian safety



*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.

Objective	Council's role	Responsibility
1 An urban environment that maintains and enhances our sense of identity and place.	Provide	Wentworth Shire Council
2 Our public assets are well maintained and able to meet the growing population demands.	Provide	Wentworth Shire Council
3 Minimise the impact on our natural environment.	Provide/ Advocate	Wentworth Shire Council, Federal Government and State Government
4 Use and manage our resources wisely.	Provide/ Collaborate	Wentworth Shire Council
5 Infrastructure meets the needs of our growing Shire.	Provide/ Advocate	Wentworth Shire Council, developers, renewable and critical mineral companies

### What the community can do

- Report safety and maintenance issues to Council
- Obey load limits on roads and bridges
- Drive to the conditions of the road and obey speed limits
- Take responsibility for drive ways and verge mowing
- Dispose of waste responsibly and minimise waste going to landfill
- Use water thoughtfully
- Report illegal dumping, polluting, littering
- Avoid excessive packaging
- Preserve trees and grow plants in your garden
- Install energy efficient fixtures and appliances at your home
- Consider alternative energy sources

### What Council can do

- Flood levee banks
- Footpaths and cycleway networks
- Kerb and guttering
- Public facilities and Council buildings
- Water and sewerage network
- Stormwater network
- Street lighting and signage
- Keep streets clean
- Road network
- Environmental planning
- Noxious weeds control
- Waste management
- Sporting Facilities
- Community Facilities
- Swimming Pools
- Regulation and enforcement

### Links to various plans

- Far West Regional Plan 2036
- NSW Future Transport Strategy
- NSW Water Strategy & Western Regional Water Strategy
- NSW Digital Strategy
- NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041

### Other potential partners

- Businesses and Industry
- Far West Local Land Services
- Department of Environment and Heritage
- Land owners
- Department of Planning
- Department Primary Industries - Water
- Water NSW
- Transport for NSW
- Department of Infrastructure

### Desired Outcome

#### **Sustainable Land Use and Development**

- Ensuring responsible urban planning and land use is essential for balancing growth and environmental protection.

#### **Waste Management**

- Effective waste management reduction strategies are essential for a clean and healthy environment.

#### **Water Resource Management**

- Preserving and managing water resources is essential for environmental sustainability and public health.

#### **Infrastructure Resilience and Maintenance**

- A key outcome is ensuring that essential infrastructure is well maintained, resilient and capable of serving the community effectively.



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

# Our Leadership



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

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.

Objective	Council's role	Responsibility
1 A well engaged and informed community.	Provide	Wentworth Shire Council
2 We value our civic leadership whose stewardship and decision making benefits present and future generations.	Provide/ Collaborate/ Advocate	Wentworth Shire Council
3 Provide a governance framework that is transparent and builds trust in local leadership.	Provide	Wentworth Shire Council
4 Manage public resources responsibly and efficiently for the benefit of the community	Provide/ Collaborate/ Advocate	Wentworth Shire Council

### What the community can do

- Stand for election to Council
- Regularly visit Council's website and read/listen to local media to keep up-to-date with Council activities
- Connect with Council on social media
- Get involved with community engagement programs run by Council
- Provide feedback to Council regarding services and customer service
- Volunteer and take part in community groups
- Exercise your right to vote
- Get involved – take an interest in civic affairs
- Attend a Council meeting
- Respect our Shire's resources and assets

### What Council can do

- Civic services and representation
- Community engagement
- Customer services
- Governance
- Integrated strategic planning
- Focus on reducing red tape and simplifying process
- Value and consider feedback
- Support community groups and organisations
- Provide open and clear lines of communication with the community
- Be an organisation people want to work for
- Ensure local needs are reflected in state and regional plans

### Links to various plans

- Far West Regional Plan 2036
- Western Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy
- NSW Future Transport Strategy
- Visitor Economy Strategy & Destination Management Plans
- Regional Investment Framework
- NSW Digital Strategy
- NSW Disability Inclusion Plan
- NSW Water Strategy & Western Regional Water Strategy
- NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041

## Other potential partners

- Businesses
- Event organisers
- Community Groups and Organisations
- Office of Local Government
- State and Federal Government
- Far West Joint Organisation
- Local Government NSW
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Neighbouring Councils
- Barkindji Native Title Group
- Dareton Lands Council
- Indigenous Community and groups

## Desired Outcome

### **Ethical leadership, integrity and transparent governance**

- The community must be lead by ethical leaders ensuring that all civic activities are conducted openly and with accountability.

### **Inclusive decision making and community participation**

- Ensuring that all voices are heard and valued is critical for fostering an engaged and inclusive community.

### **Effective and responsible leadership**

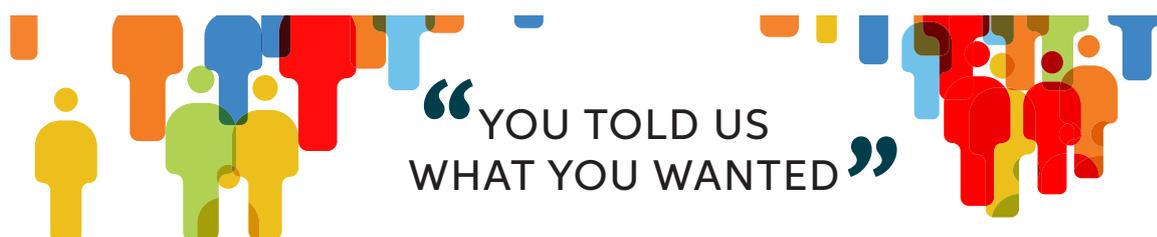
- Leadership should be proactive, adaptive and responsive to the evolving needs of the community.

### **Collaboration and partnerships**

- Building strong relationships between government, businesses and community organisations enhances civic leadership.

### **Innovation and future planning**

- Strategic foresight ensures that public resources are managed effectively for current and future generations.



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

