



Wentworth

SHIRE COUNCIL

ORDINARY MEETING MINUTES

18 FEBRUARY 2026

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1 OPENING OF MEETING

The Mayor opened the meeting with a prayer at 4pm.

2 PRAYER OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

PRESENT:

COUNCILLORS: Councillor Daniel Linklater
Councillor Jon Armstrong
Councillor Brian Beaumont
Councillor Peter Crisp
Councillor Greg Evans
Councillor Susan Nichols
Councillor Jo Rodda
Councillor Jody Starick
Councillor Michael Weeding

STAFF: Ken Ross (General Manager)
Geoff Gunn (Director Roads and Engineering)
Simon Rule (Director Finance and Policy)
Gayle Marsden (Executive Assistant to General Manager)
Jamie-Lee Kelly (Administration Officer)

3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

Councillor Starick advised that she had a significant non-pecuniary interest in Item 9.12 as she is the Council Representative on the Board of the Australian Inland Botanic Gardens.

Councillor Evans advised that he had a less than significant non pecuniary interest in Item 9.13 as the person (company) applying for funding is a relative.

Councillor Rodda advised that she had a non-pecuniary interest in Item 9.12 as she is involved in the Magenta Art Prize.

Councillor Linklater advised that he had a less than significant non- pecuniary interest in Item 12.2 as the acquiring party is a relative.

5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Recommendation

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held 17 December 2025 be confirmed as circulated.

Council Resolution

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held 17 December 2025 be confirmed as circulated.

Moved Cr. Rodda, Seconded Cr. Nichols

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council Resolution

That Council admits for consideration a supplementary late report from the Health & Planning Department due to an error in the agenda process.

Moved Cr. Crisp, Seconded Cr. Rodda

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6 OUTSTANDING MATTERS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

6.1 STATUS REPORT ON PREVIOUS COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS AS 18 FEBRUARY 2026

File Number: RPT/26/93

Responsible Officer: Ken Ross - General Manager
Responsible Division: Office of the General Manager
Reporting Officer: Gayle Marsden - Executive Assistant

Objective: 4.0 Wentworth Shire is supported by strong and ethical civic leadership with all activities conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner

Strategy: 4.3 Provide a governance framework that is transparent and builds trust in local leadership

Summary

The Status Report on previous Council Resolutions provides details of actions that remain outstanding.

Officer Recommendation

That Council notes the list of outstanding action items for Council Resolutions as at 18 February 2026.

Council Resolution

That Council notes the list of outstanding action items for Council Resolutions as at 18 February 2026.

Moved Cr. Armstrong, Seconded Cr. Starick

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7 MAYORAL AND COUNCILLOR REPORTS

7.1 MAYORAL REPORT FEBRUARY 2026

File Number: RPT/26/26

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the information contained in the Mayoral report for February 2026.

Council Resolution

That Council receives and notes the information contained in the Mayoral report for February 2026.

Moved Cr. Linklater, Seconded Cr. Rodda

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

8.1 HERITAGE AND HISTORY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

File Number: RPT/26/86

Responsible Officer: Ken Ross - General Manager
Responsible Division: Office of the General Manager
Reporting Officer: Gayle Marsden - Executive Assistant

Objective: 4.0 Wentworth Shire is supported by strong and ethical civic leadership with all activities conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner

Strategy: 4.4 Manage public resources responsibly and efficiently for the benefit of the community

Summary

A meeting of the Heritage and History Advisory Committee was held on 15 December 2025 and the Minutes of the meeting are attached to this report for the information of Councillors.

The Committee has requested that the Reporting Officer seeks resolutions of Council on the following items:-

Item 7.2 State Heritage Listing of the PS Ruby

Committee Recommendation

That Council endorse the recommendation of the committee:

- a) That an application be lodged with Heritage NSW to list the PS Ruby as a State Heritage Item
- b) That a recommendation on the future of the PS Ruby be provided at the March meeting of Council following appropriate evaluation and discussion on the various reports provided.

Council Resolution

- a) That an application be lodged with Heritage NSW to list the PS Ruby as a State Heritage Item
- b) That a recommendation on the future of the PS Ruby be provided at the March meeting of Council following appropriate evaluation and discussion on the various reports provided.

Moved Cr. Armstrong, Seconded Cr. Crisp

Amendment

That Council endorse that an application be lodged with Heritage NSW to list the PS Ruby as a State Heritage Item

Moved Cr. Armstrong, Seconded Cr. Crisp

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council Resolution

That Council endorse that an application be lodged with Heritage NSW to list the PS Ruby as a State Heritage Item

Moved Cr. Armstrong, Seconded Cr. Crisp

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9 REPORTS TO COUNCIL

9.1 GENERAL MANAGERS REPORT FEBRUARY 2026

File Number: RPT/26/27

Responsible Officer: Ken Ross - General Manager
Responsible Division: Office of the General Manager
Reporting Officer: Ebony Carter - Business Support Officer

Objective: 4.0 Wentworth Shire is supported by strong and ethical civic leadership with all activities conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner

Strategy: 4.2 We value our civic leadership whose stewardship and decision making benefits present and future generations

Summary

The General Manager's report details information pertaining to meetings attended and general information which are of public interest, and which have not been reported elsewhere in this agenda. Items of note in this report are:

1. OLG Circulars

Council Circular 26-01 Release of Quarterly Budget Review Statement Data Return Templates
Council Circular 26-02 2025 Model Meeting Code – Supplementary Guidance and Updated FAQs

2. Meetings

As listed.

3. Upcoming meetings or events

As listed.

4. Other items of note

Geoff Gunn was Acting General Manager 14 – 26 January 2026

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the information contained within the February 2026 report from the General Manager.

Council Resolution

That Council receive and note the information contained within the February 2026 report from the General Manager.

Moved Cr. Rodda, Seconded Cr. Armstrong

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.2 WENTWORTH PIONEER HOMES REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

File Number: RPT/25/743

Responsible Officer: Ken Ross - General Manager
Responsible Division: Office of the General Manager
Reporting Officer: Gayle Marsden - Executive Assistant

Objective: 2.0 Wentworth Shire is a great place to live
Strategy: 2.2 The community has access to services and initiatives that contribute to well being across all stages of life

Summary

Council is in receipt of a request from Wentworth Pioneer Homes Committee Inc. to provide financial assistance of \$150,000 over 3 years to assist with building more units at the Tunkin Homes site. There are currently 3 units under construction with the Development Application approved for 11 units. Council owns the land and has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Wentworth Pioneer Homes Committee Inc.

Recommendation

That Council:

- a) Will consider funding or partially funding the proposal from Wentworth Pioneer Homes Committee Inc following a budget review and that the proposal will be tabled for consideration following the review
- b) Not fund the proposal from Wentworth Pioneer Homes Committee Inc

Motion

That Council will consider funding or partially funding the proposal from Wentworth Pioneer Homes Committee Inc following a budget review and that the proposal will be tabled for consideration following the review.

Moved Cr. Crisp, Seconded Cr. Beaumont

Amendment

That Council will consider the proposal from Wentworth Pioneer Homes Committee Inc following a budget review and that the proposal will be tabled for consideration following the review.

Moved Cr. Starick, Seconded Cr. Rodda

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution

That Council will consider the proposal from Wentworth Pioneer Homes Committee Inc following a budget review and that the proposal will be tabled for consideration following the review

Moved Cr. Starick, Seconded Cr. Rodda

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.3 USE OF PLANNING CONSULTANTS

File Number:	RPT/26/82
Responsible Officer:	Ken Ross - General Manager
Responsible Division:	Office of the General Manager
Reporting Officer:	Simon Rule - Director Corporate Services
Objective:	3.0 Wentworth Shire is a community that works to enhance and protect its physical and natural environment
Strategy:	3.1 An urban environment that maintains and enhances our sense of identity and place

Summary

Council's Planning Department is currently experiencing ongoing resourcing constraints due to three (3) vacant positions within the approved organisational structure. These vacancies have created pressure on Council's ability to maintain statutory planning functions and service delivery timeframes.

To address these challenges, Council has engaged planning consultants to provide planning services on an interim basis. The engagement has been undertaken in accordance with the NSW Local Government Procurement Panel Contract LGP1208-4 – Professional Consulting Services, which is exempt from the requirement to tender under Section 55 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*.

Recruitment to the vacant positions is underway; however, external planning support will continue to be required until these positions are successfully filled, and staff are fully onboarded. Current expenditure is approaching \$260,000, with further costs anticipated during the recruitment period.

This report seeks Council approval to authorise the General Manager to expend up to \$500,000 (GST Exc) to ensure continuity of planning services and mitigate operational and statutory risks during this transitional period.

Recommendation

That Council:

- a) Notes the engagement of consultants for the provision of Planning Services support.
- b) Authorises the General Manager to expend up to \$500,000 (GST Exc) for the engagement of planning consultants to support the Planning Department until recruitment of vacant positions has been completed.

Council Resolution

That Council:

- a) Notes the engagement of consultants for the provision of Planning Services support.
- b) Authorises the General Manager to expend up to \$500,000 (GST Exc) for the engagement of planning consultants to support the Planning Department until recruitment of vacant positions has been completed.

Moved Cr. Armstrong, Seconded Cr. Beaumont

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.4 MIDWAY SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS

File Number:	RPT/26/65
Responsible Officer:	Ken Ross - General Manager
Responsible Division:	Office of the General Manager
Reporting Officer:	Annette Fraser - Team Leader Customer Service
Objective:	4.0 Wentworth Shire is supported by strong and ethical civic leadership with all activities conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner
Strategy:	4.4 Manage public resources responsibly and efficiently for the benefit of the community

Summary

Since 2018 the Midway Service Centre has offered Customer Service, Library Services and in 2021 Banking Agency services were established. The closure of the Bank Agency in October 2025 has reduced customer visitation (see attachment) to the Centre and prompted a review of the future service delivery model.

Four options have been identified for Council's consideration:

1. Continue operations with a full-time Customer Service Officer
2. Reduce operating hours
3. Operate as a library only

Each option presents a different balance of community benefit, staffing requirements, operational costs and visitor support. Maintaining full service provides continuity but incurs higher staffing and operational costs. Reducing hours or transitioning to a library-only model offers cost savings but reduces service accessibility.

Recommendation

That Council endorse option 3 to operate as a Library only, for a trial period of 12 months and review decision in February 2027.

Motion

That Council endorse option 2 to reduce operating hours for a trial period of 12 months and review decision in February 2027.

Moved Cr. Nichols, Seconded Cr. Weeding

Amendment

That Council endorse option 3 to operate as a Library only, for a trial period of 12 months and review decision in February 2027.

Moved Cr. Linklater, Seconded Cr. Starick

CARRIED

Council Resolution

That Council endorse option 3 to operate as a Library only, for a trial period of 12 months and review decision in February 2027.

Moved Cr. Linklater, Seconded Cr. Starick

CARRIED

For the Motion : *Clr.s Armstrong, Beaumont, Crisp, Evans, Linklater, ,
Starick and Weeding.*

Against the Motion: *Clr.s Rodda and Nichols*

Council Resolution

That Council

- a) Resolve to deal with Item 9.5, Item 9.6, Item 9.7 and Item 9.8 by exception.
- b) Approve the recommendations for Item 9.5, Item 9.6, Item 9.7 and Item 9.8 as written

Moved Cr. Armstrong, Seconded Cr. Crisp

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.5 MONTHLY FINANCE REPORT - DECEMBER 2025

File Number: RPT/26/3

Responsible Officer: Simon Rule - Director Corporate Services
Responsible Division: Corporate Services
Reporting Officer: Vanessa Lock - Finance Officer

Objective: 4.0 Wentworth Shire is supported by strong and ethical civic leadership with all activities conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner

Strategy: 4.1 A well engaged and informed community

Summary

Rates and Charges collections for the month of December 2025 were \$ 975,110.37. After allowing for pensioner subsidies, the total levies collected are now 63.27%. For comparison purposes 63.24% of the levy had been collected at the end of December 2024. Council currently has \$35,993,187.68 in cash and investments.

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the Monthly Finance Report for December 2025.

9.6 MONTHLY INVESTMENT REPORT - DECEMBER 2025

File Number: RPT/26/1

Responsible Officer: Simon Rule - Director Corporate Services
Responsible Division: Corporate Services
Reporting Officer: Ned Lamond - Financial Services Coordinator

Objective: 4.0 Wentworth Shire is supported by strong and ethical civic leadership with all activities conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner

Strategy: 4.4 Manage public resources responsibly and efficiently for the benefit of the community

Summary

As of 31 December 2025, Council had \$31 million invested in term deposits and fixed bonds with \$4,993,187.68 in other cash investments. Council received \$110,342.78 from its investments for the month of December 2025.

In December 2025 Council investments averaged a rate of return of 3.57% and it currently has \$6,522,314.93 of internal restrictions and \$27,896,497.41 of external restrictions.

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the monthly investment report for December 2025.

9.7 MONTHLY FINANCE REPORT - JANUARY 2026

File Number: RPT/26/40

Responsible Officer: Simon Rule - Director Corporate Services

Responsible Division: Corporate Services

Reporting Officer: Vanessa Lock - Finance Officer

Objective: 4.0 Wentworth Shire is supported by strong and ethical civic leadership with all activities conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner

Strategy: 4.1 A well engaged and informed community

Summary

Rates and Charges collections for the month of January 2026 were \$ 289,982.12. After allowing for pensioner subsidies, the total levies collected are now 65.09%. For comparison purposes 64.93% of the levy had been collected at the end of January 2025. Council currently has \$35,051,185.84 in cash and investments.

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the Monthly Finance Report for January 2026.

9.8 MONTHLY INVESTMENT REPORT - JANUARY 2026

File Number: RPT/26/55

Responsible Officer: Simon Rule - Director Corporate Services

Responsible Division: Corporate Services

Reporting Officer: Ned Lamond - Financial Services Coordinator

Objective: 4.0 Wentworth Shire is supported by strong and ethical civic leadership with all activities conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner

Strategy: 4.4 Manage public resources responsibly and efficiently for the benefit of the community

Summary

As of 31 January 2026, Council had \$31 million invested in term deposits and fixed bonds with \$4,051,185.84 in other cash investments. Council received \$140,311.52 from its investments for the month of January 2025.

In January 2026 Council investments averaged a rate of return of 3.53% and it currently has \$5,816,314.93 of internal restrictions and \$28,184,263.46 of external restrictions.

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the monthly investment report for January 2026.

9.9 QUARTERLY BUDGET REVIEW STATEMENTS

File Number: RPT/26/38

Responsible Officer: Simon Rule - Director Corporate Services
Responsible Division: Corporate Services
Report Author: Simon Rule - Director Corporate Services
Ned Lamond - Financial Services Coordinator

Summary

The December Quarterly Budget Review Statement (QBRS) has been prepared in accordance with the NSW Office of Local Government's 2024-2025 Quarterly Budget Review Guidelines. The updated framework aims to improve transparency, consistency, and alignment with the Integrated Planning and Reporting principles.

The December QBRS provides a comprehensive review of Council's financial performance and budget position for the quarter ended 31 December 2025, including

- A detailed analysis of operating performance, including key variations in income and expenditure
- Reporting of capital works progress and associated funding sources
- Updated information on cash and investments, developer contributions, and loan balances; and
- A summary of budget variations exceeding the $\pm 10\%$ or \$50,000 materiality threshold

While the new QBRS format no longer includes financial Key Performance Indicator (KPI)'s, Council notes that the OLG is currently reviewing the financial and sustainability ratios used across the sector. At this stage, Council's priority is to bed down the requirements of the revised guidelines. The reintroduction of the previous suite of KPI's will be considered as part of future reporting.

Consistent with the updated reporting requirements, once this QBRS is formally tabled at the February Council Meeting, a copy of the report and its attachments will be published on Council's website to ensure transparency and public accountability.

At 05:18 pm Councillor Brian Beaumont left the Council Chambers.

Recommendation

That the Committee:

- a) Receive and note the December 2025 Quarterly Budget Review Statement
- b) Endorse the December 2025 Quarterly Budget Review Statement for presentation to the February Council Meeting.

Council Resolution

That the Committee:

- a) Receive and note the December 2025 Quarterly Budget Review Statement
- b) Endorse the December 2025 Quarterly Budget Review Statement for presentation to the February Council Meeting.

Moved Cr. Starick, Seconded Cr. Nichols

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

At 05:20 pm Councillor Brian Beaumont returned to Council Chambers.

9.10 QUARTERLY OPERATIONAL PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

File Number: RPT/26/46

Responsible Officer: Simon Rule - Director Corporate Services

Responsible Division: Corporate Services

Reporting Officer: Simon Rule - Director Corporate Services

Objective: 4.0 Wentworth Shire is supported by strong and ethical civic leadership with all activities conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner

Strategy: 4.3 Provide a governance framework that is transparent and builds trust in local leadership

Summary

In accordance with the Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, Council develops a Four Year Delivery Program and a One Year Operational Plan, which details the actions to be undertaken by Council to implement the strategies established in the Community Strategic Plan.

The *Local Government Act 1993* requires that progress is reported to Council with respect to the principal actions detailed in its Operational Plan at least every six months. To better align with the Quarterly Budget Review Process, the Operational Plan progress report is also compiled on a quarterly basis.

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the report.

Council Resolution

That Council receives and notes the report.

Moved Cr. Rodda, Seconded Cr. Crisp

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.11 REAPPOINTMENT OF AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBER

File Number:	RPT/26/66
Responsible Officer:	Simon Rule - Director Corporate Services
Responsible Division:	Corporate Services
Reporting Officer:	Simon Rule - Director Corporate Services
Objective:	4.0 Wentworth Shire is supported by strong and ethical civic leadership with all activities conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner
Strategy:	4.3 Provide a governance framework that is transparent and builds trust in local leadership

Summary

This report recommends the reappointment of Caroline Smith to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee for a further term of three (3) years, concluding at the end of her allowable tenure under the guideline for risk management and internal audit for NSW local government.

A performance review conducted by the Director Corporate Services and the Chair of the Committee confirms that Caroline continues to make a strong contribution to the Committee's objectives.

Recommendation

That Council reappoints Caroline Smith as an Independent Member to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee for a further term of three (3) years, noting that this term will take her to the end of her allowable period of membership.

Council Resolution

That Council reappoints Caroline Smith as an Independent Member to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee for a further term of three (3) years, noting that this term will take her to the end of her allowable period of membership.

Moved Cr. Crisp, Seconded Cr. Starick

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.12 AF003 REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

File Number:	RPT/26/23
Responsible Officer:	Simon Rule - Director Corporate Services
Responsible Division:	Corporate Services
Reporting Officer:	Annette Fraser - Team Leader Customer Service
Objective:	4.0 Wentworth Shire is supported by strong and ethical civic leadership with all activities conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner
Strategy:	4.1 A well engaged and informed community

Council Resolution

That Council deal separately with the request for funding for the Magenta Art Prize.

Moved Cr. Armstrong, Seconded Cr. Beaumont

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

At 05:24 pm Councillor Jo Rodda left the Council Chambers.

At 05:24 pm Councillor Jody Starick left the Council Chambers.

Summary

Council has provided an allocation of \$200,000.00 for the 2025/26 financial year for consideration by Council, for the funding of requests from the community for financial assistance. In this financial year, \$112,348.70 has been granted to a variety of organisations through the annual fees and charges "Exemptions from the Application" process.

The total value of requests granted so far under delegated authority is \$4140.00 (\$1,306.00 plus \$2,576.00 plus \$258.00).

The total value of requests approved at the 19 November 2025 Council Meeting was \$14,000.00.

The total value of requests for Round 3 of the 2025/2026 funding application period totals \$10,641.84, which if granted in full, would leave a balance in the financial assistance program of \$18,011.12

Financial Assistance Program starting balance 2023/24	\$200,000.00
Annual fees & charges annual exemptions granted	\$112,348.70
Granted under delegated authority to 1 – 24 July 2025	\$ 1,306.00
Value of requests approved August 2025 Council Meeting	\$ 23,557.60
Value of approved request November 2025 Council Meeting	\$ 14,000.00
Granted under delegated authority 1 August – 24 October 2025	\$ 2,576.00
Available balance after November 2025 Council Meeting	\$ 46,211.70
Granted under delegated authority 25 October 2025 - 24 January 2026	\$ 258.00

Value of approved requests November 2025 Council Meeting	\$ 11,441.10
Value of approved requests December 2025 Council Meeting	\$ 5,859.74
Financial assistance requests received 25/10/2025 – 24/1/2026	\$ 10,641.84
Remaining balance if all approved	\$ 18,011.12

Recommendation

That Council having considered the current requests for financial assistance, make appropriate recommendations on the level of funding to be provided to each of these applications from the Financial Assistance program.

Council Resolution

That Council approve the request for financial assistance for the Magenta Art Prize of \$4,974.75.

Moved Cr. Armstrong, Seconded Cr. Beaumont

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

At 05:28 pm Councillor Jo Rodda returned to Council Chambers.

At 05:28 pm Councillor Jody Starick returned to Council Chambers.

Council Resolution

That Council approve the requests for financial assistance for funding to Wentworth Pioneer Homes of \$3,667.09 and Wentworth District Rowing Club of \$2,000.

Moved Cr. Armstrong, Seconded Cr. Beaumont

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.13 REQUEST FOR EVENT SPONSORSHIP - WENTWORTH/MILDURA COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL 2026.

File Number:	RPT/26/54
Responsible Officer:	Simon Rule - Director Corporate Services
Responsible Division:	Corporate Services
Reporting Officer:	Simon Rule - Director Corporate Services
Objective:	1.0 Wentworth Shire is a vibrant, growing and thriving region
Strategy:	1.2 Promote the Wentworth Region as a desirable visitor and tourism destination

At 05:28 pm Councillor Greg Evans left the Council Chambers.

Summary

Council has received a request from the event organiser seeking funding support for the delivery of the Wentworth/Mildura Country Music festival in 2026. The request is supported by outcomes achieved during the 2025 event, which was delivered across Wentworth and Mildura over nine days.

Based on information provided by the event organiser and economic impact modelling using REMPLAN data, it is estimated that the 2025 event generated approximately \$200,000 in economic benefit to the Wentworth local economy. The event attracted visitors from outside the Sunraysia region, contributing to increased overnight stays and expenditure within the Shire.

Recommendation

That Council approves funding support of \$8,000 ex GST for the 2026 Country Music Festival, to be allocated from the Events Sponsorship Budget, based on the demonstrated economic and community benefits delivered by the 2025 event.

Council Resolution

That Council approves funding support of \$8,000 ex GST for the 2026 Country Music Festival, to be allocated from the Events Sponsorship Budget, based on the demonstrated economic and community benefits delivered by the 2025 event.

Moved Cr. Crisp, Seconded Cr. Rodda

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

At 05:32 pm Councillor Greg Evans returned to Council Chambers.

Council Resolution

That Council

- Resolve to deal with Item 9.14 and Item 9.15 by exception.
- Approve the recommendations for Item 9.14 and Item 9.15 as written

Moved Cr. Armstrong, Seconded Cr. Beaumont

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.14 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION DETERMINATION REPORT - DECEMBER 2025

File Number: RPT/26/5

Responsible Officer: Ken Ross - General Manager
Responsible Division: Office of the General Manager
Reporting Officer: Chloe Stephenson - Coordinator Health & Planning

Objective: 4.0 Wentworth Shire is supported by strong and ethical civic leadership with all activities conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner

Strategy: 4.2 We value our civic leadership whose stewardship and decision making benefits present and future generations

Summary

For the month of December 2025, a total of twenty (20) Development Applications and two (2) Modification Applications were determined.

The estimated value of the determined developments was \$7,079,900.16. This brings the Financial year to date total to 71 Development Applications with an estimated development value of \$28,500,394.98 and 12 Modification Applications.

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the report for the Determined Development Applications for the month of December 2025.

9.15 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION DETERMINATION REPORT - JANUARY 2026

File Number: RPT/26/53

Responsible Officer: Ken Ross - General Manager

Responsible Division: Office of the General Manager

Reporting Officer: Chloe Stephenson - Coordinator Health & Planning

Objective: 4.0 Wentworth Shire is supported by strong and ethical civic leadership with all activities conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner

Strategy: 4.2 We value our civic leadership whose stewardship and decision making benefits present and future generations

Summary

For the month of January 2026, a total of 27 Development Applications and one (1) Modification Applications were determined.

The estimated value of the determined developments was \$12,573,568.42. This brings the Financial year to date total to 98 Development Applications with an estimated development value of \$41,073,963.40 and 13 Modification Applications.

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the report for the Determined Development Applications for the month of January 2026.

9.16 ROAD SAFETY QUARTERLY REPORT OCTOBER 2025 - DECEMBER 2025

File Number: RPT/26/6

Responsible Officer: Geoff Gunn - Acting General Manager

Responsible Division: Office of the General Manager

Reporting Officer: Barnaby Bates - Council Community Officer Road Safety

Objective: 1.0 Wentworth Shire is a vibrant, growing and thriving region

Strategy: 1.3 High quality connectivity across the region

Summary

This report is to provide Council with an update of the Road Safety Officer's activities from October 2025 to December 2025.

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the Road Safety Quarterly Report for October 2025 to December 2025.

Council Resolution

That Council receives and notes the Road Safety Quarterly Report for October 2025 to December 2025.

Moved Cr. Crisp, Seconded Cr. Rodda

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.17 PROJECT & WORKS REPORT FEBRUARY 2026

File Number: RPT/26/68

Responsible Officer: Geoff Gunn - Director of Roads & Engineering
Responsible Division: Roads and Engineering
Reporting Officer: Megan Jackson - Roads & Engineering Administration Officer

Objective: 3.0 Wentworth Shire is a community that works to enhance and protect its physical and natural environment
Strategy: 3.5 Infrastructure meets the needs of our growing Shire

Summary

This report provides a summary of the projects and major works undertaken by the Roads and Engineering Department which have been completed during the months of January 2026, and the planned activities for February 2026.

Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the major works undertaken in January 2026 and the scheduled works for February 2026.

Council Resolution

That Council receives and notes the major works undertaken in January 2026 and the scheduled works for February 2026.

Moved Cr. Starick, Seconded Cr. Crisp

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.18 DA2026/012 DWELLING WITH GARAGE AND SWIMMING POOL 38 HENDY ROAD LOT 2 DP 1185850 BURONGA

File Number: RPT/26/88

Responsible Officer: Ken Ross - General Manager
Responsible Division: Office of the General Manager
Reporting Officer: Ken Ross - General Manager

Objective: 3.0 Wentworth Shire is a community that works to enhance and protect its physical and natural environment

Strategy: 3.1 An urban environment that maintains and enhances our sense of identity and place

Summary

A development application (DA2026/012) was received by Council on 16 January 2026 for a dwelling with swimming pool and safety barrier to be located at 38 Hendy Road Lot 2 DP 1185850 Buronga within the river front setback.

Under the *Wentworth Local Environmental Plan 2011 (WLEP 2011)*, this development is permitted with consent when located within the RU5 Village zone.

The nature of this application cannot be determined under delegated authority, and must be determined by Council.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approve DA2026/012 for a dwelling and swimming pool with safety barrier located at 38 Hendy Road Lot 2 DP 1185850 Buronga.
2. Call a division in accordance with S375A of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)

Council Resolution

That Council:

1. Approve DA2026/012 for a dwelling and swimming pool with safety barrier located at 38 Hendy Road Lot 2 DP 1185850 Buronga.
2. Call a division in accordance with S375A of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)

Moved Cr. Armstrong, Seconded Cr. Crisp

CARRIED

In accordance with Section 375A of the Local Government Act the Mayor called for a division.

For the Motion : ***Clr.s Armstrong, Beaumont, Crisp, Evans, Linklater, Rodda, Starick and Weeding.***

Against the Motion: ***Clr. Nichols.***

10 NOTICES OF MOTIONS / QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE**10.1 PS RUBY FUTURE**

File Number: RPT/26/89

Motion

That Council prepare an appropriate plan and allocate a budget to stop Ruby as an iconic shire asset from falling into a further state of disrepair and further degradation

Option A; To get Ruby back into an operational state for cruising passengers

Option B; Consider a floating static display that public can take tours and walk throughs

Council Resolution

That Council prepare an appropriate plan and allocate a budget of \$50,000 this financial year to stop Ruby as an iconic shire asset from falling into a further state of disrepair and further degradation and that Council undertake an assessment report of what future works are required to make the vessel assessable to the public.

Moved Cr. Weeding, Seconded Cr. Crisp

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

10.2 EARLY SETTLERS MUSEUM DARETON AND PS RUBY FUTURE

File Number: RPT/26/92

Responsible Officer: Ken Ross - General Manager
Responsible Division: Office of the General Manager
Reporting Officer: Ebony Carter - Business Support Officer

Summary

Councillor Greg Evans has asked the following Questions with Notice:

1. The land and buildings have been purchased to house the Early Settler Museum at Dareton. Can the director of finance provide a report to council where funds were drawn to make this purchase. The report to council can also provide future arrangements involved during the development of the Museum and how council's finances could be impacted.

Officer Comments

At the December 2025 meeting of Council the following resolution was carried:

Council Resolution

That Council:

- a) Agree to the purchase of the Old Coomealla Packers Building and neighbouring lots (Lot 381 DP756961, Lot 382 DP756691, Lot 579 DP756961, Lot 685 DP756961 and Lot 1034 DP 756961) as the future site of the Sunraysia Early Settlers Museum.
- b) Agree to a purchase price of \$400,000
- c) Delegate the Mayor and General Manager to affix the common seal of Council and duly execute the contracts.
- d) Agree that any future capital works to prepare the site to use for any purpose be funded by State or Federal Government grants or by separate Council resolution.

Moved Cr. Armstrong, Seconded Cr. Rodda

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

To date the purchase has been communicated with Council's legal representatives, but the settlement date is yet to be agreed upon. Therefore, to date no funds have been drawn down to make the purchase. The funding strategy for this and other recent land purchases has been the subject of internal discussions where it was agreed that a report will be brought to Council seeking approval to obtain an appropriate loan to cover this expenditure.

As requested in the second part of Cr Evans' above question with notice, part d) of the Council resolution above covers off on the query.

2. To the Mayor, is it possible to call a meeting of the History and Heritage Advisory Committee as soon as practical. The decision on PS Rubys future needs urgent attention and my question would be is this matter now beyond the scope of a small committee and would it be better debated with a whole of Council forum.

Officers Comments

A similar motion has been placed on the agenda from Councillor Weeding and accordingly this item and that one can be discussed as the whole Council as suggested by Councillor Evans.

11 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS – ADJOURNMENT INTO CLOSED SESSION

Despite the right of members of the public to attend meetings of a council, the council may choose to close to the public, parts of the meeting that involve the discussion or receipt of certain matters as prescribed under section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act.

With the exception of matters concerning particular individuals (other than councillors) (10A(2)(a)), matters involving the personal hardship of a resident or ratepayer (10A(2)(b)) or matters that would disclose a trade secret (10A(2)(d)(iii)), council must be satisfied that discussion of the matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.

The Act requires council to close the meeting for only so much of the discussion as is necessary to preserve the relevant confidentiality, privilege or security being protected. (section 10B(1)(a))

Section 10A(4) of the Act provides that a council may allow members of the public to make representations to or at a meeting, before any part of the meeting is closed to the public, as to whether that part of the meeting should be closed.

Section 10B(4) of the Act stipulates that for the purpose of determining whether the discussion of a matter in an open meeting would be contrary to the public interest, it is irrelevant that:-

- (a) a person may misinterpret or misunderstand the discussion, or
- (b) the discussion of the matter may -
 - (i) cause embarrassment to the council or committee concerned, or to councillors or to employees of the council, or
 - (ii) cause a loss of confidence in the council or committee.

Recommendation

That Council adjourns into Closed Session, the recording of the meeting be suspended, and members of the press and public be excluded from the Closed Session, and that access to the correspondence and reports relating to the items considered during the course of the Closed Session be withheld unless declassified by separate resolution.

This action is taken in accordance with Section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act, 1993 as the items listed come within the following provisions:-

12.1 Panel Contract - Additional Suppliers. (RPT/25/787)

This item is classified CONFIDENTIAL under the provisions of Section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993, which permits the meeting to be closed to the public for business relating to (c) information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business. On balance, the public interest in preserving the confidentiality of information about the tender outweighs the public interest in maintaining openness and transparency in council decision-making because disclosure of this information would reveal pricing and confidential information submitted via the tender process which if disclosed would prevent council from achieving its 'value for money' objectives.

12.2 Potters Drive Classification & Closure. (RPT/26/52)

This item is classified CONFIDENTIAL under the provisions of Section 10A(2) of the

Local Government Act 1993, which permits the meeting to be closed to the public for business relating to (e) information that would, if disclosed, prejudice the maintenance of law. On balance, the public interest in preserving the confidentiality of information about the item outweighs the public interest in maintaining openness and transparency in council decision-making.

12.3 Purchase of Industrial Lot for Emergency Services. (RPT/26/70)

This item is classified CONFIDENTIAL under the provisions of Section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993, which permits the meeting to be closed to the public for business relating to (d) (i) commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it. On balance, the public interest in preserving the confidentiality of information about the item outweighs the public interest in maintaining openness and transparency in council decision-making.

Council Resolution

12.1 Panel Contract - Additional Suppliers. (RPT/25/787)

This item is classified CONFIDENTIAL under the provisions of Section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993, which permits the meeting to be closed to the public for business relating to (c) information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business. On balance, the public interest in preserving the confidentiality of information about the tender outweighs the public interest in maintaining openness and transparency in council decision-making because disclosure of this information would reveal pricing and confidential information submitted via the tender process which if disclosed would prevent council from achieving its 'value for money' objectives.

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Moved Cr. Crisp, Seconded Cr. Weeding

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

12 OPEN COUNCIL - REPORT FROM CLOSED COUNCIL

12.1 PANEL CONTRACT - ADDITIONAL SUPPLIERS

File Number: RPT/25/787

Responsible Officer: Geoff Gunn - Acting General Manager
Responsible Division: Office of the General Manager
Reporting Officer: Jamie-Lee Kelly - Administration Officer

Objective: 3.0 Wentworth Shire is a community that works to enhance and protect its physical and natural environment

Strategy: 3.2 Our public assets are well maintained and able to meet the growing population demands

REASON FOR CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is classified CONFIDENTIAL under the provisions of Section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993, which permits the meeting to be closed to the public for business relating to (c) information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business. On balance, the public interest in preserving the confidentiality of information about the tender outweighs the public interest in maintaining openness and transparency in council decision-making because disclosure of this information would reveal pricing and confidential information submitted via the tender process which if disclosed would prevent council from achieving its 'value for money' objectives.

The General Manager advised that Council approved the following supplier list to be included in the 23/24 Panel Contract for the next 12 months based on their reason for missing original application period.

1. KW Quarries Pty Ltd
2. Sargents Pest Control
3. R & W Septic
4. Jim's Test and Tag Mildura West

12.2 POTTERS DRIVE CLASSIFICATION & CLOSURE

File Number: RPT/26/52

Responsible Officer: Ken Ross - General Manager
Responsible Division: Office of the General Manager
Reporting Officer: Hilary Dye - Property and Land Tenure Officer

Objective: 2.0 Wentworth Shire is a great place to live
Strategy: 2.4 To have a strong sense of place

REASON FOR CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is classified CONFIDENTIAL under the provisions of Section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993, which permits the meeting to be closed to the public for business relating to (e) information that would, if disclosed, prejudice the maintenance of law. On balance, the public interest in preserving the confidentiality of information about the item outweighs the public interest in maintaining openness and transparency in council decision-making.

The General Manager advised that Council:

1. Approved the closure of a portion of Council's public road known as Potters Drive, Gol Gol, under the provisions of Division 3 of the *Roads Act 1993*.
2. Upon the road being closed, will classify the land as Operational Land.
3. Confirmed that upon closure and after the land is classified as Operational Land, a small portion of Potters Drive Road reserve, that is not reasonably required as a road for public use (whether for present or future needs), will be made available for resale.
4. Will enter into a Deed of Agreement with the acquiring landholder for sum of \$6,000 and further to pay for all of Councils expenses incurred in the process, including any legal fees.
5. Authorised the General Manager and Mayor to sign any necessary documentation.

12.3 PURCHASE OF INDUSTRIAL LOT FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

File Number: RPT/26/70

Responsible Officer: Ken Ross - General Manager

Responsible Division: Office of the General Manager

Reporting Officer: Ken Ross - General Manager

Objective: 3.0 Wentworth Shire is a community that works to enhance and protect its physical and natural environment

Strategy: 3.5 Infrastructure meets the needs of our growing Shire

REASON FOR CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is classified CONFIDENTIAL under the provisions of Section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993, which permits the meeting to be closed to the public for business relating to (d) (i) commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it. On balance, the public interest in preserving the confidentiality of information about the item outweighs the public interest in maintaining openness and transparency in council decision-making.

The General Manager advised that Council:

- a) Authorised the General Manager to enter into contracts to purchase 14 Two Up Drive Lot 25 DP 1305730 Buronga for the purpose of the establishment of an Emergency Services Complex.
- b) Approved the purchase price of \$655,000
- c) Authorised the expenditure to be funded through a loan for Councils land acquisitions purchases
- d) Categorise the property as operational land in accordance with Clause 31 of the *Local Government Act 1993*
- e) Authorised the Mayor and General Manager to attach the council seal and sign all documentation on behalf of Council

13 CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING

The meeting closed at 7:09pm.

NEXT MEETING

18 March 2026

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CHAIR