

GWYDIR SHIRE

**WARIALDA WORKS
PROGRAM**



**COMMUNITY STRATEGIC
PLAN 2005**

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1. DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

The Department of State and Regional Development has two community funding programs to revitalise communities throughout NSW by providing them with assistance and guidance. The Main Street/Small Towns Program (MS/STP) is aimed at larger communities with populations of 1,500 – 15,000. The Towns and Villages Futures Program (TVFP) is aimed at small communities with populations of 2,500 or less. Gwydir shire villages can apply for funding through the TVFP, but can also apply for funding on shire-wide projects with other towns through the MS/STP which provided funding for this shire-wide planning process.

The programs aim to revitalise communities throughout NSW by providing them with assistance, guidance and project funding. The program provides a framework to pull a diverse range of community stakeholders together. Benefits include cohesive planning on issues affecting the community, wider networking opportunities, greater impact and value to businesses and community groups and added value to Council. The programs build social capital within a community and shire by establishing communication channels, trust, relationships and networks.

Community economic development (CED) is entwined with social development in rural communities, so it is necessary for the planning process to take a holistic approach to all the issues affecting communities.

A CED program is achieved by harnessing local skills and resources and planning together to implement practical, achievable community and business projects. The community planning workshops develop a community action plan with an agreed vision for the future, a consensus of prioritised issues affecting the community and a series of projects to address the issues. The success of the program is reliant on community volunteers working to implement the projects, so an organisational structure is developed along with methods to run the program. Empowering the community and building community capacity are the key factors to ensuring sustainability of the program. The key elements of the program include:

Organisation – creating an organisation with broad stakeholder representation of retailers, business people, property owners, council, community groups, farmers and residents to unite and work towards a common goal.

Economic Development – developing and strengthening local businesses and developing opportunities for new businesses/industries to provide a sustainable economic base.

Physical Design – addressing physical aspects of the town area such as improving traffic, parking, tree planting and landscaping, signage, public facilities and preserving the unique qualities and heritage of the town and surrounding environment.

Events and Marketing – promoting the area and increasing community pride and social activities with events and marketing campaigns to target local residents, tourists and commercial markets.

Social Development - addressing the community's social, cultural, health, youth and elderly issues as a holistic approach to long term economic development.

2. THE ROLE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The role of this document is to:

- Act as a framework to direct the development of the community program
- Facilitate cooperative working relationships between the community, businesses, Council and other external partners
- Formalise the goals and objectives of the community in relation to its economic and social future

The plan has three core components:

1. Where are we now?
 - Situation Analysis
 - SWOT
2. Where do we want to go?
 - Vision and Mission Statements
3. How are we going to get there?
 - Key Result Areas
 - Objectives
 - Issues
 - Action Based Program of Projects
 - Program organisational structure
 - Implementation of projects by volunteer teams
 - Regular monthly meetings
 - Reporting channels to Council
 - Communication channels with Council and other towns and villages throughout the shire

The Plan contains vision and missions statements and a set of strategic priorities and objectives that have been developed to guide the community program over the next 2-3 years. The status of each current project is reviewed regularly at monthly meetings and reported to the Gwydir Shire Council and to the community via local newsletters or newspaper columns.

A second document titled 'Summary of Outcomes' details all the information gathered at the workshop. This is an internal working document that can be used as a resource to refer to as projects are finalised and new actions are sought to address the key issues nominated by the community in this plan.

3. SITUATION ANALYSIS

The following information was gathered from a variety of sources, including anecdotal information from the workshops, members of the community, Gwydir Shire Council staff, 2001 ABS statistics, the Yallaroi Shire Strategic Plan 2001, the Warialda Community Plan 2003, Gwydir shire tourism documents and Gwydir Country website.

3.1 Gwydir Shire

The Gwydir Shire is located in the north west of NSW and covers an area of 9,122 square kilometres, extending from the Inverell Shire on the western tablelands to the Moree Shire on the western plains. It encompasses a diverse landscape that is both picturesque and productive, with undulating hills that flatten out to the west and the beautiful Gwydir River.

The Gwydir Shire was formed on 17th March 2004 by the amalgamation of the Yallaroi Shire, the Bingara Shire and 40% of the land mass of the Barraba Shire.

In the past, like many other small, rural shires, the Councils of Bingara, Yallaroi and Barraba were centred around one major town. On the small rate base collected, it was difficult to extend resources and services into the outlying villages and rural communities.

The shire now covers a large land mass with a population of less than 6,000 people, which still creates a small rate base to provide facilities and services to the shire. However it is anticipated that there will be some improvement for villages and rural communities by creating a 'larger voice' representing a wider area on issues affecting the shire. A major issue from the outlying villages in the shire is the state of the roads, which are difficult to maintain, let alone upgrade.

3.1.1 Population and Census Data

Due to the recent amalgamation of the shire, there is no accurate core data available for population statistics of the towns, villages and surrounding rural areas within the new shire boundaries. The Amalgamation Proclamation in March 2004 stated a shire population of 5,790. The following population statistics for the villages and surrounding communities are based on the number of people who voted in the last elections, the number of children attending local schools and an estimation of pre school aged children and high school children attending education outside the shire boundaries.

Bingara	1,390
Coolatai	130
Crooble	40
Croppa Creek	120
Gravesend	205
North Star	200

Rocky Creek	35
Yallaroi	100
Upper Horton / Cobbadah / and southern end of the shire	280
Warialda	1,750
Warialda Rail	100
Other rural areas	1,440
Total	5,790

The Gwydir shire is experiencing an ageing population. As the Gwydir Shire is yet to establish statistics within the new shire boundaries, the following tables from the 2001 ABS census outlines statistics for the Yallaroi and Bingara shires and shows a percentage breakdown of the community by age compared with the NSW average. The Bingara section of the Gwydir Shire has a particularly high ageing population.

Age structure	Yallaroi Shire	Bingara Shire	New South Wales
0-4 years (infants)	7.4	5.3	6.7
5-17 years (children)	20.1	14.5	18.3
18-64 years (adults)	59.5	58.2	61.9
65-84 years (mature adults)	12.1	20.4	11.7
Over 85 years (senior citizens)	1.0	1.8	1.4

The following table shows a percentage breakdown of the family/household type compared with the NSW average, taken from the 2001 ABS statistics.

Family/household type	Yallaroi Shire	Bingara Shire	New South Wales
Couple without child(ren)	40.9	49.6	34.9
Couple with child(ren)	47.1	35.2	47.8
One parent family	11.0	13.5	15.5
Lone person households	29.1	38.6	31.6

The following table shows a percentage breakdown of weekly household incomes compared with the NSW average. This table indicates significantly lower earnings in the Gwydir Shire than the rest of the state.

Weekly household income	Yallaroi Shire	Bingara Shire	New South Wales
Less than \$300	16.6	17.8	12.2
\$300 to \$999	50.0	54.8	39.4
\$1,000 and over	18.6	12.3	36.9

The following table shows a percentage breakdown of employment status compared with the NSW average.

Employment status	Yallaroi Shire	Bingara Shire	New South Wales
Total employed	93.1	92.2	92.8
Total unemployed	6.9	7.8	7.2

3.1.2 History

The Gwydir Shire area was originally populated by the Weraeria tribe and there are several known aboriginal sites in the region such as carved trees, bora grounds and open campsites that are protected under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

In 1827, explorer/botanist Allan Cunningham travelled from Sydney and camped on the junction of Halls Creek and the Gwydir River which he named after his benefactor "Lord Gwydir of Wales".

Following this expedition, squatters travelled north and took up parcels of land. In 1838 the Slaughterhouse Creek and Myall Creek massacres occurred, where some 200 aboriginals were slain at Slaughterhouse Creek and the Myall Creek massacre was renowned as the first time that white men were tried and executed for the murder of aboriginal people.

In 1840 a police post was set up at "Warialda" which means "place of wild honey", the title given to the area by the local Aboriginal people. It was a well known crossing place so a logical choice for an out post. The New South Wales Government established administration centres in the interior of the country to administer the activities of pastoralists (squatters) and Warialda was one of the sites chosen.

In 1847 Warialda became the administrative headquarters for the Gwydir squatting district and the permanent headquarters for the Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands. It became the administrative centre and focal point of the region because so much official and legal business had to be transacted there. On December 22 1846, it was listed as a place where Courts of petty sessions were held. Warialda was Gazetted as a village in 1849 with Bingara being officially recognised as a village in 1852.

A number of historic buildings remain a part of the Gwydir Shire landscape and they provide a glimpse into the history of the towns and district. The discovery of gold in 1853 brought prospectors to the area and when copper and diamonds were discovered in the 1880's, rapid development followed. Bingara was the largest supplier of diamonds in Australia during this time.

3.1.3 Agriculture

The Shire's economic base is dominated by agriculture and the service facilities attached to that sector. Agriculture is the most significant contributor to the gross regional product, with stock of beef, sheep, pigs and summer and winter crops such as wheat, sorghum, oats and barley. There is currently a small trend to diversify into other areas such as aquaculture, olives, dry cotton, lupins and oil seeds such as sunflower and linseed.

Gwydir Shire has good quality and availability of groundwater. The land in the shire is of high quality overall, with parts of the area well known for its rich, black soils. The reliance on agriculture means that the area is very dependent on good seasons and the recent devastating drought has had a flow on effect that has affected all the communities.

3.1.4 Business and Retail

The shire is situated in an excellent, central location to attract manufacturing and other industries as it is approximately 50km from the Newell Highway, 450kms south of Brisbane, 1,200kms north of Melbourne and 640kms north west of Sydney.

Both Bingara and Warialda are serviced by supermarkets, hardware shops and suppliers of agricultural products, as well as a range of services such as accountants, bookkeeping, solicitors and doctors.

However, there are a limited number of retail stores with gaps in the market such as clothing, shoe shops, pampering products and a limited range of gift lines. There are snack bars and take away food in both centres, but a lack of restaurants and food variety.

The banking facilities within the shire include the National Bank in Bingara, the New England Credit Union in Bingara and Warialda, an in-store Westpac agency in Warialda and Commonwealth Bank facilities at the Post Offices. For other banking facilities, the community leaves the shire.

The lack of choice and variety in retail, hospitality, services, medical and banking facilities creates escape spending patterns as people travel to larger centres for one of the services and subsequently conduct their shopping outside the shire. This in turn creates detrimental spending for new businesses to open locally, as they need the support of the shire communities to remain viable.

Telecommunications are an important issue within the shire. With the introduction of broadband internet and improved mobile services, the number of home-based businesses has increased in the two larger centres. Satellite connections are available in some rural areas. However, many of the rural based communities identified poor, slow internet services and lack of mobile coverage as a hindrance to their business and nominated upgrading telecommunications throughout the shire as a major issue to remaining competitive in today's marketplace and essential for future expansion.

There are great variations in the economies of the shire. For instance several businesses are starting to export innovative products, aquaculture is expanding and some agricultural areas in the north of the shire are thriving whereas other sections are struggling to survive.

Another major issue affecting the Gwydir Shire is the lack of vacant land and appropriate housing for rental or purchase. The local indigenous community currently has an Aboriginal Land Rights claim over the whole shire which is inhibiting the introduction or expansion of industrial, commercial and residential land. It is imperative to resolve this issue to meet current business and community needs and future expansion.

Plumbers, electricians, builders, brick layers – in fact, most trades people are in great demand as they are either not available or very difficult to obtain. The impacts of this include having to wait a long time for quotes, let alone for the work itself and paying higher rates for the amount of travel for trades people to come to the shire. Another issue affecting the use of trades people is the shire's proximity to the Queensland border with Queensland trades people unable to practice in NSW due to licence differences, making an even smaller pool to choose from.

The lack of trades people, coupled with a strong Vocational Education program in the shire provides an opportunity to upskill local youth with a view to establishing businesses within the shire to service the trades area. Council has recently conducted a Skills Audit to identify gaps in the shire for skills, businesses and services. The information gained from this Audit will be used to attract businesses to the shire and identify training needs for long term sustainability.

3.1.5 Tourism

Tourism is steadily increasing in the shire as people leave the busier roads of the Newell and New England Highways for the more picturesque, quieter and safer roads of the Fossicker's Way, providing the most direct route from Sydney into Queensland.

The shire is currently working on an inter-regional tourism project to promote an alternative north/south touring route, particularly to the 'grey nomads'. The route will link the Gwydir, Inglewood, Milmerran and Wambo (around Dalby) Shires as an alternative route to central Queensland, through to Harvey Bay.

The Gwydir Shire has a number of attractions including the caves, horse riding, bushwalking, bird watching and a variety of waterfalls, streams, rivers and dams ideal for aquatic pursuits including fishing, canoeing or whitewater rafting. The more recognised attractions include Cranky Rock Reserve, Koorilgur Nature Walk, Myall Creek, the abundant bird and wildlife and fossicking for gold or semi-precious stones in one of the many fossicking areas.

Accommodation in the shire consists of pubs, motels and caravan parks in the major towns, with a small number of farm stays. Many of the villages nominated the development of caravan parks or bush camping sites as projects for their community programs. Developing and linking these facilities with appropriate signage and marketing materials will provide a boost to the tourism industry and entice visitors to stay longer in the shire.

Each village area has a different character and appeal that could provide visitors with a satisfying tourist experience and opportunities for increased businesses within the shire. However, lack of accommodation and poor road conditions currently limit tourism to day trips throughout the shire, so improvement of the roads and an increase in accommodation will greatly increase tourism and business opportunities. The natural beauty and heritage of the area, the friendliness of the people and the exciting and diverse range of events and activities will encourage visitors to extend their stay, return again or market the area through word of mouth.

3.1.6 Education

The Gwydir Shire places a strong focus on learning and has been working for a number of years on innovative educational practices to increase the opportunities for learning in schools and the community. Facilities include pre-schools, public and catholic schools, TAFE outreach centres and Vocational Education programs.

Gwydir Shire has a pre school in Warialda three days each week, Bingara four days each week and a mobile pre school services the shire villages one day each week for North Star, Yallaroi, Crooble, Croppa Creek and Upper Horton once a fortnight. Due to economic and geographic issues, the goal for all children to attend pre school two days a week is not being achieved throughout the shire.

Primary school education throughout the shire area has also altered over the years due to fluctuating populations tied to the economic outcomes of agricultural areas. Croppa Creek has alarmingly decreased numbers attending the primary school and is struggling to keep the school open. Upper Horton and Coolatai have lost schools in previous years, even though their current school aged population would support a local school. Many villages in the shire without a primary school in the near vicinity cannot attract new and younger families and face a decreasing and ageing population. The removal of small schools from rural areas has a huge impact and a large multiplying effect on local communities.

Historically Bingara and Warialda schools have had lower than average educational achievements, so Bingara Central School and Warialda High have made a strong commitment to Vocational Education for school age and adult students to upskill the local community.

Both schools currently offer Vocational Education Training (VET) to students as young as year 9 and have the highest number of school based traineeships in NSW. VET is also offered through TAFE and ACE (Adult Community Education) for TVET students and adults, so a wide range of courses are available.

Bingara Central School teaches students up to Year 10 and continuing senior school students attend either boarding school or Warialda High. The lack of years 11 and 12 at Bingara Central School has been an on-going issue for many years, however it is preferable to have the two schools work together to offer a wider range of courses.

Warialda High has won numerous awards in recognition of their students' achievements, winning national WorldSkills awards in hospitality, retail and business as well as many state finalists in a range of courses. Warialda High School also has a good academic record in the HSC with many students going on to tertiary education, so education levels in the shire have improved.

In a recent review of NSW education, Professor Tony Vincent highlighted the work of the two schools as a positive model for communities addressing local needs and developing strong partnerships between the local community and their schools. The Director General of Education Andrew Cappie Wood visited the shire in August 2005 to look at the achievements in Vocational Education. The shire would like to develop the model further.

Courses in Adult Education altered in late 2005 for 2006 funding decisions by state and federal governments. ACE Warialda and Bingara are outposts of Barraba Community Learning Association which is a registered training organisation, so their funding should not be affected. However, Gravesend Adult Learning Association is not registered training organisations and may not be funded after 2005, which is generating serious concern for the communities involved.

Until now, many of the educational courses were delivered to meet community needs and it has been possible to attend practical courses such as sewing, craft, art, woodwork etc. These courses bring the community together and build skills, confidence and self esteem, providing socialising opportunities that assist in developing community pride and sense of place. Under this new educational model, these courses won't be supported any more and outcomes will only be measured on Vocational Education courses.

Personal development and community development are valuable and integral parts of economic development. Many country people are isolated by long distances, hardships and economic issues and leisure learning courses provide a social and educational forum that delivers a range of benefits. They contribute to the general well being of rural communities, especially in a mental health context as people need somewhere to share their concerns and gain support. They are often the highlight of a community person's week and are a necessary part of the fabric of rural communities. The outcomes are more

difficult to measure, but certainly generate self esteem and confidence which in turn encourages the development of enterprises and initiatives within the community that increase quality of life. It is hoped that the governments will recognise the value of non-vocational courses and continue to support all learning outcome needs for communities.

3.1.7 Health and Community Services:

The Shire's main centres of Bingara and Warialda are serviced by modern medical centres and hospitals, both of which are in line to be upgraded to multipurpose health services. There are self care units for aged care in both communities managed by Council. There are also services to assist the aged and the disabled to remain independent in their homes, including Home and Community Care Services, Community Transport and Community Health Services.

However, lack of health care services was nominated by the rural communities as a major issue. These communities visit specialists in larger centres or rely on visiting services from Inverell or Moree as the population base isn't large enough to be considered in initial health and community services planning. There is a need to lobby at a regional level to ensure access to services and to attract travelling specialists to the shire to stop people having to travel large distances to access them in larger centres.

Both Bingara and Warialda provide Centrelink Agencies that enable the community to access this service without the need to travel to a major centre. Both towns also have a library and a Tourist Information Centre.

Bingara and Warialda have swimming pools and good sporting facilities. Swimming and football are strongly supported, but many other sports are struggling to have stand-alone competitions through lack of volunteers to manage the sports. Those who are currently managing local sports are burned out and struggling to keep them going. Many families join sporting associations in larger centres such as Inverell or Moree.

Sport has economic as well as social benefits for an area. When competitions or sporting days are presented in rural towns, a large influx of people attends the events and spends money in the area. Local sports create socialising activities for adults as well as helping youth to establish friendships that carry through into high school and create a sense of community. Current issues affecting sports in Gwydir Shire include insurance, sourcing and training volunteers and looking at creative ways of running sports through schools to keep the sports within the shire.

3.1.8 Gwydir Shire Community Planning

The shire has strong connections within each community, making them self sufficient and self reliant with immense community pride. Gwydir Shire Council has taken an innovative approach to community consultation by obtaining funding from the Department of State and Regional Development to conduct a

series of community strategic planning workshops in eight communities throughout the new shire.

The process has provided valuable information to Council by making them aware of local community issues and their needs and expectations. It has established 'self help' programs in each community taking a 'bottom up' approach to community economic development, with each community identifying relevant issues and projects, upskilling and becoming more organised and proactive in improving their quality of life.

The process has also established a Community Consultation Network that links all the communities to Council and to each other via email, with occasional face to face meetings by the chair of each program, as required. This network will open up communication channels and assist in building community capacity by developing relationships and networks within the shire, with all stakeholders working together as a team towards agreed goals. The Network will provide Council with a tool to consult community programs on issues that arise and the communities can interact with each other, such as supporting each other's events or combining on funding applications for issues that affect a range of communities in the same area.

After completion of the initial workshops, feedback from the communities has been excellent, with a positive feeling that 'something is starting to happen'. The next stage of the process will include the establishment of regular meetings in each community to plan and implement the projects nominated on their community plans and Council to establish a small community grant for each location. This grant money can be used by each community as matching funds for government funding programs, nominating Council as the sponsoring organisation and thereby creating a true partnership between communities, Council, state and federal government departments.

3.2 Warialda

Warialda is situated on the Gwydir Highway between Inverell and Moree. It is nestled amid hills, majestic trees and bush scrubland that are a delight to residents, visitors and nature lovers alike.

In the 1840's the site of Warialda became the headquarters for the Assistant Commissioner for Crown Land, as beurocracy was needed to administer the Gwydir Squatting Run. Warialda became the centre of the region, preceding towns such as Inverell and Moree and was the oldest pioneer settlement in the colony of NSW. In fact, at one stage Warialda was known as the furthest settlement from England. Many of the beautiful buildings in the township today originated from this era, such as the Courthouse, Post Office, Council Chambers and Carinda House. There are 15 National Trust listed buildings and a local guide has been prepared for a walking tour around most of these buildings.

The majority of land surrounding Warialda was held by a few prominent landholders on large sheep stations such as Yallaroj, Croppa and Gournama. These stations

have been subdivided and local farmers are now involved in mixed farming of stock and cropping.

Agriculture has altered over the past decades and employment has been severely reduced throughout this industry, particularly over the past few years with the crippling drought. There has been a downfall in employment, a loss of disposable income and salaried positions, greater reliance on welfare and the loss of younger people.

Warialda is easily accessible with regular coach services connecting with rail and air services from Tamworth. Another coach service runs from Moree through to Inverell and onto the Gold Coast region.

Warialda has a surprising number of facilities and organisations for a small town, including a Golf and Bowling Club, Apex Club, Rotary Club, CWA, NSW Farmers Federation, P&A, Tennis Club, Garden Club, Cultural Committee, Football Club, Show Society and Chamber of Commerce. The town also boasts an Olympic swimming pool, a caravan park, a 9-hole golf course, bowling greens, squash courts, indoor sports arena, lovely parks, heritage centre and local heritage items, arts and crafts.

Warialda has a community-run pre school, two primary schools and a high school, Adult Community Education and a number of TAFE courses. Warialda also has a medical centre, a 25 bed hospital and Naroo Hostel, a 14 bed aged care unit. There are emergency services including police, ambulance, fire, Rural bush Fire Service and State Emergency Service.

Warialda lacks social and financial services, child care facilities, full time relief doctors and dentist, there are no medical specialists or Medicare Service and there is limited further education and training facilities post high school, limited entertainment, particularly for youth and a lack of transportation, particularly for the elderly.

There have been service losses and reductions in Warialda over the past decade, many caused by the centralisation of services, include the loss of Telecom, North Power, the Westpac Bank, rail service and reduction of the National Bank and Soil Conservation Service. Many businesses have closed, including the sawmill, car dealer and auto repairs, bakeries and several fashion retail outlets.

Warialda is situated between Inverell and Moree and there is a consistent level of escape spending. Inverell is closer for chain stores and large supermarkets and Moree has many specialised machinery and metal fabrication services that are used in the agricultural sector. Warialda also has an increasing retiree component to the population, so a day trip to other centres is considered recreational and much needed dollars for the local economy are spent out of town.

However, there are many opportunities for Warialda as the township is well situated on a recognised travel and transport route from north to south and east to west. Warialda's position could be used to attract new development. There is also potential to increase the tourism sector, to diversify agriculture using the Shire's good quality land, to expand the use of modern technology and the ability to capitalise on the

lifestyle in the town by attracting new residents and businesses with low cost housing, low crime rate and a friendly, cohesive and welcoming community.

Warialda's has a friendly, enthusiastic community spirit. The community has a willingness to gather around those in need and they have raised large sums of money and volunteered large numbers of hours for charity and community projects.

3.3 Warialda Works Program

The Warialda District Development Task Force was formed in 1998 as a direct result of the closure of the sawmill, loss of businesses and the closure of a Telecom service base.

Early in 2000 the group was renamed the Yallaroi Development Group and they undertook several activities on behalf of the community, including promotion of the town library facilities, the Gem Stone Centre, the Gravesend Spring Affair, Carinda House, creek beautification, acquisition of a town bus, better mobile phone coverage, the Kogarah Tourers Promotion and the 150 Anniversary Back to Warialda event.

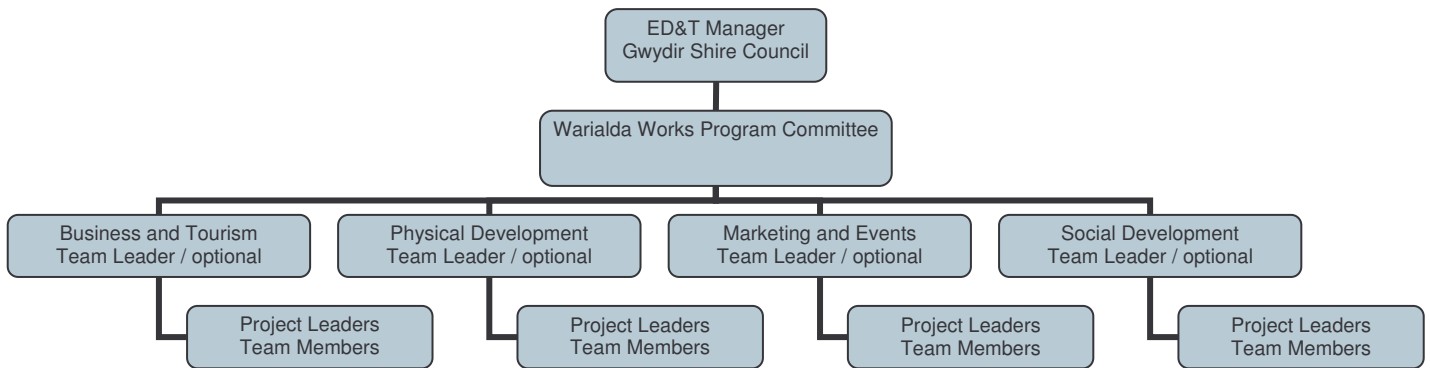
The group was also responsible for the appointment and part funding of an Economic Development Officer in 2001.

A community Strategic Planning Workshop was part funded by the Department of State and Regional Development (DSRD) through their Main Street/Small Towns Program and held in April 2001 to produce the first community strategic plan.

In October 2003 a Review Strategic Planning Workshop was funded by the DSRD and the Yallaroi Shire Council to review and update the community strategic plan. After the amalgamation of Yallaroi Shire into the Gwydir Shire, Warialda held a second Review Strategic Planning Workshop in May 2005.

During the workshop previous achievements were acknowledged and current issues were identified, prioritised and placed under key result areas. Attendees nominated short, medium and long term projects to address these issues. Project Leaders were identified for each project, where possible. The name 'Warialda Works Program' was chosen during the 2003 workshop process. The vision statement was also chosen during the 2003 workshop process, but the mission statement was devised from the objectives of each group in the 2005 planning process.

The program meets regularly every month to discuss issues and plan and implement projects from the strategic plan. Participants work together as a single group on a project-by-project basis and the Chair works and liaises with the Economic Development and Tourism Manager from Gwydir Shire Council. The following organisational structure is a suggested model to outline the program's lines of communication:



- The Project Team members report to their Project Leader
- The Project Leaders report to the Warialda Works Committee - the Chair of the committee is spokesperson and gatekeeper to the program
- The Committee reports to the Gwydir Shire Council
- The Committee is linked to other communities in the shire via email on the Gwydir Shire Community Consultation Network



4. COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS

Warialda community achievements since the inception of the program were noted in the 2003 Community Plan. The following projects are the achievements since that process:

- Pots and shrubs have been established in the main street and the Garden Club has been approached to maintain the shrubs
- A Skate Park has been established in Warialda
- The River Walk has been established
- Training in Business Planning
- The WAITE event was re-established in 2004
- Ryan Building sold and two existing businesses moved into the renovated premises with expanded businesses
- Development of a Waste Management business is under development
- Promotion of business opportunities
 - Skills, Business and Service Gaps Survey
 - Business Survey (BRE)
 - Business and Community Directory
 - Country Week event in Sydney, 2005 will be second year of participation
- NBN television campaign completed – second campaign in planning stages
- Tourism Marketing Plan and Tourism Signage Strategy – funding obtained, will be completed by the end of 2005
- Gwydir Brochure is currently being updated for the second print run
- Small brochure on Fossicking is now available at the Information Centre
- Some tourist buses are now stopping in Warialda - ongoing and long term project
- The Walking Track from Fish Ponds to Cranky Rock is in the early development stage
- The Audio History of Warialda is in the early development stage
- The Aboriginal Heritage Trail has had research conducted and the project has commenced, however it is not a walking trail as it is too long
- The mural project has applied for a grant and is currently researching options
- New street flags were developed for Christmas 2004
- Parking for caravans and trailers has been established behind the old Council sheds
- The Motor Sports Venue project – the community advised that Council has approved a site for the venue, project to be progressed
- Some seating has been established at the creek
- Establish a radio station – the CTC investigated this project, but it was not financially viable, so the project did not go ahead
- Website for the Gwydir shire currently being developed - the Warialda Website is being phased into the new Gwydir Country website on www.gwydircountry.com
- Minutes of the Warialda Works Program are available on the Gwydir website
- A Community Calendar of Events has been established - links have been established to the website for the Calendar
- Establish additional child care needs: A survey was conducted to identify child care needs; community meetings were developed between child care agencies and the community; assistance has been obtained by Council via the schools for families with young children

- Several new businesses have started in Warialda
 - Exporting agricultural equipment overseas
 - Repairing agricultural machinery and employing locals
 - New mini excavator business
 - Handyman business
 - Blacksmith
 - Coffee shop has opened up in the main street
 - Insight Accounting Business Services
- The Fruit Shop has been upgraded and is now owned by young people
- The Newsagency has new owners
- Rose & Sons have purchased a bigger excavator
- Cameron, Kirk and Rose accountants have upgraded their business
- The Supermarket has sealed their carpark
- The main street has been re-sealed and looks great
- One of the service stations has been purchased and will be refurbished with the addition of a Convenience Store
- A Lookout has been developed at Three Mile Hill
- New nurses' accommodation is currently under construction at the hospital
- Three football teams have been established – a major attribute for Warialda
- An office for the Tourism Information and Economic Development Centre is in the planning stages
- The Post Office has been re-vamped and heritage items on display
- One Playgroup has been extended and a new one has started
- Adult Education has expanded with 30-40 people attending classes
- The Second Hand Shed has been re-vamped and is no longer an eyesore
- Carinda House has a new courtyard
- Naroo has installed a new laundry
- New England Credit Union has now provided full banking services
- A new HAACC building has been established
- Two and a quarter shires have amalgamated to form the new Gwydir Shire with the best optional outcomes possible from the merger

5. GWYDIR SHIRE COMMUNITY VALUES

A shire-wide community survey was conducted alongside the planning process. People were asked to nominate what they valued about living in the area. A summary of their major responses included:

- Friendly, caring people / sense of belonging to a community
- Peaceful and quiet / lifestyle / country values
- Safe / low crime rates
- Beautiful environment / space / clean
- Good facilities
- Agriculture / farming
- Good business / industry
- Cheaper/affordable living

The following Values Statement was formed:

Community Values Statement:

“Gwydir Shire communities value their friendly, caring people and strong sense of belonging to a community, peaceful and safe rural lifestyle, beautiful natural environment, rich agricultural land and good business opportunities”



Court House

6. SWOT

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • location • history / war museum • climate • community support • people • friendly native vegetation • relatively crime free • Cranky Rock/Sculpture Park • good schools • natural environment • health services, particularly our GP • agricultural productivity • affordable housing • proximity to Myall Creek site • Aboriginal history • sporting facilities • not over populated • abundance of land (though blocks are too small) • excellent country show • community organisations • good quality air • untapped resources of our youth • scenic area • everyone knows each other • vocational education • biker's rally • adult education • optometrist • bush poetry night • WAITE • clean public toilets • shire is helpful • Off Road even • skate park • school sports carnival re-introduced • council amalgamation • lack of serious crime • good caravan park • Christmas Carnival <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • under utilisation of resources • Australia's best kept secret -lack of town promotion 	<p>Weaknesses continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of employment • lack of population • lack of activities for youth • no child care • vulnerable to big business and government decisions • poor roads/infrastructure • committee burnout • lack of town loyalty/escape spending • heavy reliance on limited primary industry – and freighting it • location • lack of value adding to agricultural produce • perception that you will get better elsewhere • lack of political candidates • businesses not supporting business in town • lack of marketing and new businesses • lack of manufacturing industry • some run down buildings and environment • lack of accommodation, especially rental • community perceptions • pessimistic attitudes • business owners/skate boarders • negative attitude of some youth • generations gap • failure of community to realise they are ambassadors • business/customer relations • no dentist • lack of housing • roads • police visibility • shabby courthouse and surrounds • no taxis • lack of staffing at Health Service • inadequate signage eg lack of advertising at town approaches • rubbish tip • lack of building blocks • town water quality • lack of venture capital • the 'we have nothing to offer tourism' attitude
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<p>Weaknesses continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of trades people – panel beater, auto electrician, brick layer etc • professional people not living in or supporting Warialda • insufficient volunteers <p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • external bureaucratic decisions • public liability • lack of youth returning/ remaining • further council amalgamation • school drift eg Inverell Senior College, private schools • loss of professional/skilled people • soil degradation • people choosing to work in the area and not live in the area (often due to lack of rental accommodation) • escape spending • out of town development • Brigalow Belt Bio Region decisions eg pine forest lost jobs • farm amalgamations – less population, less jobs • insurance • Woolwaite – deregulation of pharmacy • Kids skating on footpaths <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agricultural diversity • use natural resources • conferences/retreats • use of race track • recycling/ban polystyrene • cultural ability • building and construction • economic development • museum/history • training and education • hunting and fishing • transport/truck stop • creek beautification • location for ethanol plant • pony club • retirees/promotion 	<p>Opportunities continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • affordable commercial property • wish list in local paper • youth centre • proactive/united community • exit survey • friends of Warialda • fossicking • research from McMaster farm • flexible childcare • promote off road racing / motor sport • promotional range of flag poles at entrances • develop walking trails • antique car show • older men, new ideas (OMNI) • farm tours • new Inland Rail line • traffic - Newell Highway • promote heritage/history • backpackers • new businesses and trades people – bakery, panel beater, brick layer, auto electrician • paint the buildings, revamp heritage paints, bull nosed verandahs • sell or demolish old sale yards • another caravan park village with small units to cater for buses and increase accommodation • Korean Homestay – strong educational links, especially English learning for students) • RSL Centre for Warialda • new rubbish tip • music tuition • Coordinate events with body equivalent to Moree on a Plate • liaise with district Aborigines to advise of activities • businesses to conduct a survey of tourist visitation • skill centre / high school / flora culture • development of facilities for the aged / community • promote agriculture facilities • promote sporting facilities • community upskilling • promotion of chamber / new members • farm stays and B&Bs • information technology • develop tourism
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7. VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Vision Statement:

The following Vision Statement was developed in 2003 in a previous planning process:

“The Warialda community is actively involved in maintaining and promoting business and social opportunities in a safe, caring, rural environment”

Mission Statement:

The following Mission Statement was developed from the objectives of the 2005 planning process:

**“Develop opportunities for business, agriculture, tourism, events and promotion.
Beautify the town and environment, improve facilities, youth and social opportunities”**



Council Chambers

8. KEY RESULT AREAS AND PRIORITISED ISSUES

The following key result areas were established:

- Business and Tourism Development
- Physical Development
- Marketing and Events
- Social Development

The following issues were nominated by the community and prioritised in order:

- Develop New and Existing Businesses
- Beautify Town and Shops
- Events
- Health Services
- Aged Care and Retirees
- Youth
- Creek Beautification
- Agriculture
- Develop Tourism Products
- Marketing
- Health and Fitness
- Golf Course Improvements
- Road Improvements and Parking
- Promote Tourism
- Parks and Recreation
- Improve Community Communication
- Police
- Childcare
- Signage
- Education

9. OBJECTIVES AND PROJECT PLANNING

9.1 BUSINESS AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Objective:

To improve opportunities for business, agriculture and tourism

- Establish a new slogan for Warialda, a UNE Internship program, a Small Business Mentor Program, a Shopping Basket Survey and a retailer/tourism Postcode Survey by December 2007.

Issues:

- Develop New and Existing Businesses
- Agriculture
- Develop Tourism Products
- Promote Tourism

Business, Tourism and Agriculture Program of Projects:

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
Develop new and existing businesses	Chamber to investigate UNE Internship program – eg use marketing student 300 hours for three separate small, new businesses as a trial for a future ongoing program	Short
	Develop a Small and Micro Business Mentor Program.	Short – long
	Conduct a Shopping Basket Survey to ascertain price differences to research escape spending	Short
	Develop business training – initially seek funding for Shop Merchandise and Window Displays training for retailers.	Medium
	Lobby Council to develop an Industrial Estate	Medium
Agriculture	Develop a range of educational agricultural tours	Medium
	Establish an ongoing relationship with UNE and conduct research trials and field walks	Long
Promote tourism	Work with the consultant to develop the Tourism Marketing Plan	Short
	Investigate a new slogan for Warialda for promotional purposes	Short
	Conduct a Postcode Survey with Warialda retailers for a two week period to gauge number of tourists utilizing local businesses	Short
	Develop a shire wide accommodation listing for the website	Short
	Develop tourism brochures with self drive tours marked to the villages, using Warialda as a base	Medium
Develop tourism products	Develop guided and/or self drive tours	Medium
	Incorporate Warialda into backpackers visiting Bingara – develop bus / activity packages	Medium
	Develop more accommodation options in Warialda and surrounding area – B&Bs, farm or homestays etc	Long

9.2 PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Objective:

To beautify the town and environment and improve signage, roads, parking and facilities

- Establish a main street clean up working bee and new shrubs in pots, a Streetscape Plan for Warialda, a BBQ and seating at the creek, Christmas theme in CBD shops, street banners, cemetery signage and lobby Council for more regular main street area maintenance by December 2007.

Issues:

- Beautify Town and Shops
- Creek Beautification
- Road Improvements and Parking
- Health and Fitness
- Golf Course Improvements
- Parks and Recreation
- Develop Shop Buildings
- Signage

Physical Development Program of Projects:

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
Beautify town/ shops	Establish new shrubs in the pots in the main street area suitable for soil type and conditions	Short
	Establish a Christmas theme in shop windows to promote Christmas spending in November and December periods	Short
	Improve cleaning and window dressing of shop windows – conduct a campaign to encourage retailers to upgrade their shop windows	short
	Establish murals	Short
	Develop a Streetscape Plan for Warialda	Short
	Establish a Community Working Bee to clean main streets	Short
	Lobby Council for more regular cleaning of Warialda streets, especially main street area	Short
	Remove the power poles from the main street area and replace with heritage type lighting and improve lighting under shop awnings	Medium
	Paint the power poles throughout Warialda	medium
	Improve the Courthouse grounds	Medium
	Beautify the Old Cemetery	Medium
	Establish a Paint the Buildings Program. Develop a package of benefits to encourage property owners to paint their buildings in uniform or heritage colours in the main street area	Medium
	Establish more trees for shade in the CBD	Long
Lobby the Home Improvement Show to come to Warialda to enhance CBD area	Long	

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
Creek beautification	Establish a BBQ at the creek with seating	Short
	Establish Botanical Gardens with walkways, water effects and seating	Medium
	Develop more walking tracks along the creek / maintain existing ones	Long
Road improvements/ parking	Fix up driveway entrance to the Heritage Centre	Short
	Improve the parking behind the Heritage building	Medium
	Improve the main streets in the CBD	Medium
	Conduct general road improvements in Warialda	Medium
Health and Fitness	Develop a men's health group through OMNI (older men, new ideas)	Short
	Establish landing lights for the airstrip for emergency landings at night	Medium
	Develop a fitness circuit	Medium
	Establish a public gym	Long
Golf Course Improvements	Establish pop up sprinklers using affluent for a green course all year round	Short
	Establish lights for night golf	Long
Parks and Recreation	Establish facilities at the Skate Park	Short
	Establish facilities at the Captain Cook Park	Short
	Establish a Rotunda at the Captain Cook Park	Medium
	Establish better toilets and showers at the Showground	Medium
	Establish a Motor Sports Venue	Long
Develop new shop buildings	Develop new buildings or renovate older ones for new businesses	Long
Signage	Establish street banner flags for individual events in Warialda	Short
	Develop signage in the Old Cemetery	Short
	Encourage retailers to upgrade their signage in the CBD area	Short
	Upgrade directional signage in town	Medium
	Develop tourism signage eg for walks, fossicking, creek lands	medium

9.3 MARKETING AND EVENTS

Objective:

To develop and promote events, market Warialda and improve community communications

- Establish a photograph register, a television marketing campaign, regular outdoor movie screenings, a flagship event and investigate a name change for WAITE by December 2007.

Issues:

- Events
- Marketing
- Improve Community Communication

Marketing and Events Program of Projects:

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
Events	Investigate a possible name change for WAITE - continue to develop this event	Short
	Extend use of the community bus for bigger events	Short
	Lobby Council to develop a Cultural Policy for Warialda and shire	Short
	Establish a flagship event for Warialda by combining a series of smaller events together	Medium
	Establish Musica Viva concerts and live music events	Medium
	Establish Outdoor Movie screenings as a regular event	Medium
Marketing	Establish a register of photographs of Warialda, events, people and the surrounding rural area to use for marketing purposes	Short
	Conduct an NBN television marketing campaign for Warialda and the Gwydir Shire	Short
	Develop marketing materials to promote Warialda to new residents and businesses	Short
	Represent Warialda at trade shows to promote lifestyle and attract new residents and businesses to town	Short - long
Improve community communication	Continue to expand and update the Calendar of Events including all towns in the shire	Short
	Assist Council to develop the Community and Business Directory listing all services and businesses. Update on an annual or bi-annual basis.	Short

8.4 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Objective:

To develop opportunities for youth, health, child care, education and community safety

- Establish a community bus run to health specialists, a fundraising scheme for children's travel assistance, a Holiday Vacation Care program, a business workshop and a survey to identify Adult Education needs by December 2007.

Issues:

- Health Services
- Aged Care and Retirees
- Youth
- Police
- Childcare
- Education

Social Development Program of Projects:

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
Health Services	Establish visiting rooms and attract visiting specialists to Warialda to assist workload of local doctors and extend medical services	Short
	Establish a Community Bus run to appropriate centres on a regularly scheduled timetable to assist residents visiting out of town specialists	Short
Aged Care and Retirees	Establish a Community Bus run to Moree for hot baths for aged and community members	Short
Youth	Establish a fundraising scheme to provide travel assistance for kids to travel for sporting or cultural events	Short
	Establish a PCYC or similar facility for youth	Medium
Police	Lobby government for more police presence in Warialda	Medium
Child care	Establish a Holiday Vacation Care program with activities for kids over the school holidays	Short
	Lobby government for assisted child care services	Medium
Education	Educate businesses with a program of regular guest speakers at information / network seminars	Short
	Conduct a Community Survey to compile a list of adult education needs in Warialda and establish a program of Adult Learning to address those needs	Medium

10. SUMMARY OF PROJECTS

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
BUSINESS AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT		
Develop new and existing businesses	Chamber to investigate use of the UNE Internship program	Short
	Develop a Small and Micro Business Mentor Program	Short – long
	Conduct a Shopping Basket Survey	Short
	Develop business training – initially establish funding for Merchandising and Shop Window display training	Medium
	Lobby Council to develop an Industrial Estate	Medium
Agriculture	Develop a range of educational agricultural tours	Medium
	Establish an ongoing relationship with UNE and conduct research trials and field walks	Long
Promote tourism	Develop the Tourism Marketing Plan	Short
	Investigate a new slogan for Warialda	Short
	Conduct a Postcode Survey with Warialda retailers	Short
	Develop a shire wide accommodation listing for the website	Short
	Develop tourism brochures with self drive tours marked to the villages, using Warialda as a base	Medium
Develop tourism products	Develop guided and/or self drive tours	Medium
	Incorporate Warialda into backpackers visiting Bingara – develop bus / activity packages	Medium
	Develop more accommodation options in Warialda and surrounding area	Long
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT		
Beautify town/ shops	Establish a Christmas theme in shop windows	Short
	Establish new shrubs in the pots in the main street	Short
	Improve cleaning and window dressing of CBD shop windows	Short
	Develop a Streetscape Plan for Warialda	Short
	Establish murals	short
	Establish community Working Bee / clean main streets	Short
	Lobby Council for more regular cleaning of Warialda streets, especially main street area	Short
	Remove the power poles from the main street area and replace with heritage lighting and improve lighting under shop awnings	Medium
	Paint the power poles throughout Warialda	medium
	Improve the Courthouse grounds	Medium
	Beautify the Old Cemetery	Medium
	Establish a Paint the Buildings Program.	Medium
	Establish more trees for shade in CBD	Long
	Lobby the Home Improvement Show to come to Warialda to enhance CBD area	Long
Creek beautification	Establish a BBQ at the creek with seating	Short
	Establish Botanical Gardens with walkways, water effects and seating	Medium
	Develop more walking tracks along the creek and maintain existing ones	Long

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT continued		
Road improvements/ parking	Fix up the driveway entrance to the Heritage Centre	Short
	Improve the parking behind the Heritage building	Medium
	Improve the main streets in the CBD	Medium
	Conduct general road improvements in Warialda	Medium
Health and Fitness	Establish landing lights for the airstrip for emergency landings	Medium
	Develop a fitness circuit	Medium
	Establish a public gym	Long
Golf Course Improvements	Establish pop up sprinklers using affluent	Short
	Establish lights for night golf	Long
Parks and Recreation	Establish facilities at the Skate Park	Short
	Establish facilities at the Captain Cook Park	Short
	Establish a Rotunda at the Captain Cook Park	Medium
	Establish better toilets and showers at the Showground	Medium
	Establish a Motor Sports Venue	Long
Develop new shop buildings	Develop new buildings or renovate older ones for new businesses	Long
Signage	Establish street banner flags for individual events	Short
	Develop signage in the Old Cemetery	Short
	Encourage retailers to upgrade their signage	Short
	Upgrade directional signage in town	Medium
	Develop tourism signage	medium
MARKETING AND EVENTS		
Events	Investigate a possible name change for WAITE, continue to develop this event	Short
	Extend use of the community bus for bigger events	Short
	Lobby Council to develop a Cultural Policy	Short
	Establish a flagship event for Warialda – combine smaller events	Medium
	Establish Musica Viva concerts and live music events	Medium
	Establish Outdoor Movie screenings	Medium
Marketing	Establish a register of photographs for marketing purposes	Short
	Develop marketing materials to promote Warialda to new residents and businesses	Short
	Represent Warialda at trade shows to promote lifestyle and attract new residents and businesses	Short - long
Improve community communication	Continue to expand and update the Calendar of Events including all towns in the shire	Short
	Assist Council to develop the Community and Business Directory	Short

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT		
Health Services	Establish visiting rooms and attract visiting specialists	Short
	Establish a Community Bus run to appropriate centres on a scheduled timetable for residents to visit specialists	Short
	Develop a men's health group through OMNI	Short
Aged Care and Retirees	Establish a Community Bus run to Moree for hot baths for aged and community members	Short
Youth	Establish a fundraising scheme to provide travel assistance for kids for sporting and cultural activities	Short
	Establish a PCYC or similar facility for youth	Medium
Police	Lobby government for more police presence in Warialda	Medium
Child care	Establish a Holiday Vacation Care program with activities for kids over the school holidays	Short
	Lobby government for assisted child care services	Medium
Education	Educate businesses with a program of regular guest speakers at information / network seminars	Short
	Conduct a Community Survey to compile a list of adult education needs in Warialda and establish a program of Adult Learning	Medium