

DRAFT

WYONG SHIRE COUNCIL

# community plan

SUMMARY REPORT

2008 - 2013



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## Mayoral Introduction

Councillor Warren Welham  
MAYOR





## Acknowledgements

The Community Plan has been co-ordinated and developed by Council's Social Planning Team which is within the Future Planning Unit.

The project was overseen by an internal Council and an external Community Steering Committee. The Committees were established to input and guide the process. The Council Steering Committee comprised representatives from Council's Future Planning, Community Development, Library Services, Open Space & Recreation, Natural Resources and Community Education Units.

The Community Steering Committee comprised representatives from government and non-government agencies.

The community consultation phase was a joint initiative between Council's Social Planning and Community Development teams.

Council would like to thank those residents who participated in the consultation processes and shared their stories and perceptions about life in Wyong Shire – the time invested has been integral to the plan's development.





## Background

The Wyong Shire Community Plan 2008 - 2013 is a document that reflects the challenges, aspirations and key social issues facing our community. It is intended as a guiding document for government and non government agencies, community groups and the local community for working together to make Wyong Shire an even better place to live.

The Community Plan 2008-2013 comprises this Summary Report and a Main Report.

The process of developing a Community Plan aims to investigate and respond to the challenges and aspirations of all people who live in, work and visit the Shire. The planning process identifies demographic and other trends; community strengths and challenges; and an action strategy to assist in improving the quality of life of our community.

The purpose of the Community Plan is to clearly identify:

- Who makes up our community?
- What is important to our community?
- How can Council and others improve the quality of life of our community?

Developing a Community Plan is a statutory requirement for Councils. The Local Government (General) Amendment (Community and Social Plans) Regulation 1998 requires all Councils in NSW to develop a Social/Community Plan every 5 years and to include information about access and equity activities in their Management Plan and Annual Report.

## Objective

The objectives of the Community Plan are:

- To provide an understanding of the Wyong Shire population and demographic trends;
- To develop an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the growing population within the Shire;





- To engage the community in the planning process and provide opportunities to participate in decision making processes;
- To develop diverse, strong and sustainable relationships between community members, with government and with other key stakeholders working in Wyong Shire;
- To acknowledge and build social capital in the Shire through the development of ongoing community networks and structures providing informal support to local residents;
- To improve Council's ability to respond to changing community priorities;
- To integrate the social aspects of sustainability with the broader sustainability principles and strategic planning processes of Council; and
- To set the strategic direction and actions for Council in providing current and long term direction for social planning and community development in the Shire.

### **Key Principles**

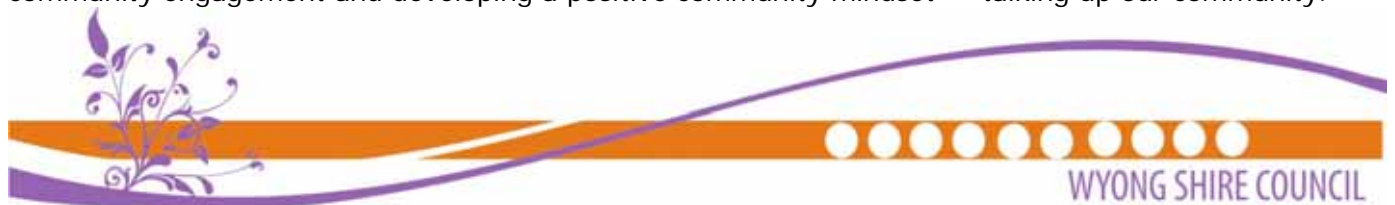
The Community Plan is based on the four social justice principles of Equity, Rights, Access and Participation.

The Plan has been developed from a strengths based approach, recognising the importance of social capital and building on our strengths and assets, rather than solely focusing on what is missing in our community (needs and deficiencies).

### **Council's Role**

Wyong Council has established an important role in providing current and long term direction for social planning and community development in the Shire. Council provides leadership to the community and is a strong advocate for Wyong Shire on the key issues and challenges faced by the community.

As well as providing high quality services, Council also has a key role in community strengthening, community engagement and developing a positive community mindset – “talking up our community.”





Council's leadership role can be fulfilled in a number of ways, either as a facilitator, enabler, broker or partner. Council seeks to engage with other levels of government, non-government agencies and the community to guide planning and provision of facilities and services and develop the capacity of our communities.

### **Link to Other Plans**

The Community Plan is a key part of Council's overall planning framework and is the main comprehensive planning document for guiding the activities of Council and the community in relation to the enhancement of social and community outcomes.

The Community Plan link's into Council's management planning and strategic planning framework.

Council is also working to integrate the various plans and planning processes to ensure that the organisation is moving in the same direction towards a vision. The Community Plan is closely related to the current development of a 20 year Shire Strategic Vision.

The Vision will look at *our community*, *our economy* and *our environment* with further consideration given to *infrastructure* and *governance*. The detailed work undertaken in developing the Community Plan, including the results of the extensive community consultation process and quality of life research, will feed directly into the vision process and will assist in setting the directions for the *community* aspect of the vision. It is not intended that another detailed community consultation process will be undertaken as part of the Vision project. A key outcome of the Shire Strategic Vision will be ensuring Council focuses its resources on the issues that are most important to our residents and their future.

The Community Plan also sets/directs the work programs of a number of sections of Council and is the umbrella or overarching document for a number of other plans and strategies, for example, the Cultural Plan and Community Pride Strategy.





## Methodology

The Wyong Shire Community Plan is the culmination of an extensive consultation and research process and has been developed from evidence-based research. Included in the process was a demographic analysis; a review of other relevant plans and social research; a review of the 2002 Community Plan; a research project to develop a framework to measure and monitor quality of life; and a five month community consultation phase using a range of qualitative methods.

A diverse range of residents and stakeholders were engaged in the development of the plan.

### Demographic Analysis

Key socio-economic and demographic data from the 2006 Census was used to provide a snapshot of the Shire and to gain a better understanding of our community: who we are, what we do and how we live and of key social trends.

### Literature Review and Social Research

Relevant regional, state and federal policies and plans were reviewed to provide a context for development of the plan and to identify current and emerging social issues, trends and best practice methodologies.

### Review of the 2002 Community Plan

The previously adopted Community Plan was reviewed to identify key achievements and the effectiveness of the process undertaken in preparing the plan – how could we improve this time?

The 2002 Community Plan proved to be a valuable resource document for service providers and community groups. While progress was made against many action areas, other actions were not completed due to changing priorities, the large number of actions and limited resources. In developing the 2008-2013 plan, key improvements have been made to the community consultation process and identifying clearer priorities for each year of implementation to enable improved integration with Council's Management Plan.







## Central Coast Quality of Life Framework

Council has partnered with the CSIRO and Gosford Council to identify what quality of life means for local residents and to consider the best approach to measure and monitor this. A quality of life framework was developed looking at quality of life according to seven life domains: standard of living, achievements in life, personal relationships, community connectedness, feeling of safety and future security.

The Community Plan has provided the vehicle for Council to move forward with establishing a baseline of subjective quality of life data.

## Community Consultation

The consultation phase was conducted between June and November 2007. As well as providing an excellent source of information to inform the plan, this process has also been positive for the community. Council recognised that it was important to value and actively pursue the contributions that the community can make to the future directions of the Shire and that the people who have the most experience of living in their communities are the residents who actually live there. Hence, local residents were consulted first.

The community has invested significant time and energy into the Community Plan. Over 1,300 people were engaged and valued the opportunity to be involved. Many of these residents have expressed a desire to be involved in future programs, projects and activities within their own community and the wider community of the Shire.

A number of best practice research methods were used to undertake the consultation process. These methods were based on an appreciative enquiry technique which emphasises the telling of stories from local residents about what it is like to live in Wyong Shire, rather than a focus on satisfaction with Council services.

- Focus Groups – Council sought to engage with a broad range of residents across the Shire, both target group and geographically based, by going out and connecting with existing groups e.g. playgroups, service clubs, community and sporting groups. Over 400 residents participated in the 35 focus groups.





- Community Conversations – conversations were held with individual residents who were considered to be “social glue” or people with many connections in their community. 40 residents participated in an individual conversation.
- Quality of Life Survey – the Central Coast Research Foundation was contracted to conduct this survey (as part of a partnership project between Wyong and Gosford Councils). The aim was to obtain information about residents attitudes and perceptions about the seven quality of life domains and overall wellbeing. 1500 Central Coast residents (700 from Wyong Shire) participated in a random 25 minute household telephone survey.
- Community Art Project – a creative consultation technique called photovoice was conducted. The photos and commentary form part of the launch of the Community Plan.
- Service Provider Consultation – Two ideas forums were held with representatives from services, agencies and organizations working in Wyong Shire using the world café technique. Over 50 agencies (including health, education, housing, family support, community services) were involved in the forums. They were asked to consider the information collected from residents; add value and knowledge to this information; and suggest ideas and practical ways to move forward.
- Steering Committees – Both internal and external steering committees were established to oversee the development of the Community Plan. Each committee met five times during plan development to guide and provide feedback on the process, theming and the development of strategies and actions.

All quotations contained within this document are taken directly from residents who participated in the community consultation process.



Who makes up  
our community?





## Demographic Overview and Social Indicators

### Regional Context

Wyong Shire, together with Gosford City, form the Central Coast Region of NSW. The region is strategically positioned between the two major cities of Sydney and Newcastle. Other neighbouring local government areas (LGAs) include Lake Macquarie and Cessnock.

### Wyong Shire

Wyong Shire covers approximately 830 square kilometres. The Shire is bordered to the east by the Pacific Ocean and has a coastline of 35 kilometres stretching from Bateau Bay to Catherine Hill Bay. Residential development is concentrated on the coastal plain around the three main lakes forming the Tuggerah Lakes System. To the west, the Shire encompasses the Yarramalong and Dooralong Valleys and the Olney, Wyong and Ourimbah State Forests.

Traditionally a holiday and retirement area, the Shire has experienced rapid population growth over the last 30 years and is now established as a popular coastal urban fringe area.

### Population Growth and Change

- The population of the Shire at the 2006 Census was 139,800.
- The estimated resident population of the Shire at June 2007 was 144,000.
- The Shire is continuing to grow but at a slower rate. During the period 1986 to 2001 the Shire was growing by around 3,000 people per annum at an annual growth rate of 2.4%. This level of growth was significantly above the comparative growth rate of 1.1% for NSW. Between 2001 and 2006 the Shire's population increased by around 1,000 people per year at an average annual growth rate of 1%. The rate remains above the 0.7% growth rate for NSW.





- Between 2001 and 2006 Wyong Shire experienced the 8th largest growth (in numbers) of all local government areas in NSW (behind Sydney City, Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Liverpool, Auburn, Tweed and Maitland) and was ranked 33rd in terms of rate of growth. Wyong LGA is comparatively large compared with other LGAs in NSW, ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of 152 LGAs as measured by estimated resident population at June 2006.
- The Shire's population is projected to grow to over 200,000 by 2031. New release areas in Warnervale and Wadalba from part of a large area identified in the Metropolitan Strategy as a major area to accommodate future urban development.
- The population is relatively stable with 69% of residents remaining in the Shire between 2001 and 2006.
- The major component of the Shire's change in population is through in-migration of people moving to the Shire from other areas. The main areas that our new residents have come from include Gosford, Blacktown, Lake Macquarie, Penrith and Warringah local government areas.

### **Key Census Facts and Figures (Objective Data)**

#### ***Age Structure***

- The age profile of Wyong reflects the area's popularity with families as a place to bring up children and older people as a retirement destination.
- In 2006, 25.7% of the population was aged between 0 and 17 and 23.3% were aged 60 years and over, compared with 24% and 18.6% respectively for NSW.
- Out-migration is occurring in the 25 to 34 years age group.
- There is a clear ageing trend in the Shire's population.





### ***Indigenous Status***

- In 2006 the indigenous population of the Shire was 3,800 representing 2.8% of the population. The Shire has a higher proportion of indigenous people in comparison to NSW (2.1%). The indigenous population has increased by 1,235 persons or 48% since 2001 due to a combination of actual population increase and more persons identifying themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

### ***Birthplace and Language***

- Overall 11.9% of the population was born overseas and 4.3% (5,800 persons) were from a non-English speaking background, compared with 23.8% and 16.8% respectively for NSW.
- The Shire is characterised by diversity in terms of birthplace with a number of different countries represented in small groups.
- 2.5% of the Shire's population speak a language other than English and English not well or not well at all.

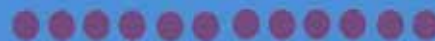
### ***Family & Household Characteristics***

- At the 2006 Census there were 38,035 families in Wyong Shire. Overall 41.1% of total families were couple families with child(ren), 38.1% were couple families without children and 19.6% were one parent families, compared with 46.2%, 36% and 16.1% for NSW respectively.
- The Shire has a high proportion of lone person households, 25.2% compared with 23.4% for NSW.

### ***Socio-Economic Characteristics***

- In 2006, the median weekly household income was \$770 in comparison to \$1036 for NSW. The Shire has a significantly lower income profile than NSW.
- For the index of relative social disadvantage Wyong has a score of 967 and is ranked 68 out of the 152 LGAs in NSW in terms of disadvantage.
- In 2007, the apparent school retention rates from Year 7 to 12 for government schools was 44.3%, 20% lower than the NSW apparent rate of 65.6%.





- 34% of the population held post school qualifications and 51.5% had no post-school qualifications compared with 40.6% and 45.6% for NSW.
- A lower proportion of the population has a bachelor or higher degree, 6.6% compared to 16.4% for NSW.
- In 2006, 57,757 persons were part of the labour force, with 34.1% of employed part-time and 54.7% full-time.
- The Shire had an unemployment rate of 8.3% compared with 7.2% for NSW.
- The youth unemployment rate for 15-24 year olds, 15.3% is significantly higher than both State (11.5%) and National rates (10.3%).
- 67.3% (36,292 persons) of employed residents worked on the Central Coast and 32.7% (17,563 persons) were employed outside of the region.
- 41% of households are not connected to the internet compared with 33.7% for NSW.
- 83% of households in the Shire own at least 1 car compared to 80% for NSW.

### ***Small Area Profiles***

The small area profiles (covering either a suburb or groupings of suburbs) show that there is significant diversity within the Shire. Newer areas are likely to be more affluent and have a younger age profile and there are a number of other areas that are experiencing social stress.

For more information see the *Wyong Shire Community Profile and Population & Household Forecasts 2006-2031* on Council's website [www.wyong.nsw.gov.au](http://www.wyong.nsw.gov.au) or contact the Social Planning team on 4350 5520.

### **Key Quality of Life Survey Findings (Subjective Data)**

*(Please note - frequencies are for Wyong Shire residents unless otherwise stated)*

#### ***Achievements in Life***

- 85% of residents were either satisfied or very satisfied with what they had achieved in life.
- 32.5% of residents who worked part-time indicated that they would like to work more hours.
- 14% of residents believe that post school education and training opportunities in the region were inadequate (insufficient courses available).





- A high proportion of residents agreed that early school leavers have the same or better chances of finding work (41.2%) and being well paid (30.2%).

### ***Standard of Living***

- 84% of residents were either satisfied or very satisfied with their current standard of living.
- 72.6% of residents identified themselves as comfortable/just getting along.
- 46.5% of residents indicated that they thought the value of their assets was about the same as friends and family.
- 44.2% of residents had been short of money in the last year.
- 93% of residents were satisfied with their current accommodation.
- Rising cost of fuel had altered some resident's mode of transport. 23% indicated they had walked or rode a bike when they normally would not have.

### ***Personal Relationships***

- 61% of Central Coast residents nominated partner/spouse and family relationships as the most important factor for their happiness.

### ***Community Connectedness***

- 80% of residents indicated that they interact with friends or relatives either often or very often.
- 64% of residents reported that people in their neighbourhood never or rarely did anything together.
- Nearly 84% of residents indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the neighbourhood they live in.
- 56% of residents agreed or strongly agreed that their neighbourhood had a strong sense of community. 30% of residents disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 53% of Central Coast residents were members of community or sporting clubs.
- 20% of Central Coast residents were members of religious organizations.
- 28% of residents did volunteer work.
- 66% of residents agreed that there were adequate public spaces in neighbourhood for people to come together.







- 58% of residents did not think that the positive impacts of population growth outweighed the negative impacts. The main negative impact was inadequate public infrastructure.
- 34% of residents agreed that there were opportunities to be involved in planning on the Central Coast.
- 78% of residents had visited at least one of these outdoor spaces in the previous four weeks – lake, beach, park, bushland.

### ***Feelings of Safety***

- 94% of residents felt either safe or very safe walking alone in their local area during the day dropping to 44% at night.
- 78% of residents thought their neighbourhoods were safe or very safe for children.
- 72% of Central Coast residents felt that people in their neighbourhood could be trusted.
- A higher proportion of residents perceive that crime and public nuisance were problems in their neighbourhood (56% compared with 35% NSW).

### ***Future Security***

- Local environmental issues that had negatively affected Central Coast residents in the last 12 months were: level of traffic (49.5%), quality of drinking water (35%), level of development (30%) and level of noise (28%).

### ***Health***

- 69% of residents considered themselves to be in good, very good or excellent health. 25% rated their health poor or fair.
- 55% of Central Coast residents were obese or overweight.
- 48% reported having a medically diagnosed condition.
- 26% of residents needed to see a GP but did not go (inability to get an appointment, cost).
- 49.5% of residents were satisfied with health services.





### **Key Associations**

- The frequency with which residents interacted with friends, family and neighbours, and whether residents were able to talk to and obtain support from their circle of friends had significant associations with wellbeing and quality of life.
- Frequency of social interaction was significantly associated with the amount of time that working residents spent commuting to and from work each day. Residents who spent up to 30 minutes a day were likely to socialize more frequently than those travelling more than 30 minutes a day.
- Satisfaction with neighbourhood and high levels of agreement that neighbourhoods had a strong sense of community were significantly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.
- Relationship status and living arrangements were associated with wellbeing and quality of life. Being in a stable relationship is linked to higher wellbeing. Living as a single adult with children and living alone were associated with lower wellbeing and less quality of life.
- Spending time in the natural environment contributes to wellbeing.
- Employment status and occupation are associated with wellbeing and quality of life. Residents who were looking for paid employment or on a pension other than an aged pension were likely to have lower levels of wellbeing than residents who were employed. White collar workers were likely to have higher levels of wellbeing than blue collar workers.
- Education attainment is associated with income. People who stay at school longer earn more than those who leave school at Year 10 and below. People who have post-school qualifications earn more than those who do not have these qualifications.
- Relative wealth is associated with wellbeing.
- Home ownership is associated with higher levels of wellbeing.
- The presence of accessible and affordable transport is an important factor associated with wellbeing and quality of life.
- Residents who had experienced a crime and who had lesser perceptions of safety in their local area were likely to have lower levels of wellbeing.

For more information see *"Quality of Life on the Central Coast – A Community Survey of Central Coast Residents 2007"* (Central Coast Research Foundation) on Council's website [www.wyong.nsw.gov.au](http://www.wyong.nsw.gov.au) or contact the Social Planning Team on 4350 5520.





The Entrance Ocean Baths



# key consultation findings





## What Residents' Value

The majority of Wyong Shire residents love living in the area. Most people indicated that they initially moved to the area because of the lifestyle the areas offers, the relative affordability, to be closer to family and friends and the environmental features (beaches, lakes, bushland, visual amenity).

When residents talked about moving to the Shire because of the lifestyle they mentioned that they thought Wyong was a better place to bring up children, that they were already familiar with the area as they had holidayed here as a child, that it is more quiet, relaxed and laid back, it is more community focused and has a good community feel.

*"It's a perfect place to raise a family."*

As a community we have many strengths to build on. Overwhelmingly, the most important positive aspects of life in Wyong Shire to local residents are:

- The friendly atmosphere and sense of community of the area;
- The amenity of the natural environment;
- That the area is still relatively safe;
- The lifestyle the area offers; and
- The location of the Shire and it's proximity to major cities

*"The proximity to the lakes, waterways and beaches are the best thing about living here."*

*"This area is so beautiful, fresh and clean. It's fabulous to wake up every morning and look out my window at the wonderful place I live in."*

*"Living here seems like being on holidays all the time."*

*"People are friendly and welcoming. We love it here and are very happy living here."*

Residents emphasised that feeling like a part of the community, actively contributing, being valued by their community and the ability to connect and link with groups and networks is something that Council and the community should work in partnership to achieve.





Residents also highlighted the importance of “local” places and spaces within neighbourhoods (community centres, parks, playgrounds, cafes, barbeque area, walking tracks and cycleways) to bring people together and build a sense of community pride and identity.

Residents were keen to be actively involved with Council and felt that they have something positive to offer in furthering Wyong Shire as a good place to live and working together for the common good of all residents.

### **Key Challenges/Fears**

Residents are becoming increasingly concerned that the physically beautiful, peaceful, friendly and safe nature of the area is rapidly changing. They are worried that the Wyong Shire they live in today will not be the same in the future if it keeps going the way it has been going (that is, with continued population growth and development).

*“Before there weren’t too many people in the Shire. Now it is congested and busy.”*

*“There is a strong protectiveness to keep the area as it is.”*

*“Friendly but I’m not pleased about the continued level of development.”*

*“It’s getting too much like Sydney. People just don’t care. We are losing the village atmosphere.”*

*“We need some development but we also need to ensure that we preserve the good things and the history of the area into the future so that it can be kept for future generations.”*

Lack of adequate infrastructure (hard and soft) is also a key concern, including:

- Health services (GPs, dental and specialist services);
- Local employment;
- Education, training and employment opportunities for young people;
- Entertainment and cultural facilities;





- Recurrent funding for community services, activities and programs including early intervention and prevention programs;
- Child friendly parks and playgrounds;
- Local activities, programs and events; and
- Public transport and transport infrastructure;

*“I think it’s a great area, but I think the lack of infrastructure needs to be addressed.”*

*“We are constantly playing catch-up.”*

*“The services at the community centre are being stretched and stretched without anymore funding.”*

Other issues include:

- Increased house prices, the impact of rising mortgage rates and fuel prices
- The lack of affordable activities for children and families;
- A lack of a Central Coast identity;
- A perception of increased crime, including anti-social behaviour, vandalism and graffiti; and
- Isolation and disconnection of some residents and a decreased sense of community as people become less involved and more insular.

*“Coast prices are more affordable than Sydney – but prices are rising and the gap is closing.”*



# key themes





The 2008-2013 Community Plan identifies ten themes or outcome areas:

1. Our Community
2. Places and Spaces
3. Young People
4. Diversity
5. Health
6. Habitat
7. Communication, Information & Participation
8. Community Safety
9. Achievements in Life
10. On the Move

These theme areas were identified from the community consultation process.





*Warnervale Spring Fair - An important event held annually in our community*

## our community

### **Social Outcomes**

A connected community where residents positively interact and participate in the life of their community, have a strong sense of belonging and a strong interest in local and regional issues.

A community that is supported and has access to a range of affordable, co-ordinated and high quality services and facilities.





A sense of community and community spirit is a vital component of a healthy community. It encompasses elements such as image, spirit, character and pride, along with processes such as communication, inter-group relations, linking and connecting. Overall well-being and quality of life are linked to the ability of people to participate in community life and daily activities, feel connected and have a strong sense of place.

Social Capital is *“the fabric that holds the community together”*. It can be defined as *“features of social organisation like networks, the quality and intensity of civic involvement, the level of trust and norms that exist between individuals and/or groups within a community, and which facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit”* (Robert Putnam).

*“Much hard evidence has accumulated that civic engagement and social connectedness are practical preconditions for better schools, safer streets and even healthier and longer lives”* (Robert Putnam).

#### Key Messages:

- The frequency and level of interaction between neighbours and people in the community is important for the development of the Shire's community spirit.
- Residents placed a high value on having good neighbours and the small village/neighbourly feel of their community.
- Neighbourhoods play an important role in resident's perceptions about their community.
- Importance of welcoming new residents.
- Importance of being involved in groups and volunteering.
- Positive interactions between different generations are key to cohesive communities.
- Need for casual and formal affordable opportunities for people to come together to meet and connect (events and activities).
- Commuting impacts on individuals, families and communities.
- Concern for the changing nature of the area.
- A range of social infrastructure is required to support the population growth (health, education, employment, children and family support services, recurrent funding).
- Making our communities even stronger should be a key priority in moving forward as a great place to live and bring up families.
- The need to prioritise community development and community strengthening as a key Council activity.





*"A good way of meeting new people is through the kids. When we are at school or a local sporting match, we meet parents and develop friendships from there."*

*"Good neighbours are very important in feeling that you live in a good community."*

*"As a new resident in Woongarra it was great to have a person come and knock on your door, introduce themselves and give you a welcome kit."*

*"Getting into volunteering is the key to being connected."*

*"I am a mentor at Plan-It Youth. It is so rewarding to help young people learn and increase their skills. They have taught me so much."*

### **What are we trying to achieve?**

A connected community where residents positively interact and participate in the life of that community, have a strong sense of belonging and a strong interest in local and regional issues.

A community that is supported, and has access to a range of affordable, co-ordinated and high quality services and facilities.

### **Key Actions (over the next 5 years):**

- Community initiatives that assist communities to have a strong sense of place.
- Support, resource and showcase small local area projects.
- Local and Shire wide events.
- Neighbourhood programs and localised neighbourhood events.
- Expansion of Welcoming Strategy.
- Development of a Community and Corporate Volunteer Policy.
- Establish a Community Matching Fund.
- Intergenerational programs.
- Supporting the Seniors Council.
- Expand early language and literacy development programs for children.





- Programs to support Indigenous Families.
- Community and Cultural Grants Program.
- Cultural development programs and places to pursue a range of cultural and artistic activities.
- Artists-with-community-projects.





Blue Haven Community Centre



## places and spaces

### **Social Outcome**

A community that has a variety of great public places and spaces for people to come together that are conducive to community connectedness and activity, are safe, inviting, attractive and reflective of community identity.





'Places and Spaces' refers to the formal and informal areas in the Shire where people come together for a range of different purposes. They are the focal point for community activity.

Examples of places and spaces include community centres, shopping centres, restaurants, parks, sports fields, BBQ areas, playgrounds, walking trails, reserves, bike tracks, lakes, beaches and waterways. Residents come together in these spaces to socialise with friends and family, meet new people, exercise and participate in the recreational opportunities the Shire offers.

Through place making these public places and spaces can be enhanced and more conducive to community connectedness by being safe, inviting, attractive and reflective of community identity.

### Key Messages:

- Residents generally agreed that public spaces were adequate, however, a number of improvements could be made.
- Local facilities are important to the community (community centres, parks, playgrounds) and provide opportunities for residents to meet and connect with other people who live in the same or nearby suburb.
- Local community centres provide a hub and catalyst for programs and activities as well as connecting residents.
- There is a need to better maintain and upkeep existing facilities (making them feel safe and welcoming).
- Retain and further develop parks, playgrounds, BBQ areas, sporting fields and open spaces as places that people can come together and to promote active/outdoor lifestyles.
- Importance of providing supporting infrastructure in parks and playgrounds eg. Bubblers, barbeques, shade and fenced areas.
- There is a lack of entertainment options for families in the Shire (informal options for people to come together e.g. theatres, restaurants, cafes, live music).
- More cycleways and pathways are needed to connect local residents to services and facilities (shops, schools, parks and community centres). Wyong Shire currently has 40km of off road cycleways and xx km of shared cycleways.





*"I love the new community centre. It is abuzz with activity and people. I volunteer here and I can walk to the centre. I have met so many people who I did not know before. There is so much going on. It's a really nice place to come."*

*"Vera's Water Garden at The Entrance is fantastic. It is free and a great place for kids to play. I have met heaps of other mums there because we all go there for our kids to play."*

*"We love to cycle on the Long Jetty to The Entrance cycleway. It has a great atmosphere and what a view!"*

### **What are we trying to achieve?**

A community that has a variety of great public spaces and places for people to come together that are conducive to community connectedness and activity, are safe, inviting, attractive and reflective of community identity.

### **Key Actions (over the next 5 years):**

- Community Facilities Strategy.
- A Performing Arts Centre in Wyong township.
- New local multi purpose community centres at Hamlyn Terrace and Ourimbah.
- Provision and integration of community facilities in the new Warnervale Town Centre.
- Enhance promotion of Council's community facilities.
- Enhance maintenance of Council community facilities to a level that encourages greater use and promotes community pride.
- Provision for and maintenance of parks, playgrounds and sporting facilities.
- Lakes Foreshore Recreation Facilities Strategy.
- Outdoor Cinemas.
- Implementation of the Public Art Policy.





## young people

### **Social Outcome**

Young people are respected and valued and are actively involved in all aspects of community life in Wyong Shire. Young people are able to reach their full potential through positive social, educational, employment and cultural opportunities and experiences.







The theme 'Young People' refers to those living in the Shire aged between 12 and 24 years. The teenage years, is a period of rapid emotional, physical and intellectual transition where young people progress from being dependant children to independent adults. This time is often associated with challenging behaviour, experimentation and risk taking. Young people in Wyong Shire are a diverse and interesting group of people with a wide range of skills, abilities, interests and talents.

### **Why the Focus on Young People?**

All people, that is every age group, population group and from every geographic area involved in the consultations mentioned the need for young people to be a key focus area for the Shire moving forward for the future.

### **Key Messages:**

- Need to promote a positive image of young people.
- Young people expressed the importance of 'community'.
- Public transport is particularly difficult for young people to access. (Challenges associated with cost, safety, isolation and servicing).
- Need for active engagement in education, training and employment.
- Need to create workstyle and lifestyle opportunities for young people to enable them to stay here.
- Lack of Cultural and Entertainment opportunities.
- Need for safe, affordable venues for young people to socialise and meet (formal and informal).
- Emerging information and communication technologies (ICTs).

*"Gravity Youth Centre is a great example of a mix of different services for young people."*

### **What are we trying to achieve?**

Young people are respected and valued and are actively involved in all aspects of community life. Young people are able to reach their full potential through positive social, educational, employment and cultural opportunities and experiences.



**Key Actions (over the next 5 years):**

- Youth Strategic Plan.
- Youth Development Officer.
- Support Youth Advisory Council.
- Extend Youth Access and Truancy Protocols.
- Programs which develop and improve education and skill base.
- Look at alternative opportunities to keep in contact with young people e.g. Facebook, MySpace.
- Expand Youth Scholarship Program.
- Homework help programs.
- Promote a positive image of young people.
- Provide opportunities for youth participation and leadership.
- Continue to work in partnership with key youth services e.g. PCYC, LINKS, Samaritans, Oasis.
- Work in partnership to run events and activities that showcase the skills, talents and abilities of young people e.g. Youth Week.





# diversity

**Social Outcome**

A Community that encourages, recognises and respects diversity.





The concept of 'Diversity' is based on an understanding that all individuals are unique and different and that all people have different strengths that contribute to making a good community.

The theme 'Diversity' in terms of the Wyong Shire community, refers to the variety of many different communities existing together, creating a vast mix of interests, attitudes, skills, abilities, opportunities and challenges.

Not only is there a variety of cultural mixes, there are everyday differences such as age, family type, socio-economic status, religion etc that make the Shire a place in which a large diversity of people live, work and play.

### **Key Messages:**

- People like a mix of different people, ages, interests, businesses and choices – these are essential in making a good community.
- Not enough diversity in the Shire – diversity should be encouraged.
- Different cultures bring a wealth of opportunities & assets to a place.
- Acceptance of diversity and inclusiveness are important in contributing to community harmony and social cohesion – there is a need for greater acceptance of residents from an Aboriginal and cultural and linguistically diverse background and people with disabilities.
- Provision of information should be accessible to people with disabilities and in bi-lingual formats, where required.

*"It's quite hard to fit in when you're from a different background."*

*"Hey everyone – we exist, we are part, we belong."*

*"We need acceptance of all people regardless of race and diversity."*



**What are we trying to achieve?**

A community that encourages, recognises and respects diversity.

**Key Actions (over the next 5 years):**

- Aboriginal Community Development Worker (linked to Cultural Plan Action).
- Indigenous Strategy.
- Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement and support for multi cultural groups.
- Festivals, events and activities that include celebration and build diversity.
- Activities on recognised days (eg. Harmony Day, International Women's Day, International Day People with Disabilities, Reconciliation Week, Youth Week, Seniors Week).
- Broad and inclusive community consultation and participation.
- Programs that raise awareness of cultural diversity and the Shire's heritage.
- Citizenship ceremonies.



Norah Head Lighthouse



# health

## Social Outcome

A community which lives and promotes healthy lifestyles and enjoys an overall sense of wellbeing.





Good health and access to quality services and facilities are important to the wellbeing of the community. The health dimension of wellbeing and quality of life is related to several other dimensions which combine to shape an overall level of wellbeing and satisfaction with life. Health is considered to be fundamental in shaping residents capacity to work and obtain income and to enjoy relationships and leisure activities.

The term health *"is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"* (World Health Organisation). There are many social determinants of health including housing, employment, friendships, social cohesion, childhood experienced and the natural environment.

*"Being involved with community groups and having strong social networks are as good for health as healthy food and exercise"* (Department of Public Health, University of Flinders).

#### **Key Messages:**

- Living in the Shire has a number of positive impacts on resident's health and wellbeing e.g. clean air, laid back nature of the area, friendly welcoming people, the natural environment and an outdoor and active lifestyle.
- Obesity and overweight – concern over increasing levels.
- An outdoor and active lifestyle could be further encouraged by the retention and provision of open spaces, playgrounds, cycleways, pathways and the better design of new residential areas.
- Health Services – there are barriers to accessing GP's (lack of services, cost and inability to get an appointment), dental, specialist services and support services for the ageing community.
- Health issues – perceived increase in drug & alcohol use, mental health issues.
- Impact of commuting on health and wellbeing.

*"The beaches and lakes are wonderful. We go to the beach every weekend – our kids do nippers and we are much more active and outdoors orientated than ever before."*

#### **What do we want to achieve?**

A community which lives and promotes healthy lifestyles and enjoys an overall sense of wellbeing.



**Key Actions (over the next 5 years):**

- Healthy by design framework (urban design and planning).
- Positive Ageing Strategy.
- Partnerships with health agencies to promote healthy lifestyle programs and address factors contributing to poor health outcomes.
- Provision of facilities that encourage physical activity, cultural expression and social connections.
- Advocacy for improved access to and provision of health services.
- Continued support for the Youth Health Clinic Gravity Youth Centre.
- Adaptive strategies for human health implications of climate change eg. provision of shade.







Wyrabalong National Park, Crackneck Lookout



# habitat

## Social Outcomes

A community that values and protects the natural environment.

A community where there is balance between the natural and built environment

A community that celebrates the interaction between people and the natural and built environment.





The theme of Habitat refers to the natural and built environment in which we live. A key attraction of Wyong Shire for residents is the natural environment combined with the accessibility and the proximity of the built environment.

Wyong Shire still retains significant natural assets which are very important to the local community. Many people value the close proximity of the natural areas in relation to where they live. The natural features include the beaches, clean air, extensive bushland, valleys and expansive waterways.

### Key Messages:

- The reason why many people have moved to the Shire is the natural environment of the area (amenity, waterways, lake foreshores, green open spaces, bushland, reserves, walking trails are highly valued).
- Residents love the diversity and the range of different environments of the Shire e.g. rural, lakes, beaches etc.
- Urban growth trends are placing significant pressure on these valuable assets. Key priorities:
  - Waterways, lakes and beaches are clean and pollution free;
  - Waterviews are maintained;
  - Treed ridgelines are maintained and preserved;
  - Additional planting should be encouraged; and
  - Reliable water supply.
- Ensuring that the natural environment retains its positive attributes and we can continue to provide accessible spaces where people can spend time in the natural environment is important to residents' wellbeing and quality of life.
- The importance of preserving the natural environment and balancing the development of the built environment.
- The lack of infrastructure combined with the growing population is a significant concern to most residents (community and recreation facilities, health, education, employment, transport).
- Residents are concerned about housing affordability.
- Residents were agreeable to balanced development, that is, reasonable population growth in specific areas and not in small village suburbs.





- People felt it is important to have distinct identity for individual suburbs as well as for the Shire and Region.

*“We love the diversity of the area –beaches, mountains, lakes.”*

*“The area is generally enjoyable but facilities and services are stretched way too thin for the current population let alone the future population.”*

*“We moved here because the house was cheap. We couldn’t afford to buy here now though.”*

### **What are we trying to achieve?**

A community that values and protects the natural environment.

A community where there is a balance between the natural and physical environment.

A community that celebrates the interaction between people and the natural and built environment.

### **Key Actions (over the next 5 years):**

- Implement Plans such as: Estuary Management Plan, Tuggerah Lakes Salt marsh Rehabilitation Strategy, Coastline Management Plan, Beachwatch Program, Regional Biodiversity and Conservation Plans.
- Environmental Education Programs.
- Investigate a Community Greening Education Centre at the Old Pioneer Dairy Site.
- Support and enhance local environmental care group programs.
- Advocacy for and provision of infrastructure to match population growth.
- Collaborative approaches to planning.
- Implementing Promoting Choice: A Local Housing Strategy.
- Enhance and maintain main entranceways and gateways to Shire.
- Enhance entries to individual suburbs.
- Continue Environmental Monitoring Programs.





# communication information and participation



## **Social Outcome**

Community that is engaged, well informed and valued.

A community that has an improved understanding of Council's role and function.

Promotion of the positive aspects of living in the Shire.





This theme refers to the variety of ways in which Council and the Community provide and share information, come together to discuss challenges aspirations and issues, listen to each other and respect and value the contributions that each can make.

**Key Messages:**

- Council is a major source of community information and has a key role to play in disseminating information.
- Not all residents have access to internet (41% not connected at the 2006 Census) but access to broadband is an essential requirement to participate in the “new information age” and emerging methods of communication e.g. Facebook, YouTube, etc.
- Information distribution could be enhanced (local paper delivery to all suburbs, community noticeboards, radio & print media, both hard and electronic copies, website up to date).
- Need for enhanced communication between Council and the community re: local issues and projects (more visible, approachable and positive).
- Residents keen to see ongoing consultation and regular conversations from all sections of Council to enable positive and strong relationships to be developed.
- Residents expressed a desire to be actively involved in decision making processes and work together with Council – local solutions to local problems.
- Council should promote its broader role (not just roads, rates, rubbish etc).
- Need to view the community as partners and contributors rather than customers or consumers.

*“Council and the community should work in partnership to achieve great things for the future.”*

*“Have Council days out in the community - not just for events.”*

**What are we trying to achieve?**

A community that is well informed, engaged and valued.

A community that has an improved understanding of Council's role and function.



**Key Actions (over the next 5 years):**

- Community Engagement Strategy.
- Provision of information via a range of mediums e.g. electronic and hard copy.
- Community noticeboards.
- Better utilise internet, radio, TV and local newsletters.
- Explore innovative options for residents to access Information Technology.
- Utilise innovative methods to communicate with the community e.g. Facebook, MySpace, Youtube etc.
- Enhancing Council's website.
- Provide up to date population information.
- Monitor and measure Quality of Life.
- Welcome to Wyong Event.
- Civics and Citizenship program in schools.
- Local people, local stories project.
- Out and About visual vox pop gallery.





# community safety

## Social Outcome

A community which enables all its residents to feel safe





The theme Community Safety refers to both crime and the perception of crime that can affect people's quality of life and the many aspects of community life including:

- Trusting neighbours;
- The willingness of residents to move freely about the community;
- Residents sense of safety; and
- The use of community facilities and public spaces for recreation and entertainment.

Community safety is about more than addressing the level of crime that exists in a community. It is also about how people feel about living in their community, and recognising that there are many factors that influence what makes people as individuals and, as part of society, feel safe. Safe communities can be encouraged through a combination of physical and social measures.

*"The strongest predictor of crime rates is social capital and crime is lower in communities in which there is a high level of connectedness." (Robert Putnam)*

*"The more people who know each other's first name, the lower the crime rate in the neighbourhood." (Robert Putnam)*

#### **Key Messages:**

- The Shire's crime rate overall is below NSW average, but we have a higher rate of incidence for some crimes e.g. domestic violence and AVO's, sexual assault, steal from dwelling and malicious damage to property.
- NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics figures show that crimes in 16 of the 17 major categories have remained stable or recorded falls in the last year.
- People generally feel that Wyong Shire is a safe place to live.
- Many people feel safer during the day than at night.
- Feeling that crime is increasing (perception).
- New residents from Sydney described the Shire as safe. Longer term residents felt that the area had changed and is not as safe as it used to be.
- Concerns about anti social behaviour, vandalism and graffiti.
- Perception of increased numbers of young people with nothing to do.







- Social infrastructure not keeping up with population growth – impact on social issues.
- Road safety issues.

*“Vandalism and graffiti is a concern. We need to harness talents and turn it from pollution into art.”*

### **What are we trying to achieve?**

A community which enables all its residents to feel safe.

### **Key Actions (over the next 5 years):**

- Safety audits in key hot spot areas.
- Wyong Safe Communities Alliance.
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design.
- Graffiti and Vandalism Plan.
- Community Art projects.
- Community Development Initiatives (linked to ‘Our Community’).
- Road Safety programs e.g. C.A.R.E.S facility.
- Partnerships with Police, PCYC, State Government, NGO’s, community groups to address community safety issues.



## achievements in life

### **Social Outcomes**

A community where education, training and life long learning is valued.

A community that has a robust economy with sustainable income-generating local employment opportunities and career paths.





The theme of 'Achievements in life' refers to improved formal educational opportunities as reflected in increased school retention rates, participation in post-secondary and lifelong education, and increased linkages between education and meaningful employment opportunities. It relates to lifelong learning opportunities, such as those afforded through participation in community groups and activities, and recognition of the broader learning needs in the community, for example, academic, vocational, environmental or social.

Education must be seen as an investment in the economic and social sustainability of the region. The skills and knowledge of the community greatly contribute to both its social and economic strengths. A more highly educated community should create income generating opportunities for itself, as well as generating employment opportunities from the range of businesses attracted by the skilled workforce. It will have a positive impact on the Shire's social fabric via improvements in community participation and health.

Employment is an important part of life for a large proportion of the population. It is a source of income, helps define who they are and gives them opportunities to enjoy other benefits.

#### **Key Messages:**

- Importance of early education e.g. affordable child care centres, early intervention and prevention programs etc.
- Need for active engagement in education, employment and training (to improve school retention rates and post-school participation and attainment).
- Need for vocational education, traineeships, apprenticeships and programs to support young people in their transition phase from schooling to post-school education, training and employment.
- Need for educational support e.g. homework help & support for parents.
- Attitudes to education –a relatively high proportion of residents believe early school leavers have the same or better chances of finding work and being well paid. This is not conducive to promoting higher retention rates.
- Opportunities for Life Long Learning are important.
- Need for local employment –less commuting.
- Difficulties in maintaining work/ life balance.





*"Ourimbah University is great and very much improved. There still needs to be a real focus on continuing to offer a range of expanded options for students."*

*"I love coming to the University of the Third Age. There is always something new to learn."*

*"Local jobs for local people."*

*"When I am commuting by train, I have little time to enjoy the area or my family."*

*"I find that I am part of two communities that I don't really get to participate in at all – Hamlyn Terrace and Sydney."*

### **What are we trying to achieve?**

A community where education, training and life long learning is valued.

A community that has a robust economy with sustainable income-generating local employment opportunities and career paths.

### **Key Actions (over the next 5 years):**

- Develop a Shire wide framework to promote learning as a key focus and priority e.g. Hume Global Learning Village.
- Partnership programs which develop and improve education and skill base of residents e.g. Apprenticeships, traineeships, work placements for VET students.
- Programs that promote and celebrate difference and achievements e.g. living library.
- Early child literacy and school readiness programs.
- Homework help programs.
- Wyong Employment Zone and rezoning of land for employment-generating development.
- Priority processing of major employment generating developments.
- Affordable child care centres.





# on the move

**Social Outcome**  
A community that has a variety of accessible transport systems to enable easy movement around the Shire to attend social, employment, educational, sporting and cultural pursuits.





The theme 'On the Move' represents the variety of ways in which people move around the Shire and the wider region.

Residents of the Shire have expressed that not having access to appropriate systems to get around impacts on opportunities such as employment, education and training, the environment, making social connections and accessing basic services and facilities.

#### **Key Messages:**

- Majority of residents rely on the car as the main mode of transport.
- Public transport continues to be a major challenge – frequency, cost, indirect routes, physical design, stops, shelters.
- 67% of employed persons living in the Shire work on the Central Coast (36,292). 33% were employed outside the region (17,563).
- Importance of cycleways and pathways.
- Roads (poor road condition) and traffic (increased, congestion)

#### **What are we trying to achieve?**

A community that has a variety of accessible transport systems to enable easy movement around the Shire to attend social, employment, educational, cultural and sporting pursuits.

#### **Key Actions (over the next 5 years):**

- Advocacy for improved public transport.
- Advocacy for and facilitation of small locally based transport initiatives.
- Adoption and implementation of the Bike Plan.
- Advocacy for formalisation of existing informal carpooling areas in the Shire.
- Provide bus shelters in appropriate locations across the Shire.
- Walking school buses.





For a copy of the *2008-2013 Community Plan Main Report* please visit [www.wyong.nsw.com.au](http://www.wyong.nsw.com.au) or contact the Social Planning Team on 4350 5520.