

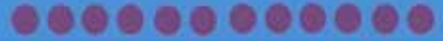
WYONG SHIRE COUNCIL

community plan

MAIN REPORT

2008 - 2013





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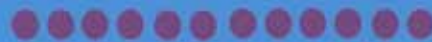
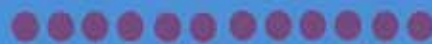


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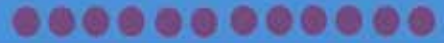
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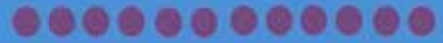
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Mayoral Introduction

The Wyong Shire Community Plan represents a major commitment by Council in engaging and working with community to better understand the key social challenges, opportunities and aspirations associated with living in the Shire.

Wyong Shire has many strengths, with residents valuing the beautiful coastal environment, extensive waterways, picturesque rural hinterland, the relaxed lifestyle, good sense of community and safe environment. It is important that we build on these strengths.

The Plan also recognises that a number of social issues and challenges do exist within our community. Many of these are associated with the changing nature of the Shire, as it continues to grow, and the inadequacy of facilities and services to meet the needs of local residents.

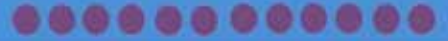
The Community Plan is a key component of our strategic framework and provides a valuable tool to guide the activities of Council, other key agencies and the community in addressing these issues and working together to enhance the quality of life for residents of the Shire.

Many of the key strategies and actions are related to bringing people together and building a sense of community pride and identity. They are also focused on improving the many aspects that contribute to quality of life and well being – community connectedness, health, housing, education, employment, community safety and transport.

I warmly welcome and endorse the Wyong Shire Community Plan 2008-2013 as an outstanding partnership project between Council and the community. I would like to extend my congratulations to all those involved in the development of the Plan. Through an extensive community consultation and engagement process local residents have provided valuable insights into what it is like to live in Wyong Shire and what they would like to see in the future.

Councillor Warren Welham
Mayor of Wyong Shire





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 and 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.





introduction



What is a Community Plan?

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 Main Report and a Summary 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.

Why do a Community Plan?

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.

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?



What are the Objectives of the Community Plan?

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.

What Principles have we Used in Developing the Community Plan?

The Department of Local Government Social/Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines highlight that the desired outcomes for Social/Community Plans are to:

- Promote fairness in the distribution of resources, particularly for those most in need;
- Recognise and promote people's rights and improve the accountability of decision makers;
- Ensure that people have fairer access to economic resources and services essential to meeting their basic needs and improving their quality of life; and
- Give people better opportunities for genuine participation and consultation about decisions affecting their lives.

These outcomes are based on the four interrelated principles of equity, access, participation and rights.



For local government this means a commitment to ensuring:

- There is fairness in the distribution of resources;
- Rights are recognised and promoted;
- People have fairer access to the economic resources and services essential to meet their basic needs and to improve their quality of life; and
- People have better opportunities for genuine participation and consultation about decisions affecting their lives.

Council acknowledges that not all groups and individuals have equal access to services and resources and that strategies and actions need to be developed to address any potential barriers such as age, disability, language, race/religion, culture, etc. At the same time, Council needs to ensure the planning and development of new services and facilities takes into account the diverse needs of all individuals and groups across Wyong Shire.

The Community Plan has been developed from a strengths based approach in accordance with the following principles:

Community

While the word community is used as an umbrella term, there are two recognised definitions: Communities of place and communities of interest.

Communities of place are defined by geographic characteristics and context. Communities of interest are defined by the mutual identity and interests shared across particular groups of people which can exist within or across communities of place.

The Community Plan provides information at both a Shire Wide and social planning district level as well as providing information on target groups.

Social Capital

Social Capital has been described as the 'social glue' that binds people together as a community. It can be measured in terms of the strength and quality of social interactions and the network of social connections that go beyond family and friends.



It can be defined as:

"The fabric that holds the community together" (Robert Putnam).

Social Capital is built when community members have many opportunities to work, live and socialise together and feel the cooperation and goodwill of others. In communities with high levels of social capital, people feel confident to play an active role in local affairs, to deal with conflicts and competing interests, and to work collectively to tackle issues of common concern and opportunity.

"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).

The Community Plan process can assist in facilitating the building of social capital in our communities.

Assets Based Community Development (ABCD)

Traditional approaches to community development usually involve top down or outside in approaches that are needs based focused largely on deficiencies in the community. *"All the historical evidence shows significant community building/community development only takes place when people in the local community are committed to investing themselves and their resources in effort. That's why you can't develop communities from the top down or from the outside in" (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993, 1997).*

An alternative approach is asset based community development which involves identifying the capacities of individuals, associations and institutions and mobilising these for development purposes:

"As communities attempt to build a healthy future, they must often struggle against a development perspective that encourages them to see only what happens when they focus solely on what is missing in their community and they know that this approach does not produce positive results. In fact every community has needs, problems and deficiencies; the choice for community groups is whether that is all they want to focus on. Like a glass of water filled to the middle which can be viewed as either half empty or half full, a community can be seen as a half empty place comprised of clients with needs and deficiencies or as a place half full of citizens with capacities and gifts to give" (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1997).

Focussing on a community's assets does not imply that the communities do not have issues or need additional resources from the outside. Rather, Kretzmann argues that issues will be much more effectively used if the local community is itself fully mobilised and invested.

A Strengths Based Approach

Working from a strengths based approach means that we operate on the assumption that people have strengths and resources for their own empowerment. Engaging people from a strength based approach is a process that recognises the barriers that constrain people's empowerment and addresses these constraints using strategies that enable the people we work with to control the process of change.

A strengths based approach is based on the principles of:

- **Respect:** For peoples' intrinsic worth, rights, capacities, uniqueness and commonalties;
- **Sharing:** Of information and 'knowledge', resources, skills, decision-making;
- **Collaboration:** Teamwork and partnership, consultation and inclusion;
- **Social Justice:** Equity, access, 'equality', participation, self-determination; and
- **Transparency:** Having things out in the open, open information and communication.

Source: Wayne McCashen, *St Luke's Innovative Resources*, 1998.



Community Capacity Building

Community capacity describes a community's ability to draw on available resources for valued purposes and is dependent upon social capital, a prerequisite for collective action. Community development remains a practice that can build these abilities. Community strengthening and capacity building are based on an appreciation of how communities and government can work together in social, economic and environmental spheres to achieve and maintain sustainable outcomes.

What is 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. It is recognised however, that the main responsibility for funding and the direct provision of many social and community services rests with State and Federal government agencies in association with non-government sector and voluntary sector organisations.

Council's role is to:

- **Provide leadership.** Council is committed to demonstrating social leadership, implementing good practice and building positive community relations and developing the capacity of its communities;
- **Provide services** across a range of quality community facilities and services in response to community needs. Provision of community facilities and services that enhance the quality of life of all by providing accessible, quality, safe, needs-based and multi-functional spaces for people to come together for social, cultural, recreational, and civic activities;
- **Promote just and equitable social structures.** This is aimed at reducing causes of social disadvantage;
- **Develop joint ventures and partnerships** with government, non government and private organisations to improve the planning and provision of human services and facilities for the community;



- **Work collaboratively** with government, non government agencies and the private sector to improve the planning and provision of human services and facilities;
- **Research** and advocate for services and facilities to ensure they are commensurate with population growth. Through applied social research and effective community consultation and participation, Council seeks to understand local challenges, strengths and opportunities, and applies this understanding to the formulation of policies and strategies to address priorities;
- **Advocate** on behalf of communities to influence decision making in other levels of government and the wider community, in order to enhance the quality of life of the community;
- **Provide information** keeping all communities well informed with a broad range of information, available in a variety of mediums and languages (where needed);
- **Strengthen communities** through an Asset Based Community Development approach;
- **Promote** the Shire;
- **Encourage and enable** public participation. Council supports and creates opportunities for all community members to participate in making decisions that affect them;
- **Integrate** social and cultural planning processes with the urban planning, economic development and environmental protection processes; and
- **Minimise the negative social, economic, environmental and cultural impacts** of development while promoting those positive impacts that contribute to quality of life.



How does the Community Plan link with other Council Activities/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 links into Council's management planning and strategic planning framework.

The Community Plan has direct linkages with other Council plans and policies as follows:

Shire Strategic Vision

The Shire Strategic Vision is currently being developed by Council and will set the direction for the community over the next 20 years. The vision will look at *our community, our economy and our environment* with further consideration given to *infrastructure and governance*. The 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. A key outcome of this process will be ensuring Council focuses its resources on the issues that are most important to our residents and their future.

State of the Shire Report

State of the Shire is a reporting process to examine where the Shire is heading in the longer term and what we should be doing in response to this long term direction. The State of the Shire process aims to integrate social, economic and environmental needs in a sustainable manner in order to achieve a better quality of life. While an earlier State of the Shire Report was produced in 2001, it is proposed to produce this report annually from 2007/08.

Wyong Shire Council's Management Plan

The Management Plan outlines the key issues to address over the coming financial year and determines how we are going to achieve our long term strategy with short term actions. The Management Plan focuses on the triple bottom line of *a better community, a better economy and a better environment* for Wyong Shire.



The Community Plan is Council's primary planning instrument for specifying the strategies and actions of Council in relation to the enhancement of social and community outcomes. It is therefore an integral input into the Management Plan.

CSIRO Central Coast Quality of Life and Sustainability Report 2007

An important component of the Community Plan has been the Central Coast Quality of Life Project. In 2006 Council 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 key outcome of the project was that quality of life helps to measure social progress and that quality of life:

- Is affected by people's internal and personal attributes;
- Is affected by people's external living environment; and
- Is measurable at individual and community levels using facts and perceptions (objective and subjective data).

As part of this research, a framework was developed to measure quality of life based on seven life domains:

- Standard of living (includes income, wealth and housing);
- Health;
- Achievements in life (includes employment, life balance and education);
- Personal relationships;
- Safety;
- Community connectedness (includes social interaction, the built and natural environment); and
- Future security (includes employment and the environment).

It was highlighted that the subjective aspect of quality of life is particularly important as it reflects how people feel about their own personal situation and their living environment.

The quality of life framework provides both Councils with a sound scientific basis to measure and monitor quality of life across the Central Coast. The Community Plan provides the vehicle for Council to move forward with establishing this baseline of subjective and objective quality of life data as per the recommendations in this report.

Quality of life on the Central Coast: A Community Survey of Central Coast Residents

In August 2007 the Central Coast Research Foundation (CCRF) was contracted to conduct the Central Coast Quality of Life Survey. The aim of the survey was to obtain information about resident's attitudes and perceptions about the seven quality of life domains, as well as resident's overall wellbeing.

Over the longer term, the research is expected to provide greater insight into the influences of quality of life and assist with the identification of issues that affect the way residents live in Wyong Shire.

A Cultural Plan for Wyong Shire 2005

The Cultural Plan provides an immediate and long term direction for culture and the arts for Wyong Shire. It is designed to guide the activities of Council and the community over the term of the plan and provide a foundation for cultural development into the future. The key goals of the Cultural Plan include: Ensuring cultural facilities and programmes for the local community; Encouraging and supporting cultural diversity and expression; Celebrating our past; Encouraging personal and professional artistic development; Promoting cultural development across the Central Coast Region; and Working with Government, arts and other organisations.

State of the Environment Report 2007

The State of the Environment (SOE) Report is the annual report card on ecological sustainability and covers environmental protection and management within the Shire. It is an annual report required by the Local Government Act. The SOE report is part of a continuous improvement framework that helps to identify areas that need attention now and in the future. It is closely linked to Council's Management Plan and other strategic documents such as the Community Plan. As of the 2007/08 report this will be contained within the State of the Shire Report.



The Community Plan also has regard for broader strategic planning documents such as the NSW State Plan, Metropolitan Strategy and Draft Central Coast Regional Planning Strategy.

How did we Develop the Community Plan?

The Wyong Shire Community Plan 2008 – 2013 is the culmination of an extensive consultation and research process and has been developed from evidenced based research.

Development of the Community Plan involved the following key stages:

Stage 1 - Developing a Framework for the Community Plan Process

This stage involved:

- Developing a project brief; and
- Establishing Community Plan Steering Committees.

Stage 2 - Background, Research and Review

This stage involved:

- Reviewing relevant Wyong Shire plans and policies;
- Reviewing the 2002 Community Plan (Appendix A);
- Reviewing relevant regional, state and federal plans and policies;
- Reviewing relevant statistical data from the 2006 Census; and
- Developing a community consultation framework.

Stage 3 - Talking to the Community (Community Consultation)

This stage involved:

- 5 month community consultation phase;
- Individual community consultations;
- Focus groups;
- Quality of Life Survey;
- Ideas forums; and
- Community Art projects.



Stage 4 - Identification of the Themes, Strengths and Challenges

This stage involved:

- Identifying key themes, strengths and challenges.

Stage 6 - Development of Strategies and Action Plans

This stage involved:

- Developing actions and strategies relating to the key themes, strengths and challenges.

Stage 7 - Preparing the Draft Community Plan

Stage 8 - Exhibition of the Draft Community Plan

Stage 9 - Adoption of the Wyong Shire Community Plan 2008 – 2013

Stage 10 - Implementation

How was the Project Overseen?

The Community Plan was co-ordinated and developed by the Social Planning Team which is within the Future Planning Unit of the Planning Department of Council.

Internal and External Steering Committees were established to oversee the development of the Community Plan.

Representatives on the Steering Committees were from a wide cross section of the community. Certain representatives played more or less of an active role depending on the stage of the project.



Stakeholder representatives were selected as a key people to participate in the community plan process because:

- They brought a range of skills, experience, knowledge, information, creative ability and expertise;
- They had a working knowledge of the Wyong Shire community;
- They could bring a different perspective to the process;
- The work they do is very important to the local community;
- They will encourage the development of strong links between all organisations to create a better quality of life for our community; and
- The actions and strategies developed as a result of the Community Plan process would benefit from their involvement, input and direction.

The Internal Working Team consisted of:

Kerrie Forrest	Senior Social Planner
Belinda McRobie	Social Planner (Chair)
Christine Bramble	Cultural Planner
Boyd McMillan	Landscape Architect
Julie Vaughan	Manager Community Development
Jean McBride	Manager Library Services
Mary Dallow	Community Development Policy Officer
Ian Rhodes/Stephen Prince	Open Space and Recreation Officers
Karen Douglas	Senior Ecology and Sustainability Officer
Danielle Hargraves	Community Education Team Officer

Representatives on the External Community Advisory Team were:

Desrae Cameron	NSW Premier's Department
Tom Mangan	NSW Department of Community Services
Pari Batha	Central Coast Multicultural Project
Jillian Hogan	San Remo Neighbourhood Centre
Sue Ellis	The Benevolent Society
Craig Forshew	Darkinjung Aboriginal Land Council

The working teams met as required to guide and provide feedback on the process, theming and the development of strategies and actions.



How was the Community Consultation Process Conducted?

The consultation phase was conducted between June and November 2007 and was a joint initiative between Council's Social Planning and Community Development Sections. The community has invested significant time and energy into the Community Plan. Over 1300 people were engaged and valued the opportunity to be involved.

The purpose of the consultation phase was:

- To identify who makes up the Wyong Shire community;
- To identify what is important to our community;
- To identify ways Council and others can improve the quality of life of the Wyong Shire community;
- To develop diverse, strong and sustainable relationships between community members, with government and with other key stakeholders working in Wyong Shire;
- To generate information from the community that will contribute to more effective community planning in Wyong Shire;
- To engage with community members in opening a broader range of opportunities for community participation in planning for a good quality of life in Wyong Shire;
- To build social capital in the area through the development of ongoing community networks and structures providing informal support to local residents; and
- To inform other decisions made by Council.

The key principles were:

- **We will Focus on Collecting Qualitative Information**

The consultation stage utilised qualitative methods for collecting information from residents rather than objective measures. Objective and subjective measures are equally important to measure Quality of Life. Objective measures encompass things like repeatable statistics – e.g. Crime rates, education level etc (and are incorporated in Chapter 2: Profile of key Census Data in the Community Plan), while subjective measures reflect how people feel about issues. Subjective data was not previously being collected or not being collected well.



- **We will Talk to Residents First**

In previous consultations undertaken by Council, views, priorities and opinions of residents have been taken into consideration equally with that of services, organisations and agencies who work in the area.

With the 2008 - 2013 Community Planning process, we recognised that the people who have the most experience of living in their communities are the residents who actually live there (not the services, agencies and organisations who work there). Community members have local knowledge and can provide a local perspective and can often offer a simple solution to a local issue.

During the consultation stage, we spoke to local residents first. This was undertaken through the community conversations and focus groups. At the end of the community consultation, we held a forum with services, agencies and organisations, where sector professionals added their own thoughts experiences and knowledge to the information already provided by residents.

- **We want to ensure Ongoing Participation of the Community in Council Processes**

Participation involves people being active in decision making processes and issues which affect them. As residents of our community, people need opportunities to participate in all aspects of community life. All people make valuable contributions to communities and are empowered themselves when they participate.

Involvement in the community is an enjoyable and rewarding experience. It can help develop skills, generate new friendships and influence positive change. Overall, people's participation makes our Shire and society a better place to live and is something that should be valued and encouraged.

The consultation process was the initial contact point for all the people involved to become further involved and connected to Council planning processes. All people involved in the consultations expressed a desire to be further involved in future programmes, projects and activities within their own and the wider community of Wyong Shire. Initially, Council's Community Development Section will be responsible for linking in and communicating with these people.



What were the Community Consultation Methods Used?

Council officers researched and utilised a number of best practice research methods to undertake the consultation process. These methods were undertaken based on an appreciative enquiry technique which emphasises the telling of stories from local residents about what it's like to live in Wyong Shire, rather than satisfaction with Council's services.

The consultation methods were as follows:

- **Individual Community Conversations**

Conversations were held with individual residents regarding what it's like to live in Wyong Shire in 2007. The conversations were conducted with identified community members who were considered as "social glue." Social Glue can be defined as: "someone that binds together to satisfy the human desire for community" (*Wikipedia, 2007*). Forty people participated in an individual community conversation.

A list of known residents involved in the focus groups and individual conversations is provided in Appendix B.

- **Focus Groups**

Council sought to engage with a broad range of age, population, interest, cultural groups across a broad geographical location within the Shire. Each focus group took the form of a structured discussion around set questions. The consultations were conducted with existing community groups in Wyong Shire. For example, University of the Third Age, playgroups, Environmental Groups, service clubs, etc. Thirty five focus groups were held with over 400 residents participating.

A copy of the questions used, and responses gained in the focus groups and conversations are included in Appendix C.



- **Central Coast Quality of Life Survey**

In October 2007 Wyong and Gosford Councils engaged the Central Coast Research Foundation to undertake a Central Coast Quality of Life Survey to establish a baseline of subjective quality of life data. 1,500 Central Coast residents (700 from Wyong Shire) participated in the 25 minute random telephone survey. The survey had an excellent response rate of 67%.

- **Community Art Project**

Photovoice

Photovoice is a creative community consultation process by which people can identify, represent and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique. The photos and commentary were used to launch the Community Plan.

- **Ideas Forums with Services and Organisations**

Two ideas forums, utilising the world café technique were held with Services, Agencies and Organisations working in Wyong Shire. Over 50 agencies were involved in the forums.

Services, Agencies and Organisations were asked to:

- Consider the information gained from Wyong Shire residents;
- Add value, knowledge, and experience to this information; and
- Suggest practical ways and ideas for moving forward.

- **Internet/Website**

The Council web site was utilised to allow people to have their say or complete a questionnaire. It was also a medium for the promotion of the community plan consultation phase and keeping people informed along the various stages of the community plan process.



- **Councillor Briefings/Updates**

Regular Councillor Briefings and Councillor Updates were held at key stages of the Community Plan process to keep the Councillors informed and supportive of the project.

How was the Information from the Community Consultation Phase Collated?

Information from the community consultations was documented and analysed for common themes in relation to each individual question, target population group and geographic locality. Analysis was qualitative using the technique called 'grounded theory'. In grounded theory technique, themes are coded, grouped and sifted, with common themes emerging from the analysis until a set of overarching themes are established.

The Community Plan provides a vibrant rich tapestry of qualitative information about what it's like to live in Wyong Shire: Why people came here, the strengths, the opportunities, and challenges of living in the Shire in 2008 and what people's hopes are for the future. What we have collected is stories as told through the experience of a very broad range of local residents. The findings from the community consultation phase were utilised to inform the development of priorities, strategies and actions.

How will the 2008 – 2013 Community Plan be implemented?

Implementation of the Community Plan will require a partnership approach which brings together the local community, all spheres of government, non government services and agencies and the private sector.

The goal is to build on the existing strengths of the community, and address the challenges facing the community by working in partnership to improve people's quality of life.

It is important to emphasise that implementation of the Community Plan is a social and community planning process, with people as the focus.

Council has an important role to play in leading and facilitating action, planning, and co-ordinating the delivery of services in an equitable and strategic manner.



We also need to move towards a 'whole of community' approach to identify and respond collectively to local issues and build community capacity. It is important that we identify, mobilise and build upon the assets and skills within our community and we, as a community, start to be responsible for our future.

Evaluation and review of the Community Plan will be ongoing. Progress will be monitored and reported by the Social Planning Team.

Many of the actions require adoption by Council and the outcomes of other actions will be reported to Council regularly. In conjunction with the ongoing review of Council's Management Plan, the Community Plan will be evaluated taking into consideration those actions, which require greater priority and where needs have changed. The allocation of resources will also be reviewed at this time. The Community Plan will also be subject to consideration with other priorities and work programmes of Council.

Many of the challenges raised in the Community Plan cannot be resolved by short term solutions but require a commitment by all stakeholders in the community over the longer term.



Who makes up
our community?



Community Profile

The 2006 Census provides an opportunity to view a snapshot of Wyong Shire. Using key socio-economic and demographic data from the 2006 Census we can gain a better understanding of our community: who we are, what we do and how we live. We are also able to gain an understanding of the Shire's changing social, cultural and economic landscape by looking at trends since the last Census in 2001. Key data is presented here, and as part of the discussion for each of the main key theme chapters.

Please refer to the *Wyong Shire Community Profile* for more detailed information of the Shire and our diverse and changing communities.

Location

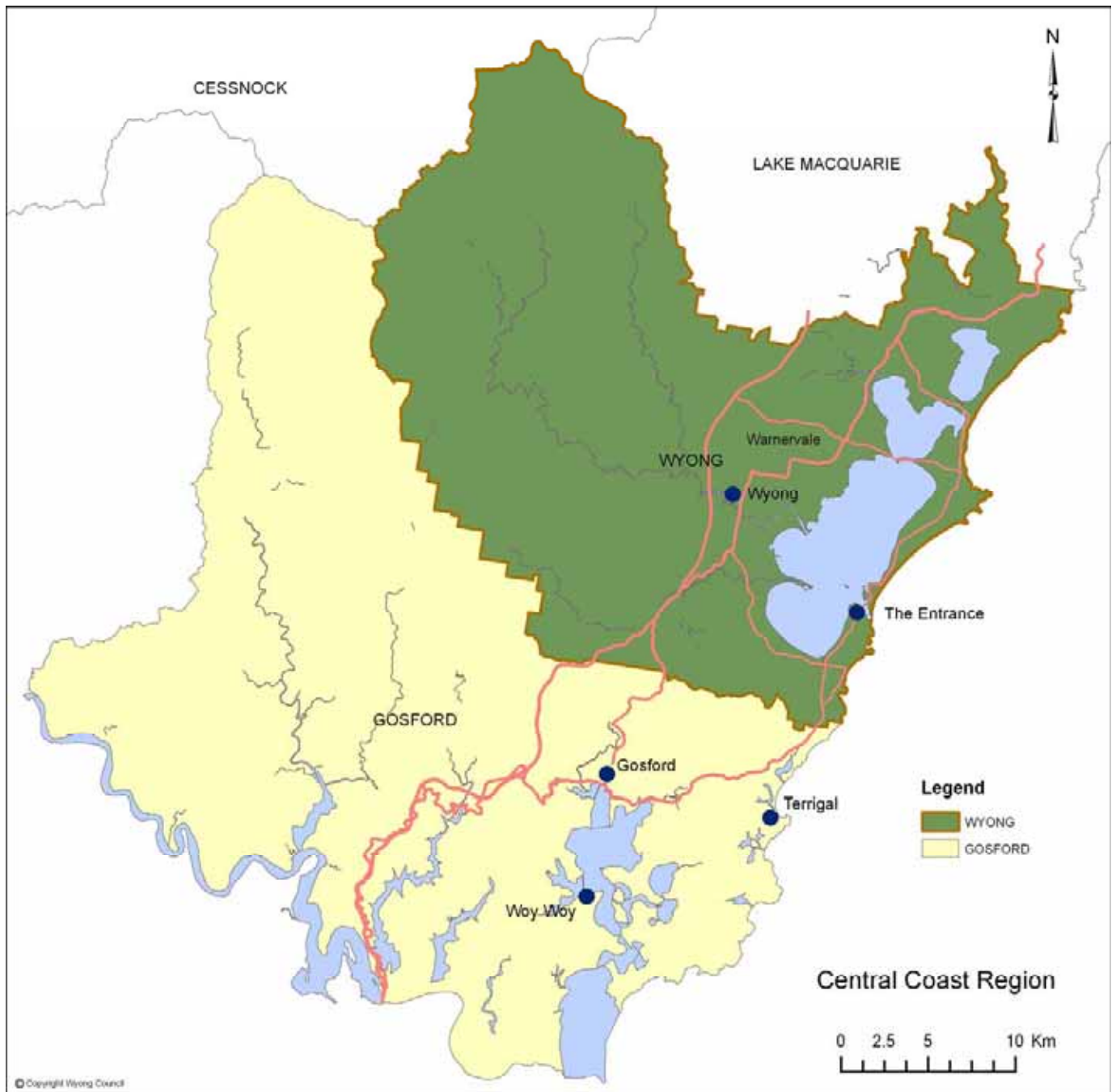
Wyong Shire covers approximately 830 square kilometres and forms the northern part of the Central Coast Region. The Shire is bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the east, having a coastline of 35 km stretching from Bateau Bay in the south to Catherine Hill Bay in the north. The Shire's three main lakes (Tuggerah, Budgewoi and Lake Munmorah) form the Tuggerah Lakes system which runs parallel to the coastline. To the west the Shire encompasses the Dooralong and Yarramalong Valleys, Olney, Wyong and Ourimbah State Forests.

Social Indicators

Population Change.
In-migration.
Stability.
Age Structure.
Cultural Diversity.
Family and Household Type.
Weekly Individual and Household Income.
Index of Social Disadvantage.



Neighbouring local government areas include the cities of Gosford, Lake Macquarie and Cessnock. Most of the Shire's population resides east of the F3 freeway in 56 square kilometres of suburbs spread around the Tuggerah Lakes system. The population density of Wyong Shire is 158 people per square kilometre.



Our Cultural Heritage

The first inhabitants of the Central Coast Region were the Aboriginal people. They have a rich heritage in the area.

The Aboriginal people lived upon the natural resources of the area collecting shellfish, fish, birds and bush plants. The people relied on hunting small marsupials, digging yams and other vegetables for their livelihood. Tools and food sources were traded each year between tribes and relations in the local area were apparently quite cordial.

The first European settler in the Wyong area was William Cape. In 1825 he was granted 1,000 acres of land for himself and 500 acres of land for each of his sons. One son called his property Wyong Place and it is from that the town derives its name.

During the next few years timber getters, attracted by large stands of cedar, came to the Yarramalong and Dooralong Valleys.

Farmers, interested in fertile land along the creeks then followed. The Waters and Stimson families, both from Northern Ireland took up land in the Yarramalong Valley in 1856. Two years later there were enough travellers between Gosford and Maitland for Matthew Woodbury to open an inn at Wyong Creek crossing. The district was slowly settled and became known for its timber. Edward Hammond Hargraves, the first man to discover payable gold in Australia, built a fine house and cedar stables at Noraville in 1856. It is the oldest and most historic home in the Shire. In 1875 William Alison took up 30,000 acres from Tuggerah to Wallarah Creek and from Hue Hue to the lakes. He was the largest landowner in the Shire.

The first school opened at Wyong Creek in 1883. Six years later the railway from Sydney to Newcastle was open and the town grew in earnest. The first pub, The Royal Hotel was opened and the Post Office established. The railway was the making of the timber industry. By the turn of the century the town exported thousands of railway sleepers.

In 1904 the Norah Head Lighthouse was built and the first few houses were developed at The Entrance. Tourists were making trips to Tuggerah Lakes by boat, horse-drawn vehicle and train. Slowly the population of the Shire began to grow. Roads, bridges and boarding houses were built.



Between the World War 1 and World War 2 the area attracted people from Sydney and Newcastle. After World War 2 the Central Coast came of age. The event was marked by the creation of two new Shires, Wyong and Gosford, out of the old Erina Shire in 1947.

Source: *Central Coast: Regional Profile and Social Atlas, 2004.*

Did You Know?

Social Planning Districts

For planning purposes the Shire has been broken up into ten social planning districts. The planning districts vary in size and population, however, they generally provide a broad indication of catchment boundaries for the identification of local community relationships and for the consideration of access to services and the location of community facilities. The Social Planning Districts are:

Social Planning District	Suburbs
Wyong	Wyong, Tuggerah, Mardi, Watanobbi, Tuggerawong, Tacoma, Rocky Point, Chittaway Point
Southern Lakes	Chittaway Bay, Berkeley Vale, Glenning Valley, Tumbi, Tumbi Rural, Killarney Vale, Fountaindale.
The Entrance	Bateau Bay, Long Jetty, Blue Bay, Shelly Beach, Toowoan Bay, The Entrance, North Entrance
Rural West	Jilliby, Dooralong, Wyong Creek, Yarramalong
Ourimbah	Ourimbah, Kangy Angy, Rural South
Toukley	Toukley, Noraville, Norah Head, Canton Beach
Gorokan	Gorokan, Kanwal, Lake Haven, Charmhaven (part), Wyongah
San Remo/ Budgewoi	San Remo, Doyalson, Blue Haven, Budgewoi, Halekulani, Buff Point
Northern Lakes	Lake Munmorah, Elizabeth Bay, Chain Valley Bay, Mannering Park, Gwandalan, Summerland Point
Warnervale/ Wadalba	Hamlyn Terrace, Woongarra, Warnervale, Wadalba Wallarah, Charmhaven (part)



Population Change

Significant development occurred in the Shire during the post-war years. The major catalyst for growth has been improvements in transport infrastructure; the electrification of the railway and construction of the freeway to Sydney; the affordability of land and housing; attraction of a coastal lifestyle and the expansion of metropolitan Sydney. Traditionally a holiday and retirement area, Wyong is now established as a coastal urban fringe area attracting a range of population groups and undergoing many social changes.

Wyong grew from about 10,000 people in 1947 to nearly 19,000 in 1961 and then to 33,000 in 1971. The 1970s and 1980s was characterized by rapid growth, with the population growing from 47,000 in 1976 to 82,000 in 1986. This level of growth continued during the 1990s reflecting the timing of new land releases and housing development. During the last six years from 2001 - 2006 the population has increased but at a slower rate. The population of the Shire at the 2006 Census was 139,800.

Table 2.1: ABS Census Counts Wyong Shire

Year	Number	Change Number	Average Annual Growth (%)
2006	139,802	8,948	1.3
2001	130,854	14,855	2.4
1996	115,999	15,356	2.9
1991	100,643	18,275	4.1
1986	82,368	13,418	3.7
1981	68,950		

Source: ABS Censuses.

To provide a more accurate population figure which is updated more frequently than every 5 years, the Australian Bureau of Statistics also produces "Estimated Resident Population" (ERP) numbers. Based on population estimates as at 30 June, the ERP is the number of people who usually reside in an area irrespective of where they were at the date of the estimate. ERPs are the official population count.

The estimated resident population of the Shire at June 2007 was 143,988 representing an annual increase of 1,264 people and 0.9% average annual growth.



Did You Know?

Residents in the consultation process were asked **what first brought you and your family here?** The most common responses for moving to the Shire were:

- The lifestyle the area offers;
- Affordability of the area;
- Work purposes;
- To be closer to family and friends; and
- The natural environment.

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."

"We holidayed here as children at Long Jetty and decided to move with the family here permanently."

Affordability related to the (once) greater availability of "more attractive and larger" houses and land coupled with the close proximity of the lakes and beaches compared to similar release areas in Sydney.

"We couldn't afford to live in Sydney and have the same type of house we have here."

Some residents stated that they moved to the Shire for work purposes, although many expressed disappointment and frustration at the lack of a diverse range of employment opportunities within the Central Coast.

The natural environment was a key reason for moving to the Shire. Residents love the diversity and range of natural environments that the Shire offers – beaches, lakes, lake foreshores, hinterland, bushland, rural farming areas and mountains.

"It's a hidden treasure. I love the natural environment – the water, birds and the lake edge."

Residents of the consultation process who had lived in the Shire for more than 15 years remember back to when Wyong was a much quieter, less busy place that had a limited range of shops, less traffic and less people generally. These people felt that the area had changed significantly in the time they had lived here –sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. On the other hand, people newly arrived to the Shire felt that Wyong was a peaceful, quiet place with not much traffic or congestion. Many people indicated that they had a long term familiarity with the area as they had holidayed in the Shire as children and still thought of the area as tranquil and relaxing.



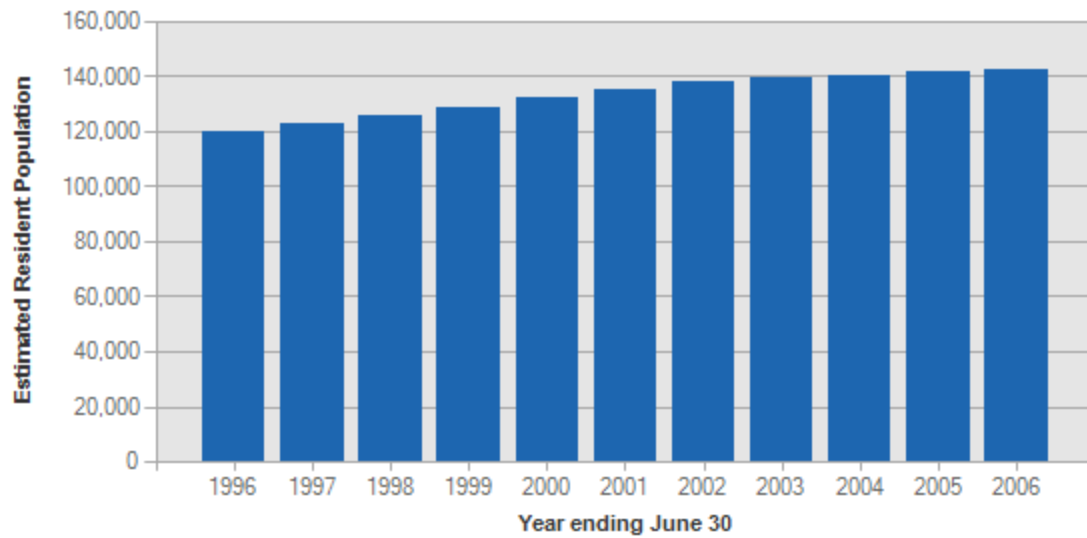
Table 2.2: Estimated Resident Population Wyong Shire, 1996 - 2006

Year (ending 30 June)	Number	Annual Change Number	Average Annual Growth (%)
2007 (prelim)	143,988	1,264	0.9%
2006	142,724	1,230	0.9%
2005	141,494	992	0.7%
2004	140,502	1,012	0.7%
2003	139,490	1,769	1.3%
2002	137,721	2,223	1.6%
2001	135,498	3,258	2.5%
2000	132,240	3,503	2.7%
1999	128,737	2,917	2.3%
1998	125,820	2,778	2.3%
1997	123,042	2,857	2.4%
1996	120,185	-	-

Source: ABS Estimated Resident Population Growth Cat No. 3218.0.55.001 Regional Population Growth Australia (Wyong Shire Community Profile – .id Consulting).

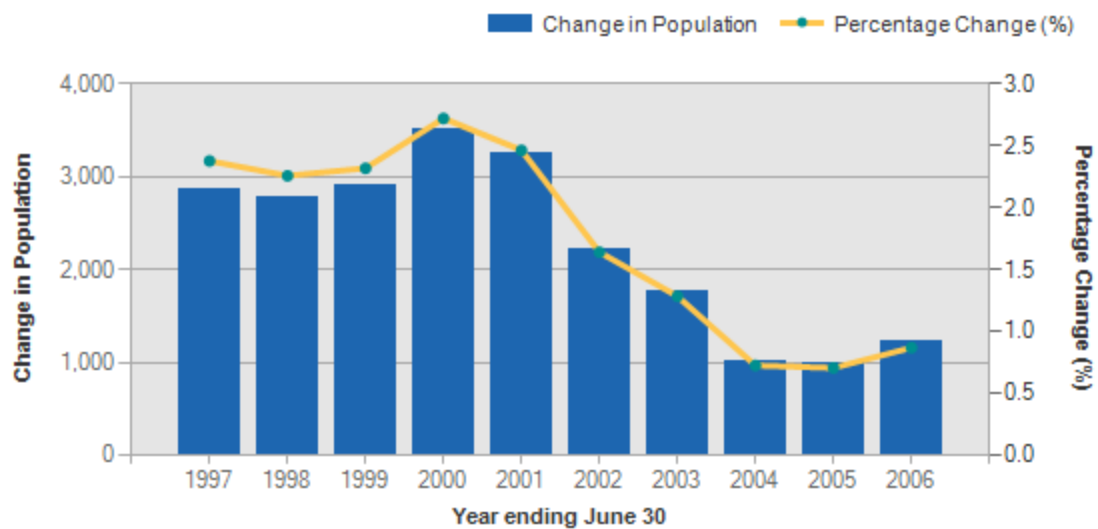
The graphs and table below show the ERP for the Shire over the last 10 years and the change that has occurred. During the period 1986 - 2001 the Shire was growing by around 3,000 people per annum at an annual growth rate of 2.4%. This level of growth was significantly above the comparative growth rate 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 of growth remains above the 0.7% growth rate for NSW. During the same periods, Gosford City has experienced small increases in population and has grown by 1.4% and 0.2% respectively.

Estimated Resident Population, Wyong Shire Council



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Estimated Resident Population Cat. No. 3218.0.55.001 Regional Population Growth, Australia

Change in Estimated Resident Population, Wyong Shire Council



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Estimated Resident Population Cat. No. 3218.0.55.001 Regional Population Growth, Australia

Table 2.3: Population Change and Average Growth Rates (ERP)

LGA	ERP at 30 June			Change 1996 - 2001	Change 2001 - 2006	State Rank 2001 - 2006	
	1996	2001	2006			Fastest Growth	Largest Growth
Wyong	120,185	135,498	142,724	15,313 2.4%	7,226 1.0%	33	8
Gosford	150,220	160,760	162,017	10,540 1.4%	1,257 0.2%	76	49
NSW	6,204,728	6,575,217	6,817,182	370,489 1.2%	241,965 0.7%	-	-

Source: ABS ERP Regional Population Growth Australia, Cat. No 3218.0 (2007).

As measured by change in ERP during 2001 - 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 15th out of 152 LGAs as measured by ERP at June 2006.

The Shire's settlement pattern has been influenced by the natural topography of the area with the population spread largely along the coastal fringe and the lake systems. Population growth has resulted in the absorption of some small coastal villages and settlements around the waterways into larger suburban masses.

Table 2.4 shows population distribution and change within Wyong Shire.

Table 2.4: Population Change Within Wyong Shire, 2001 - 2006 (Usual Residence Data)

Small Areas	2001	2006	2001 - 2006	Average Annual Growth %
Wyong LGA	131,584	139,802	8,218	1.2
Bateau Bay/Shelly Beach	12,477	12,792	314	-0.5
Berkeley Vale - Chittaway - Glenning Valley - Fountaindale	13,145	12,866	-279	-0.4
Blue Haven	4,724	5,875	1,151	4.4
Budgewoi - Halekulani - Buff Point	8,774	8,753	-21	0.0
Gorokan	7,242	7,200	-42	-0.1
Gwandalan - Summerland Point	4,575	5,118	543	2.2
Hamlyn Terrace - Wadalba	2,593	4,902	2,309	13.5
Kanwal - Wyongah	5,734	5,772	38	0.1
Killarney Vale	6,774	6,781	7	0.0
Lake Haven - Charmhaven (part)	5,763	5,691	-72	-0.2
Lake Munmorah - Chain Valley Bay	5,974	6,877	903	2.9
Long Jetty - Blue Bay - Toowoan Bay	6,770	6,614	-156	-0.5
Mannering Park	2,467	2,410	-57	-0.5
Noraville - Norah Head - Canton Beach	4,720	4,830	110	0.5
Ourimbah - Rural South	4,190	4,330	140	0.7
Rural West - Mardi	1,883	1,749	-134	-1.5
San Remo - Doyalson	4,577	4,680	103	0.5
The Entrance - North Entrance	3,748	3,826	77	0.4
Toukley	4,013	4,091	78	0.4
Tuggerah - Mardi - Chittaway Point - Tacoma South	4,502	4,953	451	1.9
Tuggerawong - Tacoma - Rocky Point	2,194	2,175	-20	-0.1
Tumbi Umbi	4,299	4,874	576	2.5
Watanobbi	3,209	3,545	337	2.0
Woongarra - Warnervale - Charmhaven (part)	3,237	5,839	2,602	12.5
Wyong Town	3,327	3,258	-68	-0.4

Source: ABS Census 2001, 2006 (Wyong Shire Community Profile – .id Consulting).



Between 2001 and 2006 50% of the Shire's residents (69,874 people) did not move. A further 18.7% of residents (26,151 people) moved within the Shire.

The major component of the Shire's change in population is through in-migration of people moving to the Shire from other areas. Between 2001 and 2006 the Shire had a net gain of 7,286 people from other parts of NSW. The main areas that our new residents have come from include Gosford, Blacktown, Lake Macquarie, Penrith and Warringah local government areas. Residents have moved from Wyong Shire to Lake Macquarie, Cessnock, the Gold Coast and "sea change" communities on the mid and far north coast (Greater Taree, Clarence, Hastings, Coffs Harbour and Tweed areas).

Table 2.5: Migration Into, and Out of Wyong Shire, 2001 - 2006

Migration	Number
Current residents who moved at least once	52,747
Residents who had moved within Wyong Shire	26,151
Migration from other parts of NSW	22,268
Migration to other parts of NSW	14,982
Net migration from other parts of NSW	7,286
Migration from other parts of Australia (excluding NSW)	2,063
Migration to other parts of Australia (excluding NSW)	4,248
Net migration from other parts of Australia (excluding NSW)	-2,185
Migration from other countries	1,490
Migration to other countries	N/A
Net migration from other countries	N/A

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2006, Unpublished Data (Wyong Shire Community Profile - .id Consulting).



Table 2.6: Migration between Wyong Shire and other Local Government Areas, 2001 - 2006

Top 10 LGAs Ranked by Net Gain to Wyong Shire			Top 10 LGAs Ranked by Net Loss to Wyong Shire				
	In	Out	Net		In	Out	Net
Gosford	4,838	3,160	1,678	Lake Macquarie	1,256	1,907	-651
Blacktown	1,825	295	1,530	Cessnock	239	743	-504
Penrith	1,131	260	871	Gold Coast	254	694	-440
Warringah	702	212	490	Greater Taree	144	431	-287
Fairfield	490	69	421	Clarence Valley	56	223	-167
Parramatta	556	147	409	Maroochy	33	177	-144
Liverpool	501	105	396	Hastings	172	310	-138
Bankstown	465	75	390	Coffs Harbour	111	247	-136
Campbelltown	473	90	383	Maitland	124	259	-135
Baulkham Hills	534	169	365	Tweed	83	218	-135

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2006, Unpublished Data (Wyong Shire Community Profile – .id Consulting).

The Draft Central Coast Regional Planning Strategy (2006) foreshadows continued population change for the Central Coast. Most of this increase will be accommodated in Wyong Shire, with Wyong's population expected to be larger than Gosford's by 2016.

In Wyong the population is projected to grow to over 200,000 by 2031.

New release areas in Warnervale and Wadalba form part of a large area which has been identified in the Metropolitan Strategy as a major area to accommodate future urban development in the Shire.

Age Structure

Age structure is an indicator of the Shire's residential role and function and how it is likely to change in the future. The age structure of a population is usually indicative of an area's era of settlement and provides key insights into the level of demand for services and facilities.

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.



At the 2006 Census, 16.9% of the population were children aged between 0 - 11 years, 16.5% aged 12 - 24, 31.3% aged 25 - 49, 11.8% aged 50 - 69, and 23.3% were persons aged 60 years and over. The median age of persons in Wyong was 39 years.

Analysis of the age structure of Wyong Shire compared to NSW shows that there was a larger proportion of people in the younger age groups (0 - 17) as well as a larger proportion on the older age groups (over 60). Overall, 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.

Table 2.7: Age Structure, Wyong Shire 2006 and 2001

	2006			2001			Change 2001 - 2006
	Number	%	NSW%	Number	%	NSW %	
0 - 4	9,119	6.6	6.4	9,419	7.2	6.7	-300
5 - 11	14,160	10.3	9.3	14,485	11.1	9.9	-325
12 - 17	12,151	8.8	8.3	11,149	8.5	8.4	1,002
18 - 24	10,556	7.7	9.2	9,394	7.2	9.2	1,162
25 - 34	15,169	11.0	13.6	16,064	12.3	14.5	-895
35 - 49	27,963	20.3	21.9	26,897	20.6	22.2	1,066
50 - 59	16,282	11.8	12.7	14,140	10.8	11.7	2,142
60 - 69	13,636	9.9	8.7	12,221	9.4	7.8	1,415
70 - 84	15,391	11.2	8.2	14,454	11.1	8.4	937
85 & over	3,049	2.2	1.7	2,313	1.8	1.4	736
Total	137,476	100.0	100.0	130,536	100.0	100.0	6,940

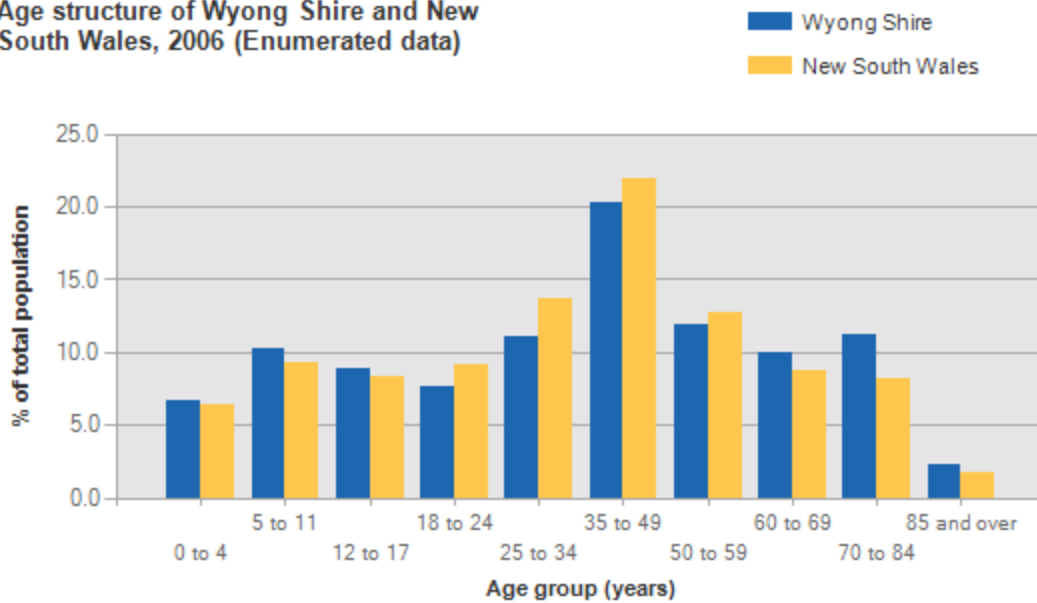
Source: ABS Census 2001, 2006 (Wyong Shire Community Profile – .id Consulting).

The major difference between the age structure of Wyong Shire and NSW were:

- A larger percentage of 70 - 84 years olds (11.2% compared to 8.2%);
- A smaller percentage of 25 - 34 year olds (11.0% compared to 13.6%);
- A smaller percentage of 35 - 49 year olds (20.3% compared to 21.9%); and
- A smaller percentage of 18 - 24 year olds (7.7% compared to 9.2%).



Age structure of Wyong Shire and New South Wales, 2006 (Enumerated data)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

The largest changes in age structure in Wyong between 2001 and 2006 were in the age groups:

- 50 - 59 (+2,142 persons);
- 60 - 60 (+1,415 persons);
- 18 - 24 (+1,162 persons); and
- 35 - 39 (+1,066 persons).

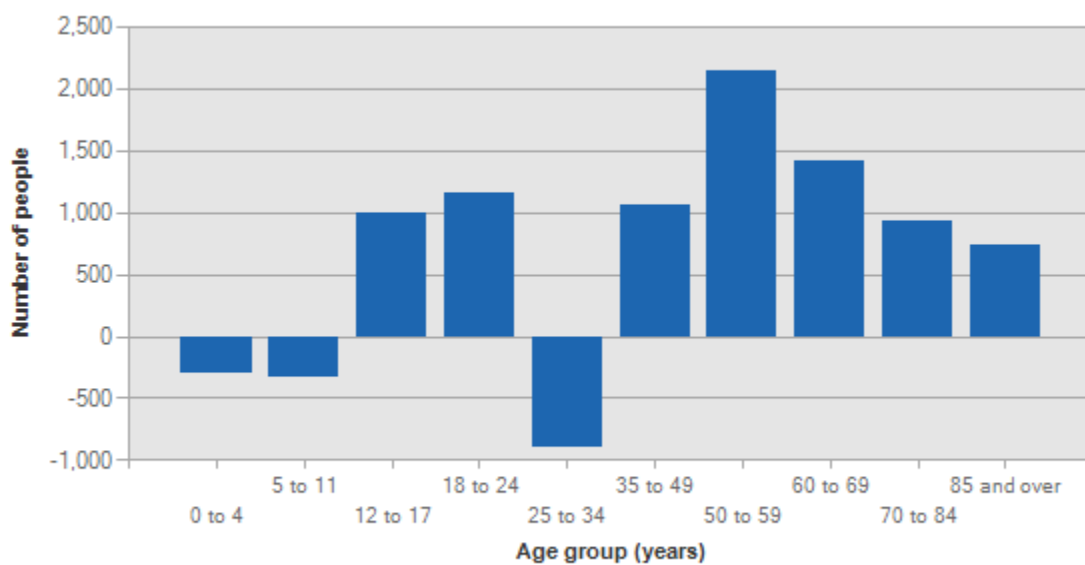
The graph below illustrates very clearly the ageing trend in the Shire's population. This trend will continue and increase in coming decades.

It is interesting to note the increase in the numbers of young people 12 - 24 years, in particular the 18 - 24 year age group. This group in total has increased by over 2,160 people since 2001. Typically an area may experience out-migration of people aged between 18 and 24 years for work, study or lifestyle reasons. The retention of people in this group may reflect the trend for young people to stay at home longer as a result of increases in the rental and property prices.

The data shows that out-migration is occurring for the next age group, that is, those aged 25 - 34 years. *"This out-migration is likely to have significant impacts upon many of the labour supply indicators and also impacts upon the levels of innovation present in the labour force, especially when those who are leaving are those with higher education levels"* (HVRF, 2006). Improving both local workforce and lifestyle opportunities for this population group is important to either retain or attract these people back to the Shire.

The 0 - 4 and 5 - 11 age groups are experiencing a decline in numbers, with a loss of 300 persons and 325 persons respectively over the last five years.

Change in age structure of Wyong Shire, 2001 to 2006 (Enumerated data)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 and 2001 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

Table 2.8 shows the distribution of the population aged under 5 years within the Shire and the change that has occurred in the last five years.

Table 2.8: Population aged under 5 years within Wyong Shire, Change 2001 – 2006

Small Areas	2001		2006		2001 - 2006	Percent Change %
Wyong LGA	9,419	7.2	9,119	6.6	-300	-3.2
Bateau Bay/Shelly Beach	657	5.3	657	5.2	-	-
Berkeley Vale - Chittaway - Glenning Valley - Fountaindale	1,009	7.7	799	6.3	-210	-20.8
Blue Haven	561	12.0	606	10.5*	45	8.0
Budgewoi - Halekulani - Buff Point	525	6.0	515	6.0	-10	1.9
Gorokan	448	6.2	505	7.1*	57	12.7
Gwandalan - Summerland Point	343	7.5	313	6.2	-30	-8.7
Hamlyn Terrace - Wadalba	266	10.0	477	9.4*	211	79.3
Kanwal - Wyongah	491	8.6	407	7.2*	-84	-17.1
Killarney Vale	480	7.1	390	5.8	-90	-18.8
Lake Haven - Charmhaven (part)	353	6.1	327	5.9	-26	-7.4
Lake Munmorah - Chain Valley Bay	457	7.8	383	5.8	-74	-16.2
Long Jetty - Blue Bay - Toowoona Bay	429	6.3	375	5.8	-54	-12.6
Manning Park	176	7.1	160	6.8*	-16	-9.0
Noraville - Norah Head - Canton Beach	254	5.3	257	5.5	3	1.2
Ourimbah - Rural South	366	8.8	336	8.0*	-30	-8.2
Rural West - Mardi	122	6.4	87	5.0	-35	-28.7
San Remo - Doyalson	391	8.6	343	7.4*	-48	-12.3
The Entrance - North Entrance	217	5.7	200	5.2	-17	-7.8
Toukley	214	5.4	164	4.1	-50	-20.7
Tuggerah - Mardi - Chittaway Point - Tacoma South	478	10.6	424	8.8*	-54	-11.3
Tuggerawong - Tacoma - Rocky Point	168	7.6	130	6.1	-38	-22.6
Tumbi Umbi	288	6.9	329	6.9	41	14.2
Watanobbi	317	9.8	283	8.1*	-34	-10.7
Woongarrah - Warnervale - Charmhaven (part)	232	7.0	505	8.8*	273	118
Wyong Town	203	6.2	147	4.6	-56	-27.6

Source: ABS Census 2001, 2006 (Wyong Shire Community Profile - .id Consulting).

Notes:

* Denotes a higher proportion of 0 - 4 year olds than the Shire average.

Table 2.9 shows the population distribution and change for young people within the Shire. There are around 22,700 people aged between 12 and 24 years in the Shire (representing 16.5% of the population). Between 2001 and 2006 the number of 12 - 24 years olds increased by 2,164 or by 10.5%.

Table 2.9: Population aged 12 - 24 years within Wyong Shire Change 2001 - 2006

Small Area	2001		2006		2001 - 2006	Percent Change %
	Population	%	Population	%		
Wyong LGA	20,543	15.7	22,707	16.5	2,164	10.5
Bateau Bay/Shelly Beach	2,025	16.3	2,194	17.5*	169	8.3
Berkeley Vale - Chittaway - Glenning Valley - Fountaindale	2,316	17.7	2,421	19.0*	105	4.5
Blue Haven	719	15.4	966	16.7*	247	34.4
Budgewoi/Halekulani/Buff Point	1,317	15.2	1,351	16.2	34	2.6
Gorokan	1,080	14.9	1,104	15.6	24	2.2
Gwandalan - Summerland Point	619	13.5	702	14.0	83	13.4
Hamlyn Terrace - Wadalba	329	12.3	617	12.2	288	87.5
Kanwal - Wyongah	848	14.9	969	17.1*	121	14.3
Killarney Vale	1,050	15.5	1,075	16.1	25	2.4
Lake Haven - Charmhaven (part)	986	17.1	998	17.8*	12	1.2
Lake Munmorah - Chain Valley Bay	802	13.7	1,080	16.3	278	34.7
Long Jetty - Blue Bay - Toowoan Bay	949	14.0	821	12.7	-128	-13.5
Manning Park	398	16.1	408	17.3*	10	2.5
Noraville - Norah Head - Canton Beach	734	15.2	715	15.2	-19	-2.6
Ourimbah - Rural South	715	17.2	785	18.6*	70	9.8
Rural West - Mardi	295	16.9	328	17.3*	33	11.2
San Remo - Doyalson	735	16.2	834	18.0*	99	13.5
The Entrance - North Entrance	474	12.4	491	12.8	17	3.6
Toukley	478	11.9	539	13.5	61	12.8
Tuggerah - Mardi - Chittaway Point - Tacoma South	700	15.6	778	16.1	78	11.1
Tuggerawong - Tacoma - Rocky Point	406	17.6	411	19.5*	5	1.2
Tumbi Umbi	782	18.7	986	17.0*	204	26.1
Watanobbi	560	17.4	663	14.1	103	18.4
Woongarra - Warnervale - Charmhaven (part)	569	17.1	872	15.2	303	53.3
Wyong Town	531	16.2	540	16.9	9	1.7

Source: ABS Census 2001, 2006 (Wyong Shire Community Profile - .id Consulting).

* Denotes a higher proportion of 12 - 24 year olds than the Shire average.



The distribution of people aged 60 years and over and population change in this age group is shown in Table 2.10. In 2006, the Shire had over 32,000 people in the older age groups, representing 23% of the population.

Table 2.10: Population aged 60 years and over within Wyong Shire, Change 2001 – 2006

Small Areas	2001		2006		2001 - 2006	Percent Change %
	Population	%	Population	%		
Wyong LGA	28,988	22.3	32,076	23.3	3,088	10.7
Bateau Bay/Shelly Beach	3,335	26.8	3,473	27.8*	138	4.1
Berkeley Vale - Chittaway - Glenning Valley - Fountaindale	2,110	16.1	2,214	17.4	104	4.9
Blue Haven	519	11.1	759	13.2	240	46.2
Budgewoi - Halekulani - Buff Point	2,327	26.7	2,383	27.8*	56	2.4
Gorokan	2,072	28.7	1,950	27.4*	-122	-5.9
Gwandalan - Summerland Point	1,049	22.9	1,188	23.7*	139	13.3
Hamlyn Terrace - Wadalba	539	20.3	1,160	22.9	621	115.2
Kanwal - Wyongah	1,101	19.4	1,228	21.6	127	11.5
Killarney Vale	1,734	25.5	1,713	25.6*	-21	1.2
Lake Haven - Charmhaven (part)	1,368	23.7	1,477	26.4*	109	8.0
Lake Munmorah - Chain Valley Bay	1,255	21.0	1,830	27.6*	575	45.8
Long Jetty - Blue Bay - Toowoan Bay	2,098	18.6	2,033	31.5*	-65	-3.1
Mannering Park	504	20.4	503	21.4	-1	0.0
Noraville - Norah Head - Canton Beach	1,523	31.6	1,440	30.6*	-83	-5.4
Ourimbah - Rural South	387	9.3	583	13.8	196	50.6
Rural West - Mardi	251	13.2	307	17.5	56	22.3
San Remo - Doyalson	827	18.2	924	19.9	97	11.7
The Entrance - North Entrance	1,284	33.5	1,216	31.6*	-68	-5.3
Toukley	1,499	37.5	1,439	36.0*	-60	-4.0
Tuggerah - Mardi - Chittaway Point - Tacoma South	591	13.1	823	17	232	39.2
Tuggerawong - Tacoma - Rocky Point	358	16.2	306	14.4	-52	14.5
Tumbi Umbi	777	18.6	1,067	22.4	290	37.3
Watanobbi	390	12.1	419	12.0	29	7.4
Woongarra - Warnervale - Charmhaven (part)	520	15.7	806	14.0	286	55.0
Wyong Town	792	24.0	862	26.9*	70	8.8

Source: ABS Census 2001, 2006 (Wyong Shire Community Profile - .id Consulting).

* Denotes a higher proportion of 60+ years than the Shire average.



Cultural Diversity

Country of birth data identifies where people were born and is indicative of the level of cultural diversity in an area.

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. In the last ten years the Indigenous population in the Shire has more than doubled. The increase is likely to be a combination of actual population increase as well as an increase in the number of persons identifying themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and improved data collection measures by the ABS.

Analysis of country of birth of the population in Wyong Shire in 2006 compared to NSW shows that there was a smaller proportion of people born overseas as well as a smaller proportion of people from a non-English speaking background. Overall 11.9% of the population was born overseas and 4.3% were from a non-English speaking background, compared with 23.8% and 16.8% respectively for NSW. The number of people from a non-English speaking background has increased by nearly 500 since 2001.

Table 2.11: Country of Birth, Wyong Shire and Change 2001 – 2006

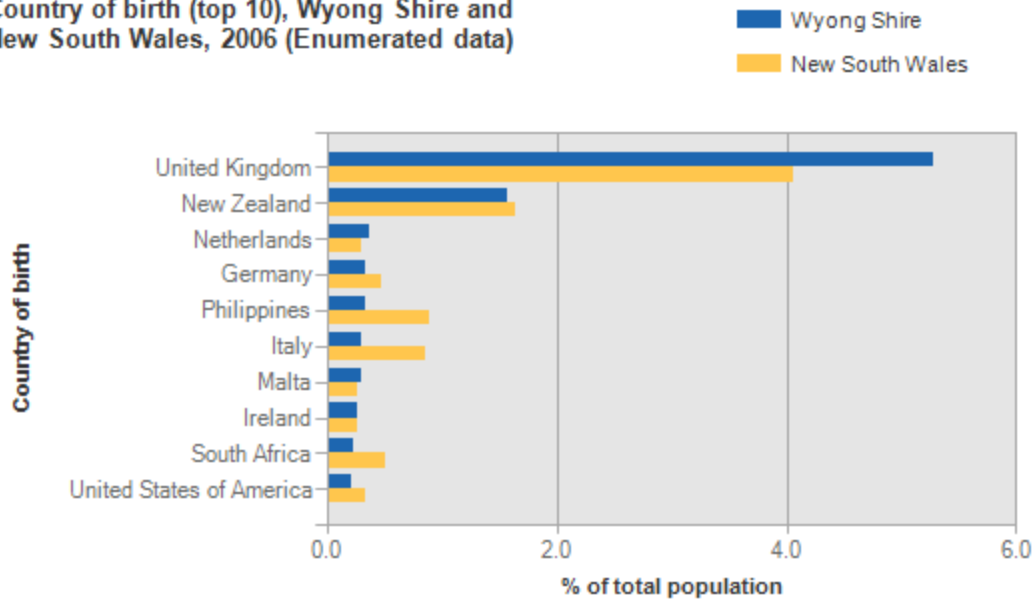
	2006			2001			Change 2001 - 2006
	Number	%	NSW %	Number	%	NSW %	
Indigenous Born	3,800	2.8	2.1	2,565	2.0	1.9	1,235
Australian Born	112,531	81.9	69.0	107,533	82.4	70.5	4,998
Overseas Born:	16,383	11.9	23.8	15,677	12.0	23.4	706
Non-English Speaking Background	5,886	4.3	16.8	5,395	4.1	16.2	491
Main English Speaking Country	10,497	7.6	6.9	10,282	7.9	7.2	215

Source: ABS Census 2001, 2006 (Wyong Shire Community Profile – .id Consulting).

There is no one dominant group from a non-English speaking background in the Shire. Rather the Shire is characterised by diversity in terms of birthplace, with a number of different countries represented in small groups. The dominant non-English speaking country of birth was Netherlands, where 0.4% of the population, or 494 people, were born.



Country of birth (top 10), Wyong Shire and New South Wales, 2006 (Enumerated data)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

Families and Households

The family and household structure of the population is an indicator of the area's residential role and function (relating to the types of housing markets attracted to the area). At the 2006 Census there were 38,035 families in Wyong Shire. Table 2.12 shows the mix of families in the Shire.

Table 2.12: Family Type, Wyong Shire

	2006			2001			Change 2001 - 2006
	Number	%	NSW %	Number	%	NSW %	
Couple Families with Child(ren) 15 years and under	11,050	29.1	31.4	11,407	30.9	33.0	-57
Couple with Child(ren) over 15 years	4,599	12.1	14.8	4,014	11.2	14.9	585
Total Couples with Child(ren)	15,649	41.1	46.2	15,121	42.1	47.8	528
One Parent Families with Child(ren) 15 years and under	4,640	12.2	8.7	4,318	12.0	8.6	322
One Parent Families with Child(ren) 15 years and over	2,827	7.4	7.4	2,325	6.5	6.8	502
Total One Parent Families	7,467	19.6	16.1	6,643	18.5	15.5	824
Couples without Child(ren)	14,511	38.2	36.0	13,712	38.2	34.9	799
Other Families	406	1.1	1.7	443	1.2	1.8	-37
Total Families	38,033	100.0	100.0	35,919	100.0	100.0	2,144

Source: ABS Census 2001, 2006 (Wyong Shire Community Profile - .id Consulting).

Analysis of the family type compared to NSW shows that there was a smaller proportion of couple families with child(ren), a larger proportion of couple families without children and a higher proportion of one parent families. 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% from NSW respectively.

The largest changes in family types between 2001 and 2006 were:

- Couples without child(ren) (+799);
- Couples with child(ren) over 15 years (+585);
- One parent families with child(ren) over 15 years (+502); and
- One parent families with child(ren) 15 years and under (+322).

Given the age structure of the Shire's population it is likely that couple families without children are older couples whose children have left home.



Comparing household types between Wyong Shire and NSW reveals a similar proportion of family households but a larger proportion of lone person households. Family households accounted for 69.4% of total households in Wyong while lone person households comprised 25.2% (68.8% and 23.0% respectively for NSW).

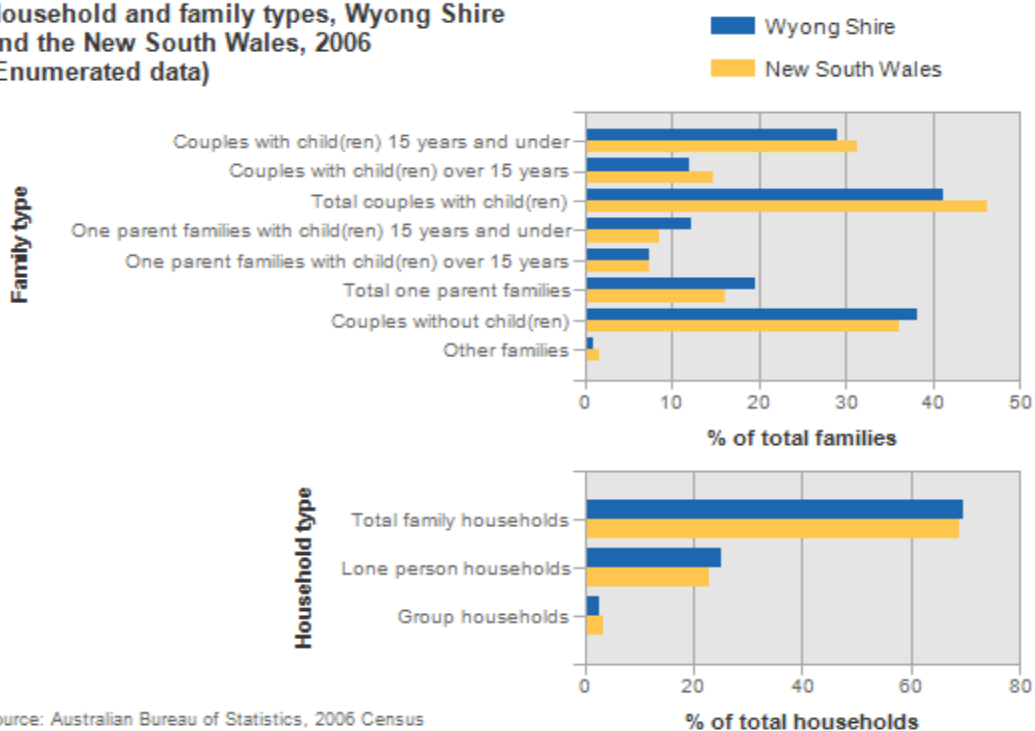
Between 2001 and 2006 the number of family households increased by 1,909 and the number of lone person households increased by 962.

Table 2.13: Household Types

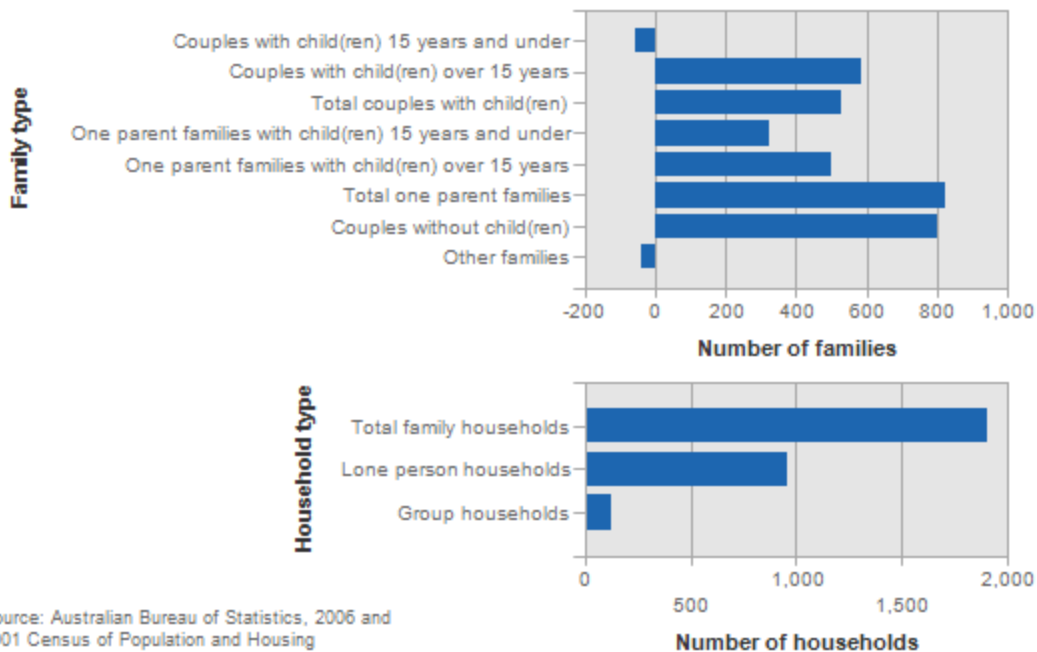
	2006			2001			Change 2001 - 2006
	No.	%	NSW%	No.	%	NSW %	
Family Households	37,315	69.4	68.8	35,406	69.7	69.3	1,909
Lone person Households	13,537	25.2	23.0	12,575	24.7	22.3	962
Group Households	1,463	2.7	3.6	1,339	2.6	3.6	124
Total	53,751	100.0	100.0	50,824	100.0	100.0	2,927

Source: ABS Census 2001, 2006 (Wyong Shire Community Profile - .id consulting).

Household and family types, Wyong Shire and the New South Wales, 2006
(Enumerated data)



Change in household and family types, Wyong Shire, 2001 to 2006 (Enumerated data)



Income

In 2006 the median weekly individual income for persons aged over 15 years was \$381 in comparison to \$461 for NSW and the median weekly household income was \$770 in comparison to \$1,036 for NSW.

The majority of the population earns below \$799 per week and a small proportion earn above \$1,000. The greatest proportion of the population (18.4%) had a weekly individual income of \$150 - \$249 per week. Similarly high proportions were found in the \$250 - \$399 income group (16.7%) and \$400 - \$599 income group (15.0%). 12.7% of individuals earn above \$1,000 per week in comparison to 18.8% in NSW.

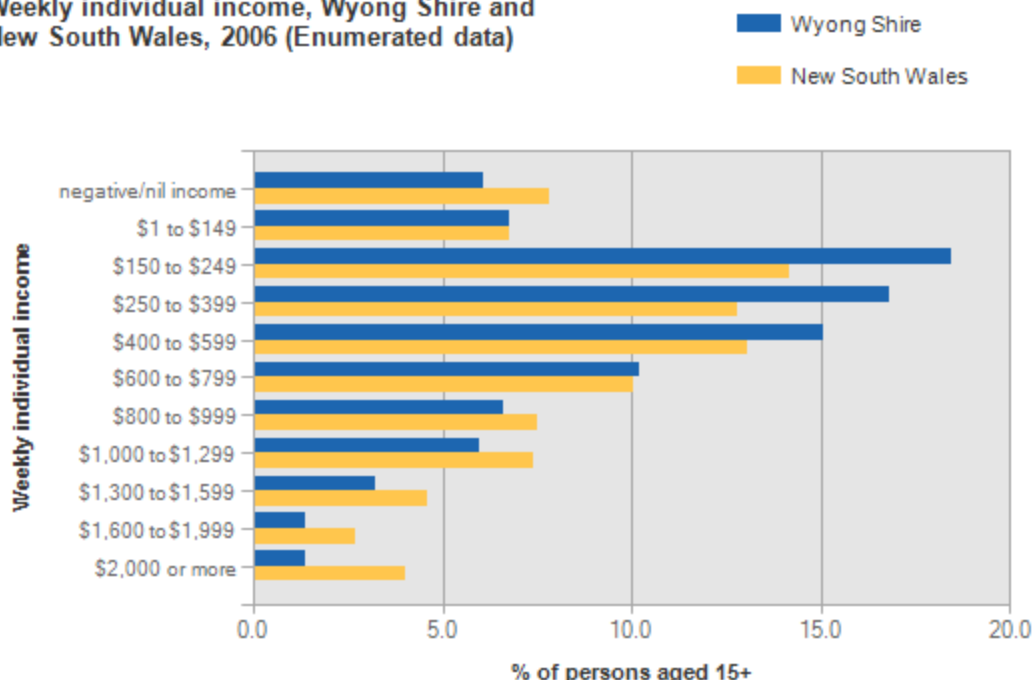
In terms of weekly household income the greatest proportion of residents in Wyong earned \$500 - \$649 per week (13.3%), this was followed by a weekly income of \$1,000 - \$1,199 (10.2%) and a weekly income of \$250 - \$349 (9.8%). The Shire has a significantly lower income profile in comparison to NSW. This can be shown by the higher proportion of households on low incomes (less than \$500 per week), 25.9% compared to 20.1%, and a lower proportion of households in the high income range of \$1,400 and above per week, 20.4% compared to 31%.

Wyong has the lowest median weekly household income level of all LGAs in the Sydney Statistical Division (*City Futures Research Centre UNSW*).

The lower than State average income levels can be explained by several factors:

- A lower proportion of the working age population (those aged between 15 and 64 years);
- A higher proportion of older people, mostly retirees;
- The state of the economy with a lower proportion of employees in higher income occupations, a higher proportion of part-time and casual employment and higher unemployment rates; and
- Lower levels of education attainment.

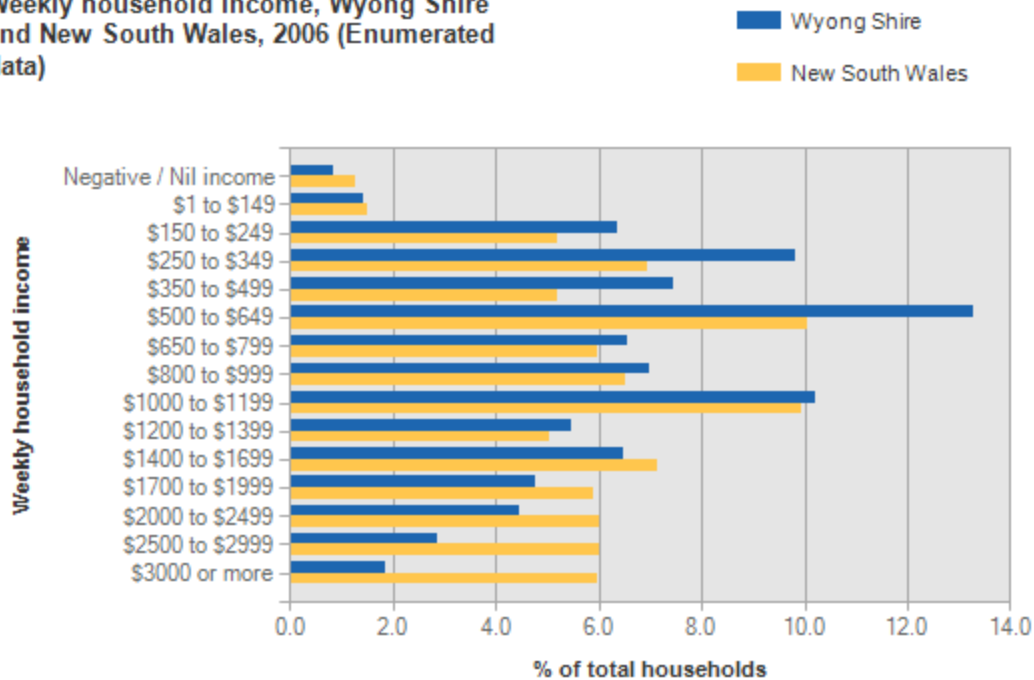
Weekly individual income, Wyong Shire and New South Wales, 2006 (Enumerated data)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)



Weekly household income, Wyong Shire and New South Wales, 2006 (Enumerated data)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)

SEIFA is a set of four summary measures that have been created from the 2006 Census. For each index, every geographic area in Australia is given a SEIFA score which shows how disadvantaged that area is compared with other areas in Australia.

Each index summarises a different aspect of the socio-economic conditions of people living in an area. They each summarise a different set of social and economic information.

The four indexes are:

- Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage – focuses primarily on disadvantage from Census variables like low income, low educational attainment, unemployment and dwellings without motor vehicles.
- Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage – is a continuum of advantage (high values) to disadvantage (low values) and is derived from Census variables related to both advantage and disadvantage.
- Index of Economic Resources – focuses on financial aspects of advantage and disadvantage using Census variables relating to residents' incomes, housing expenditure and assets.



- Index of Education and Occupation – includes Census variables relating to educational attainment, employment and vocational skills.

The following table shows the scores for Wyong on each on the above indexes. A rank is provided in relation to local government areas at both a national and state level.

For the index of relative social disadvantage Wyong has a score of 967 and is ranked 68 out of the 152 LGAs in NSW, that is, it has the 68th lowest score. The Shire is ranked 17th lowest in the State for the index of education and occupation.

The Shire has higher rankings on the index of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage (81) and economic resources (75).

Table 2.14: SEIFA Indexes, Wyong Shire 2006

Index	Score	Rank within Australia			Rank within NSW			Minimum Score for CDs	Maximum Score for CDs
		Rank	Decile	Percentile	Rank	Decile	Percentile		
Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage	967	296	5	45	68	5	45	717	1,110
Relative Socio-Economic Advantage & Disadvantage	955	404	7	61	81	6	53	753	1,109
Economic Resources	977	333	5	50	75	5	49	720	1,175
Education & Occupation	914	143	3	22	17	2	12	801	1,099

Source: ABS 2008, Catalogue No. 2033.0.55.001.

Notes:

Scores – a lower score indicates that an area is relatively disadvantaged compared to an area with a higher score.

Ranks – all areas are ordered from the lowest to highest score, then the area with the lowest score is given a rank of 1, the area with the second lowest score is given a rank of 2 and so on up to the area with the highest score is given the highest rank.

Deciles – all areas are ordered from lowest to highest score, the lowest 10% of areas are given a decile number of 1 and so on, up to the highest 10% of areas which are given a decile number of 10. This means that areas are divided up into ten groups, depending on their score.

Percentiles – all areas are ordered from lowest to highest score, the lowest 1% of areas are given a percentile number of 1 and so on, up to the highest 1% of areas which are given a percentile number of 100. This means that areas are divided up into one hundred groups depending on their score.

Ranking with State – all areas within each State are ordered from lowest to highest score, then ranks, deciles and percentages are assigned to each area within the State.



The index of disadvantage is not uniform within the Shire. Table 2.15 shows that disparity within different sub-areas of the Shire ranked from greatest disadvantage to least disadvantaged.

Table 2.15: SEIFA Index of Disadvantage within Wyong Shire

SEIFA Index of Disadvantage Wyong Shire's Small Areas (Ranked from Greatest to Least Disadvantaged)	2006 SEIFA Index of Disadvantage
Wyong Sub Area	867.2
The Entrance - North Entrance Sub Area	886.0
Toukley Sub Area	899.5
Watanobbi Sub Area	905.9
Gorokan Sub Area	912.1
San Remo - Doyalson Sub Area	914.7
Lake Haven - Charmhaven (part) Sub Area	924.2
Long Jetty - Blue Bay - Toowoyn Bay Sub Area	932.8
Budgewoi - Halekulani - Buff Point Sub Area	941.7
Killarney Vale Sub Area	941.7
Noraville - Norah Head - Canton Beach Sub Area	946.6
Mannering Park Sub Area	947.3
Blue Haven Sub Area	960.5
Wyong Shire	966.8
Lake Munmorah - Chain Valley Bay Sub Area	970.4
Gwandalan - Summerland Point Sub Area	973.8
Kanwal - Wyongah Sub Area	974.5
Tuggerawong - Tacoma - Rocky Point Sub Area	977.1
Bateau Bay - Shelly Beach Sub Area	990.0
Central Coast	990.6
Berkeley Vale - Chittaway Bay - Glenning Valley - Fountaindale Sub Area	1,013.8
Tumbi Umbi Sub Area	1,014.0
Hamlyn Terrace - Wadalba Sub Area	1,020.8
Tuggerah - Mardi - Chittaway Point - Tacoma South Sub Area	1,022.9
Ourimbah - Rural South Sub Area	1,038.2
Woongarra - Warnervale remainder - Charmhaven (part) Sub Area	1,055.7
Rural West - Mardi Rural Sub Area	1,071.4

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)*, 2006.
(Wyong Shire Community Profile - .id consulting).



Interested to find out more about your community?

Please see the following reports on Council's website www.wyong.nsw.gov.au or contact the Social Planning Team on 4350 5520.

Wyong Shire Community Profile

A detailed Community Profile for Wyong Shire including the results from the 2006, 2001, 1996 and 1991 Censuses of Population and Housing is available as an interactive research tool online. The Wyong Shire Community Profile provides information for Wyong LGA and 25 small areas of the Shire. Comparative data is provided for Gosford LGA, the Central Coast Region, Sydney Statistical Division and New South Wales.

Wyong Shire Population and Household Forecasts

Population and Household Forecasts have been developed for the Shire and sub-areas. These forecasts provide projected population, age and household forecasts for the period 2006 - 2031.

Central Coast Regional Profile and Social Atlas (2004)

This report provides a comprehensive set of statistical data for the Central Coast for the period 1991 - 2001.

Quality of Life on the Central Coast: A Community Survey of Central Coast Residents 2007 (Central Coast Research Foundation 2007).

The Central Coast Quality of Life Survey was conducted in 2007 to establish a baseline of subjective quality of life information. The aim of the survey was to obtain information about resident's attitudes and perceptions about these seven quality of life domains, as well as residents' overall wellbeing and those aspects of life that are most likely to be associated with this measure.





key themes



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

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

These theme areas were identified through analysis of the community consultation process.

Each of the key theme chapters include:

- Social outcome to be achieved.
- Importance to Quality of Life
- Current Context.
- What we can do.
- Action Plan.



Warmervale 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.

our community

Importance to Quality of Life

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.

A sense of community is at the core of all efforts to strengthen and build community. It arises from a clear sense of collective purpose that values diversity and uniqueness. It prevails over divisions caused by competition over scarce resources, conflicting goals, and historical quarrels, allowing communities to move ahead to solve shared problems (*Building Citizen Involvement: Strategies for Local Government. Mary L. Walsh. ICMA, Washington DC, 1997*).

Many times a sense of community is centred on a place, building, or event - village green, church, etc. Some communities come together around a crisis or an opportunity, and find that a shared purpose, intent, or vision - protecting children, preventing crime, helping the needy - creates the foundation from which a sense of community is readily built.

Social Indicators

- Level of Interaction with friends and relatives.
- Level of interaction with neighbours.
- Satisfaction with neighbourhood.
- Perception of sense of community.
- Membership of community groups/sporting clubs/religious organisations.
- Level of volunteering.



A sense of community can come from a collective vision, where community members are asked to participate in creating the vision versus being told what their vision is and can also come from a shared interest where community members come together to pursue that interest (*Building Citizen Involvement: Strategies for Local Government. Mary L. Walsh. ICMA, Washington DC, 1997*).

A sense of community is an important factor in people's decision to move to the area. Communities that welcome newcomers, invite their participation, and value their residents, are likely to attract willing and active individuals, adding to the strength of the community.

Did You Know?

Characteristics of communities that have great community spirit and connections

Villages, towns, and cities with a good sense of community include those where all members:

- Contribute to and hold a common vision for the future;
- Respect and celebrate their heritage, diversity, and resources;
- Share information;
- Develop and sustain an abundance of social networks and relationships;
- Feel they are part of the community;
- Feel they are useful and help in a variety of community ventures and experiences;
- Actively participate in community networks such as public meetings, group meetings, working bees and social activities raising money for charity;
- Pull together in a crisis e.g. the aftermath of the Central Coast June 2007 long weekend storms;
- Feel a sense of responsibility for all children in the community when in public spaces;
- Have high feelings of individual safety;
- Help strangers and sometimes involve them in what is going on;
- Assist with events, programmes and activities. No one person is burdened;
- People feel valued and are told so – this reinforcement keeps up their self worth and maintains participation; and
- There is a strong sense of empathy for others.

Source: *Building Citizen Involvement: Strategies for Local Government. Mary L Walsh. ICMA, Washington DC, 1997.*



Current Context

- **Social and Neighbourhood Interactions**

Both the frequency and levels of interaction between members of a neighbourhood/community give an indication of strength of the social fabric and connections which exist within that community.

The results from the Central Coast Quality of Life Survey illustrate the importance of interactions outside of the household to the quality of life of Central Coast residents. The frequency with which residents interacted with friends and family outside of the home and with neighbours, and whether residents were able to talk to and obtain support from their circle of friends all had significant associations with wellbeing (CCRF, 2008).

Nearly 80% of Wyong residents indicated that they interact with friends or relatives not living with them either *often* or *very often*. Those who socialised more frequently were likely to have higher levels of wellbeing (CCRF, 2008).

The results for neighbour relations were less positive than for the general level of social interaction. While there appears to be a fairly high level of social interaction in the Central Coast, this connectivity does not necessarily involve neighbours and those living close by. Approximately 64% of Wyong residents reported that the people in their neighbourhood never or rarely did anything together (CCRF, 2008).

Neighbourhoods are the most immediate interface between residents and the wider community and play an important role in resident's perceptions about their community.

Nearly 84% of Wyong residents indicated that they were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with the neighbourhood they lived in. The mean score for Wyong residents was below that for Gosford and NSW, indicating they were less likely to provide a higher rating for their neighbourhoods as a place to live. Satisfaction with neighbourhood was significantly associated with the frequency of interaction with neighbours. The more satisfied residents were and the higher rating that they provided for their neighbourhoods as places to live, the higher their wellbeing was likely to be (CCRF, 2008).



Central Coast residents generally agreed that their neighbourhood had a strong sense of community although the level of agreement was not strong and was significantly lower than for NSW. Wyong residents were also less likely to agree that their neighbourhoods had a strong sense of community than those residents in Gosford. 56% of Wyong residents agreed or strongly agreed that their neighbourhood had a strong sense of community. 30% of residents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The survey found that resident's satisfaction with their neighbourhoods and perceptions of sense of community were both associated with wellbeing (CCRF, 2008).

Overwhelmingly, residents in the community consultations acknowledged the importance of good neighbours and friendly people as key to feeling like a part of their community and feeling that they belong:

"Neighbours are very friendly and good neighbours are very important in feeling that you live in a good community."

"When I go walking every morning people smile and say hello. This has never happened where I lived before."

"I don't know what I'd do without the great neighbours that we have. We moved here from out west, and as far as I'm concerned this area is just like the country – friendly country people."

People love the small village/neighbourly feel that Wyong Shire offers its residents. Residents associated the "village/neighbourly feel" with words such as: small, cosy, relaxed, not too built up and quiet. Many people indicated that this feeling was typical of coastal lifestyle and was the reason that they had originally moved to the area.

Residents described the small neighbourly aspect as key in feeling connected, establishing linkages, knowing people and being involved in their community, a sense of community and community connections. In the smaller communities there was a strong feeling that this was under threat of being lost and that the safety and community spirit of the area was being affected by increased development and more people moving to the area.

"As it's become busier, there is a definite loss in neighbourly get togethers."



An important recent trend in connecting with people (especially for young people) has been online social networking. Social networking websites function like an online community. Many of these online community members share a common interest such as hobbies, religion, or politics. On social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook and YouTube, people are given a forum where they have the opportunity to meet others in a familiar environment, to chat, participate in events, create private networks or interact in public networks.

During the consultations, people mentioned the use of websites, email and the internet as key in connecting them with other people. Many people considered themselves as members of a wider online community (both within and outside of Wyong Shire) which enables regular contact with people they may not see every day.

- **Families in the Shire**

Many family types from a variety of different backgrounds and situations participated in the community consultations. There were many different experiences of living in Wyong Shire, both positive and negative.

The positive aspects of living in the Shire included:

- The great sense of community spirit in the area;
- Opportunities to be involved in groups and programmes;
- Great community centres in the area;
- The lifestyle of the area – it's a good place to bring up kids;
- The beautiful natural environment of the area;
- Feeling that it is a safer area; and
- Less stress and a more relaxed way of living.

The negative aspects of living in the Shire included:

- Lack of affordable activities for children and families;
- Lack of GPs and bulk billing GPs;
- Lack of affordable dental services;
- A growing anxiety about increasing crime rates;
- House prices are too high for families to afford;
- Lack of funding for community services, activities and programmes;
- Lack of child friendly parks and playgrounds;



- The degradation of the natural environment;
- Lack of communication by Council;
- Lack of involvement of the community in Council;
- Poor transportation system;
- Influx of tourists in the tourist season;
- Lack of affordable community based child care services; and
- Lack of family entertainment opportunities.

Did You Know?**Children's and Family Services**

Children's and family services provide significant benefits to the community:

- They enhance the development of young children, resulting in improved life chances for individuals and reduced costs for society in areas such as child abuse, remedial education, behaviour problems, juvenile delinquency, crime and relationship breakdown;
- They provide a way by which the community can support parents by ensuring that the task of caring for and raising children is not solely that of the parents or their immediate relatives;
- They assist parents, particularly mothers, to retain their skills, employability and career continuity, resulting in higher national productivity and economic output; and
- They ensure that parents on low incomes are not driven to place their children in unsafe, unstable or unsatisfactory environments.

All families felt that it was extremely important for people to have networks and connections and be 'neighbourly'. With many families moving to the area who have moved away from their families and support networks, people felt that it is extremely important for priority to be given to programmes and activities that develop connections, linkages and a sense of community.



Many parents felt that having children definitely makes it easier to fit in and have a connection with the community whether that be a local neighbourhood street, a school, sporting club or interest club. Parents felt that it was through the interactions of their children with other children that was the catalyst for meeting new people and building friendships.

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

Families continually mentioned the importance of local. For them, easy access to affordable services, facilities, activities and programmes is key, particularly when one parent is at home with the children and does not have access to a car. Both formal and informal places for families to come together and mix with others is very important.

"Local, local, local. We need to be able to walk to things in our own communities."

"Places for people to mix and gather, even like a BBQ area in a local park."

Did You Know?

Sing and Grow

Sing and Grow is an early intervention and prevention music therapy project for families who experience a range of pressures that impact upon the resources and confidence of parents. These might be caused by having a child with a disability, being from a different cultural group, being a young parent, suffering from mental health problems or generally feeling financially disadvantaged.

Programmes are held in the community for families with children aged up to 3 years. Weekly music sessions (usually 10 weeks) allow families to participate in hands-on activities that assist children with developmental skills and encourage parents to learn new and different ways to use music as a way of interacting and playing with their children. Music is also used as a way to stimulate, develop and nurture family relationships.

Lack of recurrently funded services, programmes and activities for families was seen as a significant challenge. Many parents mentioned the importance of early intervention programmes and activities that build family relationships and increase the capacity of families to cope.



Did You Know?**Brighter Futures (Early Intervention) Programme (DoCS)**

Brighter Futures, DoCS' early intervention programme, improves the level of support available to vulnerable families by providing access to a range of services that research shows time and time again, improve children's abilities at school, the way they make and keep friends; and their skills at managing various problems they encounter as they grow up.

Brighter Futures services and support are delivered when a problem is first noticed or early in its potential development. They are delivered over a period of up to two years in order to produce lasting effects for children.

Australian and international research shows that early intervention services reinforce positive family relationships, increases resilience, promote healthy child development and prevent child abuse and neglect.

Like all other groups, families were concerned about the changing nature of the area and the increasing development in the area. They felt that the area has changed significantly and that the area is not the same as it used to be. There was an increasing fear that a bigger population will fracture the great sense of community the area currently has.

"It's not lost, but it has changed."

"Once it was a quiet villagey place with lots of isolated communities – now it has changed and spread out."

Affordability of the area was a significant concern for families. Many people moved to the area because it was much more affordable compared to Sydney, but now house prices have increased significantly, and the area is now much less affordable. Many families were also worried about the increased stress in paying off a mortgage as interest rates continue to rise.

"We moved to the area because it was an affordable area. I wouldn't like to be buying a house here now though."

"We both have to work to be able to afford to pay the mortgage."



Commuting was an aspect of living in the Shire that impacts very negatively on family life. Many parents described them or their partner being away from their home and community for most of the week and being extremely exhausted on the weekends.

Families felt that there is not enough infrastructure to support the population growth, especially services, activities, programmes and facilities for children and young people.

"We need the infrastructure to support population growth."

"The services at the community centre are being stretched and stretched without anymore funding. Often we volunteer to run things like playgroup because otherwise no one else will."

"What's going to happen in 20 years when we have an even bigger population, but no additional services or infrastructure to support it? It will be a scary place to live."

There was significant concern from families regarding the lack of doctors in the area, especially bulk billing practices. There were many families who indicated that they travel outside of the area to attend a bulk billing practice:

"We need more GPs in the area, especially bulk billing doctors."

"We travel from the north of the Shire down to Wyoming where there are doctors that bulk bill."

The lack of affordable dental services was also raised by families as a challenge.

Many families felt that there is a general increasing anxiety in the community in relation to crime and anti social behaviour. Some families have directly experienced crime or anti social behaviour such as burglary, theft and graffiti, while others have read of crime and anti social behaviour in the local papers. In some discussions with families there was debate about whether or not it is safe to let children walk to and from school or play outside of the family home, in the street or in a local park.

"I don't let my kids walk to school on their own. I'm worried that something will happen to them, so I drive them and pick them up."



Many people felt that the area is still a very safe place:

"It's a much safer place here than Sydney. We feel completely comfortable."

Some families indicated that grandparents are now having significant caring roles for their grandchildren to help families cope with commuting, the pressures of working life and the costs of formal child care.

"I look after my daughter's three children every day after school as they are not home and can't afford child care."

Key issues and themes gained from families as part of the Communities for Children's Project in the Southern Lakes area included:

- Affordability and Access to Dental Care;
- Positive practical strategies and information for parents on behaviour management and child development;
- Social skills for children before starting school;
- Awareness and availability of early intervention and other specialist services;
- Opportunities for parents to connect and interact;
- Opportunities for more effective sharing of information and building networks between services;
- Improving eating habits of young children and families;
- Difficulty in achieving a work/home life balance and the impact of financial pressures on family relationships;
- Importance of parents playing with their children;
- Lack of transport services impacting on their ability to join playgroups, connect with other families and access services;
- Importance of reading to children at a young age; and
- Support and assistance to grandparents taking on a major caring role.



Did You Know?**Central Coast Families**

Looking for information about family support services and facilities?

Go to www.centralcoastfamilies.com.au

Partially funded by Wyong Shire Council, this online resource was established as a one-stop-shop for family information. The aim is to give families easy, quick access to information – from contact details for local health practitioners to educational institutions.

The site also includes a calendar of events, youth services and multicultural sections, as well as low cost accommodation information and links to larger parent organisations or relevant national sites.

Council is delighted to be involved in the project and will continue to provide administration support to ensure the site is up to date and helpful.

- **Older People**

Did You Know?**Senior Citizens' Council**

Wyong Shire Council has initiated the development of a Senior Citizens' Council with a view to harnessing the talents, ideas and experience of older residents and strengthening communication and consultation on key issues affecting senior citizens and retirees living in the Shire.

Membership of the Senior Citizens' Council reflects the geography and diversity of the local population. It also covers a wide range of links to representative community organisations such as an Aboriginal elders group, Italian seniors, various Senior Citizen's Centres as well as environmental, sports and cultural groups.



For older people in the Shire, there were a number of positive aspects of living in the Shire as follows:

- Strong sense of community – you can walk down the street and people say hello;
- Good neighbours who care about each other;
- Senior Citizens Centres in the area are very good;
- Beautiful natural environment;
- Lots of opportunities to be involved e.g. volunteering; and
- Lots of programmes and activities for people to be involved.

There were a number of negative aspects of living in the Shire including:

- Lack of focus on active ageing with programmes, activities and facilities to support this;
- Inadequate health services for the growing ageing population;
- Affordability of area for pensioners e.g. people who have lived in their home for 50 years cannot afford their rates;
- Fear of young people;
- Not enough for young people to do;
- Increasing crime;
- Inadequate public transportation services;
- Inadequate taxi services;
- Poker machines – older people spending a lot of time in clubs;
- Increasing development;
- Inadequate water supply for the increasing population;
- Work vs life balance – Parents working too much – Ability for flexibility;
- Ageing in place;
- Carers and respite; and
- Younger onset dementia – Ages 50 – 55.



Did You Know?**Aged Care in the Future**

Australia's population is ageing and as this next generation (Baby Boomers and Gen X) moves into old age this trend is set to gather greater momentum over the next three decades.

Significant changes will flow to all aspects of social and economic life as both the number and proportion of older people in the community increase and their expectations change the face of where they are living, what they are doing, how healthy they are and what services they are using.

The diversity of the older population of Australia will require a more creative approach to alternative designs in housing, transport, leisure, health services and community and residential care.

There has already been a shift in the Commonwealth aged care funding ratio of residential and community care to reflect the expectation that people are supported to continue to live in their own homes.

Community Care places Central Coast: July 2006

CACP	737
EACH	85
Dementia Specific	15
Veterans' Affairs	45

Residential Care places Wyong: November 2005

High Care Beds (nursing homes)	945
Low Care Beds (hostels)	718

- **Men**

From the community consultations conducted with men's groups the positive aspects of living in the Shire included:

- Nature of the area is overall very friendly; and
- The natural environment of the area e.g. the lakes and beaches.



The negative aspects of living in the Shire included:

- Degradation of the natural environment;
- Lack of programmes that link older men into activities to prevent loneliness and suicide;
- Not many men's groups on the coast;
- Increasing vandalism and anti social behaviour;
- Young people have nothing to do;
- Poor public transport system;
- Lack of GPs and bulk billing GPs;
- WSC doesn't seem to be interested in its residents;
- Community information in brochure just on the internet – makes it difficult;
- Development and the changing nature of the area; and
- Infrastructure not keeping up with population growth.

Did You Know?

BLOKES Programme

The BLOKES programme is run by the Family Support Centre Inc. located at Lakelands Community Centre Kanwal. The BLOKES Programme is for boys aged 10 – 12 years of age and provides learning in life skills and appropriate behaviours.

• **Welcoming Residents**

Many people moving to the Shire are moving away from friends, family and other support and social networks. There are a significant number of people who have moved from other areas and therefore do not have many connections or linkages in the area.

Residents recognised the importance of welcoming new residents to the Shire. Many new residents had experienced or at least heard of the welcome kits that are distributed in the Warnervale District and expressed their approval of this initiative and that this should be continued and extended to other parts of the Shire.



Did you know?

The Warnervale Welcoming Initiative was developed by the Warnervale Family and Community Centre to establish networks and link new and existing residents. This has been very successful project with new residents being given information on available services and activities in the community. Volunteers deliver the Welcome Kit to all new residents:

"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. It made the place feel very welcoming."

"The welcome kits are a fabulous programme for new residents to the area."

- **Being Involved in Groups**

Approximately 52% of Wyong residents in the Quality of Life Survey were members of community or sporting clubs or organisations and approximately 19% were members of religious organisations. Residents who participated in these groups were likely to have significantly higher wellbeing than those residents who were not involved (CCRF, 2008).

Residents also acknowledged the importance of getting involved in existing groups and networks as a means to making friends. Most residents described their involvement in existing groups and networks as another way they have connected and linked with others. They also indicated that there were ample opportunities to be involved in the community through existing interest, social, sporting and action groups.

Residents acknowledged the need for community leaders as vital to the vibrancy and active, inclusive nature of their communities. People indicated that often it was a certain connected individual or individuals who welcomed them to the area, encouraged them to become involved in a group or the place, and co-ordinated programmes, activities in that community.

"Once I met my neighbour, all of a sudden I was involved in everything. I've never had so much to do. Thank God I moved next to her!"



People acknowledged the challenge presented when moving to a new community and trying to tap into an existing group. They also expressed an awareness that some people would be better able to know how to access, and have the resources to seek out these groups. Some people found fitting in to a new community very challenging and felt that they were not warmly welcomed or accepted.

"Neighbourhood and Community Centres need to be more open and friendly."

"The biggest difference about living here compared to where I used to live is the amount of people I know. Where I grew up I knew just about everyone, where I'm just starting to get to know people here."

"My neighbours don't talk to me here, but they did where I used to live."

On a target group level, some older single women mentioned the lack of available programmes and activities for them to access, particularly after hours. Similarly some men mentioned the lack of Men's groups available in Wyong Shire and on the Central Coast.

Did You Know?

Celebrating the Significant Lives of Everyday People

Wyong Council is proud to celebrate the lives of local residents by using various opportunities to showcase their talents, strengths and resources.

International Women's Day 2007 was an opportunity to celebrate locally and recognise the strengths and achievements of women in local neighbourhoods by recording their stories and creating a Shire-wide event to launch the resultant publication.



- **Volunteering**

Many people in the consultations mentioned the importance of volunteering in being connected and involved in local communities.

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

"I first came to the Senior Citizen's Centre to participate in one of the programmes. I thought it was so good that I decided to volunteer and now I am friends with more people than ever before in my life."

Did You know?**Volunteering Central Coast**

Volunteering Central Coast Inc. is an incorporated not-for-profit organisation and is the only job centre for volunteers on the Central Coast. People wishing to volunteer can come and be matched with a volunteer position with one of the many volunteer positions. Volunteering Central Coast also supports community organisations in the recruitment of volunteers and promotes best practices in volunteering.

Wesley Mission's *The Faces of Volunteering* highlights that *"it is what a person does rather than what they get which makes them a citizen."* The contribution of Australian citizens includes their participation in supporting schools (committees, working bees and tuckshop duty), sporting clubs (coaching and fundraising), and involvement in community organisations such as bush fire brigades, lifesaving clubs, Country Women's Associations, Returned and Servicemen's Leagues and service clubs such as Rotary and Lions. It is noted that many of these have been well established for many years in Australian culture, and the current generation of older Australians have been, and still are, involved in most of them. The element of 'common interest' has been identified as the most fundamental reason for an individual's participation in community activities.



In Wyong Shire, many residents have moved away from their traditional support networks like family and friends to come to an area that is more affordable and offers a better quality of life. Whilst the move to the area is seen as a positive, leaving behind family and friends is often very hard and people can feel lonely and isolated in their new community. The notion of civic service, and its underlying principles of active citizenship and social participation, may present a motivating appeal to prospective volunteers as it has the potential to provide solutions to an individual's need to belong, to feel valued and to find meaning in their life (*Wesley Mission, 2001*).

Most people were very impressed at the wide variety of opportunities available in Wyong Shire to get out and be involved in the community. They mostly thought that it is vitally important to get out and be involved through either volunteering or participating in programmes, events and activities.

Approximately 28% of Wyong residents who participated in the Quality of Life Survey did some volunteer work. Volunteering was found to have a significant and positive association with wellbeing. The highest proportion of volunteers were 65 and over. This age group is less likely to experience interaction through the workplace and a relatively high proportion lives alone, so volunteering is likely to fill the need for interaction and involvement for this age group (*CCRF, 2008*).

People also often referred to the changing nature of volunteering, that it is becoming more challenging to attract volunteers, especially young people, people with families and younger self funded retirees.

"It's always the same people who volunteer for everything. It's becoming harder and harder to attract new volunteers."

It was thought that part of the reason for this was that people are becoming busier, with less and less free time to be able to participate in family life, let alone get involved in wider community life.

"People are just so busy these days. They don't have time to be involved and help their community."



Even though empirical research about volunteers is scarce, anecdotal evidence shows various trends which support community service experience, that volunteering is undergoing a fundamental shift in demographics. Some of the most significant changes in volunteering have been:

- Increasing pressures in the workforce restrict people's time for volunteering;
- Government funding of programmes which use volunteers to provide service delivery;
- The impact of formalized requirements in the management of volunteers; and
- The diminishing commitment to volunteering among younger people.

Source: The Faces of Volunteering, Sharon Hoogland, Wesley Mission, May 2001.

- **Participation in Arts and Cultural Activities in Wyong Shire**

Culture and cultural experiences reflect and celebrate the uniqueness of a community and contribute to its sense of identity. Such experiences can grow out of community initiatives specific to a sense of place or they might emerge from the opportunities afforded by features in both the built and natural environment.

Cultural experiences might also be generated from the talent and creative expression of resident artists and performers, and engage an audience beyond the immediate community. Cultural experiences can also grow out of the anxieties and tensions that accompany changing urban environments, such as the Green Square oral history project that documents the "unique industrial and working class history ... [that] lives in the minds, imaginations and experiences of the people who belong to and know an area".

In all their character and flavour, these cultural activities draw upon diverse social, economic, environmental and people-based resources in a region and celebrate and enhance the experience of being part of that particular community.



A report commissioned by the Australia Council for the Arts in 2000 found that:

"Nine out of ten Australians place a high or fairly high value on: learning about new things (93%); being intellectually stimulated (89%); and having some creative skill (88%) Only two-thirds of the population place the same value on having some sporting skill (68%) ... and 67% believe that 'the arts should be as much about [expressing yourself creatively] as being part of an audience."

The community survey conducted for the 2005 Cultural Plan found that Wyong Shire residents get involved in a wide range of cultural activities in their free time. Some of these could be termed passive, others are more active. Electronic media are pre-eminent but reading is also important. Reading books was the next most popular daily activity after watching television and listening to the radio.

Active cultural pursuits result in a cultural "product" – writing, art and craft, performing music or taking part in a play. The Cultural Plan survey demonstrated that a high percentage of respondents engage in at least one of these activities *at some time*. Writing for pleasure is the most common activity – almost 60% of respondents.

This participative, interactive engagement in cultural activities brings people together and is recognised as providing a rich foundation for community cultural development and the building of social capital:

"Active community participation in arts practice is an essential component of a healthy and sustainable society. The methodologies of arts practice not only open up fantastic vistas of community expressivity but also, in their application, profoundly contribute to the development of community."

People are at the heart of the cultural life of the community and without them there is, literally, no culture. The research undertaken for the development of the 2005 Cultural Plan revealed a rich diversity of cultural groups, businesses and individual artists and performers in the Shire. Not counting individuals, these groups may be summarised as follows:



Adult Education Centres	5
Craft	40
Cultural Diversity	27
Dance	27
Events	21
Film and Media	11
Heritage	4
Music	23
Photography	22
Studios and Galleries	12
Theatre	10
Visual Arts	10
Writing, Speaking and Literature	8

Highlights of the cultural life of the Shire include:

- The traditional owners' 40,000 year history of living on the Central Coast. There are a number of organisations of Aboriginal people in the Shire including the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council based in Wyong Township.
- The post 1788 history of the Shire including the story of the timber industry, agriculture and transport and items of built heritage.
- Norah Head Lighthouse and Hargraves House at Noraville.
- The relatively small (compared with NSW as a whole) but growing and richly diverse multicultural community.
- Central Coast Festival of the Arts (Approx 4,000 visitors per annum).
- Wyong based theatre groups (up to 6 productions per year at the Memorial Hall, Wyong).
- Central Coast Country Music festival (approx 25,000 visitors per annum).
- Annual Gathering of the Clans (approx 15,000 visitors per annum).
- Music programme at Gorokan High School.
- A large number of dance schools.



Infrastructure that supports culture and the arts consists of a network of five libraries, over 50 Council halls (the largest being the Memorial Hall in Wyong), eight community and neighbourhood centres, the Community Cultural Centre in Wyong township, a small art gallery at Wallarah Point Park Gorokan, a potters studio, arts facilities at Gravity Youth Centre, a movement studio at Wadalba Community School and parks and reserves. There are two privately operated cinemas in the Shire. The University of Newcastle Ourimbah Campus is also a significant cultural asset that supports tertiary education in visual, performing and literary arts. At a regional level Wyong residents have access to Gosford Regional Art Gallery at East Gosford, Laycock Street Theatre at Wyoming, Mt Penang Parklands festival venue and Lake Macquarie Art Gallery at Booragul.

Source: Wyong Shire Council: A Cultural Plan for Wyong Shire, 2005.

- **Participation in Sports and Physical Recreation**

Importance of Participation

Recreation and sport form an integral and valuable component of people's lives. Enjoyable experiences can make an important contribution to the maintenance of health and feelings of personal satisfaction and well-being. They create opportunities for social networks, connect people to the wider community and help build local social capital as well as personal growth through physical, social and emotional development. Sport also provides value 'team' skills.

Australian Summary

Nearly two-thirds (66% or 10.5 million people) of the Australian population aged 15 years and over reported that they had participated in sports and physical recreation at least once during the 12 months prior to interview in 2005 - 2006.

Similar proportions of males and females (both 66%) participated at least once during this period. Participation in activities organised by a club, association or other organisation also showed similar proportions for males (2.3 million or 29%) and females (2.1 million or 26%).



Almost one in three (29% or 4.7 million people) of the population aged 15 years and over participated in sports and physical recreation activities twice per week. More females (32% or 2.6 million) than males (27% or 2.1 million) were involved in more than twice-weekly participation.

The number participating in non-organised activities (8.6 million or 54%) was almost double that for participation in organised activities (4.4 million or 28%). Walking was the most commonly reported physical recreation activity for both males and females, with 4.0 million people (25%) participating. This was followed by aerobics/fitness (2.0 million or 13%), swimming (1.4 million or 9%) and cycling (1.0 million or 6%).

Source: ABS Participation in Sports and Physical Recreation 2005 - 2006.

Participation in Sport and Recreation - Wyong Shire

According to the Wyong Shire Sports Facility Review 2007, the main users of sports facilities on the Central Coast are people aged 5 - 24 years. It is worth noting however, that there will be significant growth over the next 20 years in the proportion of active people aged over 55 years who will make increased demands for access to public facilities.

There are some 60 different sports that are played competitively or have organized teaching on the Central Coast. Table 4.1 shows the Trends of Aggregated Major Sports Using Public Sports Facilities in Wyong Shire.

Table 4.1: Trends of Aggregated Major Sports Using Public Sports Facilities in Wyong Shire

Code	2002	2003	2004	2005	% Growth
Athletics	330	353	353	353	7.0%
AFL	508	424	397	397	-21.9%
Baseball	235	235	235	336	43.0%
Cricket	1,411	1,134	1,134	1,134	-19.6%
Netball	2,382	2,694	2,144	2,144	-10.0%
Oztag	600	520	700	700	16.7%
Rugby League	2,264	2,508	2,828	2,907	28.4%
Rugby Union	1,845	1,902	2,120	2,174	17.8%
Soccer	5,192	5,593	5,926	6,396	23.2%
Softball	386	399	399	399	3.4%



The data for Wyong shows that:

- Athletics has good growth in Wyong against a significant broader decline.
- Australian rules is not growing as predicted.
- Baseball is growing significantly in juniors.
- Cricket declines in Wyong.
- Netball is declining at an equivalent rate to the broader trend.
- Rugby League continues to grow in Wyong against the broader trend. (Both Junior and Senior).
- Rugby Union is significantly more modest growth in Wyong compared to the broader trend.
- Soccer continues to grow from a very large base.
- Softball has a modest growth in Wyong against a very significant broader decline.

Source: *Wyong Shire Sports Facility Review, 2007.*

• **Intergenerational Linkages**

Residents recognised the need for a range of intergenerational programmes and activities to increase co-operation, interaction and exchange between generations by sharing of skills, knowledge and experience.

"More care/concern for older people is important. They are like library books."

"It is really important to have a link with and keep in touch with young people. Our centre goes to the school and does programmes and activities with the kids there."

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

Many people thought that the gap between older people and young people is widening, with a lack of respect from young people to older people and a lack of understanding from older people towards the young people of today.

"Older people just don't want us to have any fun. There is this old lady in our street who comes out and yells at us whenever we are riding our bikes."



"Young people are very intimidating when they are hanging around at the station. I am always suspicious of them, that they are up to no good."

Residents demonstrated a keen attitude for building better foundations between generations, but often described limitations to this such as lack of knowledge of where to start, funding issues, marketing constraints etc. Residents thought that there were many opportunities for programmes and activities to be implemented to build relationships between generations.

- **Opportunities for People to Come Together**

People spoke of the necessity for casual and formal affordable opportunities for people to come together to meet, connect and link. Often, for residents, casual opportunities to come together was more about socialising and meeting new people as well as being involved in more formal groups, activities and programmes.

When people talked about the opportunities for people to come together they talked mainly about events and activities (both small and large) in which they can attend in an informal sense (i.e. they can just turn up), such as the festival at The Entrance, Warnervale Spring Fair, Warnies Markets, local street parties, car boot sales, etc. At these type of events and activities, they talked about the possibility/opportunity of bumping into new people or meeting up with friends.

Formal opportunities for people to come together related to more formal groups and meetings such as Rotary, Lions Club, P&C Association etc.

This theme is directly linked to the provision of formal and informal places for people to come together, as often it is the places where people go that they manage to link and meet with other people.



Did You Know?**Warnervale/Wadalba Community Visioning**

In June 2007, twenty-five residents and community workers came together to create a community vision for the local area.

The main aims of the workshop were to begin to identify the assets (skills, knowledge and talents of participants), discuss local community issues and to explore ways these assets could be harnessed to improve or address identified community issues.

Using the Asset Based Community Development approach the participants developed an Asset map for Warnervale/Wadalba and surrounding areas that identified significant people, groups/organisations, physical environment, heritage/history and local stories.

A positive outcome from the workshop included the formation of 3 key working groups covering:

- Community Communication Strategy.
- Extension of the Warnervale/Wadalba Welcome initiative.
- Community Safety.

- **Negative Impacts on Building Community**

Commuting

The Quality of Life Survey showed that the 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 socialise more frequently than those travelling more than 30 minutes a day (CCRF, 2008).

Many residents described the impact of commuting as significant to them personally, or to their family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances and described the importance of local employment to enable those commuting to Sydney and other areas to remain on the Coast for work.



People expressed the fear of the flow on effects of so many people commuting such as:

- "Latch key kids" home alone for significant hours per day;
- Whole families commuting with parents (to attend school) in Sydney therefore having no connection to the local community they live in; and
- Non working parents isolated in their homes while the other parent is commuting to Sydney, taking the family car with them.

People described the impacts as follows:

"We need more local jobs so that I do not have to commute to Sydney everyday hence turning an 8 hour day into a 14 hour day."

"I am so tired on the weekends after spending the whole week commuting. I really feel that it is affecting my health and I don't get to spend any time with my wife or my kids."

"We should have jobs on the Central Coast so that there aren't as many people commuting every day. I find that I'm a part of two communities that I don't really get to participate in at all – Hamlyn Terrace and Sydney."

"Commuting is the pits."

"The only way I know about my local community is in the 15 minutes it takes to get to the station when I listen to the local radio station."

"When I am on leave from work and not commuting, the area is very pleasant to live and is close to amenities, beaches and lakes. However, when I am commuting by train for 5 hours a day, I have little time to enjoy the area or my family."

"The district is different to where I lived before in that there is a strong sense of community, particularly through our church. Conversely due to the high proportion of commuters like myself, people tend to not have enough time to get together socially."



- **Changing Nature of the Area**

There was a strong feeling from long term residents that the “country” nature and laid back feeling of Wyong Shire has changed. Longer term residents still liked living in the area but made the following types of comments:

“It is not lost but it has changed.”

“It has changed since we moved here. There’s more people and traffic. It is still good though. We like it here. There are social problems – my car was stolen last week, but that’s a small price to pay.”

“It used to be smaller, more friendly and laid back. Now it is less friendly and much busier.”

These residents indicated that the old fashioned values, and the laid back nature of the place were no longer the norm and it would be lucky if you knew your immediate neighbours, let alone going a few doors down to enjoy a cup of tea or borrow some sugar. They felt that Wyong Shire used to be more friendly and open.

As an opposing view to those longer term residents, the majority of newer residents to the Shire, those who have been in the area for a shorter period of time, and who had moved from other areas thought that the area is a fabulous place to live, and felt that most residents were warm, open and friendly:

“We all love it. My children are doing well in school, the people are friendly and I feel safe.”

“The street we live in is fantastic. The neighbours are always friendly and willing to help out with anything.”

“It is great to live in this area because everyone is friendly and keeps an ear out for each other.”



- **Seasonal Population Influx**

The seasonal influx of tourists to the area was seen by some residents as a negative impact to the community feel and spirit of the area. Whilst people acknowledged the need for the financial benefits of tourism, they felt that the casual connection by tourists and landlords to the area was a negative aspect of life in Wyong Shire.

Residents from areas with significant seasonal tourist influx also felt that the planning by Council in the area was all for the benefit of the tourists and not the permanent population. They felt left out of decision making processes that directly affect them but do not necessarily benefit from them.

"There are lots of people in the area at peak times – a transient population who don't really care about our community."

"There is a lack of respect for the permanent population by holiday makers."

"There is a lack of permanent residents, and therefore a lack of community connections and links with neighbours. All the buildings are empty, except in tourist times."

"Absentee landlords – don't live here and only care about their rental dollars coming in."

"Tourists don't care about doing things like taking in garbage, or picking up the paper on a neighbour's lawn."

- **Community Services**

People felt that the provision of a wide range of services to meet the demands of a growing community is very important element in making it a good place to live. There was much discussion about the significant lack of community services in the Shire.



People described the following services as very important:

- Adequate Health and Medical Services (Local Bulk Billing GPs, after hours GPs more accessible Accident and Emergency, Specialist Services, after hours chemists);
- Education (Extended programmes at Ourimbah Campus and local TAFE's, alternative education programmes for young people, further support for traineeships and apprenticeships);
- Community Services (recurrent funding for community organisations, youth services, children and family services, support services for isolated vulnerable people); and
- Basic Services (Post office boxes, phone booths).

What We Can Do

Wyong Shire residents have clearly indicated that making their communities even stronger is a key priority in moving forward as a great place to live and bring up families. Residents mentioned the need for Community Development work to be prioritised as a key Council activity. While most people know about the work of local Council's in terms of roads rates and rubbish, it was a common thought that the community was not generally aware of the great and important community development work being undertaken:

"Promote Council as an organisation that is involved in and supports community development, not just roads, rates and rubbish."

What Council Can Do:

Council has a key role in community support, community development and building community:

- **Community Support**

Advocacy: Council is a prime advocate and representative of the community's needs for all groups within the community. Given the social challenges being experienced within the Shire coupled with the significant shortfall in resources in relation to population growth, Council has an important role in advocating and lobbying for additional resources.



Planning and Policy Development: Council has a leadership role in planning for community services and facilities and the development of policy, standards and guidelines which efficiently achieve an appropriate level of social infrastructure and service provision within the Shire. This includes negotiating joint venture arrangements to better utilise existing facilities in schools, clubs and churches.

Facilitation and Support: Council has a role in assisting to facilitate a co-ordinated approach by local support services and by providing support for people involved in community structures and activities and fostering creative local models of service delivery.

Direct Service Provision: Council is a direct provider of child care including long day care, occasional care, out of school hour's care and vacation care (where this is not being met by the private sector). Council also provides a range of other community facilities including community centres, youth centres, senior citizen centres, public halls and libraries which provide a focus for community service delivery and community development activities. Council is also in a position to auspice innovative programmes.

- **Community Development and Building Community Capacity**

Council has a key role in community development and building supportive communities. Council resources, supports and encourages the development of social capital. This role essentially involves facilitation in relation to stimulating and supporting community development – becoming a catalyst for action and helping the process.

Council employs a number of Community Development Workers to facilitate community cohesion and support networks in both established and new release areas of the Shire. Their role is to:

- Assist residents to form vital support networks and establish group activities which will develop a sense of community within the local area;
- Provide information about existing services and research;
- Assess and respond to residents needs;
- Build networks and partnerships between service providers and the community in a particular area;
- Develop practical partnership models for linking under resourced community groups to wide community skills, resources and expertise; and



- Build on the community's assets and strengths and utilise existing structures, for examples, schools, service clubs, resident groups, precinct committees, etc.

Council also aims to strengthen family, neighbourhood and community ties by integrating planning, urban development and transport.

Council also has a role in investigate the cultural needs and aspirations of the community and developing strategies to meet these needs as well as encouraging residents to participate in cultural activities.

Council's role in the future could be enhanced by:

- Creating a positive community mind set that focuses on optimism; belief, expectation and 'talks up the community';
- Recognising and promoting healthy and sustainable community behaviours, such as, inclusive community participation, consensus decision making, win-win solutions, collaboration and stewardship of resources; and
- Supporting and providing funding for community development initiatives and self help projects.

What Other Organisations Can Do:

- Continue to utilise an Assets Based Community Development approach.
- Work with a whole of government and community approach to planning for the community.
- Work in partnership with Council to address challenges and opportunities that impact on quality of life for our residents.
- Employers: Give employees time (e.g. 3 days per year) to work on a community project.

What the Community Can Do:

- Establish strong links between existing community organisations e.g. schools, churches, sports clubs etc.
- Foster strong sporting and social groups e.g. sporting teams, P&C's, Scouting Groups.



What I Can Do:

- Have street parties.
- Make a point of getting to know your neighbour.
- Contact an elderly person in the neighbourhood who lacks a support network on a monthly basis (at least).
- Offer to watch a neighbour's property when they are on holidays.
- Be willing to accept offers of support and assistance.
- Offer to help maintain a local hall, scout hall, road verge etc.
- Participate in activities, events and programmes in the local community.
- Volunteer your skills at a local organisation.
- Be open to welcoming new people to the area.
- Look out for your neighbours.
- Help to identify and talk up the great things happening in our community.
- Help to identify the challenges facing the community.
- Turn off the TV and talk with friends or family.
- Declare your home a violence free zone and make a commitment to never use words or actions that hurt people.



Our Community Action Plan

What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
Programmes and activities that build a sense of community	Continue to utilise and implement an Assets Based Community Development and Strengths based approach when working with communities to further recognise and develop their skills, abilities and talents.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Community Development, Future Planning, Open Space & Recreation, Natural Resources, Library Services	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	Within existing
	Develop and implement initiatives that enhance a sense of community and community spirit to assist communities to have a strong sense of place and take an active interest in what is happening around them.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Community Development, Future Planning, Open Space & Recreation, Natural Resources	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	\$5K per year (Community Development budget)
	Support, resource and showcase small local area projects to enhance community participation and ownership and acknowledge community effort.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development, Communications Unit, Future Planning, Natural Resources	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	\$5K per year. Maximum of 5 projects per year. (Community Development budget)
	Facilitate events and activities that create a sense of community and increase local awareness and knowledge of the Shire e.g. Race around the Shire.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Community Development, Education Unit, Communications Unit	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	\$10K per year (Community Pride Strategy)
Opportunities for linkages and connections	Support existing and establish new programmes which enhance neighbourhood connections and increase the sense of belonging, e.g. "Get to know your neighbour" programme.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development, Communications Unit	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	\$2K per year
	Develop user friendly processes to encourage localised neighbourhood events – street parties, BBQ's, festivals etc to enhance local neighbourhood connections.	Year 1 - 2	Community Development	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	Community Pride Strategy
	Consider and extend opportunities for intergenerational linkages that build relationships and understanding between different age groups.	Years 1-5	Community Development, Youth Advisory Council, Seniors Council	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	Within existing.
New residents are welcomed to the Shire	Expand the welcoming strategy (including maintaining and extending the welcome kits) for the whole of the Shire to assist new residents to settle into and feel like a part of their community.	Commence Year 2 2009/10 & ongoing	Community Development	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	\$5K per year



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
Encourage volunteering within the community.	Develop a Volunteer Policy within Council that incorporates a strategic approach to volunteering (recruitment, resourcing, retaining and recognising volunteers) including a strategy that promotes staff undertaking volunteering activities in the Shire.	Year 5 2012/13	Community Development, Staff Services, Future Planning	Volunteering Central Coast, University of Newcastle, TAFE, Community College, DET	Within existing
A well resourced Community	Review Council's current model of grant provision to ensure Council grant funding is responsive, equitable and linked to social outcomes.	Year 1 2008/09	Corporate Services Grants Officer, Community Development, Future Planning	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	Within existing
	Participate and contribute to a co-ordinated approach to planning for the Shire which brings together Local, State and Federal Government infrastructure dollars to fund social infrastructure including recurrent service provision.	Current & Years 1- 5	Future Planning, Community Development	State and Federal Government Human Service Organisations, NSW Department of Premier & Cabinet, NGO's	Within existing
	Establish and implement a 'Community Matching Fund' to facilitate community initiated projects funded by Council and matched with community and volunteer in kind contribution.	Commence Year 2 2009/10 & ongoing	Community Development, Corporate Services, Future Planning	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	\$75K per year
	Support the Seniors Council as a representative group of diverse older people, including a financial contribution to allow projects to be implemented and evaluated.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development	Older people, NGO's, DADHC	\$8K per year (Year 1 subject to budget adjustment)
	Support Community Development initiatives in the Shire (undertaken by a range of organisations) and provide a team of Community Development workers to facilitate local participation, consultation, education and relationship building within our communities.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Community Development	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members, DoCS	Within existing
	Provide assistance and support for community groups in grant funding including submission writing, administration skills, acquittal processes and understanding government processes.	Years 2 - 5	Corporate Services Grants Officer, Community Development	NGO's, Community Groups	Within existing
A community that supports and nurtures families	Expand the role of Council's Library Services to support the early language and literacy development of children under 5 years at local as well as district locations throughout the Shire. This may be via the provision of direct services or through supporting and resourcing partnerships with other early childhood or community services.	Commence Year 2 & ongoing	Library Services, Little Coast Kids Care & Education Services	NGO's, Community Groups, State Government, DET, Education Providers	\$50K for staff resources



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
	Lobby and advocate for the retention and expansion of high quality, inclusive services and initiatives which support the health and early learning of children 0 - 5years throughout the Shire consistent with the National Agenda for Early Childhood (E.g. through partnerships, funding applications to relevant bodies etc)	Years 1 - 5	Community Development, Little Coast Kids Care & Education Services	Childcare centres & providers, DocS, family & Wyong Shire Council's Little Coast Kids Care & Education	Grant funding required
	Support male specific activities and support groups that promote the health and wellbeing of men e.g. programmes and interest groups such as Men's Sheds.	Years 2 - 5	Community Development	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	\$2K per year
	Raise awareness, advocate and support and resource existing and new programmes that reduce or prevent family violence e.g. Steps to respect project, Kinks and Bends etc.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	Within existing
	Work alongside Indigenous Families to implement projects that support Indigenous issues such as family cohesiveness e.g. Sister Speak and Where is my Wawa.	Years 2 - 5	Community Development	Aboriginal Community, Aboriginal Services & Organisations	\$16K per year
	Facilitate awareness and opportunities to enable CALD families to access services and participate in the community.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Community Development	CALD Organisations, CALD Community	Within existing
	Provide high quality, community focused children's services(Out of school hours care, vacation care and long day care) to care, educate and enhance the potential of children and assist working families and vulnerable families.	Ongoing	Wyong Shire Council's Little Coast Kids Care & Education	Child care centres (Community Based & Private), NGO's, Child & Family Organisations	Within existing
A Community that values the arts and enjoys a range of opportunities for participation in arts and cultural activities	Continue to implement, review and extend the strategies, actions and resources of the Wyong Shire Cultural Plan.	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning	NGO's, Cultural Groups, Community Members	\$20K per year (Funding allocated in Management Plan)
	Continue existing, and support new community art partnerships e.g. artists- with- community projects.	Commence Year 1 & ongoing	Future Planning, Community Development	Artists, NGO's, Community Members	\$20K per year (subject to budget adjustment)
	Explore all options for funding of cultural development programmes through other Government portfolios that are linked to social outcomes.	Year 2 2009/10	Future Planning, Corporate Services Grants Officer	State Government Agencies.	Within existing



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
	Facilitate and support the provision of affordable opportunities for residents to participate in a range of cultural activities.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Future Planning , Community Development	NGO'S, Community Groups, Community Members	Within existing





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.



Importance to Quality of Life

'Places and spaces' refer to the formal and informal areas in the Shire where people come together for a range of different purposes. 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.

A key role of local government is the provision of local places and spaces within established communities and in locations where new developments occur. These places and spaces are provided for residents as a focus for community activity. The investment by Council in the provision of places and spaces represents a strong financial commitment by Council to the development and support of local communities.

Community facilities are focal points for communities and help strengthen communities by bringing people together. Beneficial community outcomes include an improvement in community life, cohesion and identity.

Social Indicators

- Perceived adequacy of public spaces for people to come together.
- Perceived adequacy of venues to pursue leisure time activities.
- Visits to a local library, theatre or art gallery.
- Attendance at a sporting event.
- Attendance at an event (festival or fair).

"The simple idea of providing a central meeting place, with some degree of resourcing (staff, volunteers, fund, equipment etc) is still an essential ingredient of much community development work. Such a location can be used for a range of activities and can be a focal point for community building activities" (Ife, 1995).

"Without them, it is unlikely that many of the activities, services and social interactions that we value as "community" would exist" (Nesbitt, Planning Institute of Australia NSW Division 'New Planner', 2000).

Current Context

- **Creating Places and Spaces – Place Making**

Place making is the process of developing and embellishing inclusive, visually appealing, safe and inviting public places, whether publicly or commercially owned that encourage a sense of community ownership where people congregate. A fundamental aim of place making is to create public places that are conducive to community connectedness by being safe, inviting, attractive and reflective of community identity. Elements of place making include natural and built features, architecture, landscape design, interior design, street furniture, public art, people within the streetscape and the relationships between all of these.

Did You Know?

Community Art at Blue Haven Community Centre

There are a range of exciting public artworks designed and developed with members of the community at Blue Haven Community Centre. The project involved 2701 participants drawn from Northlake's Primary School Northlake's pre-school, Schools as Community Centres at Northlake's and Blue Haven, Blue Haven Primary School, Scallywags Pre-school, Northlake's High School, San Remo After School Care, San Remo Neighbourhood Centre, Blue Haven Craft Group, San Remo Community Gardeners, Links Youth Service, the Smith Family, Northern Milparra Local Aboriginal Group and the contractors involved in building the Blue Haven Community Centre and members of broader community. TEMARI. The installation at the front of the centre relates directly to the Ball of Friendship, an artwork that is located in the foyer of the centre.



Place making projects enhance the visual appeal of the natural and built environment, highlight the uniqueness of the local environment and indirectly enhance the built environment by encouraging a sense of ownership thereby reducing inappropriate behaviour such as vandalism.

Wyang Shire has its share of the inharmonious aspects of modern built environments but there are many created outdoor places in the Shire that are attractive and inviting. Council has invested significant resources in projects such as the landscaping of Wyong Road, the redevelopment of The Entrance waterfront, Toukley Village Green, Swadling Park and the Chittaway to The Entrance cycleway.

During the community consultations people often referred to the development public places that uplift and help people connect to each other. Of particular importance to the residents of the Shire are places that are not only safe, inviting and open, but offer opportunities for people to come together that are low cost or free.

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

People also referred to places and spaces as not just the building of or fixing up of a space, but a whole process involving the local community that makes a real focal point of a community, ultimately creating a good public space that promotes people's health, happiness, sense of connectedness and well being. Residents in the consultations not only mentioned the need for provision of new public spaces for people to come together, but the need for community based projects such as beautification projects to fix up a place to make it more of a community focal point.

Did You Know?

Mannering Park Village Green

Wyang Shire Council supports the Mannering Park Community in pursuing greater use of the Oval area by converting it to a Village Green. This space will be improved by providing greater recreational diversity, not only in a sporting context but also greater usage as a picnic and community area. This joint project is a partnership with Mannering Park Progress, Precinct, Country Women's Association, Pensioners' Group (CPSA), Social Group, Playgroup, LINKS Youth Service, and the Mannering Park Primary School, Scouts, Recreation Club, Sailing Club, Gwandalan Bowling Club, Doyalson Soccer and various Sports Clubs and Delta.



"We would like to do so many projects in our suburb e.g. to create Rotary park as a real focal point for the community – we just don't know where or how to start."

Often when residents discussed the need for more places and spaces, for example, local parks and playgrounds, BBQ areas it was directly linked to the opportunity these spaces provide for people to meet each other, connect and link.

In the Quality of Life Survey, Wyong residents generally agreed that public spaces in their neighbourhoods were adequate to allow people to come together. Nevertheless, 31% disagreed with this statement indicating that this is an area where improvement may have positive impacts on quality of life (CCRF, 2008).

Did You Know?

Wyong Shire Public Art Policy

The Wyong Shire Public Art Policy and Implementation Plan is an essential tool in providing the framework for the orderly commissioning of art in the public domain in Wyong Shire.

The *Public Art Policy* constitutes the broad strategic framework underlying the planning, inception, coordination, installation, and maintenance of public art in its place-making role in Wyong Shire. The *Implementation Plan* summarises the procedures by which public art will be planned, initiated, funded, coordinated, installed, managed, and maintained in the Shire.

The Public Art Policy relates to the whole of Wyong Shire. All Council public art projects and relevant public art projects in private developments will be conducted in accordance with this Policy and its Implementation Plan.

- **"Local" Facilities**

"Local" was a word that was used repeatedly by residents in the consultations. People described "local" facilities as providing an opportunity for residents to mix with local people who live in the same or a nearby suburb, therefore increasing the chances for people to meet, make long term connections and linkages. Because of the limitations of the public transport system in Wyong Shire, the increasing costs of petrol, and the numbers of people commuting to Sydney and taking the car, people regularly mentioned their desire for facilities and activities that are close by or "local". These types of facilities enable people to easily walk to them and get out of the house and participate in the life of their local community.



- **Providing a Network of Community Centres**

Council provides a network of community facilities including community centres, halls, youth centres, childcare centres, libraries and senior citizen's centres as a focus for community activities and interests and as venues for the delivery of social and community support services, programmes and activities.

Did You Know?**Council's Community Facilities**

Wyong Shire Council has 50 community facilities that are made available to the community. These range from Community Halls and Community Centres to tennis courts and Senior Citizens Centres.

Thirty two of the halls are run by 355 Committees which are Council approved committees of local residents and user groups that take on responsibility for the management of a Council owned facility. To find out more about using Council's community facilities please call 4350 5555.

The provision of local community centres was one of the most common themes to emerge from the consultations. Residents often regarded local community centres as the hub and catalyst for programmes and activities that meet the demands of the local community as well as the key link in joining and connecting people together.

"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 new people who I didn't know before. There is so much going on. It's a really nice place to come to."

Residents described the importance of being able to easily access programmes and activities in their suburb. They described local community centres as the local focal point that provides opportunities for localised programmes and activities such as playgroups, public meetings, seniors groups, after school activities and child care.



- **Maintenance of Existing Facilities**

Maintenance of the existing facilities in the Shire was considered important to the community. Young people, older people and families were concerned that the existing places and spaces in the Shire, ranging from parks and playgrounds to community halls and centres were not being maintained to a level that is required to keeping them looking good and being well used.

"Council should stay on top of maintenance of facilities."

"Keep fixing broken and damaged facilities. The community deserves good quality facilities."

"Some of the parks in the Shire never seem to be mown regularly. This makes the place look unkempt and uncared for and more susceptible to vandalism and graffiti."

- **Proposed Changes to Section 94 Funding**

In November 2007, the Department of Planning released a planning circular providing all NSW Council's with early advice on the proposed changes to the setting and collection of developer contributions (known as Section 94). Traditionally, Council has been able to levy developers, under Section 94 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, for capital funding for community facilities.

The circular stated that Council will only be able to levy Section 94 contributions for:

- Local Roads;
- Local Bus Infrastructure;
- Local Parks that service a development site or precinct;
- Drainage and water management expenses;
- Land and facilities for local community infrastructure that services a development site or precinct; and
- Land for other community infrastructure and recreation facilities

These changes could have a significant impact on the provision of community facilities such as community centres, sports fields, parks, playgrounds and sports facilities.



- **Leisure, Recreation and Open Space**

Participation in recreation and leisure activities requires access to a range of resources. These resources generally encompass:

Recreation Areas: For example parks, sports grounds, natural areas;

Facilities: For example, sports centres, playgrounds;

Services: For example, advice about health and fitness; and

Programmes: For example, leisure/fitness programmes, after school programmes for children etc.

Wyong Shire offers a range of recreation and leisure activities which reflect the area's long history as a popular recreation destination. Many people are attracted to the Shire for lifestyle factors and the opportunities to participate in both active and passive recreation pursuits.

Whilst facilities are provided for 'active' sports, such as, cricket, netball, tennis, skateboarding, basketball, baseball, hockey, softball, athletics and all football codes, Council is also developing an extensive network of cycleways/pathways throughout the Shire and there are over 280 reserves available for public recreation many with barbecues and playground equipment. The Shire provides a setting that is very conducive to informal recreation. The beaches are suitable for swimming, surfing, relaxing, walking and various other activities, the lakes provide a resource for boating and other water based activities and the lake frontages and bushland areas provide a resource for walking, cycling, picnics and play (*Suter and Associates, 2002*).



Did You Know?**Saltwater Creek Park**

Saltwater Creek Reserve is an exciting redevelopment that includes an all access playground, new picnic facilities, upgraded cycleway connections through the park, landscaping and reconstruction of the existing car park.

The centrepiece of the park is the new playground which features items not normally provided in Council playgrounds such as a wheel chair swing, a fence and shade structure. It is an inclusive playground that acknowledges children have a range of abilities and disabilities.

The project is a collaboration between Wyong Shire Council, PoP4kids parent group, The Benevolent Society (Southern Lakes Community for Children), and Rotary. Grants for the project were obtained from the NSW Department of Planning: Metropolitan Greenspace Programme \$80,000, and NSW Department of Sport and Recreation \$25,000.

Did You Know?**Wadalba Sports Complex**

The Wadalba Sports Complex opened in March 2008 and is the main sport and leisure facility for the 10,000 residents of the new release areas of Warnervale and Wadalba.

The facility includes:

- Two soccer fields with flood lighting;
- Two multi-purpose courts for tennis and netball;
- A skate park;
- Cycling and walking trails;
- Children's playground;
- Picnic and shade areas;
- An amenities building containing male and female change rooms and canteen; and
- Carparking areas.



Open Space

Open space includes bushlands, reserves, beaches, lake foreshores, crown lands, national parks and civic spaces. The provision of open space can influence a community's health and well-being by encouraging physical activity and social interaction. The quality of open space and preservation of natural habitats may lead to an improved quality of life. The 827 kilometre area of Wyong Shire is dominated by two major features the Tuggerah Lakes system and the mountains.

The Wyong Open Space Principles Plan (June 2005) sets out a system for the size, development and distribution of open space throughout the Shire based on identified community preferences, and the Local Parks Strategy (August 2005) presents the current understanding of the issues and the criteria in planning for local parks.

Local parks provide the most common leisure opportunities for local residents. Leisure may be in play or informal games, exercise, social interaction, or quiet reflection. Local parks often support a range of age groups so leisure opportunities should be available for a variety of ages that is appropriate to the community profile of the local area.

Large parks are classified into two main types by the extent and intensity of development. The first are those on ridgelines which may have BBQ areas and play equipment but also emphasise tree planting. The second provide for settings which can support large numbers of people in social groups. They generally provide large open areas for informal activities as well as BBQ areas and playgrounds.

Small parks provide easily accessible open space for family based recreation and are the most common open space in residential areas.

Wyong Shire's Open Space Principles Plan (2005a) provides minimum areas for the different type of open space as follows:



Type	Minimum Size
Court	1.0ha
Field	4.0 ha
Cycleway	N/A
Large Park	2.0 ha
Small Park	0.5 ha
Semi-Natural Area	2.0 ha

In new release areas, Council provides local open space for residential areas at a minimum of 3.0 hectare per thousand people, excluding buffer areas and drainage ways.

Where existing conditions provide more space, a higher standard should be used.

Did You Know?

Southern Parks Group

Council's Community Development Team is providing a supportive role to the Southern Parks Group. The group's primary objective is to consider ways in which local residents can play an active role, in conjunction with Wyong Council and other community partners, to work on strategies relating to parks and playgrounds within The Entrance and Southern Lakes Social Planning Districts. There is currently some great work through partnering in projects with many non government groups, such as the Benevolent Society in their Communities for Children Committee.

The need for additional parks, playgrounds, sporting fields and open spaces was a key priority for residents living in Wyong Shire. With the continued increasing development, and perceived loss of the green spaces, residents felt that it was more important than ever to retain and develop parks, playgrounds, sporting fields and open spaces as places that people can come together. Residents also felt that in terms of the health of our community, Council should be prioritising more opportunities for people to get out and enjoy the outdoors rather than staying inside and watching television or playing on the computer.

The theme of "local" continued as an important requirement for residents when they spoke about parks and playgrounds. Residents regularly referred to the need for these types of facilities to be located within walking distance of their homes and suburbs:



"There should be a place close to home where my kids can play."

"Playgrounds and similar facilities located to be convenient to families with young children."

"Retention of some open spaces for kids to play but still be close to home."

There was a strong emphasis that parks and playground facilities should have the supporting infrastructure e.g. bubblers, toilets, BBQ's, shade structures, fenced areas etc.

"I would love a large park where families can go for a BBQ, walk around nice gardens and the kids can run around and play."

"I think that there needs to be more parks for children to play in. I don't have children myself, yet, but when I do, there is really nowhere for them or the children in the neighbourhood to play. The kids in our area are usually hanging out on the roads kicking a ball or riding their bikes."

- **Cycleways and Pathways**

Did You Know?

Cycleways

Cycling is a popular activity that promotes an active and healthy lifestyle and is a sustainable alternative to the motor car for transport.

Council seeks to co-ordinate and facilitate the provision of on-road bicycle routes within and between areas of development and provide alternative off-road shared pathways where possible to allow safe and enjoyable trips.

On-road routes are provided along regional, arterial and local routes.

To date there is approximately 38km of off-road shared pathways. They are usually specially built, concrete or asphalt paths that run through parks or reserves or are widened footpaths. They are completely separate from a street or road carriageway.



Residents spoke of the need for connected pathways and cycleways. People across all stages of life require access to adequate pathways, for example; people with a disability, frail aged, mum's with prams, young children walking to school etc. A significant number of residents indicated that the current provision of pathways in the Shire is inadequate, with some communities having no pathways at all.

Resident's discussion centred on the requirement for pathways and cycleways to get safely to a destination point, for example to the shops, to school, the community centre etc. In terms of cycleways, many residents mentioned the great quality of the existing system, and the enjoyment that their use of these facilities bring:

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

People were enthusiastic that the cycleways in Wyong Shire should actually link up with each other, so that there is a great alternative (to cars and public transport) for people to get around the Shire safely:

"New cycleways should be developed to link in with the existing cycleways. It would be great if we could use the cycle paths to get us to where we need to go."

- **Entertainment Opportunities**

Residents mentioned the lack of entertainment options in the Shire. Entertainment options ranged from movie theatres, restaurants, and cafes to live music, theatre and other cultural type events.

"We are somewhat isolated from good restaurants and entertainment facilities."

Some residents acknowledged transport is a major factor that impacts on them accessing entertainment opportunities in the Shire. Other people were resigned to the necessity that to live on the Coast, you have to drive long distances and have a car to get around easily.



Often people discussed the fact that they travel outside of the Shire to attend various forms of entertainment:

"We often drive to Sydney for leisure activities as the Central Coast is void of culture. Even to watch an outdoor movie in summer, we go to Sydney. For theatre, opera, festivals, and even to travel by plane we have to make a long journey."

"I would like to have more coffee shops, boutiques and entertainment closer to where I live. I am always having to drive long distances to go out. The cost of cabs is prohibitive even from Wyong to Hamlyn Terrace. So in that sense I am socially isolated in Hamlyn Terrace."

"Socially, there aren't many things to do e.g. restaurants, cafes, etc. We drive to Newcastle for dinner and events."

Some residents mentioned the proposed Performing Arts Centre in Wyong as an exciting and important cultural facility for the Shire:

"I am really looking forward to the Performing Arts Centre in Wyong."

"The Performing Arts Centre in Wyong will be fantastic. It's really important that it stands out architecturally. It will be a jewel in Wyong Shire and should be iconic."

- **Venues to Pursue Leisure Time Activities**

Residents in the Quality of Life Survey were asked about the adequacy of venues to pursue leisure time activities. Approximately three quarters of Wyong residents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the question about adequacy of venues to pursue leisure time activities.

The survey identified that residents aged from 25 - 29 had the lowest level of agreement with the statement and were significantly less likely to agree that these venues were adequate compared with residents in a number of other age groups. Residents who *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with this statement concerning *the adequacy of venues in their local community in which to pursue leisure time activities* were likely to have lower levels of wellbeing (CCRF, 2008).



Less than half of Central Coast residents had either visited a venue (local library, theatre or art gallery) or attended the events (sporting event; fair or festival) in the month prior to the survey. In Wyong Shire:

- 44.8% had visited a local library, theatre or art gallery;
- 36.7% had attended a sporting event; and
- 32.2% has attended an event, such as a fair or festival.

However, the Cultural Plan (2005) highlighted that Wyong Shire residents have a high rate of attendance at cultural venues (cinema, library, museum, art gallery) compared to similar areas.

The results show that attendance at leisure time venues and events is associated with higher wellbeing. Residents who visited these venues and attended a sporting event and/or an event/festival in the month prior to the survey were likely to have higher levels of wellbeing (CCRF, 2008).

What We Can Do

What Council Can Do:

Council has a major role in providing a variety of great public places for people to come together through:

- Provision of community facilities such as multi purpose community centres as a focus for community activities and as venues for the delivery of community support services and programmes;
- Provision of local, district and shire-wide facilities; and
- Maintaining community facilities, places and spaces to ensure they are presentable, welcoming and safe.



Council has a major role in responding to the leisure and recreation needs of residents through:

- The direct provision of an equitable and appropriate range of recreation resources;
- Maintenance and embellishment of parks, sportsfields and other recreation facilities;
- Co-ordination and planning of an integrated range of recreation services and facilities;
- Formulation and implementation of policies which relate to recreation at the local level;
- Advocating for recreation resources;
- Encouraging participation in recreation;
- Assisting voluntary recreation and sporting organisations; and
- Provision of information on the recreation opportunities available within the Shire.

Council owns and maintains significant holdings of public reserves and also has care control of a large portion of Crown land in the Shire.

Council's role is to:

- Plan manage and maintain a range of community centres and halls within the Shire;
- Plan, manage and maintain open space areas and sporting and recreation facilities within the Shire including parks, semi-natural areas, urban bushland. This role is essentially related to open space in the Shire to the east of the freeway;
- Plan and maintain all beach carparks and most public facilities on ocean and lake foreshores;
- Provide a lifeguard service to six popular ocean swimming beaches; and
- Continually upgrade highly used beachside parks and recreation facilities as part of the Coastal Area Improvement Programme.

What Other Organisations Can Do:

- Utilise places and spaces, e.g. Community Centres for services and activities.
- Work in partnership to help create places and spaces that are inviting, active and vibrant.
- Participate in the planning of community facilities, places and spaces.



What the Community Can Do:

- Form Section 355 Committees to help manage local facilities.
- Develop local groups and activity organisations that use facilities and encourage local community activities.
- Participate in local initiatives such as community gardens, neighbourhood improvement projects, etc.

What I Can Do:

- Participate in the planning of community facilities such as community centres, sporting facilities etc.
- Utilise public places and spaces.
- Join a sporting group.
- Get involved in neighbourhood projects.
- Report vandalism or suspicious behaviour around facilities.

Places and Spaces Action Plan

What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
A network of well maintained community facilities that are equitable and accessible as a focal point for community activities and services	Develop and implement the Community Facilities Strategy to provide a framework and implementation plan for the equitable planning, provision and operation of community facilities.	Commence Year 1 2008/09 & ongoing.	Future Planning, Corporate Services, Community Development, Building Services	Section 355 Committees Facility Users	Within existing, S94 funds and revenue
	Recognise the importance of 'local' to the community by providing a balance of local, district and Shire wide services and facilities.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Future Planning, Community Development, Open Space & Recreation	Community Groups, Services & Organisations, State Government Agencies	S94 funds
	Ensure that the community, community organisations and stakeholders participate in the planning of all Community Facilities in the Shire to take into account the needs of all groups, noting the specific needs of young children e.g. suitable outdoor areas, fencing etc.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Future Planning, Community Development, Open Space & Recreation	NGO's, State Government Agencies, Community Groups, Community Members.	Within existing
	Implement the actions from the Warnervale Community Support & Human Services Strategy to provide the recommended facilities in Warnervale Town Centre.	Current & Years 1 - 5 (Subject to WTC development)	Future Planning	Human Services Planning Team, Community, NGO's.	S94 funds
	Develop Wyong Performing Arts Centre to provide equitable access to performance and rehearsal spaces of a contemporary standard and to meet the need for locally available high quality entertainment.	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning, Community Development, Contracts & Special Projects, Corporate Services	Performing Arts Groups, Schools, Youth Organisations	\$ Required. WSC revenue, State & Federal Government Grants, Private Sector Sponsorship
	Design and construct local multi purpose community facilities in Ourimbah and Hamlyn Terrace to meet the needs of the local community and provide a focal point for community activity.	Hamlyn Terrace Year 1 Planning 2008/09 Year 2 Commence Construction 2009/10 (subject to land acquisition) Ourimbah Year 1 Planning 2008/09 Year 2 Construction 2009/10	Future Planning, Community Development, Contracts & Special Projects, Property Services	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	S94 funds
	Construct stages 2 and 3 of The Entrance Community Centre to provide a focus for community activities and services in the district.	Stage 2 Year 1 2008/09 Stage 3 Subject to S94 funding	Contracts & Special Projects, Future Planning, Community Development	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	S94 funds



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
	Improve coordination of community assets to ensure a coordinated strategic approach to improve the overall management of Council's community facilities to meet social objectives.	Year 2 2009/10	Shire Services	-	\$ Required.
	Promote and develop Council's community facilities as a social asset to provide a focal point for the local community via improved marketing, signage, community information noticeboards and clearer booking procedures.	Year 2 (linked to implementation of Community Facilities Strategy)	Community Development, Communications Unit.	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	\$ Required for marketing, signage & noticeboards (Community Pride Strategy)
	Provide additional resources to maintain Community Facilities to a level that promotes community pride and encourages the use of these spaces as a key resource for the community.	Years 1 - 5	Shire Services	-	\$ Required
Usable, accessible and inviting open spaces and natural areas	Develop further accessible playgrounds, sporting facilities and exercise opportunities, using Saitwater Creek Reserve as a model of best practice for community participation, planning and design.	Current and Years 1 - 5	Open Space & Recreation, Future Planning	Community Groups, community Members, Specialist Groups	\$ Required
	Lobby Council to increase annual resources to address deficiencies in the provision of local playgrounds based on/ utilising the Local Parks Strategy	Years 1 - 5	Open Space & Recreation	Community Groups, Community Members, Sporting Groups	\$ Required
	Lobby Council to increase annual resources for the maintenance of parks, playgrounds and sporting facilities to make them as inviting, friendly and open as possible.	Years 1 - 5	Open Space & Recreation	Community Groups, Community Members, Sporting Groups	\$ Required
	Develop and strengthen positive interactions between Council maintenance staff and the local community in maintaining local parks.	Years 1 - 5	Open Space & Recreation, Community Development, Maintenance Staff	Community Members	Within existing
	Provide a range of Sporting Facilities to encourage participation in sporting activities and promote healthier lifestyles in Wyong Shire.	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning, Open Space & Recreation	Sporting associations, Department of Sport & Recreation	\$S94 funds & revenue.
	Develop and implement the Lakes Foreshore Recreation Facilities Strategy to provide better facilities in foreshore areas	Current & Years 1 - 5	Future Planning, Estuary Management, Shire Services	Tuggerah Lakes Estuary, Coastline & Floodplain Management Committee, Department of Natural Resources	\$ required for implementation



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
	Conserve and maintain the Shire's natural bushland areas for passive community recreation.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Open Space & Recreation , Natural Resources	Environmental Groups, Community Groups, Community Members, Schools	Within existing
Places and Spaces that are active and vibrant.	Develop and implement user friendly and accessible procedures for utilising public spaces for community events and activities.	Year 3 2010/11	Future planning , Community Development	NGO's, Community Groups, Local Community	Within existing
	Identify and establish suitable locations for Outdoor cinemas as a form of low cost family entertainment.	Year 2 2009/10	Future Planning , Community Development	Community Organisations & Groups, Community Members, Cinema Operators	\$ Required
	Continue to support and resource cultural and community events across the Shire.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Future Planning, Community Development , Corporate Services, WSC Councillors	Community Groups, Cultural Groups, NGO's, Community Members	Grant funding
	Encourage the development of local growers and farmers markets and food festivals in different locations in the Shire.	Years 4 & 5 2011/12 & 20012/13	Community Development	Local Farmers, Businesses, Community Groups, NGO's	\$5K per year
	Install infrastructure to promote increased informal use of community open space e.g. shade, fencing, seating, bubblers, toilets, garbage bins, BBQ's etc.	Years 1 - 5	Open Space and Recreation , Future Planning, Shire Services	Community Groups, Local Residents	\$ required
	Explore opportunities to activate existing places as a venue for low cost performance and entertainment opportunities.	Year 3 2010/11	Future Planning , Community Development	Community Groups, Local Businesses, Schools, Shopping Centres	Within existing
	Ensure planning policies and processes encourage commercial provision of local hospitality and entertainment e.g. cafes and restaurants, outdoor dining, movie theatres that activate and re vitalise places.	Years 1 - 5	Planning Legal & Policy , Future Planning, Development Assessment	Local Businesses, Developers	Within existing
	Implement the Wyong Shire Public Art Policy.	Commence Year 1 & ongoing.	Future Planning , Development Assessment, Community Development, Open Space & Recreation, Shire Services	Visual artists, Community Organisations, Business Organisations, Developers	\$40K per year (\$10K currently allocated in 08/09). Additional \$30K in Year 1 subject to budget adjustment.





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.



Current Context

- **Young People in Wyong Shire**

There is significant discussion regarding the correct definition of the term 'Youth'. The Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies defines the period of youth as spanning the ages from 10 - 24. This definition is also used by the Australian Medical Association and the World Health Organisation. Other peak bodies and organisations that work with young people define this period as spanning the ages from 12 - 24. The Department of Community Services (DOCS) defines young people for funding purposes as 12 - 18 years.

Wyong Council defines the period of 'Youth' as people aged between 12 and 24 years.

In 2006 there were approximately 22,700 young people aged 12 - 24 living in the Shire representing 16.5% of the total population. Between 2001 and 2006 the number of 12 - 24 years olds increased by 2,164 or by 10.5%.

The teenage years are a period of rapid emotional, physical and intellectual transition, where young people progress from being dependent children to independent adults.

This is often a period where young people face a range of life events and challenges and make decisions that can impact on them, their families and their communities in the immediate and longer term.

Social Indicators

Youth unemployment rate.

School retention rates.

Participation rate 15-24 year olds at TAFE/University.



Some of these include decisions on schooling and career paths, relationships with families and peers, sexual behaviours, employment, financial decisions and contact with drugs, alcohol or the justice system.

For young people, the transition to adulthood is made more complex by the social, economic, environmental and rapid technological changes in Australian society over recent decades. Compared with young people from previous generations, young people today have fewer siblings and are more commonly living in either single-parent or blended families, or families with both parents in the workforce. The pathways from education to work are more varied and complex than in the past and often extend over longer periods; coupled with decreased job security this means that young people often live in the parental home for longer.

Young people who are unable to make the transition to adulthood smoothly can face significant difficulties and barriers in both the short and long term. As such, positive protective factors introduced in childhood need to be reinforced throughout these critical years as young people go through various transition points in life and this is a role for families, communities and governments alike.

Source: Australian Health and Wellbeing Institute: Young Australians: Their Health and Wellbeing, 2007.

Young people in Wyong Shire are a diverse and interesting group of people with a wide range of skills, abilities, interests and talents. They are particularly disadvantaged on the urban fringes and in the northern areas of the Shire. Young people indicated during the consultation process that they feel challenged by people's perceptions of young people generally, inadequate public transport, limited access to education, training and local employment and lack of entertainment opportunities.

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.



- **Promoting a Positive Image of Young People**

Young people and their portrayal in the local media was repeatedly identified during the community consultations as important, both to young people and the wider community. There was a clear link made by residents between the way young people are portrayed in the media and the way they are perceived in the community.

There was a strong feeling by young people that the majority of media articles portray young people in a mostly negative light, and when there were positive articles they were mainly related to achievements of individuals in terms of academic and sporting achievement. There was a strong feeling that these types of positive media articles were not representative of the broader positive youth culture on the Central Coast.

"Older people are scared by what they see and hear about young people in the media."

"In the paper we read negative stories about the bad things a minority of young people do. This is what the wider community judges all young people by."

"The media only put across negative stories of young people. The positive stuff is not celebrated."

"The media reinforces the community's perception of young people as "bad" but most young people are not like this."

There was a strong desire and willingness by young people in the consultations to work together to challenge these negative perceptions and values.

- **Building Community, Connecting and Interacting.**

Like the wider population, young people expressed a concern that community values have changed and that people no longer talk to their neighbours or look out for one another.

"We have lost that community building and networking that happened when we used to be able to play cricket and soccer in the cul-de-sacs."



"It's not a pretty picture - the community is not all facing the same direction like we should be - neighbours don't talk to each other, values and community pride aren't the same."

When asked what changes they would make to their community, young people mentioned often that they would try to increase people's enthusiasm for making a community – engaging all people, making connections and linkages across the whole population in each community. Young people continually spoke about whole of community rather than just themselves as a population group:

"We need children playing in our communities, young families and people outside – this makes a community a community."

"Intergenerational mixing in social spaces is important."

"Closer community, people out together on the street, laughter of people, more friendly people – families hanging out together."

Young people regularly mentioned the importance of community events and activities that bring people together to link, connect and establish networks for example:

"We used to have street parties in our street and neighbours having dinner together – that was great."

They thought that people today have an "entitlement mentality" in that everything is about the individual. Young people were worried that there is no trust in the general community, and especially no trust of young people.

An important trend in connecting with people (especially for young people) is information and communication technologies (ICTs).

The Internet, mobile phones and blogging now play a significant role in the lives of young people. Young people increasingly use information and communication technologies to create their own communities, project their identities and to link with society. These technologies have become an important part of how children and young adults experience and learn to relate to the world.



Some interesting statistics relating to young people and their use of information and communication technologies are as follows:

- Four out of five 15 - 17 year olds in Australia own or have access to a mobile phone.
- Sixty per cent of all Australian teenagers use the Internet – the highest usage by any age group in the nation.

Source: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth).

It is important that Council utilises and learns about these technologies to enable relevant and current interactions with young people and to assist young people to use them positively, creatively and wisely.

- **Services for Young People**

Young people do not traditionally easily access services, programmes and supports. During the consultations, young people indicated that this is sometimes because of a lack of knowledge about a service, programme or activity; feeling scared or intimidated; or having had a bad experience previously. Young people indicated that they have high expectations of what a service should offer including; being open, welcoming and friendly, maintaining confidentiality, clear explanations of issues, and a high quality of service. There was a strong view expressed by all residents that Council had an important community service role with young people.

Specific comments made with regard to community services for young people were:

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

- **Community Safety**

Young people expressed awareness that they are often considered as the perpetrators of crime, vandalism, graffiti and anti social behaviour in Wyong Shire. They believe that this is strongly linked to their portrayal in the media, and subsequent perception of all young people as intimidating, or the perpetrators of crime.



While young people acknowledged that there are some young people who are involved in these activities, they expressed a frustration at this perception as they have significant safety concerns of their own. Some of the main themes that young people spoke of in terms of their own safety are as follows:

- The level of bullying happening both inside and outside of schools;
- Concerned about people using drugs and the feelings of being unsafe in the area because of this;
- Worried about the level of graffiti and vandalism in the Shire; and
- Worried about P Platers and how they drive (too fast).

"We feel scared of junkies. They make it feel dangerous and give a bad name to the area."

"Bullying in school and out of school is a problem."

"We hate that vandals wreck things and all young people get the blame for it. We are just as worried that things are damaged and that we can't use them either."

- **Transport**

All population groups, both older and young, mentioned the impacts of a lack of appropriate transport on young people, ranging from social impacts to financial and safety impacts.

During the consultations, young people consistently reported the negative impacts of a lack of quality affordable transport, and how it is increasingly difficult for them to access employment, services, facilities and recreation options within Wyong Shire. For many young people, transport is the catalyst for their isolation and exclusion in the community.

"It is very important to improve the transport system on the Central Coast for young people – for them it is so hard to get around."



Similarly to the wider population, young people experienced a range of challenges associated with public transport in Wyong Shire as follows:

- **Costs:** The cost of public transport on the Central Coast is especially hard for young people who are on little or very limited income.
- **Indirect Routes:** What would be a fifteen minute trip to the beach is up to 1.5 hours on public transport.
- **Safety:** Young people who work casually are often required to work outside of normal working hours. This presents a challenge to young people travelling home on public transport – often they are on their own, travelling significant distances at night.
- **Social Impacts:** Transport in Wyong Shire has significant impacts on the social capabilities of young people. The cost, lack of services and indirect routes make young people quite isolated and unable to get to their social outings without the use of private transport.

Many people suggested special transport services for young people e.g. a beach bus service etc. The night owl bus was also mentioned regularly with people not understanding why it had ceased.

When asked what services would assist or benefit young people in their day to day life in Wyong Shire, every single young person mentioned the provision of reliable public transport as key to improving their quality of life. Cycleways and pathways were also important to young people. Young people often rely on bicycles, scooters, skateboards and walking to get them to the places they want to go and they continually mentioned the need for linked cycleways and pathways to make their journey safer and easier.

- **Employment and Education**

At the 2006 Census unemployment rates for young people aged 15 - 19 years were 20.2% and for 20 - 24 years 11.0%. These rates were significantly higher than comparative rates for Gosford City and Sydney Statistical Division as well as state and national rates. The unemployment rate for 15 - 19 year old has remained stable since 2001 whilst there has been a slight improvement in the unemployment rate for 20 - 24 years olds.



Table 6.1: Youth Unemployment, 2006

	15 - 19 years	20 - 24 years	15 - 24 years
Wyong	20.2%	11.0%	15.3%
Gosford	15.3%	9.0%	11.9%
Sydney SD	14.3%	8.3%	10.4%
NSW	15.1%	9.3%	11.5%
Australia	13.1%	8.3%	10.3%

Source: ABS Census, 2006.

Table 6.2 shows apparent school retention rates for government schools in the Shire and NSW. In 2007 the apparent retention rate from year 7 to year 12 (defined as the proportion of students who started year 7 and have continued to year 12) was 44.3% in Wyong Shire, 20% lower than the State apparent rate (65.66%). There have been slight improvements in the rate since 2001.

Table 6.2: School Retention Rates

Year	Wyong LGA Apparent Retention Rate			State Apparent Retention Rate		
	7 - 10	10 - 12	7 - 12	7 - 10	10 - 12	7 - 12
2001	84.80	46.27	42.98	95.41	66.70	63.52
2002	87.54	53.19	46.04	95.89	68.89	65.20
2003	94.61	56.20	47.66	96.03	69.91	66.70
2004	88.81	55.35	48.45	95.38	70.37	67.48
2005	87.30	47.33	44.78	95.08	69.95	67.17
2006	87.56	53.86	47.83	95.51	69.59	66.37
2007	89.58	50.74	44.30	96.30	69.05	65.66

Source: Department of Education and Training, Planning and Innovation, Data Collection Unit.

Apparent retention rates from Year 7 to Year 10 and from Year 10 to Year 12 are also significantly below the apparent retention rates for NSW.

Active engagement in education, employment and training is a key ingredient in helping young people to make a successful transition from education to the workforce. Longitudinal studies have shown that young people who in their first year after school, have been mainly in either part-time work, unemployment or outside of the labour force are much less likely to make a successful transition to full-time employment. Research has also shown that problems faced by teenagers in their transition from full-time education to full-time work continue for young adults (*Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2003*).



Did You Know?**Are you meant to be at school?**

That's the catch phrase for a truancy protocol developed in partnership with Wyong Shire Council, The NSW Department of Education and Training and NSW Police. Designed around a School Leave Pass, the protocol aims to address the issue of local students using the Gravity Youth Centre Precinct and Skate Park at Lake Haven, as locations to truant. Young people will be asked to produce a school leave pass to account for a legitimate absence from school during normal school hours. A trial of the programme successfully ran throughout Term 4 2007. Based on this success, the programme will continue to operate, beginning with the commencement of the new school year in 2008. The protocol has been well received by students, teachers, youth workers and community members. The programme has been endorsed by NSW Police and Department of Education and Training, who want to help reinforce to school students that Gravity and other Shire facilities are not to be used during school hours.

Young people and the wider community mentioned employment for young people in terms of a provision of local jobs on the Central Coast to enable them to stay here rather than migrating to Sydney, Newcastle or even further away. Residents also stated the need for a focus on apprenticeships and traineeships and support of youth enterprise activities:

"The area needs more work opportunities for young people and sufficient transport to get to work."

"We should be doing things to encourage small businesses to take on apprenticeships – employers don't know about apprenticeships."

The consultations reported the need for increased collaboration between the education sector, service providers, government, local business and industry with the aim to increase local employment prospects for young people in Wyong Shire. The consultations also highlighted the need to support young people moving through the transition phase from compulsory schooling to further education, training and employment.

The majority of residents reported that schools in Wyong Shire were one of the more positive aspects of living here. Residents acknowledged however the increasing pressure that schools are under in responding to the variety of social issues that are impacting on a young person's capacity to learn, and the fact that for some young people, the school curriculum fails to engage them therefore needing options in terms of alternative education programmes.



In a social sense, young people indicated that school or other educational institutions were one of the main places that they established friendships networks and connections.

Affordability of education (particularly in relation to tertiary education) was seen as a barrier to young people continuing their education.

Homework Centres were continually raised as an important programme/activity for children and young people to have better education opportunities that should be supported in the Shire.

- **Cultural and Entertainment Activities**

Both young people and the broader community who participated in the consultations identified the need for a wide range of programmes and activities for young people to participate in rather than activities and programmes that are just focused around sport.

There was a feeling from some residents that sporting activities (whilst very important) are reasonably well catered to and that there is a significant gap in the provision of other activities for example arts and cultural activities.

"I would like to see less emphasis on sport. There are a number of creative activities that children and young people who are not sports minded could participate in, if the venues were available."

"I'd like to see more emphasis placed on children's activities that are creative (in contrast to sporting – which is also important) e.g. Venues for ballet, drawing, painting, drama, musical groups, cooking, life skills."

All residents reported a lack of entertainment opportunities available for young people across the whole of the Shire, but in particular for those living in the northern areas. This is further exacerbated by the isolation of some of the smaller communities and an inadequate transport system, restricting young people's participation.

Young people reported that there is a shortage of live music venues and 'gigs' in the area, as well as limited local festivals and events. Young people believed that these types of events should happen regularly.



"We should have things like the Blue Haven Christmas festival and GOATS Youth festival held regularly throughout the year – not just once."

Commonly, young people requested that 'places of entertainment' such as time zone, movies, outdoor cinemas, cafes and Zulu's nightspot for example be more accessible, safe and more regular.

Affordable activities were also important to young people. They advocated for more low cost or subsidised events, activities and programmes.

Did You Know?

MUSE Group

MUSE is a group of young adults, aged between 12 and 18, that meets at Lake Haven Library every second Thursday. Over the occasional slice of pizza, members of the group discuss things that they have written or read recently. Members talk about lots of themes relating to books, including fantasy, horror, romanticism, gothic, adventure and historical fiction.

- **Inclusiveness – Youth Participation and Involvement**

The consultations identified common trends in terms of establishing and fostering meaningful participation and involvement by young people.

Residents identified the common themes as; Our young people are the future; young people's input should be valued; our young people should be included not excluded from the community; young people's inclusiveness and participation gives young people new skills and abilities; the importance of positive role modelling and mentoring; engaging young people at risk and recognising the resilience of young people.

Specific comments made with regard to the importance of youth participation and involvement, indicative of collective views are as follows:

"Young people should be encouraged to be actively involved. Not just a token commitment."



Did You Know?**Wyong Youth Advisory Council**

The Wyong Shire Youth Advisory Council is a group of young people aged 12 – 18 years, who formally meet to discuss how Council's policies and actions affect youth in the Wyong Shire and to make Council aware of young people's interests, ideas and recommendations for the shire. It provides an opportunity for young people to have a say and be heard about decisions that affect them and their communities. The Youth Advisory Council provides a link between young people and their local Council and promotes the positive achievements of young people. The Council is very proactive in researching youth needs and issues and are currently developing projects for the next 12 months. The Youth Advisory Council is passionate about providing leadership development and participation opportunities for young people of the Wyong Shire.

- **Diversity**

Young people talked about 'Diversity' in two main ways:

- Relating to acceptance and welcoming of people from different backgrounds; and
- Identity of young people.

Many young people discussed their view that many older residents in the Shire are fairly unaccepting of people from different backgrounds and cultures. Some young people had a direct experience of this behaviour from adult residents:

"Racism is a problem for us. We have had horrible comments directed at us because we wear the headscarf."

Most young people expressed their disgust at this behaviour and were very keen to work towards promoting and advocating for diversity in the Shire.

Young people were also concerned at the wider population's interpretation of what an acceptable young person is. There was discussion about the many different 'types' of young people that exist in the Shire and that all groups of young people have something valuable to offer:



"All sorts of young people should be able to be involved and participate – even if they aren't considered as the right 'type' of person. It's not realistic to have school captains and prefects representing all the young people in the Shire. We are all different."

- **Places and Spaces for Young People to Come Together**

Young people's use of places and spaces in the Shire is often quite controversial, whether that controversy is a perception or a reality. Young people described the limited opportunities in the Shire where they can access safe and affordable entertainment venues to socialise and meet people.

Often, the places where young people come together and gather as a group, presents perceived or real problems for the wider community. Young people frequent public places and facilities such as shopping centres because these social areas serve as good meeting and 'hanging' places.

During the consultations, residents mentioned the need for both formal and informal venues where young people can meet. By informal venues, people described cafes, shopping centres etc and by formal venues they described community centres, youth centres and places where more organised programmes and activities take place. Young people expressed a desire that when planning community facilities for young people, the facility is included as one in a hub of other activities. For example:

"Hubs of facilities are good – not just a facility for young people out on it's own – it needs to be linked with other things – restaurants, cafes, entertainment venues, outdoor space. We want to be included not excluded."

Young people also regularly mentioned their limited access to community facilities. For example:

"We are locked out of the Extreme Sports Park at San Remo. It was built there for people to use and now it is locked. It was advertised as a shared space but it isn't in reality."



“There shouldn’t be just church activities in the community centres on the weekend. It should be open to everyone. When we are at the skate park and need to go to the toilet or get a drink we aren’t allowed into the new community centre in the place where we live.”

Access to technology is also important as a means for social interaction, for example, MySpace, Facebook, YouTube and MSN.

Young people, like the broader community were also concerned about the ongoing maintenance of existing facilities. They felt that all of Council’s facilities should be maintained so that they look open and inviting and not scary places where ‘bad’ things happen.

Facilities in public places and spaces such as seating, bubblers, BBQ areas, shade, toilets, garbage bins, lighting and phone boxes were also mentioned as important to young people.

- **Environment**

The environment was mentioned by young people in terms of retaining the green open spaces, places where young people can get outside and exercise and kick a ball, etc.

They were also concerned that the natural environment should be preserved for future generations, e.g. National parks, trees, wetlands etc.

“There should be more green open spaces and more trees need to be planted.”

Young people love that the area is clean and has clean fresh air. In the future, young people envisioned that the area will be a lot greener with parks and open space, and the wetlands would be protected and well cared for.

- **Health**

During the consultations, the main themes that emerged for young people in relation to health were:

- Lack of GPs;
- Long waiting lists;
- Family issues impacting on wellbeing;



- Mental health issues (both personal and non personal);
- Drugs and alcohol; and
- Work versus life balance for families.

Most young people had extreme difficulty in accessing health services on the Central Coast, and when asked what the Shire would be like in 20 years from now, young people indicated that it would have adequate medical services, and doctors, and waiting lists would not be too long.

What We Can Do

What Council Can Do:

Council has a key role in supporting, developing and involving young people in the decisions and directions of the Shire.

Gravity Youth Centre

Currently, Council supports two Youth Worker positions operating out of Gravity Youth Centre at Lake Haven. These positions encourage the collaboration of services and stakeholders towards positive solutions and coordinates ongoing programmes, ensuring they demonstrate a commitment to the wellbeing of young people and the wider community. These roles also work on building better relationships with young people and other sections of the community towards a more harmonious and responsible community and to improve the safety and security of the environment for the community as a whole.

Wyong Shire Council's 'Gravity Youth Centre', at Lake Haven, is one of the most innovative and popular facilities of its type. Situated adjacent to the Lake Haven shopping Centre, Gravity offers an innovative holistic approach to youth services.

Gravity is the setting for an exciting and rewarding community project - the development of a community park. The project includes the Delta amphitheatre, which has been created with the support of Delta Electricity.

Another big drawcard at Gravity is the skate park. The centre has been the venue of high quality competitions and has attracted some of the Central Coast's best known young skaters.



Key Projects:

- Gravity Community Park Makeover
- Youth Access Protocol
- Truancy Protocol
- Youth Advisory Council
- Youth Week
- Sustainability Street

Wyong Youth Advisory Council

Wyong Shire Youth Advisory Council is designed to provide a link between Wyong Shire Council and young people of the shire.

Ranging in age from 12 - 18, the youth representatives include school, TAFE and University students and come from various cultural backgrounds.

The role of Council is to:

- Address existing and future needs of young people in Wyong Shire;
- Foster a safe community where young people are respected, have opportunities to belong, and feel they are valued in the community;
- Enhance communication with young people – listening, responding and providing feedback about matters impact on their quality of life;
- Involve young people in meaningful ways in civic life, such as planning and decision making processes, and in voting and elections;
- Promote a positive image about the role young people play in the community and celebrating their achievements;
- Represent the needs of young people to community agencies and other spheres of Government, and advocate for the provision of infrastructure to enable young people to access accommodation, social, educational and employment opportunities, and support services;
- Be responsive, provide accessible services and facilities and support young people's needs and further development; and
- Continue to work in partnership with Youth Services e.g. PCYC, LINKS, Samaritans, Oasis, RYSS, etc.



Council's role in relation to young people could further be enhanced by:

- Developing a Strategic Plan for young people;
- Reinstating the Youth Development Officer Position; and
- Supporting and enhancing the Youth Advisory Council.

What Other Organisations Can Do:

- Involve young people.
- Enhance communication with young people.
- Represent and advocate with young people.
- Promote a positive image of young people.
- Ask local young people to solve a community problem/issue.
- Work in partnership to ensure adequate services, programmes and activities for young people.
- Write letters to community members (especially young people) who contribute to the community.

What the Community Can Do:

- Be understanding of the challenges facing young people.
- Raise funds for a youth led organisation or event.
- Work together to create a great future for young people.
- Be inclusive of young people.
- Nominate a local young person for an award.

What I Can Do:

- Avoid pigeon holing of young people and generalising about their behaviour, opinions or ideas.
- Be understanding of the challenges facing young people.
- Work together to create a great future for young people.
- Be inclusive of young people.
- Volunteer for a youth based service, sporting group etc.
- Be a youth mentor.



Young People Action Plan

What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
A Strategic Approach to young people in the Shire	Develop an inclusive strategic plan for young people in partnership with Wyong Youth Advisory Council, young people, youth specific services and other organisations to provide a collaborative approach to servicing, resourcing and supporting young people.	Years 1 & 2 2008/09 & 2009/10	Future Planning Community Development	Youth Advisory Council Youth Workers Youth Services Young People	\$10,000 (Funding allocated in 08/09 Management Plan)
	Reinstate a Youth Development Officer within the Community Development Section of Council to implement the actions from the strategic plan.	Year 2 2009/ 2010 & ongoing	Community Development	Youth Advisory Council Youth Workers Youth Services Young People	\$80K per year
	Continue to work in partnership with key youth services e.g. PCYC, LINKS, Samaritans, Oasis etc.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Community Development	Youth Advisory Council Youth Workers Youth Services Young People	Within existing
A positive image of young people	Continue to support the Youth Advisory Council as a representative group of diverse young people, including a financial contribution to allow projects to be implemented and evaluated e.g. Imagineering Project	Years 1 - 5	Community Development	Youth Advisory Council Youth Workers Youth Services Young People	\$10K per year (Funding allocated in Management Plan)
	Wyong Youth Advisory Council to work with Council's Communications Unit and other media outlets to educate and create awareness of the contribution of young people make and the issues they face.	Year 1 2008/09	Community Development, Youth Advisory Council, Communications Unit.	Young People Youth Interagency	Within existing
	Work in partnership to run events and activities that showcase the skills, talents and abilities of young people e.g. Youth Week.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Community Development	Youth Advisory Council Youth Workers Youth Services Young People	Grant funding & within existing.
Places and spaces for young people to come together	Implement guidelines produced by the Youth Action Policy Association (YAPA) for assessments of new Development Applications.	Year 2 2009/10	Development Assessment, Future Planning	Developers forum, Developers Community Development Youth Advisory Council Young People	Within existing



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
	Facilitate the extension of the Lake Haven Youth Access Protocol and Truancy Protocol model to other areas in the Shire to enhance positive relationships between young people and local shopping centres.	Year 3 2010/11	Community Development	Shopping Centres Local Businesses Youth Services Youth Workers Young People Police DET	Within existing
	Ensure that appropriate participation/ consultation strategies are implemented to attract a broad range of young people's input into the planning, design and implementation of places and spaces e.g. Skate Parks, playgrounds, community centres etc.	Years 1 – 5	Future Planning, Community Development, Open Space & Recreation	Young People Youth Services Youth Workers Developers Sporting Groups Schools, Public Art Committee	Within existing
	Ensure that Council and non Council front line staff managing public spaces who have contact with young people undergo regular training to update skills and knowledge in working with young people.	Commencing Year 2 2009/10 & ongoing.	Community Development Rangers		\$2K per year
Inclusiveness, Youth Participation and Involvement	Provide real opportunities for youth participation and leadership on appropriate Council and community projects, programmes and committees.	Years 1 – 5	Community Development, Future Planning, Open Space & Recreation, Youth Council.	Young People, Schools, Youth Services, Youth Workers	Within existing
Employment and Education opportunities	Facilitate partnerships and linkages with government, business, community and education providers to seek avenues (including funding options) for programmes which develop and improve the education and skill base of young people in the Shire e.g. Alternative education, school retention etc.	Years 1 – 5	Future Planning, Community Development, Economic & Corporate Planning	Government, Business, Training Providers, Education Providers, DET	Within existing
	Promote the availability and benefits of Apprenticeships and Traineeships to young people and local employers, including opportunities within Council.	Years 1 – 5	Community Development, Communications Unit	DET, Schools, Education Providers, Alternative Education Providers, Community Education	Within existing
	Support the expansion of programmes including Workwise, ET Australia, Youth Connections and mentoring e.g. Plan-It- Youth	Years 1 – 5	Community Development, Future Planning	DET, Schools, Education Providers, Alternative Education	Within existing



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
	Explore the establishment of the R U Mad? Leadership development Programme.	Years 2 - 5	Community Development	DET, Schools, Education Providers, Alternative Education	\$5K per year
	Continue, expand, promote and publicise the Wyong Shire Council Scholarship programme to assist young people accessing tertiary education opportunities within the region.	Years 1 - 5	Corporate Services, Communications Unit	DET, Schools, TAFE, University, Other Education Providers	\$ Required in Year 2 to expand. (\$10K currently allocated in Management Plan)
	Support the establishment and implementation of homework help programmes (including young people from CALD backgrounds).	Years 2 - 5	Community Development, Libraries.	CC Multicultural Project, NGO'S, Education Providers	\$2K per year
	Expand the role of Libraries and community centres as additional venues for education and training to provide young people access to computers, internet, resources and reading materials (Prioritise in isolated areas with limited transport).	Years 1 - 5	Library Services, Community Development.	DET, Schools, Education Providers, Alternative Education Providers, Community Education	\$ Required







diversity

Social Outcome

A community that encourages, recognises and respects diversity.



Importance to Quality of Life

"Acceptance of diversity and inclusiveness are important in contributing to community harmony and social cohesion. A society that does not accept or include diversity can lead to the creation of marginalised groups which become isolated from others in the community, and are unable to access opportunities to fully participate in social, economic and political spheres of society. A lack of social inclusion may also lead to individuals and groups being disadvantaged through a lack of access to resources and information. This may lead to discord within or between communities, and the fracturing of community spirit, linkages and connections."

Source: *Measuring Social Capital, An Australian Framework and Indicators*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004, p.38.

Acceptance or tolerance of diversity, as well as inclusiveness demonstrate an individual's or community's acceptance and respect for a broad range of social norms, lifestyles, and beliefs. This contributes to feelings of inclusion, acceptance and belonging.

Current Context

The Wyong Shire community is one in which a variety of many different communities exist together, creating a vast mix of interests, attitudes, skills, abilities and challenges. Not only is there a variety of cultural mixes, there are every day differences such as age, family type, socio economic status etc. that make the Shire a place in which a diversity of different people live, work and play together.

Social Indicators

% of Indigenous population.

% of population from CALD background.



The Community Profile of the Shire shows a range of ages and family types living in the Shire ranging from families with young children to older residents. There is also a great range of income levels which brings many opportunities and challenges.

Whilst the majority of Shire residents are Australian-born and of Anglo-Celtic origin the Community Profile has identified that there is a small but growing population of over 3,800 people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in the Shire and over 5,800 people from non-English-speaking backgrounds. With the arrival of new residents to the growth areas of the Shire, many from Sydney, this diversity will grow.

The concept of diversity is based on individual acceptance and respect. It is an understanding that individuals are unique and different and that all people have different strengths and abilities that can contribute to creating a good community. Diversity includes race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, culture, age, physical ability and religious, political and other beliefs.

During the consultations when speaking of "diversity" people defined diversity in terms of the elements described above and also meant everything from diversity in business type, attracting a mix of people, welcoming and including people from different backgrounds and a diversity in education.

Residents had mixed experiences of "Diversity." The majority of people felt that there was not enough diversity (on all levels) in the Shire and that Council needs to do a lot more to encourage it.

When asked what makes up a good community most residents stated that a mix of people is essential in making a good community. By a 'mix' of people, residents meant a range of ages, family mixes, interests and ethnic groups:

"We need a mix of people from different backgrounds."

"Communities need a mix of different people, ages and backgrounds."

"It's really important to not just have a clump of the same people in a community e.g. all older people living in the same street – we need families, single people, older people all living together."



A significant number of residents (from both a CALD and non CALD background) felt that Wyong Shire was still quite backwards in its approach to encouraging diversity:

"There needs to be a cultural shift in the Shire. We are still so old fashioned in the way we do things and treat different people."

"Wyong Shire is still so 'Anglo'. It is quite hard to fit in when you're from a different background."

People also felt that Wyong Shire Council and elected Council representatives as a whole were not proactive, encouraging or interested in developing, supporting and connecting with diverse communities:

"Council needs to be more user friendly to multicultural residents i.e. language links on Council's website, interpreter services, welcome kits in other languages, etc."

A minority of people expressed the word "diversity" in a negative light as a fear of people from different cultures, and were very racist in their comments and approach. This type of attitude is reflected in some of the experiences of people from a culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background.

As well as attracting a diverse range of people, residents also expressed the need to attract a diverse range of businesses and shopping options.

"A nice deli would be great."

"Everywhere you go it's the same type of shops – it's so boring."

"It would be fantastic to have even a fruit and vegetable shop in The Entrance."

"When we first moved to the area [from Sydney] my husband and I decided that we felt like Japanese food for dinner we drove around for about an hour and ended up having pizza as that was the only thing around."

"I really miss the variety that Sydney offers – lots of choice and things like fresh produce markets."



"I would entice more contemporary businesses to the local region. The right types of cafés boutiques, hairdressers and cinemas."

The community consultations highlighted that there are four groups in particular in the Shire that are cause for attention in promoting inclusiveness and accepting diversity. These four groups are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, People from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background, People with a Disability and Young People.

- **Indigenous People**

Many people from an Indigenous background participated in the consultations. Residents from an Indigenous background had mixed feelings about living in the Shire. For some Aboriginal People living in the Shire their experience is a more positive one, but for others they experience significant negative attitude and disrespect from the wider community.

"We are constantly dealing with judgements from the wider community."

Aboriginal people involved in the consultations outlined the positive aspects of living in Wyong Shire as follows:

- The open space and natural environment of the area;
- Good neighbours who are open to learn about the Stolen Generation and challenges that affect Aboriginal People;
- Lots of Aboriginal children integrated into local schools;
- The Shire allows the opportunity to live in a house as opposed to a unit;
- The Eleanor Duncan Community Health Centre; and
- Wyong Shire Council - *"Events at Council help to put Aboriginal Issues on the agenda. The Community Development staff are very welcoming which I have never felt at another Council."*



The challenges of living in Wyong Shire include:

- Lack of respect and pre judgement by the wider community;
- Racism experienced by the Aboriginal Community;
- Ineffective public transport system on the Central Coast;
- Lack of affordable and accessible activities for children and youth;
- Bullying inside and out of school;
- Lack of OOSH care;
- Lack of affordable medical and dental facilities;
- The increasing over development of the area;
- High number of single parent families and lack of male role models;
- Grandparents raising grandchildren with no support; and
- Lack of affordable entertainment for all ages.

"There is still significant racism experienced by the Aboriginal Community on the Central Coast."

The preservation of open space and the natural environment of the area is very important to the Aboriginal People, especially the beaches, birds and trees. The protection of key sacred Aboriginal sites in the area was seen as a priority to be addressed by Council in conjunction with the local Aboriginal People.

People expressed that in their ideal future, the area would have lots of green open spaces, that bushland would be protected, that sacred Aboriginal Sites would be retained and the beaches and waterways would be pristine. There would be an understanding and respect for Indigenous culture in the wider community and acknowledgement and recognition of the Indigenous community and its leaders by local government.



Did You know?**NAIDOC Flag Raising Ceremony**

The NAIDOC Flag Raising ceremony is based around showcasing and celebrating the diversity of personal experiences within our local Aboriginal community and creating a positive and vibrant environment using displays of contemporary Aboriginal artworks, traditional Indigenous foods and personal histories.



- **People from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Background**

Did You Know?**Central Coast Multicultural Project**

The Central Coast Multicultural Project is conducted to assist people on the Central Coast who are from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB). This includes new arrivals, refugees and migrants.

Managed by the Wyoming Community Centre the Project provides information, referrals, support, advocacy, community development and casework and is funded by the Department of Community Services and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

The Project is an acknowledgement of the diverse cultures living on the Central Coast of NSW and the contributions and benefits derived from the sharing of these cultures within the whole community.

There were a significant number of people from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background involved in the consultations. People from a CALD background have had various experiences of living in Wyong Shire, both positive and negative.



The positive experiences are:

- Celebrations of different cultures/people coming together;
- Friendly neighbours (immediate);
- Linking with those from a common background;
- Development and progress of the Shire;
- The beauty and cleanliness of the natural environment; and
- The laid back and less stressed lifestyle of the area.

The negative experiences related to:

- Lack of bi lingual information (including welcome kits and Council's website);
- Lack of inclusiveness on the Central Coast;
- Lack of multi cultural acceptance;
- Poor transport system;
- Lack of Infrastructure keeping up with population growth;
- Not enough local jobs;
- Poor communication from Council to its CALD residents;
- Community safety; and
- Lack of medical services.

The social and cultural attitudes, values and norms of some mainstream residents make it difficult for people from a CALD background to feel welcome and a part of the community:

"I went into Coles after school with my friend and there were adults walking behind us saying horrible things because we were wearing the head scarf."

"The growth of the Shire is good in a way as there are more people here [in Wyong Shire] from different cultures now so our culture is more visible – other people can see that there are a range of different cultures here, which is good."

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

"It was really hard at first to live here because of racism. We weren't accepted in the broader community, but a few people accepted us right from the start."



"There are still small pockets of racism here, especially from older people."

'We need acceptance of all people regardless of race and disability.'

Many people from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background talked about their increasing worry of the loss of their traditional celebrations, languages and customs as people age and pass away. This worry was specifically linked to the passing on of knowledge and experiences from one generation to the other.

"Our community is getting older and older. Our families have moved away and there is no one here every day to make sure our traditions are kept alive."

Another impact on individuals from a CALD background in terms of age is the social isolation and loneliness of older people, especially those older people who revert back to the language of their birth with the onset of illnesses like dementia:

'We go visiting people from our community at the nursing homes up here – they no longer know how to speak English and no one can understand them which makes them feel scared and lonely.'

"We try really hard to pass on our culture to our children, it's really important to use not to lose our heritage."



Did You Know?**Wyong Shire Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement (EAPS)**

In March 2008, Council implemented an Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement which will address the key ethnic affairs initiatives and priorities of Council.

In developing the EAPS, Council consulted widely with culturally and linguistic diverse (CALD) communities and agencies.

EAPS is a measure of Wyong Shire Council's performance where the needs of culturally diverse clients are fully integrated into core business, which in turn results in quality service delivery within the framework of the principles of multiculturalism and social justice obligations.

Outcomes from the EAPS will include improving internal processes which will provide improved support for CALD communities through information sharing and bi-annual community days, provision of a translator service and staff cultural awareness training.

- ***People with a Disability***

People with a disability expressed a view that they were often not included, and that Council had a significant role to play in community education and building connections to better include and respect this group. People with disabilities had both positive and negative experiences of living in the Shire.

The positive aspects of living in the Shire included:

- The sense of community, the connections and linkages with people in the community;
- The importance of good neighbours;
- The natural environment of the area – the lakes, the river, the sounds of bird life;
- The area is quiet and peaceful; and
- The village feeling the Shire has.



The challenges of living in the Shire included:

- Not enough public transport options for people with a disability;
- Increasing busyness of the Shire;
- Environmental degradation;
- Inadequate parking for people with a disability;
- Lack of interesting places for young people to go;
- Feeling unsafe while out at night;
- Not enough organised social events; and
- Young people with disabilities living in nursing care for older people.

Analysis of the discussion of residents with a disability has identified the following key requirements:

- Integrated information and communication strategy and the provision of information in formats that are accessible to people with a disability;
- Appropriate and affordable socialisation and recreational activities and spaces for people with a disability;
- Addressing of accessibility issues in the Shire;
- Advocating and lobbying for the provision of disability services in Wyong Shire;
- Increased respite care and services for families and carers;
- Affordable and accessible transport options;
- Supporting and promoting education, employment and training for people with disabilities; and
- Greater community acceptance of people with disabilities.



Did You Know?**Central Coast Disability Network - Working to Develop Better Opportunities for People with Disabilities**

The Central Coast Disability Network (CCDN) is a registered charity and a not for profit organisation that has been providing support to people with a disability since 1979. CCDN delivers several disability focussed programmes and provides an information, referral and support role to people with disabilities, families, carers and service providers on the Central Coast.

CCDN is committed to, and practices social justice principles of rights, equity, access and participation. These principles are informed by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons. CCDN's vision is for all people with disabilities to be fully included in the life of their communities. CCDN's philosophy is based on the belief that people with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other members of society.

What We Can Do**What Council Can Do:**

A significant number of residents from all backgrounds suggested that more work could be done to further promote multicultural awareness and education. There was a feeling from residents that the Shire is still quite "backwards" when it comes to supporting people from a different background and not motivated to provide education to the wider community.

Most residents felt that Council had a significant role to play in supporting cultural community groups to promote and educate the wider community by holding festivals, activities, programmes and events. Many groups indicated that their festivals and celebrations have ceased because of the burden of insurance and liability issues.



Council's Role is to:

- Provide equal access to services, resources and facilities for all residents;
- Practice and implement non-discriminatory service provision;
- Seek broad and inclusive, active community consultation and participation;
- Promote and lead community harmony and cultural expression;
- Continue to promote a respect for diversity in Council strategic plans, operational plans, policies, programmes and projects;
- Continue to provide adequate facilities and to use materials and methods that are culturally appropriate; and
- Further develop initiatives that promote mutual respect, harmony, co-operation and opportunities for cross-cultural exchange.

Council supports cultural diversity, cultural expression and the arts through the provision of:

- Wyong Shire Cultural Plan (2005);
- Library services;
- Youth services;
- Cultural programmes, events and activities;
- Support for a number of events and activities; and
- Cultural grant provision.

What Other Organisations Can Do:

- Provide support, programmes and services that are inclusive.
- Provide advice and guidance about best practice approaches to working with diverse communities.
- Continue to celebrate diversity.
- Work in partnership with Council and others to promote the benefit of living in a diverse community.

What the Community Can Do:

- Ensure that there is broad representation in your group, committee, etc.
- Don't discriminate against people who are different.



What I Can Do:

- Respect others.
- Attend a cultural event.
- Take part in a recognised day of celebration e.g. International Day of People with a Disability.
- Accept people who are different.
- Learn about people from different backgrounds by participating in activities and programmes.
- Get to know different people.
- Speak out against discrimination of any type.
- Volunteer to spend time with a person with a disability.
- Learn about the traditional owners of the land where you live.



Diversity Action Plan

What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
Acceptance of diversity and recognition of members of the community regardless of background, disability etc	Negotiate with the Aboriginal Community to seek ways to establish a permanent Aboriginal Community Development Worker position within Council to work in partnership with the Aboriginal community to develop positive relationships and programmes. (Link to Cultural Plan Action 20)	Commencing Year 3 2010/11 & ongoing.	Future Planning, Community Development	Aboriginal Community, DLALC, Elders, Aboriginal Organisations	\$80K per year (salary & programme \$)
	In consultation with the Indigenous community, develop an Indigenous Strategy to promote access and inclusion for the Indigenous community including a Council protocol for acknowledgement of and involvement of the traditional custodians at meetings and functions organised by Council.	Year 4 2011/12	Future Planning, Community Development	Aboriginal Community, DLALC, Elders, Aboriginal Organisations	\$5K
	Implement recommendations and review the Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement (EAPS) annually to ensure equity and recognition of cultural differences by Council and the community.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development, Libraries, Customer Services, Future Planning	Central Coast Multicultural project, Central Coast Multicultural Interagency, CALD Organisations, CALD Community	\$2K per Year (Cultural Plan budget)
	Support multicultural organisations and groups within the community to assist in providing programmes and services to the growing multicultural community.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development	Central Coast Multicultural Project, Central Coast Multicultural Interagency, CALD Organisations, CALD Community	Within existing
	Develop a Disability Action Plan to promote access and inclusion in our community for people with disabilities.	Year 3 2010/11	Community Development	People with Disabilities	\$5K
A Celebration of diversity	Support the provision of festivals, events and other community projects that celebrate and build diversity – (link to Cultural Plan Action 23)	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning, Community Development, Events Co-ordinator	Community & Cultural organisations, Central Coast Tourism	Cultural Grants Programme
	Co-ordinate activities on recognised days of celebration of diversity within our community e.g. Harmony Day, International women's day Reconciliation Day, Sorry Day, International Day PWD, Senior's Week, Youth Week to show appreciation of the positive impacts and key role diversity plays in shaping our community.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development, Events Co-ordinator	NGOs, Community Groups, Cultural Groups	\$5K per year (Community Development budget) & grant funding
	Continue to conduct Citizenship Ceremonies and examine ways to enhance the event memento provided to new citizens.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Office of the Mayor	-	Within existing



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of other sections	Community Partners	Resources
Inclusiveness, Participation and Involvement	Provide mechanisms which encourage people from diverse backgrounds to participate in Council planning, decision making and services to ensure wide representation.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development, Future Planning	Aboriginal Community, DLALC, Elders, Aboriginal Organisations Central Coast Multicultural Project, Central Coast Multicultural Interagency, CALD Organisations, CALD Community. People with Disabilities	Within existing
Improved Cultural Awareness	Encourage and support programmes that raise awareness and educate residents of the cultural diversity and heritage of the Shire.	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning, Community Development.	DLALC, Elders, Aboriginal Organisations Central Coast Multicultural Project, Central Coast Multicultural Interagency, CALD Organisations, CALD Community. People with Disabilities, Community Groups, Community Members	Cultural Grants Programme





Norah Head Lighthouse



health

Social Outcome

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



Importance to Quality of Life

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 (CCRF, 2008).

The term health is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (World Health Organisation, 2008).

This definition addresses health issues from a broad perspective. It refers to the social, economic and environmental factors that impact on health; including housing, social and psychological circumstances, childhood experiences, the impact of work, experience of violence and abuse, education, employment, friendship and social cohesion, stress and community resilience and quality of the built and natural environments. These factors are known as the social determinants of health.

As well as access to clinical and community health services, the following social determinants of health take account of the wider responsibility for creating opportunities for health:

- The need for policies to prevent people from falling into long-term disadvantage;
- The social and psychological environment that affects health;

Social Indicators

Self assessed health status.
Obesity levels.
Satisfaction with health services.
Access to GP services.



- The importance of ensuring a good environment in early childhood – The effects of early development last a lifetime, a good start in life means supporting mothers and young children;
- The impact of work on health – There is no trade-off between health and productivity at work. Work that does not provide appropriate rewards, in terms of money, self-esteem and status, damages health;
- The problems of unemployment and job insecurity - The health effects of unemployment are linked to both its psychological consequences and financial problems. Because unsatisfactory or insecure jobs can be as harmful as unemployment, merely having a job cannot protect physical or mental health. Job quality is important, and job security increases health, well-being and job satisfaction;
- The role of friendship and social cohesion – Friendship, good social relations and strong supportive networks improve health at home, at work and in the community;
- The dangers of social exclusion – Access to emotional and practical social support varies by social and economic status. Poverty can contribute to social exclusion and isolation. Social cohesion – the existence of mutual trust and respect in the community and wider society helps to protect people and their health;
- The effects of alcohol and other drugs – Individuals turn to alcohol, drugs and tobacco and suffer from their use, but use is influenced by the wider social setting;
- A good diet and adequate food supply are central for promoting health and well-being - Access to good, affordable food makes more difference to what people eat than health education. Social and economic conditions result in a social gradient in diet quality that contributes to health inequalities; and
- The need for healthy transport systems – Healthy transport means reducing driving and encouraging more walking and cycling, backed up by better public transport. Cycling, walking and the use of public transport promote health by providing exercise, reducing fatal accidents, increasing social contact and reducing air pollution.

Source: *Wyong Shire Council Community Support and Human Services Strategy for Warnervale/Wadalba, 2002.*

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



Current Context

- **Positive Impacts of Living in the Shire**

Most residents in the consultation process discussed the positive impacts living in Wyong Shire has had on their health and wellbeing. These include:

- The cleaner air in the Shire compared to other areas like Sydney and Newcastle;
- The laid back and less stressed nature of the area;
- The friendly and welcoming nature of the area and feeling like you fit in;
- The outdoor focus, naturally enabling outside activity rather than indoor activity; and
- The great outdoor lifestyle Wyong Shire offers.

Most people, and particularly those who moved to Wyong Shire from other areas, talked about the great outdoor lifestyle that the area offers and how it positively impacted on their health and wellbeing.

Residents regularly mentioned that the environment of the area was significantly better than where they had come from:

"The cleaner air up here is great."

The natural environment of the area was also seen to encourage more of an outdoor and active lifestyle:

"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 oriented than ever before."

Most people felt that the outdoor and active lifestyle could be further encouraged by the provision of more open spaces, parks and playgrounds, cycleways and pathways and larger house blocks so that kids can have a backyard to enable them to get out and play rather than staying indoors and watching TV.

Some residents living in the northern parts of the Shire however, did mention that they were concerned about the black dust circulating in the area, coming from the array of industry nearby.



- **Self-Assessed Health Status**

Nearly 70% of Wyong residents aged 18 years and over considered themselves to be either in *good*, *very good* or *excellent* health. A further 30% rated their health as *fair* or *poor*. The Quality of Life research showed that residents of Wyong were significantly more likely than residents of Gosford to give low ratings for their health. Older age groups were also more likely to assess their health as poor or fair. People having post-school qualifications, higher income levels and in paid employment were associated with a higher rating of health status (CCRF, 2008).

The CCRF survey found that those residents who rated their health *poor* or *fair* were significantly more likely to have lower wellbeing scores those who rated it as *good* and those who rated their health as *very good* or *excellent* were significantly likely to have high wellbeing scores (CCRF, 2008).

Around 48% of Wyong residents reported one or more medically diagnosed long-term condition (i.e. a disease, impairment or disability that is expected to last more than six months). Nearly 60% of the diagnosed medical conditions of residents restricted them in their work or everyday activities. Those residents with a diagnosed condition were likely to have lower wellbeing than those residents who did not have a condition (CCRF, 2008).

- **Obesity and Overweight**

The Quality of Life survey, looked at the body mass index (BMI), calculated as the ratio of self-reported height and weight to provide an indicator of whether residents were obese or overweight. 60% of Wyong residents were either obese or overweight, with men more likely to be overweight than women (CCRF, 2008).

Residents were also asked to self-assess whether they were underweight, just right, overweight or very overweight. 42% of residents considered themselves to be overweight and only 4.7% considered themselves to be very overweight. However, the BMI calculated 20% of residents to be obese (CCRF, 2008).



Did You Know?**Q4: Live Outside the Box Project**

Q4: Live Outside the Box commenced as an initiative of a group of Central Coast agencies aiming to raise community awareness about the components of our daily lives that contribute to overweight and obesity in children and young people. These include, but are not limited to television watching, computer games, and takeaway and convenience foods.

It aims to promote practical ideas for including more daily physical activity and healthy eating habits into our lives.

The flagship of the project has been a school based activity where students are provided with information and resources to record aspects of their behaviour that may influence their body weight. The record is kept over a 2 week period and students attempt to maximise points scored by reaching benchmarks. There is a primary school and junior high school version of the activity. Between 2004 - 2006 a total of approximately 47,500 Central Coast primary and high school students have participated in Q4 LOTB 2 week challenge. The primary school activity has been introduced to Northern Sydney schools in 2007.

Residents from the consultations spoke of their increasing worry that they themselves and their children are leading more sedentary lifestyles. They were extremely worried about the increasing levels of childhood obesity.

Did You Know?**'Active Over 50'**

'Active Over 50' is an exercise programme designed specifically for people who are aged 50 or more. Over 25 Central Coast venues offer Active Over 50 classes in aqua fitness, strength training, tai chi, ballroom dancing and group exercise which are conducted by trained professionals. There is no running or jumping in any of the classes, which consist of gentle movements to improve stamina, strength, flexibility and balance. Classes are suitable for beginners.

People who attend say that joining Active Over 50 is the best thing they've done in years. Not only have they improved their fitness and health, they have a lot of fun and have made lasting friendships.



People expressed a desire for the natural and open aspects of the Shire to be retained to encourage the active, outdoor lifestyle rather than limiting this type of space. They regularly commented on the design of new estates i.e. the small or non-existent backyards (encourages kids to play indoors), the lack of parks and open spaces (lack of outdoor options for families to gather outdoors) and the lack of footpaths and cycleways (encouraging people to drive small distances e.g. to pick up milk etc).

Did You Know?

Central Coast in Motion Project

This project aims to raise awareness and motivate action to prevent and reduce overweight and obesity within the Central Coast community. Quite simply, the goal is to get the people of the Central Coast community moving more.

Family Activation Pack

The Family Activation Pack is a fun packed resource to help parents and carers get active with their children. It's full of quick and easy games to play at home, in the park or wherever

Ultimately, by playing games together, families will be achieving at least some of Australia's Physical Activity Recommendations whilst also developing movement skills, confidence and greater potential to live an active-healthy life

Measure Up 4 Health

Measure Up 4 Health is an initiative designed to educate and raise personal awareness of health risks associated with increased waist size (excess abdominal body fat) and to motivate physical activity amongst adults (16+ years).

The Measure Up 4 Health pack contents include a "special" male/female tape measure, info brochure, pedometer and Workplace Physical Activity Challenge. This initiative will target Central Coast workplaces, commencing with the largest, the Area Health Service.

A partner and supporter of the project is the Central Coast Regional Coordination Management Group (RCMG), whose many agencies will also be rolling out the tape and measuring up for health.



The following comment is representative of resident's concerns:

"Larger housing blocks to prevent people living on each other's door step and enabling children to play safely in their own back yards rather than roaming the streets. This will also reduce the obesity problem. If children can't be active outside they will get fatter."

- **Other Health Indicators**

As a result of the merger between Central Coast and Northern Sydney Area Health Services it is difficult to source data for Wyong and/or the Central Coast.

Births

In 2005 there were 1,877 births to mothers living in the Shire. The Shire has a fertility rate of 2.3% compared to 2.0% for NSW.

6% of mothers were aged under 20, 50% were aged between 20 and 29 years and 41% aged 30 – 39 years.

Infant Mortality

The infant mortality rate refers to the number of deaths in children aged under one year per 1,000 live births. Between 2000 and 2005 the Wyong infant mortality rate was 4.03 per 1,000 compared to 4.8 per 1,000 for NSW.

Smoking

Central Coast data from the NSCCAHS Survey 2006 shows 26.9% of males and 20.4% of females were current daily or occasional smokers. The level of smoking was twice that of other areas in Northern Sydney.

Source: NSCCAHS Demography Discussion Paper Health Services Planning Unit.



- **Demand for Health Services**

Wyong Shire's socio economic status and demographic structure has significant implications for the provision of health services in the area. Population growth and the ageing population places considerable pressure upon the resources of Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health to meet the changing needs of the area.

The Shire has a higher proportion of people aged over 65 than NSW which is increasing yearly as the 'baby boomers' generation ages and as more people move into the Shire to retire. This age group has a high demand for all types of health services. The ageing of the population will continue to change the pattern of health problems. Increased prevalence of chronic health problems will necessitate a greater focus on the integration of community health and hospital based services. The lack of both high and low care beds (nursing homes and hostel accommodation) for the frail aged, also places increased demand on inpatient and community based health resources

The Shire is also characterised by a higher proportion of children. This age group also places high demands on health services.

- **Health Service Provision**

Northern Sydney Central Coast Health is one of 17 Area Health Services in NSW. The service manages four hospitals: Wyong Hospital, Gosford Hospital, Woy Woy Hospital, Long Jetty Health Centre and four community health centres in the Shire at Lake Haven, Long Jetty, Toukley and Wyong Central. There is one private health care facility in the Shire at Berkeley Vale.

Wyong Hospital is designated as a Major Metropolitan Hospital with 360 beds. It provides inpatient, outpatient and emergency services for the Northern part of the Central Coast. The hospital provides Aged Care Medicine, Emergency Medicine, General Medicine, Low Risk Maternity, Rehabilitation Medicine, General Surgery and sub-specialties and Mental Health Services.

The following table shows increased levels of activity and beds at Wyong Hospital from 2002/03 to 2005/06. 42,644 people presented at the Emergency Department in 2005/06 and there were 27,261 hospital admissions.



Table 8.1: Wyong Hospital – Levels of Activity

	2005/06	2004/05	2003/04	2002/03
Beds	277.6	244.4	186.2	191.6
Occupancy Rate	95.7%	96.5%	102.8%	97.4%
Non-inpatient Occasions of Service	116,123	101,033	97,000	87,330
Emergency Department Attendances	42,644	41,092	39,213	37,172
Admissions/Separations	27,261	24,514	22,855	22,016
Average Length of Stay	3.6	3.5	3.1	3.1

Source: NSCCAHS Annual Report 2005–06.

The Quality of Life Survey asked residents how satisfied they were with health services on the Central Coast. Nearly 50% of Wyong residents stated that they were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with health services, 17% were *neither satisfied or dissatisfied*, 20% were *dissatisfied* and 12 % were *very dissatisfied*. Wyong residents were significantly less likely to be *satisfied* or *very satisfied* in comparison to residents of Gosford (CCRF, 2008).

Residents who were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with health services were significantly more likely to have high wellbeing scores than those who were not as satisfied.

Most residents in the consultation process reported their concern regarding particular health service availability on the Central Coast, specifically in regard to access to accident and emergency, specialist treatment, mental health services, and drug and alcohol services. It was thought that service provision in all these areas was severely lacking in Wyong Shire.

Some residents reported that they were travelling to Sydney hospital to access Accident and Emergency services as they were unhappy with the service at public hospitals on the Central Coast, and even went so far as to suggest that private hospitals on the Central Coast should have Accident and Emergency services to accommodate the need:

"There should be an accident and emergency service at private hospitals that we can pay for and get a better quality service."

People were worried that there are not enough specialists on the Central Coast and that there are significant waiting lists and travel distances to see a specialist.

The lack of subsidised dental services was also a major concern for some residents.

Whilst a third of Wyong residents visited a dentist regularly (one a year or more), 45% of residents visit the dentist less frequently (once every two years). The CCRF survey found that residents of Wyong were more likely than Gosford residents to visit the dentist less regularly. Approximately 31% of Central Coast residents said that they didn't visit the dentist more regularly because they could not afford it, 42% did not visit more regularly because they did not have any dental problems and 14% were afraid of the dentist (CCRF, 2008).

Residents also acknowledged a perceived increase in matters relating to drug use and mental health. Residents were particularly concerned about the lack of services to accommodate these problematic and far reaching community issues.

Of particular concern to older residents is the provision of support and medical services for the ageing community.

- **General Practitioners**

General Practitioners (GPs) are the main providers of primary health care and often the first contact for residents who are unwell or injured. GPs are also responsible for referring patients elsewhere in the health system, in particular to specialists. The number of doctors, their distribution and the balance of general and specialist medical practitioners are basic considerations affecting access to health care.

The Commonwealth Department of Health's guide for good doctor-to-patient ratios is 1:1,100 to 1:1200 persons. The table below shows that this ratio is substantially exceeded in Wyong.

As at June 2007 there were 294 GPs working in the Central Coast of which 210 (71%) were male and 84 (29%) were female. There was a higher proportion of GPs in Gosford 182 GPs (62%), compared with Wyong 112 (38%). The average age of GPs is 53.0 years.



Table 8.2: GP and Practice Nurses Profile, Central Coast

	Gosford	Wyong	Total
GPs	182 (62%)	112 (38%)	294
FTE GP [#]	136.5	96.3	232.8
FTE GP to population ratio [#]	1: 1214	1:1574	1:1280
Gender:			
Male	122	88	210(71%)
Female	60	24	84 (29%)
Practice Nurses	60	54	114

Local estimate

Source: Central Coast Division of General Practitioners, 2007.

The Quality of Life Survey looked at access to GP services. Over 90% of Wyong residents had seen a GP in the last 12 months. 25% of residents indicated that they had needed to see a GP and did not go. Residents of Wyong were significantly more likely than residents from Gosford to agree that the barriers they had faced in accessing GP services in the last 12 months were *lack of GP services in the local area, cost and the inability to get an appointment*. Wyong residents also indicated a high degree of difficulty in accessing GP services outside of business hours (CCRF, 2008).

The results are important as they indicate an inability to access services, which, in turn, may affect health and quality of life. Residents who faced barriers to accessing GP services were also likely to have lower wellbeing scores (CCRF, 2008).

Most people in the community consultations reported concern with the lack of access to GPs generally and more specifically bulk billing GPs in their area. These concerns mainly related to long waiting times to see a doctor, lack of choice of a doctor, quality of care, bulk billing services, services out of normal hours and after hours chemists.

"It would be good to have better medical facilities, e.g. available doctors."

"More doctors who bulk bill and are willing to accept you as a patient."

"Better access to healthcare, GPs and Hospital Emergency Services."



Some residents indicated that they travel long distances to see a doctor. A significant number of people told us that they travel regularly to the bulk billing practice at Wyoming, and some new residents to the Shire indicated that they still travel to Sydney to visit their family GP. These people who travel to Sydney for medical services indicated that they were not at all satisfied with the standard of care on the Central Coast.

- **Commuting**

Residents who commute spoke of the impacts on their health and wellbeing as follows:

"I am tired all the time – it is such a long day when you commute."

"Being active is the last thing I feel like doing after a week of commuting."

"It takes my husband at least half of Saturday to recover from the week of commuting."

Impacts on family life were also a significant concern to the community and those people commuting. The amount of time spent away from the family was seen to be a real negative both on the wellbeing of the person commuting and the wellbeing of the family unit.

What We Can Do

What Council Can Do:

Council has an important role in further improving the health and wellbeing of the local community by creating open and welcoming physical, social, economic and cultural environments that promote and encourage positive health and an increased sense of wellbeing.

There is a strong relationship between social capital, social cohesion and health. People's social and economic circumstances strongly affect their health throughout life. Therefore all approaches to addressing health and wellbeing in the Shire should take account of the wider responsibility (e.g. social determinants) for creating opportunities for better health.



Council's main role in relation to health is to:

- Lobby for additional resources to improve health services for residents of Wyong Shire;
- Maintain existing partnerships and establish new partnerships with NSCCAHS and other key agencies to address the factors contributing to poor health outcomes in Wyong Shire; and
- Advocate for improved provision and access to health services including access to GPs for residents.

In terms of direct service provision, Council has a role in health and wellbeing of residents through the provision of:

- Services and facilities that encourage physical activity and cultural expression for example, community centres, youth centres, senior citizens centres, parks, playgrounds, BBQ areas, skate parks, bike tracks and cycleways;
- Free immunisation clinics for pre-school aged children on the first and third Friday of every month. To cater for working parents Saturday clinics are also held once a month; and
- Health related inspections such as food shop inspections, hairdressers, skin penetration, water quality monitoring etc.

Council planners continue to work to ensure that urban design and development provides safe open spaces and retains natural areas for people to come together within new and existing communities. When planning new communities in the Shire it is important for Council to consider:

- The importance of environmental considerations in urban planning, such as industry type and location;
- The inclusion of recreational facilities, such as cycling and walking paths;
- Employment opportunities to facilitate financial and social stability; and
- A rich diversity of opportunities to interact, including those provided by village-style shopping centres.

Environmental factors such as climate change impact and will continue to impact significantly on people's health and wellbeing. Council has an ongoing role to work with stakeholders and the community to ensure that these factors are addressed for the future.



What Other Organisations Can Do:

- Run services to address health issues.
- Establish support groups/programmes to address health issues.
- Work in partnership with Council and others in lobbying for additional health services.
- Utilise a whole of government and community approach to addressing factors that contribute to poor health.

What Can the Community Do?

- Lobby in partnership with others for additional health services.
- Work to establish active groups, e.g. sporting, walking, healthy cooking etc.

What Can I Do?

- Try to get out and about and be active – walk and cycle instead of taking the car everywhere.
- Try to maintain a healthy diet.
- Enjoy the outdoor natural aspects of the Shire.
- Lobby in partnership with others for additional health services.
- Play sport.
- Go to the gym.
- Give up smoking.
- Reduce alcohol consumption.
- Register as an organ donor.
- Learn CPR.
- Volunteer, e.g. as a referee, on a sporting committee, at the school canteen.
- Support someone in poor health.

Health Action Plan

What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
A healthy community	Develop a Healthy by Design Framework in partnership with relevant agencies to integrate the principles of building a healthy community in planning and design.	Year 5 2012/13	Future Planning , Open Space & Recreation.	Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service	Within existing
	Work in partnership with the NSCCAHS Health Promotion Unit and other agencies on programmes that contribute to promoting healthy lifestyles e.g. Coast in Motion project, Secondary Supply of Alcohol Campaign.	Years 1 - 5	Future planning , Open Space & Recreation, Community Development	Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service	Within existing
	Develop a Positive Ageing Strategy for Wyong Shire.	Years 2 - 3 2009/10 & 2010/11	Future Planning , Community Development, Seniors Council	Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service, ADSS1,	\$10K
	Council to work with NSCCAHS to develop adaptive strategies for human health implications for climate change e.g. provision of shade, heat stroke awareness programmes, mosquito borne diseases.	Years 1 - 5	Natural Resources , Community Development.	Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service	Within existing
Better access to health services	Continue to work with Central Coast Division of GPs and general practices, to assist in the recruitment of GPs and establishment of new practices.	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning	Central Coast Division of GPs.	Within existing
	Continue to advocate for a range of health and dental services (including access for vulnerable families) and assist in the establishment of new health facilities in Wyong Shire.	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning , Community Development.	Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service Health Services & Health providers	Within existing
	Continue to support the Youth Health Clinic at Gravity Youth Centre.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Community Development	Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service	Within existing





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.



Importance to Quality of Life

The theme of 'Habitat' refers to the natural and built environment in which we live.

A healthy natural environment is vital to the wellbeing of the community as it impacts directly on people's quality of life. The importance of preserving the natural environment and balancing the development of the built environment was raised by focus group residents (in both the Quality of Life research and Community Plan process) as key factors influencing their overall wellbeing and quality of life (see *CSIRO, 2007*).

A key attraction of Wyong Shire for its residents is its natural environment combined with the accessibility and 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 and expansive waterways. The environment is one of the main assets which attract people to the area however the legacy of past practices associated with the development of our towns, farming, industrial, commercial and forestry areas, together with the current urban growth trends has and is continuing to put significant pressure on these valuable assets.

Current Context

The Natural Environment

Clean air, clean drinking water and access to waterways, open space and natural areas are recognised contributors to health and wellbeing and are some of the attributes of the Shire that make it a good place to live.

Social Indicators

Visits to the natural environment.

Dwelling type and tenure.

Median monthly loan and rental payments for housing.



The natural environment was of both great joy and concern to all residents in the consultations. The amenity of the environment was very important to residents and green open spaces, bushland, reserves and walking trails for active and passive recreation was highly valued. Many residents stated that the beauty of and the proximity to the natural environment was one of the main reasons they had moved to the Shire:

"The environment of the area was a big draw card and the reason we moved here."

An extremely high value was placed on the diversity of nature that the Shire offers its residents. People were amazed at the range of environments there are in the Shire. Residents often described the ability of being able to access the mountains, native bushland, hinterlands and rural farming areas, and within a 15 minute drive, be on the beach and swimming in the ocean. A particularly high value was placed on the lakes, the lake foreshore and the beaches.

"We love the diversity of the area – beaches, mountains, lakes."

"The sea air and the salt spray is wonderful. I feel such a connection with this area."

"There are beautiful views all around."

"The beaches and lakes are great."

"Clean air."

"I really like the sun and watching the sunsets."

Residents were very worried however, that the beauty and amenity of the natural environment is changing for the worse, and that with the increased population growth, development and industry development, the natural attractiveness and abundance of flora and fauna will be lost. The environment was seen as an important factor to be maintained and developed further in order to create a balance with the increased development and maintain a healthy community.

"There should be more areas like wildlife corridors and more trees left when building new estates."

"There needs to be ongoing protection of natural resources."



"Preservation of parks, open space, green space."

"We are all very concerned about coal mine development."

Some key priorities for residents for the future are as follows:

- The natural heritage of the area is preserved;
- The waterways, lakes and beaches are clean and pollution free;
- Water views are maintained for all the community (not just those who can afford it);
- Treed ridge lines are maintained and preserved;
- Trees are highly valued;
- Trees should be preserved and protected;
- Additional tree planting should be encouraged, especially in new estates;
- The lake and lake foreshores are very highly valued by the community; and
- Encourage planting to encourage native species.

The results of the Quality of Life Survey showed that 78% of Shire residents had visited a natural environment such as a beach, lake, river, bushland, park etc in the past month. Analysis confirmed that for Wyong residents, experiencing outdoor spaces was associated with higher wellbeing. Perceptions of the natural environment in residents' local areas are also likely to have associations with quality of life and that the more inviting, well cared for and protected that these natural areas are considered to be, the more likely that they are able to have positive impacts on people's everyday lives (CCRF, 2008).

Ensuring that the natural environment retains its positive attributes and that we continue to provide accessible outdoor spaces where people can spend time in the natural environment is an important part of promoting wellbeing and quality of life.

The CCRF survey also investigated aspects of the local area and environment that had negative impacts on Central Coast residents in the last year. Most frequently cited negative issues included level of traffic (50%), water issues (35%), level of development (30%) and level of noise (29%). Gosford residents were significantly more likely than Wyong residents that the quality of their drinking water had negatively affected them, while Wyong residents were more likely to agree the level of development, the quality of air and the level of greenery had negatively affected them (CCRF, 2008).



Residents were also asked whether they were worried about broader environmental issues either from a local or global perspective. They indicated they were concerned about climate change (70%), water issues (68%) and clearing of native bushland or forests (63%).

- **Tuggerah Lakes Estuary**

The three interconnected lagoons that comprise the Tuggerah Lakes estuary are largely isolated from the sea, but it's that isolation that creates a special environment that supports a huge diversity of plants and animals. The beauty of the lake attracts people; who either want to live here or want to visit. As a result a wide range of commercial activities, including fishing, boating and tourism take place on or around the lakes. The Tuggerah Lakes and their catchment are home to over 130,000 people. This attractiveness has also created big problems because more people means greater stress on an already stressed environment.

The estuary is in better condition than it was 20 years ago, mainly because we now dispose of our sewerage at sea, but the Estuary Management Study still showed that there are a number of issues that threaten the lakes. People need resources like land, water, electricity and sewerage systems. Natural vegetation has been cleared for urban development, causing more sediment to wash into waterways and lakes. Water is diverted for domestic and industrial use and what's left is often of too low quality and sometimes quantity to help the estuary. The Estuary Management Plan was developed to improve and maintain the health of the Tuggerah Lakes for current and future generations.

The Estuary Management Plan identified six primary objectives that Wyong Shire should aim for in the management of Tuggerah Lakes. These objectives are as follows:

- 1 Ensure that the quality and quantity of water meet the needs of the community and lakes and rivers;
- 2 Ensure that the plants along the banks of rivers, lakes and in wetlands are protected because these are essential to a healthy ecosystem;
- 3 Ensure that biodiversity and ecological integrity of the lakes ecosystem are maintained and enhanced;
- 4 Ensure that human activities can take place while protecting cultural heritage and enhancing soil, water and ecosystem health; and



- 5 Ensure that the social and economic needs of the community are met while protecting the environment of the coastal zone.

Source: Snapshot of the Tuggerah Lakes Estuary Management Plan, October 2006.

- **Biodiversity**

Biodiversity is the variety of all living things; the different plants, animals and micro organisms, the genetic information they contain and the ecosystems they form.

It is estimated that there are 13.6 million species of plants, animals and micro-organisms on earth. Australia has about one million of these, which represents more than 7% of the world's total and is more than twice the number of species in Europe and North America combined. As a 'developed' nation, Australia has a special responsibility for biodiversity conservation and management.

Wyong Shire is rich in biodiversity, enhanced by the presence of both coastal and inland vegetation communities and expresses faunal characteristics of both the Sydney basin and north coast bioregions. It supports 427 native fauna species (mammal, bird, amphibian and reptile) and many invertebrates.

To many residents of the Shire, the environment is the most crucial issue of our time. Community concern regarding the environment has led to a rapid rise in the number and size of community based environmental groups who are working towards the sustainability of Australia's natural resources.

The community-led network of volunteers in Wyong Shire are committed to the sustainable health and management of biodiversity and the environment. The network includes Landcare, Waterwatch, Coastcare, Dunecare and Bushcare groups. There are approximately 32 groups conducting restoration and regeneration activities at 51 sites throughout the Shire.

Source: Wyong Shire Council State of the Environment Report 2006 - 2007.



- **Climate Change**

Human activity, particularly the burning of fossil fuels, has made the blanket of greenhouse gases around the earth "thicker." The resulting increase in global temperatures is altering the complex web of systems that allow life to thrive on earth, such as cloud cover, rainfall, wind patterns, ocean currents, and the distribution of plant and animal species.

More of the sun's energy is being trapped in the atmosphere, and much more of the world's carbon (in the form of carbon dioxide) is resting in the air rather than in trees, soil, and subterranean deposits (*United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2008*).

Climate change will have major implications for the economy, the community and for the health and wellbeing of people. Climate change is likely to result in rising sea levels, more intense storms and cyclones, reduced water availability in Southern and Eastern Australia, and more heat waves. The likely impacts on human settlements include increased costs of managing water resources, increased energy demand, more damage to infrastructure and housing, increased insurance risk, more vector-borne and food-borne diseases, and increased stress on stormwater management systems.

The human and social impacts of this change are only just beginning to be recognised. Human adaptation to these changes needs to be quickly advanced if particular at-risk groups are not to be significantly disadvantaged in the future.

During the 2006 and 2007 financial year, Wyong Shire Council made significant gains in acknowledging and responding to the issue of climate change. In January 2007, Council supported the recommendations of a staff report which outlined the latest research in relation to climate change. It resolved to initiate a response to the threat of projected changes to climate in the coming years including:

- Developing an overarching sustainability decision making framework;
- Initiating a climate change risk assessment process;
- Implementing an Energy Savings Action Plan;
- Increasing the proportion renewable energy (green power) purchased;
- Participating in the GreenFleet programme to offset vehicle fleet emissions;
- Reviewing planning instruments and policies;



- Reviewing Council's Car Fleet Policy; and
- Undertaking climate change education/training.

Source: *Wyong Shire Council State of the Environment Report 2006 - 2007.*

- **Sustainability**

Sustainability means managing development by doing more with less; making sure we don't exhaust our resources or degrade the environment and being proud of what we leave behind. It is about development that improves quality of life, both now and in the future, in a way that maintains ecological processes on which life depends.

Sustainability is fundamentally about the ability to provide choices to future generations of Wyong Shire.

Sustainability requires us to better understand the systems that support what we do – and the need to take a broader view in our decision making to recognise that our day to day activities can simultaneously affect our economy, environment and community.

In 2007 Council staff with the assistance of an external stakeholder community group undertook a series of sustainability workshops to begin to develop a sustainability decision making framework. A set of draft guiding sustainability principles have been created to provide direction for the continuing development of the framework.

Did You Know?

Sustainability Street

Sustainability Street is a programme that supports local community groups who would like to learn about their environment and get practical by working on some grass roots projects. During 2007, three Sustainability Street Groups formed in the Shire and these are based at Mannering Park Primary School, Budgewoi East and Gravity Youth Centre in Lake Haven. The groups are busy learning how to manage water, waste and energy in a sustainable way as well as working on special projects such as setting up community gardens. Sustainability Street groups are all about celebrating and caring for the community whilst nurturing the environment. The project is supported by the NSW State Government's Environmental trust programme and works in partnership with seven other NSW Councils.



Did You Know?**Mannering Park Sustainability Street**

The student environmental group from Mannering Park School forms the basis of the latest Sustainability Street group. Parents and Community members provide input in a mentoring capacity for the group's major project, which is the development of a series of vegetable gardens built in the school grounds. Activities include planning the different elements of the garden, including discussion of what type of plants to grow; the need for features such as scarecrows, a trellis, a worm farm, or a water feature. Reducing waste through diversion of school food scraps to compost and a worm farm is a continuing theme for the school. An energy audit has been undertaken to establish high energy uses in the school. Discussions on this theme will continue to identify actions where savings may be made. This is a partnership between the school and its immediate community (open to the general Mannering Park community) and Wyong Shire Council, whose Senior Officer - Terrestrial Ecology and Sustainability Natural Resources and Community Development Worker contribute to the project. Sustainability Street is licensed from Vox-Bandicoot.

- **Environmental Education**

Education in the broadest sense is an essential tool for achieving sustainability. People all around the world recognise that current economic development trends are not sustainable and that public awareness, education and training are key to moving society towards sustainability and longer term behavioural change.

Council is continuing the development of a holistic Education Strategy to increase the scope of education throughout the Shire and provide long term direction for Council's operations in community education.

A key way of delivering sustainability principles is through school programmes, higher education, non formal education and community based learning activities. Focusing on the 'next generation' with this approach does mean that there is a lead time in changes to behaviour and attitudes, however, it also means that sustainability becomes the norm rather than the exception.

Source: Wyong Shire Council State of the Environment Report 2006 - 2007.



Did You Know?**Little Green Steps**

The Little Green Steps Programme provides resources and tools to assist pre-school staff communicate environmental messages to children aged 3 - 5 years. This included the development of five resource kits including, water, waste, wildlife, energy and stormwater.

Little Green Steps is co-ordinated by Wyong and Gosford Councils with funding received from the Department of Environment and Climate Change – 'Our Environment It's a Living Thing Programme.'

- **Water**

The theme of water supply, water harvesting systems and water restrictions was raised as a significant area of concern for a majority of residents.

The concerns mainly related to:

- Lack of future planning around water issues;
- Frustration towards people not obeying the water restrictions;
- Perception of too much development in light of the lack of water supply;
- Lack of financial assistance for people to enable them to purchase a water tank; and
- Ongoing water restrictions – for some residents this was a positive measure and for others it was considered as a draconian approach as the water levels are rising.

"Why are more people moving here when we don't have enough water for ourselves?"

"There was once a time when everyone had water tanks. The Council made us take them out and connect to town water – now we're being encouraged to put them back in. It seems there is a major lack of foresight there."

In July 2007, the Gosford/Wyong Council's Water Authority adopted the long term water supply strategy, WaterPlan 2050. The strategy is based on managing demands on the water supply system through improved per capita efficiency, together with improving the yield of the system and providing a flexible toolbox of additional water sources as they are required in the future.

Source: Wyong Shire Council State of the Environment Report 2006 - 2007.



- **Environmental Attitudes**

The Central Coast Research Foundation (CCRF) has regularly monitored the attitudes of Central Coast residents towards the environment. This survey canvasses contemporary environmental issues, including climate change, nuclear power, and recycled water usage.

The Central Coast Region Environmental Attitudes Survey was conducted in 2007 and in summary, Central Coast Residents:

Agreed that:

- Threats to the environment are not exaggerated.
- Looking after the needs of people is more important than looking after the needs of the environment.
- Climate change will have a direct impact on their lives in the next 20 years.
- The actions of the average person can have an impact on slowing climate change.

Supported:

- Paying more for electricity to ensure a constant supply in the future.
- Paying more for electricity if it was generated from renewable sources such as solar or wind.
- Making donations to conservation organisations that work to improve the environment.
- Farmers receiving financial incentives to plant trees on their properties.
- Using recycled water for drinking, washing clothes, flushing toilets, washing cars and watering gardens.

Were divided on:

- Whether improvements in technology would do more to solve environmental problems compared with people making changes to their lifestyle.
- Nuclear energy as an alternative to coal-based energy for Australia.
- Whether the benefits to the Central Coast Region of the coal industry outweigh the negative impacts.



- More land being made available in the future for residential development, rather than increasing the housing density in existing urban areas.
- Paying increased taxes if the money is used to fix environmental problems.

Opposed:

- Higher water prices as a method to discourage water use.

Source: Central Coast Research Foundation (CCRF), 2007.

The Built Environment

The majority of the population resides in large urban clusters close to the Tuggerah Lakes with smaller population pockets spread throughout the Shire. Warnervale/Wadalba is the greenfields growth area in the Shire and is expected to house approximately 40,000 people and provide employment for many Central Coast residents through initiatives such as the proposed Wyong Employment Zone (WEZ) and the Warnervale Town Centre.

Continuing development increases urban sprawl resulting in greater dependence on private transport, increasing urban stormwater run off and associated pollution, increasing energy use, fragmentation of natural bushland, a loss of biodiversity and increased pressure on the social fabric and infrastructure. There is a backlog in the provision of community facilities, human services and access via comprehensive intra-regional public transport (*Wyong Shire Council State of the Environment Report 2006 – 2007*).

- **Infrastructure Keeping Up with Population Growth**

The lack of infrastructure combined with the growing population was a significant concern to most residents. When asked “*What are the challenges of living in Wyong Shire?*” most people indicated that the lack of infrastructure is a challenge to them currently, and that they are extremely worried about the impact of future growth on the current infrastructure.

When asked “*What services, facilities, activities or programmes would assist you and/or your family in your day to day life in your community?*” most people’s responses were in terms of the provision of infrastructure for example:



- **Social Infrastructure:** Community facilities (local and district community centres), child care (before and after school, vacation care), places for people to come together (cafés, restaurants, town squares, etc);
- **Transport Infrastructure:** Warnervale Town Centre railway station, appropriate and affordable public transport, supporting infrastructure (shelters, tilt buses etc), better road condition, and volume of traffic;
- **Professional Infrastructure:** Local employment (less commuting, range of employment types, appropriate wage structures etc) and increased education opportunities (equal programmes at Ourimbah University);
- **Recreation Infrastructure:** Open Space (parks, playgrounds, sports fields, BBQ areas), recreation facilities (pools, basketball courts); and
- **Basic Infrastructure:** Water, tanks.

Representative comments from residents regarding the lack of infrastructure include:

"The area is generally enjoyable but services are stretched way too thin for the current population let alone the increasing pressure."

"Initially, this was a small rural community and that's what you expect, but now it's big and busy with no infrastructure – may as well have stayed in Sydney where there was infrastructure."

"The infrastructure is not here. In our old area there was enough bus services, train services, ovals and playgrounds for children."

Many new residents to the Shire expressed their disappointment in the area in terms of the lack of infrastructure of the area, stating that they had moved to the area not only because of the lifestyle, affordability and environment of the area, but also for the proposed services, facilities and infrastructure and in particular the Warnervale Town Centre:

"We moved here because of the promised services and facilities – where are they? We should have just stayed where we were – at least there was proper infrastructure there."

"I think it's a great area, but I think the lack of infrastructure needs to be addressed."

Residents were supportive of balanced "appropriate" development – that is, steady population increases commensurate with appropriate infrastructure.



The Quality of Life survey asked residents if they thought that the positive impacts of population growth on the Central Coast outweighed any negative impacts. 58% of Wyong residents answered no to this question. This has implications for future planning of the Region and the likely perceived negative impacts of continued growth. Residents were also asked to select the single most negative impact of population growth. Inadequate infrastructure was clearly the most significant concern (56%) followed by traffic volumes and travelling time (11%) (CCRF, 2008).

- **Affordable Housing and Accommodation through Life Stages**

There are many aspects of housing, including affordability, tenure type and living conditions that provide an important measure of wellbeing (CCRF, 2008).

Wyong Shire's dwelling stock comprises a large proportion of separate houses. The development of new suburbs consisting largely of separate houses has characterized housing growth over the last 15 years.

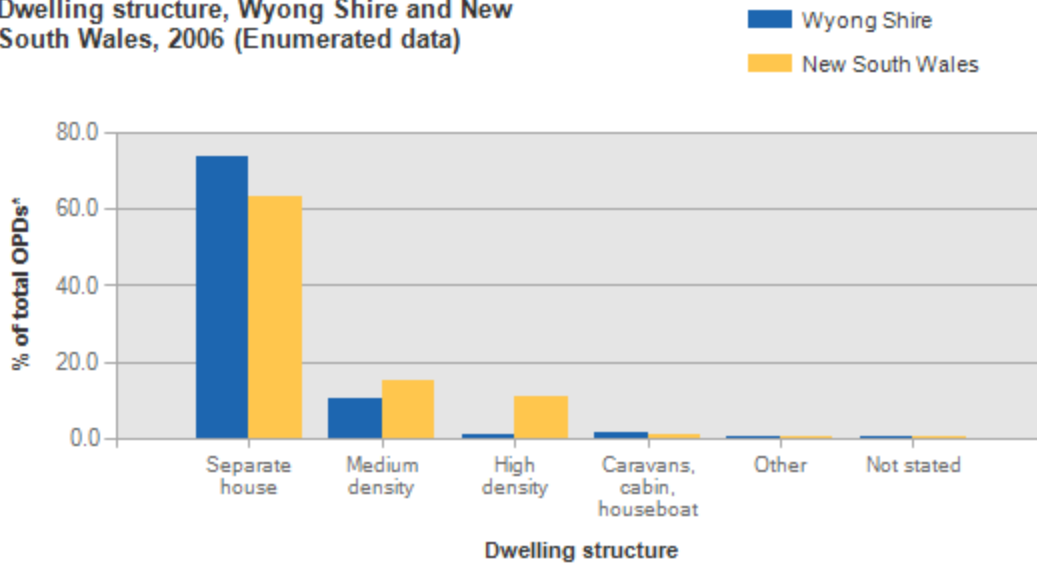
In 2006 there were 54,095 occupied private dwellings in the Shire. 45,802 households occupied a separate house in the area, while 6,636 occupied a medium density dwelling, and 569 occupied high density flats and apartments. Analysis of the types of dwellings of the households in the Shire compared to NSW shows that Wyong has a lower density profile: 73.4% occupied a separate house, 10.6% occupied a medium density dwelling, while 0.9% occupied high density dwellings, compared with 63.1%, 15% and 11.1% respectively in NSW.

Between 2001 and 2006 the largest changes in the type of dwellings occupied by households were for those occupying a:

- Separate house (+3,376 dwellings);
- Medium density dwellings (+547);
- High density dwellings (+252); and
- Caravan, cabins, houseboat (-345 dwellings).



Dwelling structure, Wyong Shire and New South Wales, 2006 (Enumerated data)



*OPDs refers to Occupied Private Dwellings.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

The Quality of Life survey found that overall Central Coast residents were more likely to rate their health status as good to excellent if they lived in a separate house (76%) rather than an apartment (57%). The wellbeing of Central Coast residents who lived in a separate house was also significantly higher than residents who lived in flats, units or apartments (CCRF, 2008).

In 2006, 35.6% of households in Wyong Shire owned their dwelling, 31.7% were purchasing and 25.9% were renting, compared with 33.2%, 30.2% and 28.4% for NSW.

The high home ownership rates are significant given the Quality of Life survey found high home ownership to be significantly associated with higher levels of wellbeing. The finding that the majority of Central Coast residents were satisfied with their accommodation was also an indication of generally good quality of life in the Region (CCRF, 2008).



The largest changes in housing tenure categories for the households in Wyong Shire between 2001 and 2006 were:

- Being purchased (+3,823 households);
- Renting - Total (+1,910 households);
- Renting - Other (+1,707 households); and
- Owned (-2,643 households).

Source: Wyong Shire Community Profile.

The increase in private rental is likely a result of both an increase in investors entering the housing market and an increasing number of people continuing in rental accommodation as housing prices become less affordable. There has also been a shift from homes owned outright to being purchased.

Many residents stated that they had originally moved to the area because of the greater availability of 'more attractive and larger' houses/land than had been available in other areas, coupled with the close proximity of the lakes and beaches, and the lifestyle of the area compared to similar in Sydney.

Comments received from residents who had lived in the area for a period of time did indicate however, that they would not be able to move into the area if they had to purchase a property now, as house and land prices have increased, making the area much less affordable.

Many comments received from residents indicated this:

"Affordability – we were able to break into the housing market."

"We were able to build the new home we wanted in Woongarah, this wouldn't have been our budget down in Sydney."

"Land was cheaper to build. This has changed now."

"We moved here because the house was cheap! We couldn't afford to buy here now though."



Many residents were concerned at the lack of affordable housing on the Central Coast and were particularly concerned about how future generations would be able to afford to live in the places they have grown up in:

"The escalating costs of housing is a worry, especially when I think about my own family (adult children) and them trying to purchase or rent in an area they would like to live – they are being pushed out of these areas."

There was also concern regarding the impact of high mortgages and the stress of this to families and community life.

As the changing demographics of the Central Coast and especially the Wyong Shire have created more demand for housing choice, the level of housing affordability has steadily decreased (Between 2001 and 2005 there was a 69% increase in the Wyong Shire median house price). The current situation is that many households on very low, low and moderate incomes can only find accommodation that leaves them in significant levels of housing stress. With the extensive level of greenfield development in the Wyong Shire there has been no lack of supply of housing. The problem appears to be that the housing stock is not a good match for the current and future demographic profile of the Wyong Shire, particularly for the very low, low and moderate income section of the Shire population (*Promoting Choice: A Local Housing Strategy for Wyong Shire, 2008*).

Table 9.1 provides a simplistic snapshot of housing affordability, looking at the ratio of median household incomes and median mortgage repayments.

At the 2006 Census the median monthly loan repayment for housing in the Shire was \$1452 per month. This represents 43.6% of median household income. Since 2001 there has been a significant increase in the level of mortgage payments and an 8% increase in the median mortgage to income ratio. Wyong is one of the LGAs in the Sydney Statistical Division that has experienced the greatest decline in affordability.

In 2006 the median monthly rental payment for housing was \$200 per week, up from \$165 in 2001. The data indicates that there has been a slight improvement in the median rental to income ratio.



Table 9.1: Buyer Affordability

	Median Repayment 2001	Median Repayment 2006	As % of 2001 Income	As % of 2006 Income	% Point Change
Wyong	\$953	\$1,452	35.5	43.6	8.0
Gosford	\$1,083	\$1,517	33.5	37.1	3.7

Source: City Future Research Centre UNSW (2007).

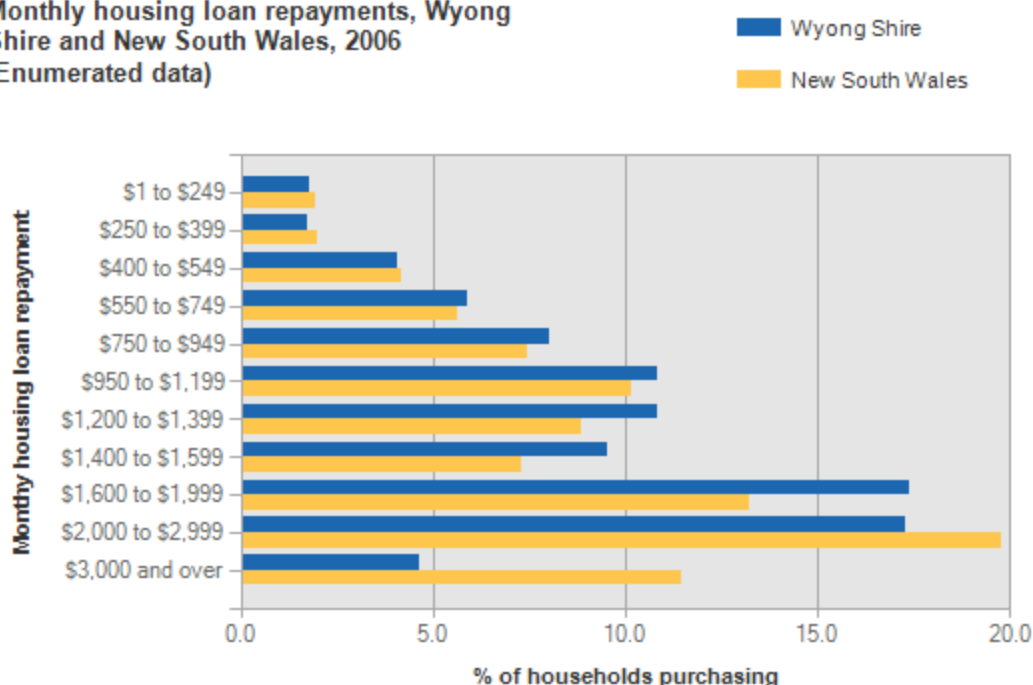
Table 9.2: Renter Affordability

	Median Rental 2001	Median Rental 2006	As % of 2001 Income	As % of 2006 Income	% Point Change
Wyong	\$165	\$200	26.7	26.0	-0.6
Gosford	\$180	\$220	24.1	23.3	-0.8

Source: City Future Research Centre UNSW (2007).

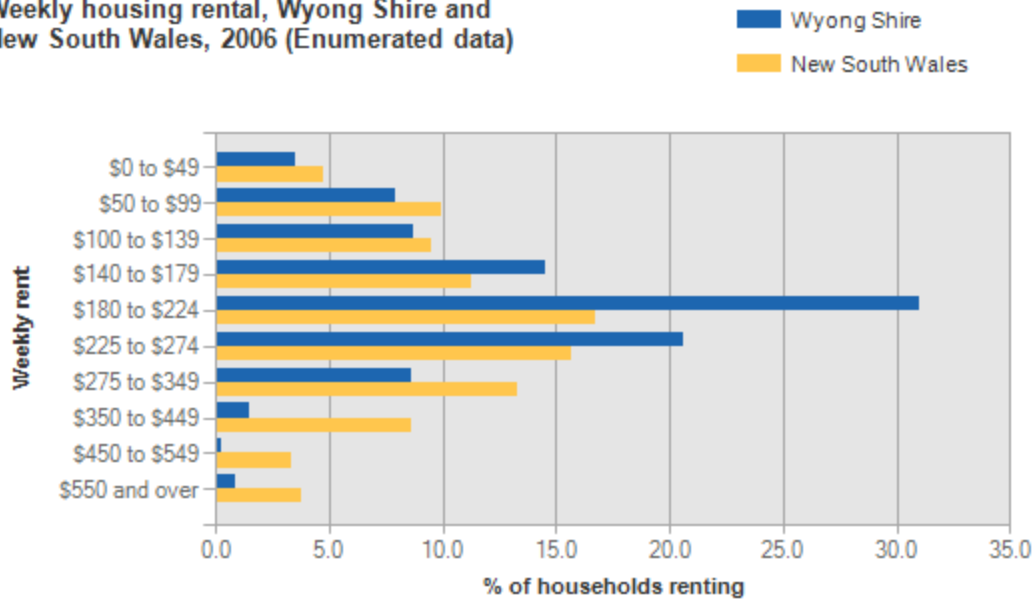
The fact that only 20% of the Shire population is able to afford a median priced house and not be in housing stress is an indication of a need for intervention. Having a significant number of the population in housing stress has implications beyond the people with the high housing costs. It will have negative impacts on the local economy, community life and the healthy functioning of all families (*Promoting Choice: A Local Housing Strategy for Wyong Shire, 2008*).

Monthly housing loan repayments, Wyong Shire and New South Wales, 2006
(Enumerated data)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

Weekly housing rental, Wyong Shire and New South Wales, 2006 (Enumerated data)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

Of note is not only the affordability of the housing but also its appropriateness. With a high number of the population aged over 55 along with increasing trends to smaller and lone person households it can be assumed there will be an increase in demand for 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings and a need for greater provision of housing that can accommodate people at different stages of life (*Promoting Choice: A Local Housing Strategy for Wyong Shire, 2008*).

There was significant concern amongst residents at the increased development of medium and higher density accommodation.

"We don't want to see higher rise."

Although there was an overall concern regarding medium and high density accommodation, many residents acknowledged that this type of housing is appropriate in certain areas, and people requiring different types of housing depending on their stage of life:

"We should be encouraging a range of accommodation options that reflect life stages e.g. medium density dwellings that are designed well."



"A variety of residential possibility should be developed in the Shire. The existing dwelling structure does not cater well to the existing and future demographics."

The development of high density housing in places like The Entrance was also mentioned by residents as a challenge that impacts on the sense of community, connections and linkages in that area.

"There is a lack of permanent residents here, therefore a lack of community connections and links with neighbours. The high rise buildings are mainly empty except in tourist times."

"It's really hard to know who are the permanent residents that live in the apartment blocks."

Did You Know?

Promoting Choice: A Local Housing Strategy for Wyong Shire

This Strategy is designed to protect, produce and promote housing choice and diversity.

The Strategy contains an analysis of the Central Coast housing market and considers what Council can do along with other levels of government, non-government organisations, the business sector and the wider community to deliver housing choice, affordability and diversity.

- **The Changing Nature of the Area**

Many people, although they love living in the Shire are increasingly worried that the area is changing and the small village type nature of the Shire is under threat:

"Right now it's very frightening: the future of the area is uncertain and under threat. It's not the way we want it to be for the future."

"It's not lost but it has changed."

"It was a small community – it still is, but it is under threat."



Residents repeatedly linked smaller village type communities to the existence and development of social linkages, connections and people knowing each other, looking out for one another and saying hello. It was the general feeling that with the increased development and population coming into communities that less and less community spirit and neighbourly feeling would be fostered.

Residents were agreeable to balanced development, that is a reasonable population growth in areas that were developed specifically for this purpose i.e. Warnervale.

Nearly one third of Central Coast residents in the Quality of Life survey stated that they were negatively affected by the level of development occurring in their local area (CCRF, 2008).

- **Planning Communities**

Many residents were concerned with the type of planning that has allowed development that is not user friendly, does not suit the area, is not practical or doesn't meet the needs of the local community.

Some examples of this include:

- Small and narrow streets in suburbs;
- Houses with no eaves; and
- No tree plantings in new suburbs;

"It's OK, but not what we hoped. On the plus side the children go to great schools and the mortgage is affordable. On the negative side we have to use cars to get anywhere to do anything. There are no facilities within safe walking or cycling distance for children or adults to go. The parks are terrible – no shade, on top of hill so is open and exposed. Sporting grounds are very few and often unable to be used and there are no local sporting activities other than rugby union. There are no bushland areas that can be accessed for bushwalking trails, picnics and other passive activities. Roads are in poor condition causing damage to cars. My husband commutes (by train) to Sydney as there are no jobs with the same level of pay to be found locally and I would catch public transport to my work in Gosford if it was easier to get to the train. It seems to be one struggle after another to get adequate services to the community.



The more I live here, the more I realise how inadequately planned the area is. Where is the town centre where people can go to shop, have lunch, be entertained that is close to home and easy to get to?"

There was a strong sense from residents in the focus groups that more action by Council in relation to decisions and actions is required. Residents expressed a sense of frustration that discussion and talking about planning for communities goes on and on and there is no action (for example Warnervale Town Centre).

"I want to see action, not another report."

"There are too many plans and not enough action."

Residents were also critical of the ongoing requests for their input and involvement in particular projects without feedback as to how their input was used. Some of the specific comments made in the consultations were:

"We are asked to provide input or give feedback on a certain project and we never hear again about that project or how the information was used. It's very frustrating."

- **Community Identity**

Many people expressed frustration that their individual suburbs do not have their own distinct identity. Residents felt that during the early stages of planning for a community, there should be some measures incorporated to create a distinct identity and feeling of that particular place.

People mentioned that this could be achieved simply by signage on the entry to an area, or more excitingly by public art projects and urban design measures.

"You drive right past our suburb and wouldn't even know where you are. There is not even a sign or indication that you are here."

"There should be better planning of communities to give them identity. Such assets as a central village green do much to provide communities with a central focus point."



Did You Know?**Manning Park Identity Project**

The Manning Park Working Party has been actively pursuing having its township "turn off" easily recognised. The feeling throughout the community has been that their town has suffered through its turn off being mistaken for a Delta Colliery entry point. Delta has worked in with the group to move its sign and Council's Community Artist, Landscape Architect and Community Development Worker have workshopped possibilities with the community. The work will be a sculptural piece comprising 7 steel poles of varying height with stainless steel attachments designed to give the appearance of a water flow. The stainless steel elements relate directly to the new Shire signs currently in design stage. In addition a mass planting of vegetation specific to the area is proposed. It will provide an innovative entry point for the suburb and be a catalyst to entice people to enter the suburb.

- **Central Coast and Wyong Shire Identity**

There was a strong feeling from residents that the Central Coast does not have a distinct identity of its own. The region is experiencing significant changes from its traditional role with the increasing population growth and the ongoing shifts in the character of the area.

Residents mentioned the need for the Central Coast to be recognised as a region in its own right, and be granted the commensurate services and infrastructure as separate to Northern Sydney and the Hunter.

In relation to Wyong Shire many people thought that Wyong Shire is left out of considerations for the Central Coast. People regularly discussed the focus of essential services and facilities as always being located in Gosford, for example the NRMA, NSW Premiers Department etc. People asked "*Why are these services in Gosford all the time?*"

"Embrace the Central Coast as a whole, rather than just Gosford City with Wyong Shire on the side as the poor relation."

- **Loss of the History of the Shire**

Residents who had lived in the area for a significant period of time expressed their concern that with the new development and new residents moving into the area, the history and character of the place is being lost.



"The valleys were once about produce and farming. As the land is being sub divided and more people move in, this traditional use of the land is being forgotten. It is a part of who we are and how we have gotten to where we are today. We really need to preserve this."

"There is a gathering of trees at the end of our street that was planted by the first pioneers to the area. This used to be common knowledge amongst residents here, but now hardly anyone would know about it. That makes me sad."

"We really should retain the heritage of the area, e.g. all the old buildings in Wyong such as the old Police station, court house, butter factory, Strathavon, etc."

What We Can Do

What Council Can Do:

The Natural Environment

Council's are required by the Local Government Act 1993 to ensure that development in their local area is ecologically sustainable. Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) means: "Using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased" (*National Strategy for ESD*).

The NSW Local Government Act, 1993 also requires that Councils "properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment in a manner that promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development" (*Section 8(1)*).

Local Council's are collectively one of the largest environmental managers in the country through:

- Maintenance of parks and bushland;
- Planning and Development;
- Activities as land developers and managers; and
- Education and raising awareness of environmental issues.

Council plays a significant role in the enhancement, protection, upgrading and maintenance of the natural environment.



Council's current and future role is:

- To minimise land degradation as a result of urban development, to limit the impact of coastal processes on the built and natural environment and to safeguard the environment through monitoring and mitigation;
- To preserve and plan for the waterways that characterise the Shire – the lakes, the beaches and their catchments for future generations;
- To plan for and ensure that land is set aside or restored to preserve the Shire's biodiversity;
- Maintain the health of residents and the environment by managing air pollution and minimising Council's contribution to carbon emissions through a suite of mitigation and adaption measures; and
- Plan for and mitigate the effects of climate change to residents.

The Built Environment

Council is the lead land use and development planning agency for the Shire and has to abide by a number of statutory provisions including the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, regulations and State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs).

Council's role in land use development and planning involves:

- Preparing statutory plans, e.g. Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) and Development Control Plans (DCPs) to ensure that development in the Shire achieves appropriate physical, environmental, social, economic and cultural outcomes;
- Assessing development applications and proposals against Council's and the NSW Governments planning controls; and
- Developing Section 94 Plans to enable Council to collect funds from developers for the establishment of community facilities such as community centres, parks, roads, etc.

Council also has a direct provision role in relation to a range of services and facilities to ensure that people in Wyong Shire have a vibrant public domain, built environment, range of housing choice and an improved quality of life. This role involves:



- Ensuring that infrastructure (water, sewer, social) keeps up with population growth;
- Ensuring that Section 94 funding is spent appropriately;
- Establishing and maintaining a range of community facilities such as community centres, parks, playgrounds and sportsfields;
- Implementing the Housing Choice Strategy to protect existing housing diversity and promote and produce new housing choice options, including affordable housing; and
- Implementation of the Public Art Policy.

What Other Organisations Can Do:

- Educate the community about the environment.
- Work in partnership with Council and others to protect and enhance the natural environment.
- Work in partnership with Council and others to assist in planning balanced development with adequate services, facilities and infrastructure.

What the Community Can Do:

- Establish and support Environmental Care groups.
- Start a community garden.
- Plan a walking tour of a local historic area.
- Clean up a local park or nature reserve.
- Lobby and advocate for adequate services, facilities and infrastructure.

What I Can Do:

- Participate in 'Clean up Australia Day'.
- Tread lightly – reduce your use of water, energy and materials.
- Pick up a piece of garbage every day.
- Join an environmental care group.
- Recycle.
- Use water wisely.
- Switch to green power.
- Heat and cool your home less.
- Turn off standby power.
- Light efficiently.



- Leave the car at home.
- Plant a tree.
- Get to know the history of the place you live.
- Get involved in a local suburb identity project.



Habitat Action Plan

What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
The Natural Environment					
Preservation of the Lakes, Beaches and Bushland	Implement the Estuary Management Plan to protect and restore Wyong Shire's lakes and waterways	According to the EMP 5 year implementation plan.	Estuary Management Unit	Community Groups, Community Members.	Within existing, State and Federal Government Grants
	Implement environmental education campaigns to increase community awareness to institute behavioural change, in particular the Estuary Education and Communication Strategy.	Years 1 - 5	Community Education Team, Community Development, Natural Resources Unit	Community Groups, Community Members.	Estuary & Communication Strategy.
	Implement the Tuggerah Lakes Saltmarsh Rehabilitation Strategy to restore salt marsh and fringing vegetation around the lake's foreshore.	According to the EMP 5 year implementation plan	Estuary Management Unit	Community Groups, community Members	Within existing
	Continue the Beachwatch programme to monitor swimming beaches for water quality.	Years 1 - 5	Regulation & Compliance, Natural Resources	-	Within existing
	Support the development of regional biodiversity and conservation plans to identify areas of high conservation value.	Years 1 & 2 2008/09 & 2009/10	Natural Resources	DECC, Department of Planning, Catchment Management Authority	NSW Government
	Implement measures to protect the Shire's rich diversity of native fauna and vegetation communities.	Years 1 - 5	Natural Resources Open Space & Recreation Unit,	Community Groups, Community Members	Within existing & Grant funding.
Community Education of Environmental Issues	Implement climate change programmes to raise awareness and community empowerment through personal and collective adaptation strategies.	Years 2, 3, 4 & ongoing	Natural Resources Unit, Community Development, Community Education Team.	Community Groups, Community Members	\$100K (General revenue)
	Implement sustainability programmes for Council and the community to increase awareness about sustainable living.	Years 2, 3, 4 & ongoing	Natural Resources Unit, Community Development, Community Education Team Unit.	Community Groups, Community Members	\$50K (General revenue)



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
	Investigate the activation of the Old Dairy Site as a Community greening and education centre.	Year 3 2010/11	Community Education Team , Community Development	State Government Local Community Community Groups DET	Within existing
	Continue to develop and implement environmental education programmes and activities, e.g. Environmental Tours Little Green Steps, Sustainability Street, Watertight, Blue Planet Website.	Years 1 - 5	Community Education Team , Community Development, Natural Resources Unit	Environmental Groups, Schools, NGO's Community Members	Within existing
Adequate water & water supply	Implement the WaterPlan 2050 to protect and secure our water supply for the future.	45 years (According to WaterPlan 2050)	Shire Services	Gosford City Council	WSC & GCC
	Continue to develop and implement water education programmes in preschools, primary schools and high schools	Ongoing	Community Education Team , Natural Resources Unit, Communications Unit, Library Services	Childcare Centres, Schools, DET.	Joint Water Authority.
Active and Supported Environmental Care Groups	Work in partnership with local environmental groups to support and enhance programmes e.g. Wycare, Landcare, Dune Care, Friends of the Estuary to ensure they are adequately resourced.	Years 1 - 5	Natural Resources Unit , Community Education Team, Open Space & Recreation	Local Environmental Groups	Within existing and grant funding



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
The Built Environment					
Infrastructure keeping up with population growth	Continue to advocate to the State Government the importance of Council collecting Section 94 funding to provide community infrastructure such as community centres, sports fields, parks, playgrounds and sports facilities.	Current & Year 1	Future Planning	State Government Agencies, Human Services Planning Team	Within existing
	Develop the Warnervale Town Centre with emphasis on integrating community facilities, retail, recreation, culture and transport to provide appropriate infrastructure for the growing population of Warnervale and the northern parts of Wyong Shire.	Current & Years 1- 5 (Subject to development of the WTC)	Future Planning	Human Services Planning Team	Within existing
	Continue to advocate to State and Federal Government for adequate social infrastructure (including recurrent funding) to meet the needs of the existing and future population.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Future Planning	NSW Premiers Department, State Government Agencies, NGO's, Community	Within existing
	Facilitate and encourage collaborative approaches to planning and service provision to maximise efficient and effective service delivery.	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning	NSW Premiers Department, State Government Agencies, NGO's, Community	Within existing
Housing Choice	Implement Promoting Choice: A Local Housing Strategy for Wyong	Current & Years 1 - 5	Future Planning. Development Assessment, Planning Policy & Legal, Community Development	Residential Parks Association, Business Sector, Community/Human Services sector, State Government, Community, Senior's Council	Within existing
Well planned communities	Utilise best practice planning approaches in the planning and design of new communities. e.g. Planning cities for children, active communities, healthy communities	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning	NSCCAHS, DOP, Office of Children & Young people	Within existing
A Sense of Identity	Enhance main entrance ways and gateways to the Shire to reflect the culture and lifestyle of Wyong.	Years 1 - 5	Open Space and Recreation, Future Planning	Community Groups & Community Members	\$ Required



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
	Enhance the entries to individual suburbs to reflect the history and character unique to each individual community.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development , Future Planning, Shire Services	Community Groups & Community Members	\$5K per project
	Continue to advocate and lobby for the Central Coast to be recognised as a region in its own right including specific services to the Central Coast such as health, education etc.	Years 1 - 5	Economic and Corporate Planning, Business Development , Future Planning	Business Central Coast, Gosford City Council, DOH, DET	Within existing
	Reflect and document the history, heritage and culture of the Shire.	Year 4 2011/12	Future Planning , Community Development.	Wyong Family History Group, Local community	Within existing







communication information and participation



Social Outcome

A 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.



Importance to Quality of Life

The theme of 'Council, Communication, Information, Participation and Involvement' 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 of each other.

Open, communicative, accountable, efficient, effective and participatory local government is an essential component in building a strong, healthy and well connected community.

Information needs to be easily accessible to all residents. People need to know where to seek information and be provided with clear, simple, easy to read (in plain English) information at highly utilised key points in local communities.

Residents should be able to actively participate in their communities and society and therefore achieve civic understanding. To do this, people, require knowledge of civic institutions, political and legal systems and processes and the history that underpins them. They need to understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and democratic values and principles such as democratic decision making, representative and accountable government, freedom of speech, equality before the law, social justice and equality (*Victorian Essential Learning: Civics and Citizenship 2008*).

There has been a recent world wide shift in local government, in response to increasing pressures, to view residents only as customers, not as residents who should be involved and connected to the democratic process:

Social Indicators

% of household with an internet connection.

Perceived adequacy of opportunities to participate in local planning.



"Local governments all across the world are facing similar dilemmas: Their resources are not keeping up with the increasingly complex social issues, and the federal and state governments are devolving more responsibilities than money. The common response to this has been to 'reinvent' government to be more like a business with a greater emphasis on efficiency and customer service. Although it may be true that local government needs to improve customer service, there is a danger inherent in treating citizens as customers. To the extent that government treats citizens only as customers, residents think of themselves as only taxpayers and feel that much more alienated from their local government."

Source: Jim Diers, 2004: *Neighbour Power: Building Community the Seattle Way*.

It is extremely important to value and actively pursue the contributions that the community can make to the future directions of the Shire:

"There are other things that communities can do better than government can. Community members have local knowledge and can provide a local perspective. At the same time, they think more holistically than government departments that tend to specialise in specific functions. The community is often more innovative than the local government and can constitute a powerful force for change."

Source: Jim Diers, 2004: *Neighbour Power: Building Community the Seattle Way*.

Current Context

Council is one of the major sources of community information. A key issue for the community during the consultations was knowing when, how and where to access information. Often, residents indicated that as a new resident, the first port of call to find out about their local community would be Council.

During the consultations, residents raised a number of issues regarding information provision, communication between Council and the community, consultation, participation, and Council as an organisation that values community development as having a key role in developing relationships and involving residents.

Residents often described a lack of knowledge or difficulty in establishing a link and connection with Council and expressed their frustration, lack of understanding and intimidation at the complicated processes and legalities associated with Council run projects, decision making and a significant confusion at the roles and responsibilities of residents and Council.

Residents felt that Council should facilitate the practice of developing citizenship skills, involvement and leadership, the exploration and development of values and dispositions to support citizenship and the empowerment of informed decision making.

- **Information Provision**

The provision of information to the community was regularly discussed by residents in the consultation process. Residents felt that Council has an extremely important role to play in the dissemination of information relating to both Council activities and wider community activities. People regard Council as the catalyst or first point of call for many people seeking information about their community (especially new residents).

People regarded some of the current systems of information provision as good, such as the Wyong Shire Council page in the local papers, but also described the things that make it hard for people to access information from Council. Some of these include:

- Information not available in different languages other than English;
- Not all residents have access to the internet;
- Council website is not easy to negotiate;
- There is a lack of up to date information on Council's website; and
- The shift from hard copy to electronic – not everyone has a computer connected to the internet, and if they do, they often cannot access large documents.

It is becoming widely accepted that broadband internet access is an essential requirement to participate in the "new information age" and households with no or only dial up internet service are increasingly left behind in the information age.

In 2006, 52.6% of households in the Shire were connected to the internet. 30.8% had broadband connectivity and 21.3% had a dial-up connection. 41.1% of households were not connected to the internet.



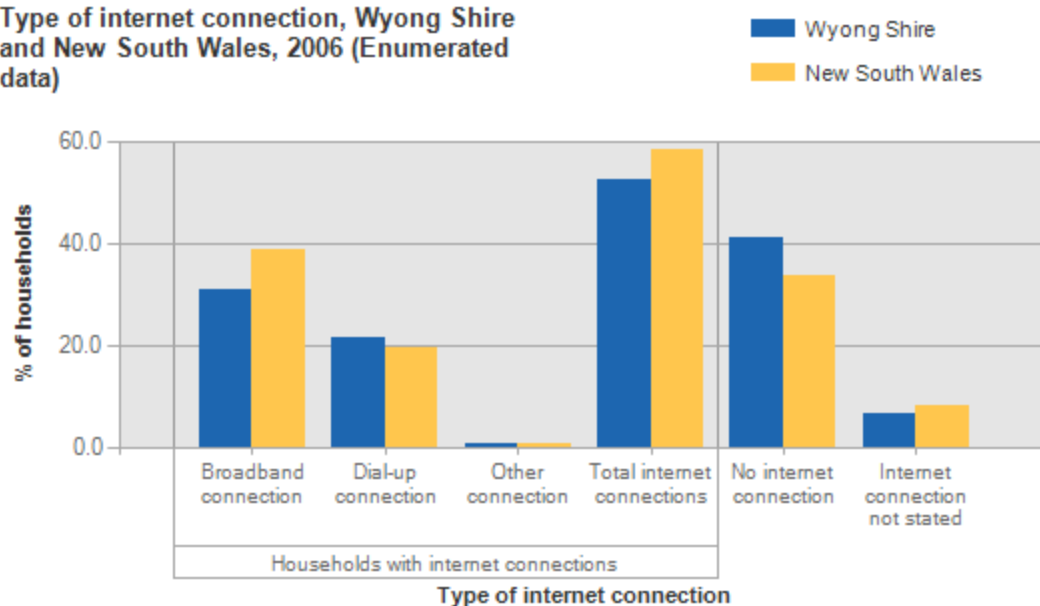
Analysis of the type of internet connection of households in comparison to NSW shows that there was a larger proportion of households with either no internet connection or a dial up connection, but a smaller proportion of households with broadband connectivity. Wyong has the lowest proportion of households with internet connection of all LGAs in the Sydney Statistical Division.

Table 10.1: Type of Internet Connection

	Number	%	NSW %
Broadband Connection	16,639	30.8	38.5
Dial-Up Connection	11,525	21.3	19.3
Other Connection	265	0.5	0.6
Total Internet Connections	28,429	52.6	58.4
No Internet Connection	22,230	41.1	33.7
Internet Connection Not Stated	3,435	6.4	7.9
Total Households	54,094	100.0	100.0

Source: ABS Census, 2006 (Wyong Shire Community Profile – .id Consulting).

Type of internet connection, Wyong Shire and New South Wales, 2006 (Enumerated data)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

By far the most commonly described method of information dissemination that would be of benefit to residents is the provision of hard copy information rather than just electronic (email) or internet based.



"We need hard copies of the community directories, new resident's kits and other relevant information – older people and many others in the Shire don't always have access to computers."

"As a new resident I would rather have access to a quick and easy paper information brochure that sticks on the fridge, rather than logging onto the computer and accessing the internet which takes ages."

Other ways that residents felt they could be better informed and information could be better distributed are as follows:

- Help to ensure that the local papers are distributed to all suburbs in the Shire: Currently there is no local paper delivery in some suburbs;
- Erect Council noticeboards in suburbs and at transport interchanges (e.g. actually on train platforms);
- Utilise community publications and newsletters more effectively;
- Ensure that people from a CALD community are catered to with language links on Council's website, interpreter services, welcome kits in other languages etc; and
- Ensure that information in publications and on Council's website is as up to date as possible.

Although the Shire has a low proportion of people connected to the internet, it is still important for Council to keep up to date with current and relevant trends of internet usage and seek alternative and innovative ways for residents to access information technology e.g. telecommuting centres, wifi access, etc.

• **Wyong Shire Council – Communication with the Community**

Another of the most common themes to emerge from the consultations was communication between Council and the Community. Regular communication from Council to the Community was raised as extremely important to residents. Many residents expressed that they felt Council is not approachable, is not there for the community, does not listen and does not communicate well with them about local issues.

"Council gets too insular sometimes and doesn't seem to think that it is there for the local community."



"Listen to the community – then Council will get a better understanding of a problem and how to fix a problem."

"It's important for Council to talk to the community – but listen to us too!!"

"There should be better communication regarding development and issues in the local area."

Residents indicated that often they were left with no clue as to what is happening in their community and that Council "goes quiet" on certain issues:

"If Council doesn't talk to the Community, then the community makes up the story – and there are lots of stories around about what's actually happening."

Residents expressed a desire for Council to be open, honest and transparent and communicate with residents at all stages of a project, even if it is not going well:

"Communication must happen the whole way along about certain projects, even if it's not all good news – we should be able to know what's going on."

People continually expressed the need for Council (Councillors and Council Officers) to keep communicating and made a number of suggestions for the best way to do this. Suggestions included:

"Council needs to be user friendly to multi-cultural residents, for example, language links on Council's website, interpreter service, welcome kits in other languages etc."

"Council could be more responsive with requests and inquiries."

"Have Council days out in the community – not just for events."

"Develop community notice boards in lots of different areas so that are kept up to date."

"Keep putting articles in paper/radio/community newspapers/newsletters."

"Elected Councillors need to communicate with the community and be more present in the community."



"Promote Council as an organisation that is involved in community development not just roads, rates and rubbish."

"Meet with the people on a regular basis."

Residents regularly mentioned that different Council departments do not seem to communicate with each other:

"There needs to be better communication within Council and across Council departments."

Residents on the whole thought that all Council officers and Councillors should be more visible, approachable and positive in the community (rather than just in the Council chambers or in enforcement type roles) and enable positive and strong relationships with the community to be developed.

- **Consultation**

Residents in the consultations were very keen and enthusiastic to be involved, and have many valid comments regarding the opportunities and challenges that living in the Shire presents. The community has a stake in the future planning for the Shire and they naturally have an interest in any plans for the future of the area they live.

They were very keen to see ongoing community consultation (in the form of the community plan consultations, i.e. conversations) implemented across all levels and sections of Council. Residents felt that there should be ongoing regular conversations between the Community and Council about living in the Shire:

"Continue with these community consultations."

"Keep talking to residents and seeking their opinions."

"Individual conversations are great – this is a good way of going about it."

*"This current process of community consultations **is** an important one."*



"Conversations are a good start – to get an understanding of the depth and breadth of what the people think."

"It's about valuing what people have to say."

There was discussion from residents that they felt that some Council consultations were token, and rather for information purposes than truly asking for the opinion of the community. This was further emphasised by the feeling that they don't see their input reflected in the plans and projects that are developed:

"It's important for communities to see their opinions/thoughts/inputs reflected in action."

"Action followed up from consultations with communication."

"Communication from Council to the community – hearing back regarding the various consultations we are involved in."

- **Participation**

Residents highlighted their desire to be more involved in the decision making processes of Council, in a participatory way rather than a tokenistic way. People were keen to be actively involved with Council, and felt that they have something positive to offer in creating Wyong Shire as a good place to live, and working together for the common good of all residents.

Residents were concerned that Council thought of them as a hindrance to certain processes rather than positively contributing members of the community:

"Wyong Council should be engaging people who live in the place to be involved in the community and local government."

"Simple solutions to simple problems – residents are the experts and will often know the simple easy solutions to local problems rather than having a huge State and Local Government approach to everything."

"We want to be involved, not just token involvement. We want to help make the decisions."



Jim Diers, in his book 'Neighbour Power: Building Community the Seattle Way' states:

"I am convinced that people still yearn for a sense of community and want to contribute to the greater good. They also want a voice in their government."

Around 34% of Wyong Shire residents in the Quality of Life Survey agreed that there were adequate opportunities to be involved in the planning for the population and provision of services. Residents who did not agree (48%) that there were adequate opportunities to be involved cited insufficient information about opportunities and the fact that government doesn't really take any notice. Those residents who felt that the opportunities to become involved were adequate were likely to have higher wellbeing scores (CCRF, 2008).

- **"Community" as a Key Council Priority**

Residents in a number of consultations highlighted the importance of Council as an organisation that is involved and committed to people and improving the quality of life of residents. Many residents felt that the focus of Council is on roads, water and building things rather than really connecting and linking with people:

"The focus of Council should be as an organisation that is dedicated to, and involved in Community Development not just roads rates and rubbish."

It is clear from resident's responses to the questions and the way in which the themes emerged, that establishing networks, connecting and linking with people and being active and involved is one of the most important elements for people to feel good about themselves and where they live.

People also emphasised the importance of Council viewing the community as partners and contributors rather than customers or consumers. Residents felt that they have lots of assets and strengths that could really benefit Council and working together would have the best outcome for local communities.

"Council and the community should work in partnership to achieve great things for the future."



What We Can Do

What Council Can Do:

Local government is recognised as the closest level of government to the community. Councils' therefore have a key role in working together with the community to respond to local issues, challenges and aspirations of residents.

Council is a significant provider and producer of community information. Council currently provides information through a range of mediums such as media articles, brochures, directories, community noticeboards etc.

Council provides access to information through the Wyong Shire Council website. The site provides 24 hour, 7 day access to Council information including business papers and an online payment facility. Community Directories, Council Notices and Job vacancies are also available on the website.

Council also provides a wide range of information services through its branch libraries. Libraries are located at Bateau Bay, The Entrance, Toukley, Lake Haven and Tuggerah Information Centre at Westfield Tuggerah.

Council provides information relevant to the Shire and the Central Coast Region to government, business, community organisations and local residents. Council has a role in informing these groups about key social trends and issues, demographic information and social indicators, providing information on services available to the community and what's happening in the local community, funding programmes, as well as Council's activities.

Not only does Council have a role as a provider of information, but it has an extremely important role in consulting and actively involving residents in the processes and decisions of Council.

Community consultation is the key mechanism for the identification of local values and local needs. Good community consultation is able to:

- Gain valuable and unique perspectives from the local community;
- Ensure that services, facilities, programmes, activities and decision making are more relevant and appropriate;



- Enable people to have a say, develop new skills and gain an increased sense of connection to the community;
- Empower people to have their opinions sought and recognised as valid; and
- Focus on Quality of Life rather than satisfaction, e.g. Hearing the stories of local people living in the community – what is it like to live in Wyong Shire, rather than quantifying or rating their satisfaction with Council services.

Council's Role could be further enhanced by:

- Developing a strategy for community engagement to ensure consistency of approaches across Council;
- Enhancing the Wyong Shire Council website to be more user and community friendly; and
- Ensuring provision of information is in plain English and multi lingual (where necessary).

What Other Organisations Can Do:

- Provide up to date appropriate, relevant information to the community.
- Engage the community in planning and service provision.
- Work in partnership with Council and the Community.
- Advocate and involve all groups in the planning and provision of services.

What the Community Can Do:

- Form action groups and committees.
- Create a local newsletter/newspaper.
- Take action on local issues as a group.
- Lobby government and others regarding community concerns.

What I Can Do:

- Write letters.
- Participate in advisory and action groups e.g. Precinct Committees, Progress Associations.
- Keeping up to date about what's going on in the area by reading papers, checking the website etc.
- Vote in elections.
- Write a letter to the local newsletter about an issue, concern or local opportunity.
- Take an interest in local government issues – observe Council meetings.
- Answer surveys when asked.
- Get involved with activities and projects that have involvement of the community.
- Get to know your local politicians.
- Provide input to Council about living in Wyong Shire.
- Provide feedback to Council about the appropriateness of information.
- Talk to your local Council and Councillors about things that concern you.



Communication and Information Action Plan

What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
An engaged Community	Develop a Community Engagement Strategy for Council to provide staff with best practice models of community engagement and ensure consistency of approaches.	Year 3 2010/11	Future Planning. Community Development & Communications Unit.	Target Groups, Young People, CALD Community, PWD, ATSI etc	Within existing
An informed community	Enhance the Wyong Shire Council website, particularly the Community Development and Social Planning section of Council's website to make them interactive and user friendly and more responsive to the community.	Year 2 2009/10	Communications Unit, Community Development & Future Planning.	-	Within Existing
	Ensure that all council produced directories are in plain English, relevant and up to date with accurate helpful information.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development, Communications Unit, Libraries.	Local Community Community Groups, NGO's	Within existing
	Review the Community Services Directory and the Central Coast Families website to ensure a usable accessible resource for families in the Shire.	Year 1	Community Development	Local Community Community Groups, NGO's	Within existing
	Provide hard copies as well as electronic versions of information, brochures, welcome kits etc.	Years 2 - 5	Community Development	-	\$2.5K per year
	Install community noticeboards in various locations across the Shire.	Years 2,3,4.	Community Development	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	\$5K per year
	Better utilise internet (Facebook, YouTube, MySpace), radio, TV and local newsletters in the providing of information to the community.	Years 1 - 5	Communications Unit, Community Development	-	Within existing
A technologically connected community	Explore innovative options for residents to access Information Technology, e.g. Wi fi sites, telecommuting etc.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development, Communications Unit, Future Planning, IT Section, Library Services		Within existing



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of other sections	Community Partners	Resources
Up to date information to support planning and decision making	Continue to provide and maintain comprehensive data sets on population and demographic trends to guide future policies and planning e.g. on line Community Profile, Population and Household Forecasts	Current & Years 1 – 5 2012/13 update based on 2011 Census Data	Future Planning	-	\$10K per year to maintain profile and forecasts. \$60,000K in 2012/13 to update profile and forecasts.
	Undertake further analysis of the Quality of Life survey data as a sub area level.	Year 1 2008/09	Future Planning	-	\$5K (Funding allocated in 08/09 management plan)
	Continue to monitor and measure Quality of Life of Wyong Shire residents through longitudinal surveys conducted every four years.	Year 4 2011/12	Future Planning	Local community	\$80K
An improved understanding of Council's role and function	Establish an annual Welcome to Wyong event for Council and community organisations and groups to promote and raise awareness of their roles and functions.	Year 3 2010/11 & ongoing.	Events Co-ordinator	Local community Community groups, NGO's	\$10K per year
	Promote facilities, programmes and activities undertaken by Council to inform residents about what's on and available in the Shire.	Years 1 - 5	Communications Unit, Whole of Council	NGO's, Community Groups, Community members	Within existing
	Investigate providing a Civics and Citizenship Programme to de stigmatise the role of Local Government in the school environment	Commencing Year 2 2009/10 & ongoing	Community Development, Community Education Unit	DET, Schools, Education Providers	\$5K per year
Promotion of the positive aspects of living in the Shire	Develop a publication of local people and their stories which builds on the Community Plan consultation phase	Year 2 2009/10	Community Development, Future Planning	Community members involved in community plan consultations	\$7.5K
	Establish a weekly 'Out and about photo gallery' – visual vox pop gallery.	Commencing Year 2 2009/10 & ongoing	Communications Unit, Community Development.	Community members. Tourists etc.	\$2K per year.







community safety

Social Outcome

A community which enables all its residents to feel safe.



Importance to Quality of Life

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, the use of community facilities and public spaces for recreation and entertainment, and the use of public transport.

Community safety can be defined as a state of mind as well as a real situation people find themselves in. It's a component of a person's health and wellbeing, in that a person cannot feel completely well if their safety is threatened and that feeling unsafe can affect a person's long term wellbeing. It is based on perceptions of surroundings as much as experiences within those surroundings. Safety is felt when a person can live without fear of intentional or unintentional injury. It is influenced by the appearance and attractiveness of local areas, by the presence of crime or threatening behaviours, by the standard of maintenance and upkeep of a local area and by the information a person gathers from sources such as the media, word of mouth reports and personal experiences.

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.

Social Indicator

Crime rates.

Perceptions of Crime/Safety in neighbourhood.

% of residents who feel safe walking in their local area both in the day and night.



Safe communities can be encouraged through a combination of physical and social characteristics, through the promotion of initiatives that stimulate community life and create “civilising” environments. Urban design and planning processes should seek to maximise “natural” areas of congregation, patterns of use and public life.

The creation of vital urban spaces and points of interest in public places where people can interact on a regular basis, can facilitate informal interaction to bring diverse members of the community together in a way which generates tolerance, awareness, identity, a sense of belonging and mutual respect.

Did You Know?

Crime Prevention

Crime prevention tries to address crime problems at their source, rather than waiting for offenders to reach the criminal justice system. It is an attempt to stop crime or anti-social behaviour before it occurs.

Crime prevention measures can be broken down into two broad categories: those which focus on social prevention and those which stress situational prevention.

Social prevention approaches are usually centred on the underlying causes of crime. Strategies include school based activities, community development programmes, anti-violence campaigns. The emphasis is on maximising the health and well-being of all members of the community and enhancing their opportunities to partake in community life as fully as possible. The community plays an important role in this process.

Situational prevention approaches focus on modifications of the physical environment in some way through management and design initiatives. The basic assumption is that crime is opportunistic and can be controlled by modification of the physical environment and/or by generating a greater presence of people in particular areas.

To address the issue of community safety a combination of approaches is needed.



Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) seeks to influence the design of buildings and places by:

- Increasing the perception of risk to criminals by increasing the possibility of detection, challenge and capture;
- Increasing the effort required to commit crime by increasing the time, energy or resources that need to be expended;
- Reducing the potential rewards of crime by minimising, removing or concealing “crime benefits”; and
- Removing conditions that create confusion about required norms of behaviour.

Good urban design should take into account physical characteristics that promote safe access and use of public space and feelings of safety. CPTED principles include provision of:

- Carefully designed streetscapes;
- Well used corridors of activity that feel safer for everyone concerned;
- Open plan areas that are in clear view of the general public;
- Good footpaths with provision of regular rest stops;
- Disability/physical access into and within all public and commercial premises and venues;
- Combination (English/Community languages, where appropriate/Braille);
- Hearing loops in all public meeting venues;
- Adequate street lighting;
- Locating bus stops near places of activity for better surveillance; and
- Using vandal proof materials and ensuring speedy repair and replacement of damaged items.

Social characteristics that encourage safe communities include:

- Early intervention programmes that facilitate feelings of belonging and community connectedness;
- Community development activities that facilitate the emergence of social trust, civic engagement fostering norms of generalised reciprocity, i.e. the willingness of people to help each other; and
- Encouraging Safety House, Neighbourhood Watch and resident action groups and educating the community to look after each other.



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

Current Situation

- **Incidence of Crime**

Crime rates for the Shire indicate that the rate of crime overall is below the State average. However, the Shire has a higher rate of incidence per 100,000 compared with the State average for a number of criminal activities. These include domestic violence related assault, sexual assault, steal from dwelling and malicious damage to property.

The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics figures show that crimes in 16 out of the 17 major categories have remained stable or recorded falls in the last year.

Between 2003 and 2007 Wyong Shire experienced an increase in recorded crime incidents in the areas of non domestic violence related assault. There was a downward trend in incidents of break and enter non dwelling, motor vehicle theft, steal from retail store, steal from dwelling and steal from person. Remaining stable were the crimes of assault domestic violence related, steal from a motor vehicle, fraud and malicious damage to property.



Table 11.1: Crime Statistics Wyong Local Government Area 2003 - 2007

Offence Category	2007 Total	Rate per 100,000 Population	2007 NSW Rate per 100,000 Population	Annual Percentage Change 2006 - 2007	Average Annual Percentage Change 2003 - 2007
Murder*	4	2.8	1.2	N.A.	N.A.
Assault - Domestic Violence Related	841	582.8	401.3	Stable	Stable
Assault - Non-Domestic Violence Related	1,105	765.8	671.4	Stable	Up by 5.8%
Sexual Assault	103	71.4	58.8	Stable	Stable
Indecent Assault, Act of Indecency and Other Sexual Offences	69	47.8	48.9	Down by 39.1%	Stable
Robbery Without a Weapon	42	29.1	71.1	Stable	Stable
Robbery With a Firearm	1	0.7	8.0	N.A.	N.A.
Robbery With a Weapon Not a Firearm	14	9.7	34.2	N.A.	N.A.
Break and Enter - Dwelling	990	686.1	695.7	Down by 34.2%	Stable
Break and Enter - Non-Dwelling	434	300.8	356.3	Stable	Down by 12.1%
Motor Vehicle Theft	557	386	393.6	Down by 21.3%	Down by 8.7%
Steal from Motor Vehicle	1,131	783.6	909.4	Stable	Stable
Steal from Retail Store	405	280.7	267.8	Stable	Stable
Steal from Dwelling	514	356.2	336.0	Up by 14.1%	Down by 6.2%
Steal from Person	95	65.8	174.3	Stable	Down by 10.01%
Fraud	463	320.9	479.0	Stable	Stable
Malicious Damage to Property	3,034	2,102.6	1,572.2	Stable	Stable

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 2008.

Note: This table shows the results of statistical tests for a significant upward or downward monthly trend in the number of criminal incidents * recorded over 2 years and 5 years respectively, for selected offence categories. Where the trend is significant, the annual percentage change in the number of incidents is shown.

"N.A." indicates that the number of incidents recorded was too small for a reliable trend test to be performed.

For murder, the trend test is applied to the monthly number of recorded victims.

In 2006 there were 1006 Apprehended Violence Orders (AVO's) issued in relation to Domestic Violence on the Central Coast and a further 247 orders issued in relation to personal violence.

The rate of AVO's on the Central Coast, 326.9 per 100,000 people is higher than the NSW rate of 289.5 per 100,000 people.



Table 11.2 shows the number and rate of AVO's granted between 2002 and 2006.

Table 11.2: Domestic AVO's Granted 2002 - 2006

	2006		2005		2004		2003		2002	
	No	Rate	No	Rate	No	Rate	No	Rate	No	Rate
Central Coast	1,006	326.9	1,021	332.9	1,142	374.9	999	329.2	852	283.6
NSW		289.5		287.4		297.3		303.5		285.0

Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

In 2002, the rate of Domestic AVO's on the Central Coast was marginally lower than the NSW rate. Over the last five years there has been an increase in both the numbers of AVO's issued and the rate per 100,000 people on the Central Coast.

Did You Know?

Steps to Respect Campaign

The Steps to Respect Campaign to reject violence abuse and neglect (VAN) is an initiative of the Central Coast, NSW.

The campaign aims to:

- Raise community awareness of the extent of violence, abuse and neglect;
- Promote the ideal of a non-violent future for our region;
- Create a sense of community ownership of a range of strategies and encourage action; and
- And to work together in developing local solutions.

'Steps To Respect' is a prevention initiative intending to influence the community's tolerance of violence, abuse and neglect (VAN) such as *domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment, child abuse and neglect, bullying and violence against young people.

Educational institutions, businesses, the media and sporting bodies are major points of intersection with the community who will be supported and assisted to adopt a range of violence prevention strategies and actions.



Did You Know?**Central Coast Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme**

The Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme is a special service that can help women get an ADVO (Apprehended Domestic Violence Order). Support workers at the Scheme will:

- Explain about AVO's and stopping domestic violence.
- Tell you what will happen in court.
- Go with you to court to support you.
- Tell you about other organisations that can help you.

Women can contact the Scheme prior to going to court or ask Local Court staff to direct them to a Scheme worker at the court on the day the matter is listed.

- **Perception of Safety**

Perceptions of safety are important in gauging how secure or safe the community feels and how this impacts their daily life. Fear prevents people from participating in the life of their community. Perceptions of safety can be formed from actual experience of crime, recounted experiences of family and friends and from media reports.

People in the consultations stated that they generally feel that Wyong Shire is a safe place to live. Residents expressed that they feel quite safe in their local areas although many people stated that they feel safer during the day rather than at night.

This finding is supported by the Quality of Life research. The majority of Wyong residents (94%) felt either safe or very safe walking alone in their local area during the day, but the figure dropped to 44% for walking alone at night. The decline was less marked for residents feeling safe in their home during the day (98%) and feeling safe in their home alone at night (91%). Nearly 78% of residents indicated that they felt their neighbourhood was safe or very safe for children. Residents who had greater feelings of safety were likely to have higher levels of wellbeing (CCRF, 2008).



Residents were asked about their perception of crime in their neighbourhood. 56% of Wyong residents thought that crime or people creating a public nuisance were problems in their neighbourhood. Wyong residents were more likely than Gosford residents to think that crime was a problem in their neighbourhood. Residents of the Central Coast had lesser feelings of safety than residents sampled in the State, with a higher proportion of residents perceiving that crime and public nuisance were problems in their neighbourhood (CCRF, 2008).

There was a strong feeling from consultation residents that the area is not as safe as it used to be, and that with the growing population, a range of social challenges are presented.

"It was a nice little community before – but with all the growth it has become not as nice. Safety is an issue – we used to feel safe walking at night, but now wouldn't walk without someone else."

Many residents mentioned the lack of appropriate lighting along footpaths and cycleways, in recreation areas, along many roads and at train stations which contribute to resident's feelings of not being safe.

Other issues that people were worried about in relation to community safety were:

- Feeling that crime is increasing (perceptions of crime);
- Anti Social Behaviour (especially relating to alcohol);
- Young people with nothing to do;
- Vandalism and Graffiti;
- Not enough police presence;
- Social infrastructure to keep up with population growth; and
- Road Safety.

Some residents discussed their own experience of crime, while other talked about their feelings or perceptions that things were worse, for example, that the area is not the same as it used to be, that young people are much scarier that they used to be.

Many people from the community consultations who worry about crime, and who have a perception that crime is on the increase talked about their experience of crime as sometimes their own experience, and more often as a knowledge of another's experience.



Interestingly, people's responses often related to where they lived previously or how long they had lived in the Shire as to how safe they feel living in their community.

For a majority of people who moved to Wyong Shire from Sydney, they mostly described the area as very safe, that they would walk around the area at night and feel secure for their kids to play outside of their own backyards.

On the other hand, people who have lived in the Shire for a significant period of time mentioned that the area had changed, there was less community feeling and spirit, that neighbours don't look out for each other and that it was generally not as safe as it once was. Residents often mentioned that they wouldn't walk around their local area at night by themselves, but would walk around at night with another person.

Often, people linked occurrences/perceptions of crime to specific communities or areas in the Shire (whether this was a fact or a perception). Sometimes people attributed this to the clustering of low cost housing, co-location of a number of social services (Centrelink, Department of Housing, etc.) attraction of shopping facilities (e.g. Wyong Plaza, Watanobbi shops, Lake Haven Shopping Centre) combined with the accessibility public transport.

One of the main things people were worried about was 'young people causing a nuisance'. Residents discussed the anti social behaviour of large groups of young people in the following areas: Buff Point/Budgewoi, San Remo, Shelly Beach and Toukley.



Did You Know?**Gorokan Safety Audit**

Wyong Shire Council initiated the Gorokan Community Safety Audit in 2007 in partnership with Crime Prevention Officers Tuggerah Lakes Local Area Command and Department of Housing. Members of the community and relevant agencies patrolled nominated areas with a view to assessing the condition of the lighting, public transport, noise, visibility, public spaces, amenities and pedestrian access.

The information was then collated by the Crime Prevention Officers and distributed to the agencies responsible for the repair and maintenance of these issues.

Immediate strategies resulting from the safety audit include:

- The formation of the Gorokan Lake Haven Community Improvement group, who have investigating the possibility of forming walking groups and child caring projects.
- The creation of a garden on Vacant Council land as part of a strategy to promote safety by design principles in the area.

• Anti Social Behaviour

People expressed their concern and worry at their perception of the increase in a range of anti social behaviours in the Shire. Many people spoke about the impacts of this on their quality of life, specifically in relation to their feelings of safety outside of their own homes.

A range of concerns were expressed about behaviour in public places and spaces including drinking, drug use and drug dealing, loud obnoxious behaviour, threatening and intimidating language or actions, and people hanging around in groups. Often residents described this behaviour as linked to alcohol consumption.

Some people also expressed concern at the levels of domestic violence.



- **Young People**

Some residents suggested that young people are often the perpetrators of crime, vandalism, and graffiti and anti social behaviour in Wyong Shire. They considered that this is often because there is not a lot for young people to do. Residents expressed that boredom combined with the effects of alcohol creates havoc on weekends in some areas of the Shire.

Young people during the consultations described significant safety concerns of their own:

- The level of bullying happening both inside and outside of schools;
- Concerned about people using drugs and the feelings of being unsafe in the area because of this;
- Worried about the level of graffiti and vandalism in the Shire; and
- Worried about P Platers and how they drive (too fast).

- **Vandalism and Graffiti**

Graffiti and vandalism was of increasing concern to residents. Often, graffiti and vandalism is the one form of crime that people had a direct experience with. A large number of residents had experienced graffiti on their own property, or had dealt with graffiti and vandalism in a public place, for example a community centre, senior citizen's centre or a local business. People explained that often the presence of graffiti combined with unkempt areas increase their fear of crime in that area.

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

- **Police Presence**

Many residents mentioned that they thought there was an insignificant police presence in the suburbs and public places of Wyong Shire. People regularly spoke about the need for more 'beat' police so that there is a visible police presence.

Residents also regularly spoke of the time it takes for police to arrive when called, this relating to the wide area that the Shire covers.



- **Social Infrastructure to Support the Population Growth**

Residents regularly discussed the need for infrastructure in the area to keep up with the population growth to avoid significant numbers of people with nothing to do, and therefore an increase in anti social behaviour and social challenges.

"We need to have things like hospitals, schools and community centres to support the growing population and give them something constructive to do otherwise we will be Mt Druitt by the sea."

- **Road Safety**

Road safety was also a particular concern for residents in the focus groups and conversations, specifically relating to young people on the road and pedestrian safety.

Residents regularly mentioned the declining behaviour of drivers, in relation to speed generally and 'hooning'. The increasing occurrence of road rage was also a concern. It was felt by residents that poor traffic signalling, timing, signage and road work contribute to poor driver behaviour and road accidents.

Many people spoke of their perception that there are an increasing number of young people on the roads who are driving too fast and unsafely. People spoke about teenagers "hooning" and needing a safe venue to able to do this.

"Car training and a place for young people to hoon safely is needed."

Residents who were older or who had young children were also particularly concerned about pedestrian safety in relation to crossing busy roads. Often people mentioned the lack of appropriately placed pedestrian crossings/light crossings or no formal crossings at all.

"It would be good to have a formal crossing between the preschool and the community centre on Oakland Avenue at The Entrance."



People suggested that there should be better driver education at the start of driving careers:

"We should start teaching kids from an early age about road safety, and continue that when they become teenagers and start driving on the roads."

What We Can Do

What Council Can Do:

Improving community safety requires all sections of the community to work together, to create safer environments in which people work, live and play. This can only be achieved by building partnerships between police, government agencies, local councils, community organisations and individuals.

Some of the major factors contributing to people's fear of crime are personally experiencing crime; socio-economic disadvantage; lack of knowledge/information; encountering anti-social behaviour in the public realm such as graffiti, verbal abuse, vandalism and litter; or the ongoing presence of people intoxicated by drugs or alcohol in their community.

Research suggests that lack of attention to such behaviour can encourage some people to participate in crime, increasing the cost to Council; for example, cleaning up graffiti and dealing with vandalism. Fear also reduces people's willingness to be visible in their neighbourhoods and participate in community life. It is now well-established that fewer people in the streets leads to reduced natural surveillance, which in turn can lead to an increase in crime.

An increase in community satisfaction and trust can lead to a lower level of concern about crime. If Council, in partnership with Police and others, can succeed in lowering crime, it will also succeed in creating vibrant communities who have a reduced fear of crime and a high sense of trust and ownership of the places they live, work and play.

Council plays an important role as follows:

- Continuing to undertake a community development approach that facilitates the establishment of connection and linkages, builds a sense of community and trust in residents;
- Facilitating programmes and activities that build a sense of community;



- Advocating and lobbying for resources and infrastructure to match population growth and addressing crime and safety concerns;
- Working in partnership with government, non government agencies and community groups to address crime and safety issues;
- Utilising Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in planning and design;
- Providing support to services for victims of family violence and crimes of violence in the community;
- Raising awareness of road safety issues through the implementation of education campaigns; and
- Law enforcement through ranger activities.

What Other Organisations Can Do:

- Utilise community strengths, networks and assets as foundations for promoting a sense of community pride and belonging.
- Advocate for resources to promote safer communities.
- Work in partnership to develop and implement integrated approaches to creating safer communities.
- Provide activities, programmes, events and services that build a sense of community.
- Being inclusive of all members of the community.
- Making places and spaces open, inviting and friendly.
- Supporting victims of crime and their families.
- Raise awareness that violence is not OK.

What the Community Can Do:

- Establish strong links between existing groups and organisations.
- Foster opportunities for social interaction.
- Work in partnership with others to address challenges and build on opportunities.



What I Can Do:

- Get to know your neighbours.
- Keep an eye out in your community.
- Make people feel welcome and not isolated.
- Notice and report strange behaviour.
- Report graffiti and vandalism.
- Slow down in school zones.
- Don't drink and drive.
- Obey road rules.



Community Safety Action Plan

What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
Safety in the public domain	Conduct safety audits in key 'hot spot' areas to identify key safety concerns within local communities.	Years 2 - 5	Community Development Future Planning Rangers	NSW Police, NSW Department of Premiers & Cabinet, State Government Agencies, NGO's, Community Groups, Local Businesses, Community Members.	\$1K per audit, up to 3 per year.
	According to safety audits, work with partners to develop crime prevention strategies to minimise unsafe practices within the community.	Years 2 - 5	Community Development Future Planning Open Space Road Safety Officer Engineers	NSW Police, NSW Department of Premiers & Cabinet, State Government Agencies, NGO's, Community Groups, Local Businesses, Community Members.	\$2K per audit
	Participate in the establishment and development of a Central Coast Anti Social Behaviour Strategy (partnership with NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet) to look at an active collaborative approach to Crime Prevention in the Shire.	Year 3 2008/09	Future Planning Community Development Rangers	NSW Police, NSW Department of Premiers & Cabinet, State Government Agencies, NGO's, Community Groups, Local Businesses, Community Members.	\$ Required
	Ensure Police involvement in planning for new developments, where developments may increase factors that contribute to crime.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Future Planning , Development Assessment	NSW Police Development Industry	Within existing
	Utilise and apply CPTED principles in all community settings and public space planning	Current & Years 1 - 5	Future Planning Development Assessment	NSW Police	Within existing
A decrease in anti social behaviour	Develop a holistic Graffiti and Vandalism strategy to promote the positive aspects of graffiti e.g. urban art, and prevent and reduce illegal tagging and vandalism in the Shire	Year 3 2009/10	Community Development Future Planning Open Space & Recreation	NSW Police, NSW Department of Premiers & Cabinet, State Government Agencies, NGO's, Community Groups, Local businesses, Community members	\$10K



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
	Investigate and implement community art programmes that engage the community to encourage community pride and reduce vandalism and illegal tagging.	Year 3 2010/11	Community Development Open Space & Recreation	NGO's Artists Local Community Groups	\$5K per project
	Review existing Alcohol Free Zones to ensure zones are valid and appropriately located and develop strategies for identifying new areas for Alcohol Free Zones.	Year 1 2008/09	Regulation & Compliance	Local Community, Local Businesses.	Within existing
	Work in Collaboration with Community Drug Action Teams to increase and improve general community awareness about drugs and to help communities develop their own responses to local drug problems.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Community Development	Local Community, Community Groups, NGO's	Within existing
Stronger, safe communities	Develop positive neighbour and community relations and links which foster connections and linkages to promote a positive experience of living in a community therefore changing negative perceptions of crime.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Community Development	Local Community, Community Groups, NGO's	Within existing
Improved road user behaviour through targeted programmes	Implement the Road Safety Strategic Plan and annual Road Safety Officers Action Plan to improve road user behaviour throughout the Shire and reduce the incidents of fatalities and accidents.	Ongoing. Variations made to the target group & road safety issue based on statistics and input from the Police/Community	Community Education Team , Community Development Team Rangers	Ongoing. Variations made to the target group & road safety issue based on statistics & input from the Police/Community	Within current resources until 2010. This includes \$15,000 annually from Roads and Drainage budget and external funding from various sources





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.



achievements
in life

Importance to Quality of Life

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.

A broad definition of learning and the provision of lifelong learning opportunities are extremely important to the community of Wyong. The value of learning and the flow on benefits of learning in a society cannot be overestimated. It is a vital part of personal growth, as individuals expand their horizons and stretch their potential. The excitement of learning, its ability to help us achieve our dreams and ambitions, and the possibilities it awakens in our imagination, all nurture our sense of wellbeing and self-esteem.

The flow of information between people is fundamental to personal and economic growth – it is the transition of knowledge that prepares people to replace those retiring; it spurs innovation in business and industry, and enables workers to adapt to those changes; it forges links between people and groups, and fosters understanding.

Social Indicators

- Satisfaction with achievements in life.
- School education attainment.
- Post School education attainment.
- Attitudes to education.
- Employment status.
- Unemployment rate.
- Industry.
- Occupation.
- Perceived work/life balance.



Education and training are important issues for the Shire and are strongly linked to employment, the local and regional economy and quality of life. The capacity of the community is enhanced whenever high levels of education are encouraged, actively acquired and ultimately achieved. A person's level of education can have an impact on their access to employment and the economic resources necessary to support a reasonable standard of living.

The development of a strong ethic and interest in education needs to begin at birth, and the early years are a critical time to focus on parents and therefore children having positive attitudes to learning. Research suggests that quality early learning is integrally linked to abilities at primary and secondary school, in higher education and for being productive members of society.

Overwhelming international evidence supports the view that government investment can provide crucial support to parents and communities, helping to ensure that children succeed in life. Investing in the early years of life delivers strong long-term benefits for children, and for the wider community. Investing more in human capital formation and investing it earlier leads to increased educational attainment and labour force participation, with higher levels of productivity. It also helps tackle disadvantage, dependency on welfare, and minimises our use of hospitals and the criminal justice system.

Research shows that early school leavers are far more likely than their peers to experience prolonged periods of unemployment, and that without early intervention this may lead to social isolation, poor health status, alcohol and drug misuse and participation in crime.

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 to establish/relocate. It will also have a positive impact on the Shire's social fabric via improvements in community participation and health.

Economic prosperity is fundamental to the sustainability of the Region. Local employment and income generating opportunities are vital as they provide residents with the time and money necessary to actively participate in their community.



Employment is an important part of life for a large proportion of the population. It is a source of income, often takes up a considerable amount of time, helps people define who they are and gives them the opportunity to enjoy other benefits (*CCRF 2008*).

Current Context

86% Of Central Coast residents (85% Wyong) indicated in the Quality of Life Survey that they were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their achievements in life.

Education

ABS Census and other survey data indicate lower education levels in the area than the State overall. Three important education outcomes for the Central Coast have been identified in the Quality of Life Survey:

- Central Coast residents have lower levels of education compared with the remainder of the State – they have left school earlier, and apart from obtaining trade certificates they are less likely to undertake post-school education and training;
- People who stay at school longer earn more than those who leave early (Year 10 and below); and
- People who have post-school qualifications earn more than those who do not have these qualifications (*CCRF 2008*).

- **School Retention Rates**

Table 12.1 shows apparent school retention rates for government schools in the Shire and NSW. In 2007 the apparent retention rate from Year 7 to Year 12 (defined as the proportion of students who started Year 7 and have continued to Year 12) was 44.3% in Wyong Shire, 20% lower than the State apparent rate (65.66%). There have been slight improvements in the rate since 2001.



Table 12.1: School Retention Rates

Year	Wyong LGA Apparent Retention Rate			State Apparent Retention Rate		
	7 - 10	10 - 12	7 - 12	7 - 10	10 - 12	7 - 12
2001	84.80	46.27	42.98	95.41	66.70	63.52
2002	87.54	53.19	46.04	95.89	68.89	65.20
2003	94.61	56.20	47.66	96.03	69.91	66.70
2004	88.81	55.35	48.45	95.38	70.37	67.48
2005	87.30	47.33	44.78	95.08	69.95	67.17
2006	87.56	53.86	47.83	95.51	69.59	66.37
2007	89.58	50.74	44.30	96.30	69.05	65.66

Source: Department of Education and Training, Planning and Innovation, Data Collection Unit.

Apparent retention rates from Year 7 to Year 10 and from Year 10 to Year 12 are also significantly below the apparent retention rates for NSW.

Active engagement in education, employment and training is a key ingredient in helping young people to make a successful transition from education to the workforce. Longitudinal studies have shown that young people who in their first year after school, have been mainly in either part-time work, unemployment or outside of the labour force are much less likely to make a successful transition to full-time employment. Research has also shown that problems faced by teenagers in their transition from full-time education to full-time work continue for young adults (*Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2003*).

Young people and the wider community mentioned employment for young people in terms of a provision of local jobs on the Central Coast to enable them to stay here rather than migrating to Sydney, Newcastle or even further away. Residents also stated the need for a focus on apprenticeships and traineeships and support of youth enterprise activities:

"The area needs more work opportunities for young people and sufficient transport to get to work."

"We should be doing things to encourage small businesses to take on apprenticeships – employers don't know about apprenticeships."

The consultations reported the need for increased collaboration between the education sector, service providers, government, local business and industry with the aim to increase local employment prospects for young people in Wyong Shire. The consultations also highlighted the need to support young people moving through the transition phase from compulsory schooling to further education, training and employment.

The majority of residents reported that schools in Wyong Shire were one of the more positive aspects of living here. Residents acknowledged however the increasing pressure that schools are under in responding to the variety of social issues that are impacting on a young person's capacity to learn, and the fact that for some young people, the school curriculum fails to engage them therefore needing options in terms of alternative education programmes.

In a social sense, young people indicated that school or other educational institutions were one of the main places that they established friendships networks and connections.

Affordability of education (particularly in relation to tertiary education) was seen as a barrier to young people continuing their education.

Homework Centres were continually raised as an important programme/activity for children and young people to have better education opportunities that should be supported in the Shire.

- **School Education Attainment**

In 2006, 56.2% of the Shire's population had left school at Year 10 or below, and 26.5% went on to complete Year 12 or equivalent, compared with 40.4% and 42.4% respectively for New South Wales.

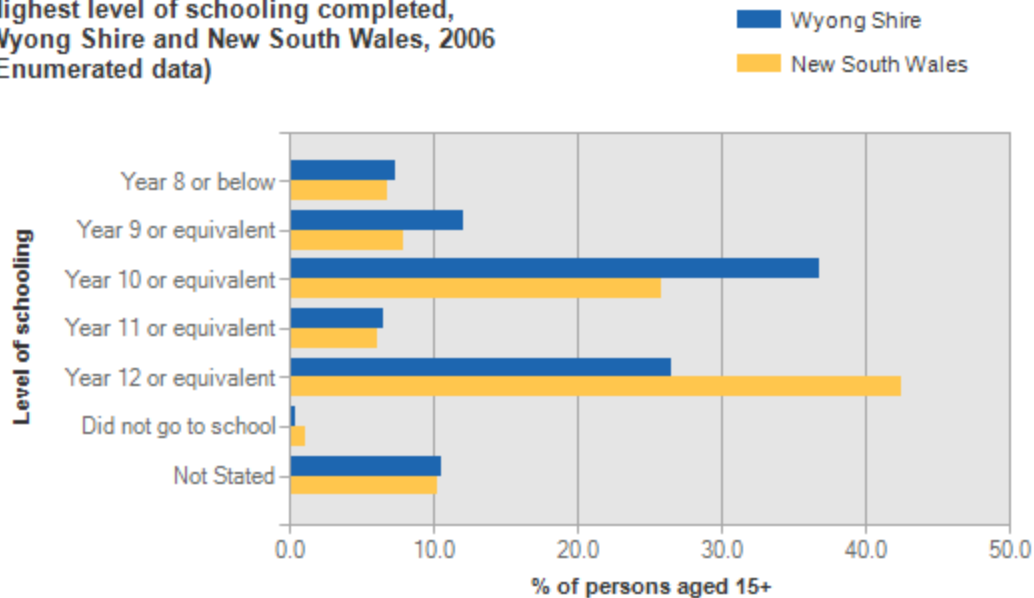
The major differences between the level of schooling attained by the population in Wyong Shire and New South Wales were:

- A *larger* percentage of people who left school at Year 10 or equivalent (36.8% compared to 25.8%);
- A *larger* percentage of people who left school at Year 9 or equivalent (12.1% compared to 7.9%), and



- A *smaller* percentage of people who left school at Year 12 or equivalent (26.5% compared to 42.4%).

**Highest level of schooling completed,
Wyong Shire and New South Wales, 2006
(Enumerated data)**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

Residents in the consultations regularly expressed their concern that there is still a high proportion of young people leaving school early. People mentioned a range of reasons for why they felt that young people weren't staying in school including:

- Lack of suitable subjects;
- Engagement/interest in academic subject matter;
- Relevance of academic programming; and
- Family/personal issues.



Did You Know?**Links to Learning**

The Links to Learning Community Grants Programme assists young people aged 12 - 24 years who have left school early or who are students at risk of leaving school early, and provides them with a range of opportunities to remain in or re-enter mainstream education and training.

The programme provides funding assistance to community organisations and local government authorities in New South Wales to undertake innovative and creative activities with young people in informal learning settings, and to link participants back to education and training. The community based approach for implementation of projects means that organisations develop local strategies to best meet the needs of local young people.

There was also vigorous discussion by residents of the ability of the Central Coast to retain our young people by providing them with appropriate and competitive opportunities to pursue education and employment opportunities locally.

It was generally felt that while this situation is improving there are still too many young people leaving the Central Coast to attend University and other educational opportunities as well as for work purposes.

Results from the Quality of Life Survey indicated that progress is being made toward increasing education attainment on the Central Coast; younger people (under 40 years) were significantly more likely than older residents to have finished Year 12. Those residents who have completed Years 11 and 12 had higher levels of wellbeing than those residents who left school after completing Year 10 (*CCRF 2008*).

Central Coast residents who left school after completing year 10 or below were subsequently asked to indicate the main reason for leaving school at that time. More than half (55%) said that the main reason for leaving was *to start a job* and approximately 16 per cent nominated *to start training or education elsewhere*. Wellbeing and income were not associated with the reasons for leaving school early.



Women were more likely to leave school early *to start education and training elsewhere* (18.7%) than men (12.1%) and men were more likely to leave school at Year 10 or below *to start a job* (61.7%) than women (48.9%). Age group was also significantly associated with the distribution of reasons for leaving school at Year 10 or below, in that the main reason the 18 - 24 group nominated was *because you were unhappy at school*, while all of the other age groups nominated *to start a job* as the main reason.

Did You Know?

Plan it Youth

Plan-It Youth helps students at risk of leaving school early to help themselves. Students work with a mentor to investigate career options and post-school destinations.

Trained volunteer community members work in a one-on-one relationship with students to assist them to plan their education and training pathways and investigate career options. Plan-It Youth focuses on positive destinations and builds on the strengths, skills, abilities and interests of young people.

By becoming a Plan-It Youth partner, you can:

- Assist at-risk students to gain a qualification;
- Strengthen disadvantaged families and communities;
- Alleviate the run-on effects (financial, social and welfare) of early school leavers to the community; and
- Help a child's future.

- **Vocational Education, Traineeships and Apprenticeships**

Many residents both young and older mentioned the need for school curriculums to be very flexible to accommodate the vast range of learning styles and interests of young people and to provide them with a clear education to work background and learning experience.



Did You Know?**Central Coast Youth Connections**

Youth Connections Inc. helps young people aged 13 - 19 on The Central Coast access employment, education, training and recreational opportunities so they can reach their full potential.

Youth Connections offer:

- Job placement.
- Mentoring.
- Tutoring.
- Work readiness training.
- Work experience.
- Structured workplace learning.
- Career coaching.
- Life skills activities.
- Vocational awards.
- Vocational skill development.
- Traineeships and apprenticeships.
- Youth advocacy.
- Alternative learning environment.
- Case management.
- Connecting schools to industry.

There was significant support from residents for the further introduction, support and promotion of apprenticeships as they felt that businesses on the Central Coast are not aware of the benefits to both the young person and business by taking on an apprentice or trainee.

"Encourage small businesses to take on apprenticeships."

"Employers don't know about apprenticeships."



- **Education Support**

Many residents described the lack of support for children and young people to assist them in their basic education and further development and enhancement of learning. Parents of children and young people were particularly interested in ensuring that this aspect of learning is optimised.

Residents suggested that further support could include:

- 'Homework help' classes at community centres, libraries and schools; and
- Support for parents who are supporting children to do schoolwork.

"There needs to be more places that kids can go to get some support when doing their homework. There needs to be transport there and back too."

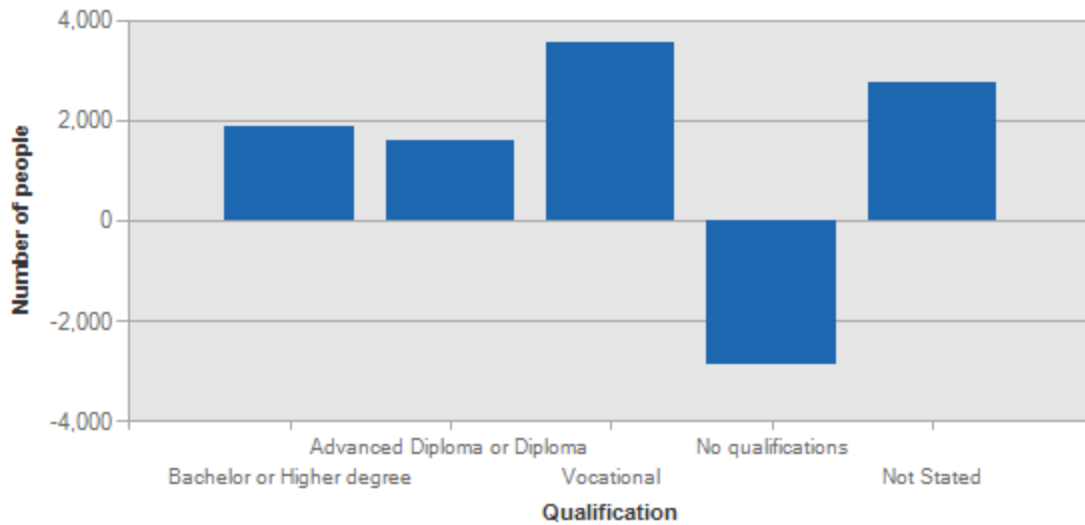
- **Post-School Education Attainment**

Analysis of the qualifications of the population in Wyong Shire in 2006 compared to New South Wales shows that there was a smaller proportion of people holding formal qualifications (Bachelor or higher degree; Advanced Diploma or Diploma; or Vocational qualifications) and a larger proportion of people with no formal qualifications.

Overall, 34.1% of the population held educational qualifications, and 51.5% had no qualifications, compared with 40.6% and 45.6% respectively for New South Wales.



Change in highest qualification achieved, Wyong Shire, 2001 to 2006 (Enumerated data)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 and 2001 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

Of non-school qualifications, certificate qualifications accounted for the greatest proportion at 21.9%, of which Certificate levels 3 and 4 were the most popular at 18.5% of total persons with qualifications. Advanced diplomas and diplomas accounted for the next highest proportion after certificates at 5.7%, followed closely by bachelor degrees at 5.1%. Postgraduate degrees (0.8%) and graduate diploma and graduate certificates (0.7%) accounted for only small proportions of persons with non-school qualifications. The major differences between the qualifications held by the population in Wyong Shire and New South Wales were:

- A *larger* percentage of people with No qualifications (51.5% compared to 45.6%); and
- A *smaller* percentage of people with Bachelor or Higher degrees (6.6% compared to 16.4%).

The largest changes in the qualifications of the population in Wyong Shire between 2001 and 2006 were in those with:

- Vocational qualifications (+3,533 persons); and
- No qualifications (-2,882 persons).



The establishment of the Central Coast Campus of the University of Newcastle together with the Community College and TAFE has been a major step forward in terms of providing local access to tertiary education and further training opportunities for Central Coast residents. In 2006 there were 2,485 students enrolled at the University and 12,105 at the Hunter Institute of Technology, Central Coast Campuses (*University of Newcastle; Hunter Institute of Technology*).

Many residents indicated that the establishment of Ourimbah Campus was a real high point and positive moment for the development of the Central Coast and Wyong Shire.

There was a strong feeling however, that the range of courses and programmes at Ourimbah Campus could be greatly improved to limit the numbers of people moving away from the Central Coast to attend other educational institutions.

"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."

"We want to be able to go to University on the Central Coast; however it doesn't have the reputation like other universities, so we go to Sydney instead."

The Quality of Life Survey found that Central Coast residents with access to higher household incomes were more likely to have a bachelor undergraduate degree qualification or a postgraduate degree or diploma. Those residents with bachelor degrees were likely to have significantly higher wellbeing than those with certificate qualifications.

The survey found an association between satisfaction with the adequacy of education and training opportunities in the Region and wellbeing (*CCRF 2008*).

Those age groups most likely to be engaged in the education and training system, residents 18 - 24 and 25 - 29, were less likely to agree that the education and training opportunities on the Central Coast were adequate to meet their needs. Residents were asked to nominate the single aspect that was inadequate. The highest proportion of residents nominated insufficient courses (60.9%), insufficient vocational training available (9.3%) and the university is not well located (5.0%).



The Quality of Life Survey found associations between completing Year 12 and income, obtaining post-school qualifications and income and leaving school early and unemployment. It is of concern that a relatively high proportion of residents believe that early school leavers have the same or better chances of finding work, chances of finding fulfilling employment over their lifetime and chances of being well paid at work. This was more pronounced for Wyong residents.

- **Life Long Learning**

Life long learning refers to the concept that it's never too early or too late to start learning. Residents in the consultations regularly discussed the philosophical shift in the thinking of society from "learning as a non essential" (after normal school requirements) to "learning as an essential" – the need to constantly update and keep learning through all stages of life.

There was a strong view from residents that learning and obtaining knowledge to increase understanding or awareness is a most important and valuable element of education, rather than learning to obtain a piece of paper or a certificate. It was recognised however that learning to obtain a qualification is very important.

People felt that the continual obtaining of knowledge and skills make us best able to take advantage of the opportunities that life and society offer, including for work, family life and community.

Residents felt that the need to focus on life long learning has been influenced by:

- Information Technology (IT) developments;
- Longer work life;
- Shifting job requirements;
- Range of job types increasing; and
- Less focus on lifetime careers (people changing careers regularly).

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

"We have a whole range of different aged people in my class. It certainly brings lots of experience and discussion!"



- **Employment**

The employment characteristics of the population is an important indicator of the socio-economic status of an area. It shows the share of the population that is employed full-time, part-time or unemployed, as well as changes over time in the labour force. Employment status is linked to a number of factors:

- The age structure of the population which, for example, influences the number of persons in the workforce (i.e. population 15 years or more) or retired (i.e. population over 60 years);
- The economic base and employment opportunities available in the area; and
- The education and skill base of the population.

The size of Wyong Shire's labour force in 2006 was 57,757 persons, of which 19,721 were employed part-time (34.1%) and 31,593 were full-time workers (54.7%).

The main features of Wyong Shire's labour force are:

- A high proportion of the population aged 15 years and over not in the labour force (low participation rates);
- A high ratio of part-time to full-time employment; and
- High unemployment rates.

Analysis of the employment status of the population in Wyong Shire in 2006 compared to New South Wales shows that there was a smaller proportion in employment and a larger proportion unemployed.

Overall, 91.7% of the labour force was employed (49.1% of the population aged 15+), and 8.3% unemployed (4.4% of the population aged 15+), compared with 94.1% and 5.9% respectively for New South Wales.



Table 12.2: Employment Status

	2006			2001			Change 2001 - 2006
	No.	%	NSW%	No.	%	NSW %	
Employed Full-time	31,593	54.7	60.8	28,848	55.0	61.0	2,745
Employed Part-time	19,721	34.1	30.6	16,889	32.2	29.0	2,832
Total Employed	52,970	91.7	94.1	47,231	90.0	92.8	5,739
Total Unemployed	4,787	8.3	5.9	5,256	10.0	7.2	-469
Total Labour Force	57,757	100.0	100.0	52,487	100.0	100.0	5,270
Total in Labour Force	57,757	53.6	59.0	52,487	52.0	59.3	5,270
Total Not in Labour Force	44,129	40.9	34.3	44,083	43.7	36.0	46
Not Stated	5,944	5.5	6.7	4,336	4.3	4.7	1,578
Total	107,830	100.0	100.0	100,936	100.0	100.0	6,894

Source: ABS Census 2001 2006 (Wyang Shire Community Profile – .id Consulting).

Traditionally, the Shire's unemployment rate has been higher than the State average, national average and the average for the Central Coast Region.

In 2006 the Shire had higher youth unemployment rates for people aged between 15 - 19 years (20.2%) and 20 - 24 years (11%) than NSW (15.1% and 9.3% respectively).

The Shire also has a higher ratio of people employed part-time to full-time employed in comparison to NSW. In 2006, 34% of employed persons were in part-time employment compared to 30% for NSW. Between 2001 and 2006, there has been a proportional increase in part-time employment. Part-time employment could also be disguising levels of underemployment.

Between 2001 and 2006, the number of people employed in Wyong Shire showed an increase of 5,739 persons and the number unemployed showed a decrease of 469 persons.

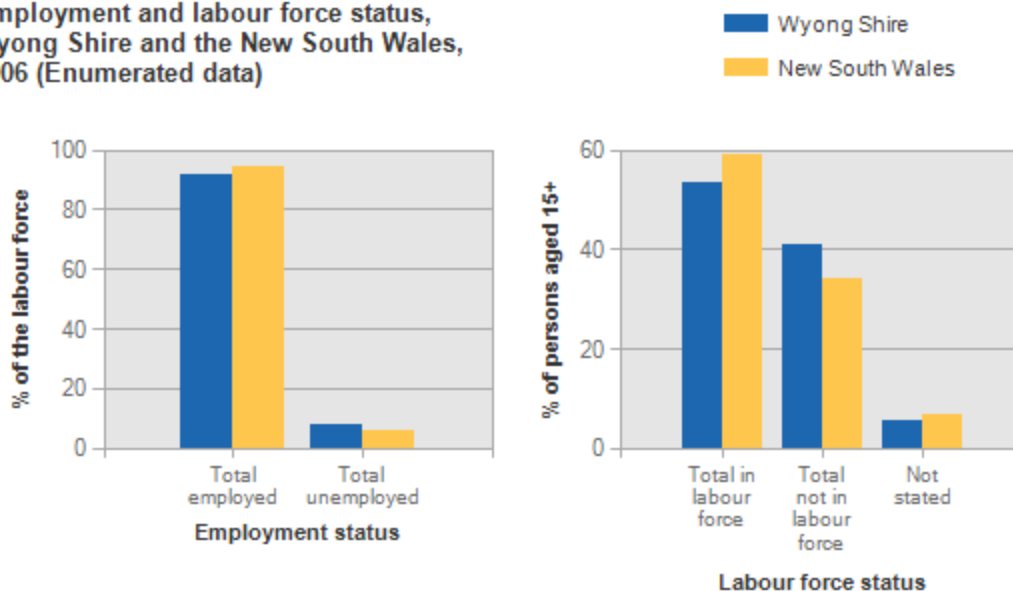
The labour force participation rate refers to the proportion of the population over 15 years of age that was employed or actively looking for work. *"The labour force is a fundamental input to domestic production. Its size and composition are therefore crucial factors in economic growth. From the viewpoint of social development, earnings from paid work are a major influence on levels of economic well-being"* (Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Australian Social Trends 1995](#)).



Analysis of the labour force participation rate of the population in Wyong Shire in 2006 shows that there was a smaller proportion in the labour force (53.6%) compared with New South Wales (59.0%).

Between 2001 and 2006 in Wyong Shire the number of people in the labour force showed an increase of 5,270 people, or 10.0%.

Employment and labour force status, Wyong Shire and the New South Wales, 2006 (Enumerated data)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

The Quality of Life Survey showed that employment is a factor that is significantly associated with wellbeing and quality of life. The level of wellbeing amongst unemployed people was lower than the wellbeing of residents in all other employment groups other than those on a pension other than an aged pension who had similar low levels of wellbeing.

Around 27% of Central Coast residents (32.5% of Wyong residents) who worked part-time indicated that they would like to work more hours. This group of residents were significantly more likely to have lower wellbeing than those part-time workers who did not wish to work more hours.

In addition to monetary benefits the workplace provides other benefits to residents in the form of residents experiencing enjoyment and personal satisfaction, having a more interesting and varied lifestyle, being able to serve society and do something meaningful, and socialising and communicating with people.



Those residents who were casually employed were less likely to experience some of these non monetary benefits (CCRF 2008).

- **Industry**

An analysis of the jobs held by the resident population in Wyong Shire in 2006 shows the three most popular industry sectors in which they were employed were:

- Retail Trade (7,750 persons or 14.6%);
- Health Care and Social Assistance (6,232 persons or 11.8%); and
- Manufacturing (6,011 persons or 11.3%).

In combination these three industries employed 19,993 people in total or 37.7% of the employed resident population.

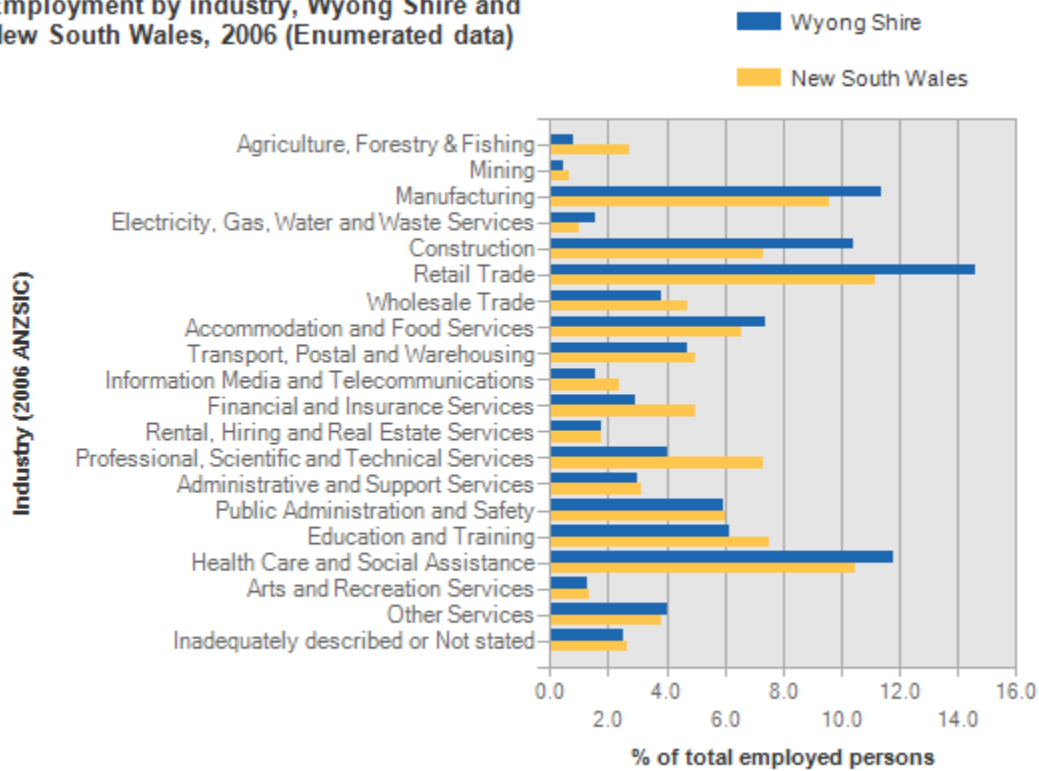
In comparison, New South Wales employed 11.1% in Retail Trade; 10.5% in Health Care and Social Assistance; and 9.6% in Manufacturing.

The major differences between the jobs held by the population of Wyong Shire and New South Wales were:

- A *larger* percentage persons employed in Retail Trade (14.6% compared to 11.1%);
- A *larger* percentage persons employed in Construction (10.4% compared to 7.3%);
- A *smaller* percentage persons employed in Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (4.0% compared to 7.3%); and
- A *smaller* percentage persons employed in Financial and Insurance Services (2.9% compared to 5.0%).



Employment by industry, Wyong Shire and New South Wales, 2006 (Enumerated data)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

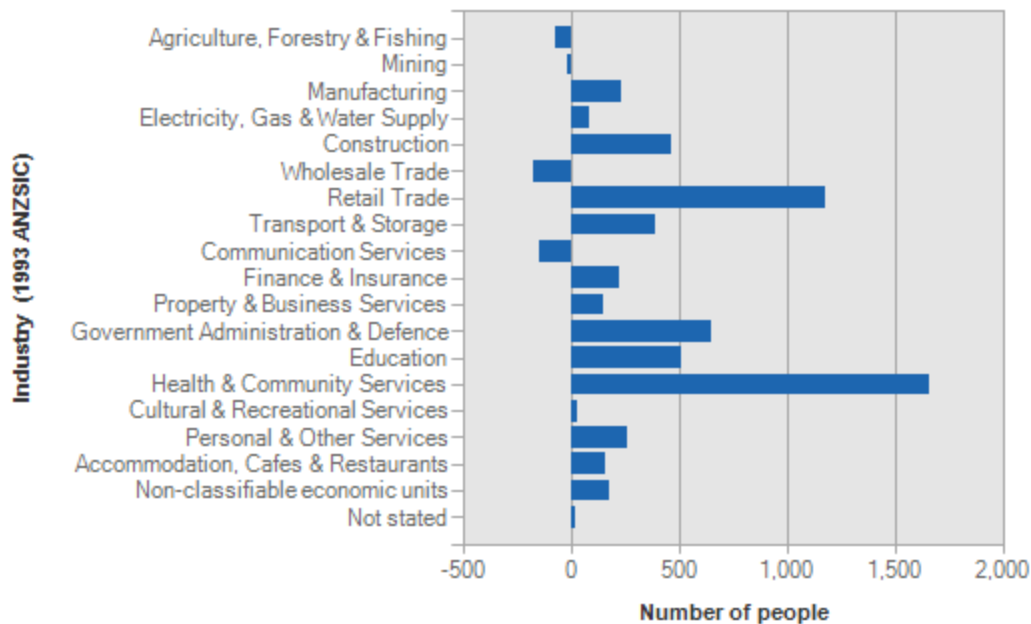
The largest changes in the jobs held by the resident population in Wyong Shire between 2001 and 2006 were for those employed in:

- Health and Community Services (+1,653 persons);
- Retail Trade (+1,179 persons);
- Government Administration and Defence (+645 persons); and
- Education (+505 persons).

The data shows a move towards employment in service industries. This is strongly connected to population change in the Shire.



Change in employment by industry, Wyong Shire, 2001 to 2006 (Enumerated data)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 and 2001 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

• Occupation

Wyong LGA shows an orientation towards employment in lower skilled occupations.

An analysis of the occupations held by the resident population in Wyong Shire in 2006 shows the three most popular occupations were:

- Technicians and Trades Workers (9,026 persons or 17.0%);
- Clerical and Administrative Workers (7,571 persons or 14.3%); and
- Professionals (7,011 persons or 13.2%).

In combination these three occupations accounted for 23,608 people in total or 44.6% of the employed resident population.

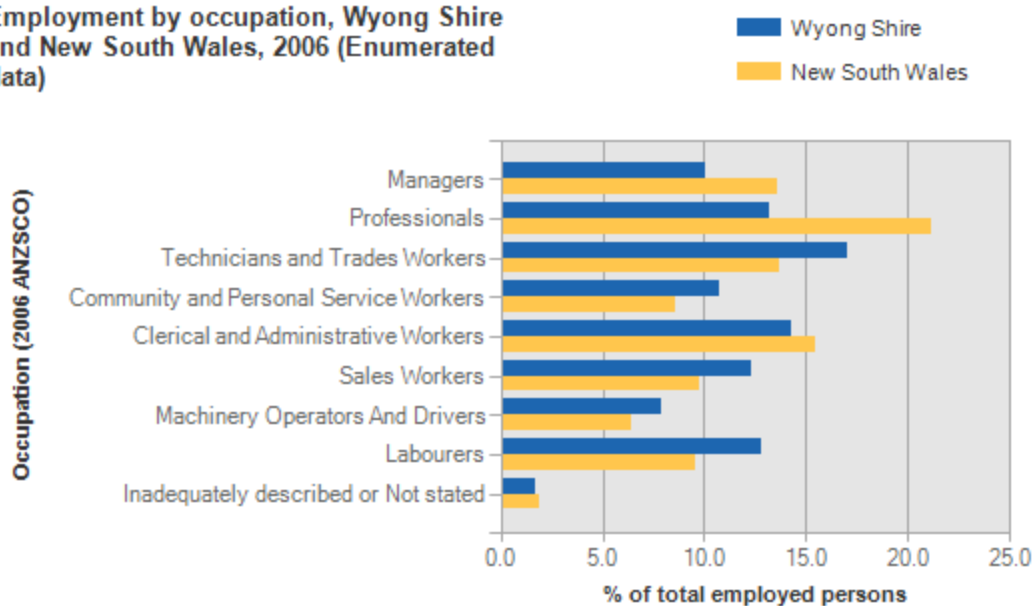
In comparison, New South Wales employed 13.6% as Technicians and Trades Workers; 15.4% as Clerical and Administrative Workers; and 21.2% as Professionals.



The major differences between the occupations of the population of Wyong Shire and New South Wales were:

- A *larger* percentage persons employed as Technicians and Trades Workers (17.0% compared to 13.6%);
- A *larger* percentage persons employed as Labourers (12.8% compared to 9.5%);
- A *smaller* percentage persons employed as Professionals (13.2% compared to 21.2%); and
- A *smaller* percentage persons employed as Managers (10.1% compared to 13.6%).

Employment by occupation, Wyong Shire and New South Wales, 2006 (Enumerated data)



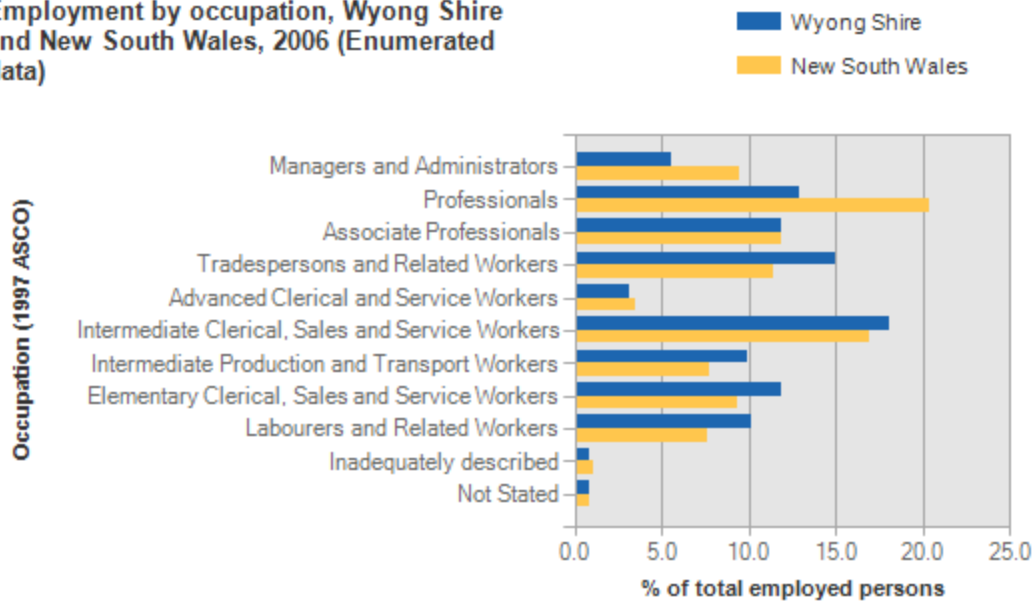
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

The largest changes in the occupations held by the resident population in Wyong Shire between 2001 and 2006 were:

- Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers (+1,469 persons);
- Professionals (+1,081 persons);
- Associate Professionals (+961 persons); and
- Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers (+827 persons).



Employment by occupation, Wyong Shire and New South Wales, 2006 (Enumerated data)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

The Quality of Life Survey found that there were significant differences in the wellbeing of Central Coast residents by occupation category. Those employed in white collar occupations were likely to have higher levels of wellbeing than those employed on blue collar occupations (CCRF, 2008).

- **Need for Local Employment**

Access to sustainable employment opportunities generates the income necessary to improve the quality of life and living standards of the community. Continuing population growth will place increasing pressure on the need to generate local employment. One of the key challenges for the region is to broaden the economic base to provide a greater range of job opportunities for people who are either unemployed or who are commuting outside of the area to work. To date however, the growth in local employment opportunities has not kept pace with population growth, and many residents commute outside of the Region for work. See "On the Move" for journey to work data.



Commuting is a complex issue for Wyong Shire and the wider Central Coast. It provides residents with greater employment opportunities, however long term commuting is disruptive to both family in terms of time spent together, energy levels and the ability to cope with family stress and the social structure of the community in terms of the ability to be able to participate in community and recreation activities. Commuting also affects the economy because of escape spending and vehicle travel has negative environmental impacts.

Local employment is preferable to long distance commuting for three major reasons:

- There are less opportunities for escape expenditure from the region;
- It avoids negative environmental impacts associated with vehicle travel; and
- It overcomes the negative social impacts on families and communities of people being forced to spend long periods of time away from home.

Source: Central Coast: Regional Profile and Social Atlas, 2004.

Most residents agreed that local employment is key to improving the quality of life of residents. Many people spoke of the negative impacts of commuting on individuals, families and communities. Residents often asked why so many people are encouraged to live in the area without the employment infrastructure to enable them to be employed locally.

"The most important thing that the area needs to grow is the amount of local employment across a range of levels including work for professionals. This is a vital foundation for local economy."

"Local jobs for local people."

Most residents had a personal experience of commuting. Residents felt that commuting has a serious impact on personal health and wellbeing, family life, community life and involvement, and social life.

At every community consultation, people described the importance of local job creation and employment to enable those commuting to Sydney and other areas to remain on the Coast for work.

Many residents had some knowledge of the numbers of people commuting out of the area every day, and mentioned the impacts of this as follows:



- Lack of involvement with, and connection to their local community;
- Commuters spending their day to day income in areas away from the Central Coast;
- Environmental impacts of driving a car every day;
- Costs associated with travel and car upkeep; and
- Deteriorating state of health and wellbeing.

"I commute to Sydney which is isolating. It is so difficult to make contacts. It's a good area to live due to a wide range of activities revolving around the lake and ocean."

"My partner commutes to Sydney for work so therefore we are unable to engage in leisure activities on weeknights."

"Importantly, reducing the amount of commuting that people undertake will greatly improve the quality of life for themselves, their family and the community."

"We need a very fast train so less time is spent commuting."

- **Unpaid Employment and Work Experience**

Work experience is most commonly sought by students and people re-entering the workforce in a new capacity. Work experience is valuable as it gives individuals an understanding of the personal aptitudes, actual skills and workplace relations required by employer organisations, and increases their attractiveness to future employers.

Formal work experience programmes are designed to promote opportunities for students to put into practice their educational knowledge and develop professional skills and relationships. The programmes provide organisations with opportunities to shape the development of skills and attitudes of young people entering the workforce. In this way unpaid employment and work experience can be of enormous value within the community.



- **Wages**

Residents often indicated that the wage structure on the Central Coast does not reflect that of other areas for example, Sydney and Newcastle. Residents felt that a significant number of people will continue to commute away from the area unless there are equal wages on the Central Coast to that of other areas.

"It would be great to have professional employment on the Coast with the wage structure to back it up!"

There was also an opposing view to this in that some residents had accepted a large pay decrease to work on the Central Coast. People indicated that the reasons they took a pay cut was so that they could spend more time with their families, and enjoy the lifestyle that the area offers.

See Chapter 2 'Community Profile' for income data.

- **Work/Life Balance**

The challenge of "work/life balance" is a central theme for many people who participated in the consultations.

Most residents felt that they, their partners, family or friends do not have a good work/life balance. They felt that there is increasing pressure to work longer hours because of increased job competitiveness and less job security.

Commuting away from the Central Coast has a significant impact on the balance between work life and family or personal life. Commuting often adds an extra three to four hours per day onto a work day. That is up to an extra twenty hours per week that is spent getting to and from work and not with family and friends.

Most residents felt that flexible work practices are of benefit to all employees in the workplace, including those with family and caring responsibilities, mature age workers and people with disabilities.



The Quality of Life Survey found that flexible hours was associated with wellbeing and that those residents who did have this entitlement were more likely to have higher levels of wellbeing (CCRF, 2008).

Having sufficient time to relax and enjoy leisure activities is often cited as an important influence on people's wellbeing.

The Quality of Life Survey found that a little over half of Central Coast residents (54.6%) (Wyang 52.1%) *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they often felt *rushed* or *pressed for time*. Women were more likely to agree with this statement than men. There was also a significant association with age group. Central Coast residents in the core age groups of 30 - 34, 35 - 39 and 40 - 44 were more likely to feel rushed or pressed for time than the 18 - 24's and those over 55.

Residents were also asked whether they were *satisfied with the amount of free time* available. Approximately three quarters of the Central Coast population *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with both statements

Residents aged between 25 and 44 were significantly less likely to feel satisfied with the *amount of free time* that they had than residents aged 55 and over and residents aged 65 and over were likely to feel more satisfied with this aspect than all of the other age groups aside from those aged 60 - 64. Residents with parenting responsibilities for a child aged 18 or younger, or who were in paid employment, were significantly more likely to have felt *rushed* or *pressed for time*, and less satisfied with the *amount of free time* that they had for themselves.

Residents who *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* with this statement concerning *satisfaction with the amount of free time* were likely to have lower levels of wellbeing (CCRF, 2008).

- **Diversity in the Types of Businesses that are attracted to the Shire**

People regularly spoke about the need to attract a wide range of businesses to the Shire. A range of business types meant everything from attracting a range of employment opportunities from a range of businesses to a variety of diverse shopping options.



This common theme went hand in hand in with attracting a diversity of people to the Shire as people described that to have a diversity of business then a diversity of people is needed to support and operate it.

What We Can Do

What Council Can Do:

Education and Training

Council encourages the community to value education (via a range of initiatives such as reading programmes, scholarships, school to work transition programmes, etc.) and, as a result, positively influence individuals' awareness, behaviours and attitudes.

Council plays a key role in education through the Library Service, Wyong Shire Council's Little Coast Kids Care and Education, Youth Services, Road Safety, Waste management and the Community Education Team unit.

The Libraries provide resources, internet, information, literacy and language materials, programmes for toddlers and their parents, children, young people and students at all levels.

Wyong Shire Wyong Shire Council's Little Coast Kids Care and Education promote an enjoyment of learning, cooperative play and social development. Wyong Shire Council's Little Coast Kids Care and Education staff ensure that children in long day care have stimulating, positive experiences and interactions which help them learn and develop and help to expand their thinking and language.

Youth services provide an education and training focus including hosting alternative education and training programmes, life skills and social interaction.

The Community Education Team continues to develop a holistic education strategy to increase the scope of Community Education Team throughout the Shire. The strategy encompasses education for sustainability covering a variety of priority areas. A key way of delivering sustainability principles is through school programmes, higher education, non formal education and community based learning activities.



Council also has a role through providing funding for projects that address literacy, numeracy and social skills development and also providing access to community facilities for use by educational providers.

Council's other main role is to advocate for additional resources to improve education opportunities, promote school retention rates and support education and lifelong learning for the Wyong Shire Community.

Council has a co-operative planning role with Government departments, e.g. Department of Education and Training to ensure the timely provision of educational facilities within the growth areas, initiates resource sharing opportunities, and works with schools for the wider benefit of the community.

Council's role in the future could be enhanced by:

- Facilitating stronger links and co-operation between schools, TAFE and Ourimbah Campus as well as schools and the private sector;
- Supporting the development and enhancement of a range of education and training options for residents including government, independent, tertiary, vocational, apprenticeships;
- Providing additional scholarships targeted at both secondary and tertiary level for disadvantaged students;
- Implementing programmes and projects to assist in the transition between school and work; for example, training opportunities within Council through apprenticeships, traineeships, and student placements;
- Providing mentoring and support programmes;
- Establishing a more diverse role for libraries and other community centres by the provision of meeting space for formal and informal training, homework assistance and computer access;
- Facilitating the provision of a range of education institutions including private schools, a private university and adult and community education (such as University of the Third Age);
- Developing and promoting a culture of continuing education; and
- Facilitating appropriate IT connections to homes and services.

Work and Employment

Council plays a key role in the creation of an environment that enables local business, industry, employment, work experience and voluntary opportunities to flourish.



The correlation between social capital and economic development is well documented. A minimum level of economic well-being is a pre-requisite for the development of social capital. People who are financially disadvantaged and struggling to survive will generally not be able to effectively connect with community fabric – they will not have the means for transport, outings, etc.

For the Wyong Shire community specifically, investment in local training and educational infrastructure is required. Similarly, it is important to have a range of education facilities available locally, both school and tertiary education, to facilitate a culture of valuing education and up-skilling the workforce. It is vital to maintain young people as part of the community and to utilise their valuable skills in generating local employment where possible.

Further, sustainable enterprises must be created to form the foundation for a viable local economy. In addition to access to a range of employment opportunities, attention must be given to ways in which the impact of commuting can be ameliorated. Commuters are restricted from becoming part of the community due to the long periods of time they spend away from their home and families.

What Council Can Do:

Council has a planning, co-ordination and advocacy role in generating employment and actively encouraging business to the Shire. This involves:

- Advocating to raise the profile and priority of the Central Coast Region at both bureaucratic and political levels of State and Federal Government;
- Providing infrastructure and serviced employment land within the Shire to support economic development including development of the Wyong Employment Zone and Warnervale Town Centre; and
- Providing regulatory processes which facilitate employment generating development, economic development and investment.

Council can also contribute to local economic development by influencing 'pre-conditions for a prosperous community' (*Lennon, 2008*). These pre-conditions include:

- Efficient and effective infrastructure including good physical and functional links that support, social, cultural and economic interaction;



- A quality living environment (quality of and accessibility to local recreation, leisure, entertainment and cultural infrastructure, community's acceptance of diversity and its social cohesion);
- An appropriately skilled and flexible workforce;
- Connectivity between business, government, research and education; and
- A supportive governance structure including ready access to business support services.

What Other Organisations Can Do:

- Provide programmes and services to the community.
- Work in partnership with Council, other agencies and the community.
- Promote and encourage positive attitudes to education and learning.
- Advocate and lobby for better education, training and employment outcomes.
- Employ local people where possible.

What the Community Can Do:

- Actively support local business.
- Utilise the existing education opportunities in the Shire – Schools, University, TAFE, Community College, Libraries, University of the Third Age, etc.
- Experience volunteering as a way to learn.
- Value and encourage Life long learning.

What I Can Do:

- Become involved with someone who is out of work and help them to find a job.
- Do business locally – spend locally!
- Recognise the importance of Life Long Learning.
- Join a book club discussion group.
- Try to stay on the Central Coast to undertake your education and training.
- Volunteer to do mentoring programmes and homework help programmes.
- Get to know your child's teachers.
- Attend P&C meetings.
- Volunteer to help with reading in schools.
- Participate in the programmes and activities at Council libraries'.
- Attend children's story time at Council libraries.
- Read to your child.



Achievements in Life Action Plan

What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
A Diverse Income-generating Economy	Facilitate local employment opportunities to match population growth and broaden the economic base of the Shire	Years 1 - 5	Business Development Economic & Corporate Planning Future Planning	Business Central Coast	Within existing
	Promote the rezoning of land for employment generating development, e.g. Wyong Employment Zone (WEZ).	Current & Years 1 - 5	Future Planning Business Development	Developers	Within existing
	Actively support the initiatives of business development organisations on the Central Coast to encourage business growth.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Business Development , Economic & Corporate Planning, Future Planning	Business Central Coast	Within existing
	Continue to advocate to raise awareness of the economic needs of the Shire to attract increased investment.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Business Development Economic & Corporate Planning Communications Unit	Business Central Coast	Within existing
	Continue to assist and give priority to the processing of major employment generating development applications.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Development Assessment Future Planning	Local businesses Developers	Within existing
	Plan and implement strategies for the revitalisation of town centres, e.g. Wyong, Toukley, Long Jetty.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Future Planning	Government Business Community	Within existing
Access to local education opportunities	Support further development and expansion of tertiary education opportunities to ensure that quality education is available with courses specifically aimed to meet the needs of the region.	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning Economic & Corporate Planning	CC Campus University of Newcastle, Community College, TAFE	Within existing
	Facilitate partnerships and linkages with government, business, community and education providers to seek avenues (including funding options) for programmes which develop and improve the education and skill base of young people in the Shire, e.g. Alternative education, school retention etc.	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning	Government, Business, Education Providers, Community	\$ Required



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
Opportunities for Life Long Learning	Explore the feasibility of implementing alternative models that promote life long learning and address literacy and numeracy as a key priority area for the Wyong Shire Community e.g. The Global Learning Village model Hume City Council Victoria.	Years 3 & 4 2010/11 & 2011/12	Future Planning Community Development Library Services	NGO's, Community Groups, Education Providers	\$ Required
	Support, develop, maintain and encourage the provision of educational opportunities for all residents.	Years 1 - 5	Library Services Future Planning Community Development	University of Newcastle, Community College, TAFE, DET, Education Providers	Within existing
	Provide a series of programmes which promote and celebrate difference and achievements in our community e.g. Living Library etc.	Years 1 - 5	Library Services Community Development	Community Groups Community Target Groups	\$10K per year
	Support and expand programmes for early child literacy and school readiness e.g. Books for babies, baby bounce, and preschool story time.	Years 1 - 5	Library Services Community Development	NSCCAHS, Community Education Providers, Child & Family Organisations, Child Care Centres	Within existing
	Support services and programmes that provide formal and alternative education e.g. homework help, computer literacy, home schooling, flexible education options for young mothers etc.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development Library Services	Community Education Providers, DET	Within existing
	Support community education providers to provide Life Long Learning e.g. University of the 3 rd Age.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development Future Planning Seniors Council	Community Education Providers, Community	Within existing





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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.



Importance to Quality of Life

As with all past consultations on the Central Coast over the past ten to twenty years, transport (both public and private) emerged as a major challenge for residents during the community plan consultations.

The theme of '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.

Community consultation has once again highlighted the difficulties of living in an area with large travel distances, rising petrol prices, increasing congestion and public transport that does not meet the needs of the majority of its residents. There was an insistence by residents that an improved public transport system is capable of servicing a higher proportion of journeys, providing an alternative to the private car and thereby reducing congestion, pollution and carbon emissions.

Having supporting infrastructure to encourage residents to easily move around the Shire in a variety of ways is very important to the residents of the Shire.

Transport in Wyong Shire and on the Central Coast is still a key challenge for residents, service providers, non government agencies and government agencies alike.

Social Indicators

Car ownership.

Public transport usage.

Satisfaction with public transport.

Journey to work – commuting.



Whilst residents experience major hassles trying to get to and from appointments, shopping and social outings, services and organisations experience significant problems in appropriately locating services, seeing clients and having clients access their services.

Current Context

The ability of the population to source services, facilities and employment is strongly influenced by access to transport. The majority of Shire residents rely on the car as their main form of transport, the remainder rely on privately owned bus services to meet their transport needs.

Almost 80% of Wyong residents who participated in the Quality of Life Survey used either their own motorised vehicle or one that they had access to in the three months prior to the survey. 11% of residents had used both a combination of private and public transport, 7% used public transport and 1.6% of residents stated that they generally walk and/or cycle. A significantly higher proportion of Wyong residents used their own vehicle in comparison to Gosford residents, while Gosford residents had a significantly higher proportion of residents using a combination of public and private transport (22%) (CCRF, 2008).

- **Private Transport**

The number of motor vehicles per household quantifies access to private transport. In 2006, 83.4% of households in the Shire owned at least one car, while 9.7% did not have a car compared with 80.4% and 11.2% in NSW respectively.

Overall 40.6% of households owned one car, 31.1% owned two cars and 11.7% owned three cars or more, compared with 36.7%, 31.4% and 12.3% respectively for NSW.



Table 13.1: Car Ownership (Vehicles per Household)

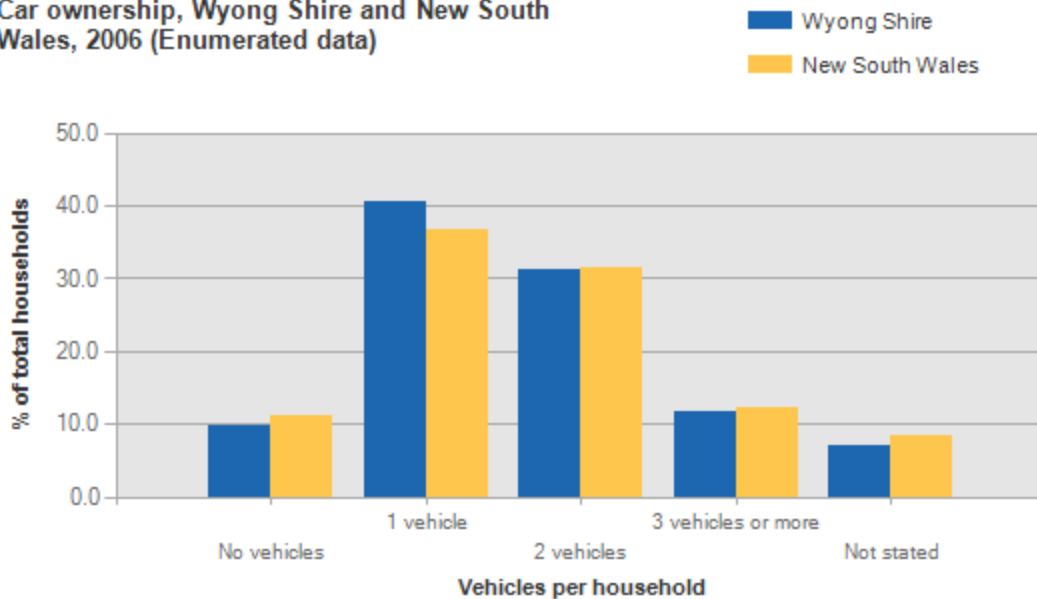
	2006			2001			Change 2001 - 2006
	No.	%	NSW %	No.	%	NSW %	
No vehicles	5,225	9.7	11.2	5,431	10.7	12.0	-206
1 vehicle	21,969	40.6	36.7	22,629	44.5	39.8	-660
2 vehicles	16,830	31.1	31.4	14,799	29.1	30.2	2,031
3 vehicles or more	6,326	11.7	12.3	4,880	9.6	10.8	1,446
Not stated	3,745	6.9	8.3	3,085	6.1	7.3	660
Total	54,095	100.0	100.0	50,824	100.0	100.0	3,271

Source: ABS Census 2001, 2006 (Wyong Shire Community Profile – .id Consulting).

The major difference between the car ownership of the households in Wyong Shire and NSW was:

- A larger percentage of households with 1 vehicle (40.6% compared to 36.7%).

Car ownership, Wyong Shire and New South Wales, 2006 (Enumerated data)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)



Between 2001 and 2006 the largest changed in household car ownership were with those households who owned:

- 2 vehicles (+2,031 households);
- 3 vehicles (+1,446 households);
- 1 vehicle (-660 households); and
- No vehicles (-206 households).

The shift in numbers between one car households to 2 or more car households may reflect the teenagers getting cars and issues associated with access to public transport.

Private transport was mentioned by consultation residents in terms of the costs of running a car. People indicated that they were finding it hard to meet the costs of owning and operating a private vehicle, especially in terms of running children around, driving to and from work, attending weekend sports etc, in conjunction with the competing issues of the rising costs of living, costs of extra-curricular activities etc. They also mentioned the impact of cars on the environment and traffic congestion.

In the light of rising fuel costs, the Quality of Life Survey asked residents whether they had either considered changing jobs to be closer to home, considered moving residence or walked or rode when they would not have. Almost one quarter of Wyong residents indicated that they had walked or rode a bike when they normally would not have (*CCRF, 2008*).

- **Public Transport**

Commercial contracts are the primary mechanism used to provide bus services on the Central Coast. Route bus services are provided under contract to the NSW Ministry of Transport (MOT) by three private bus companies: Busways, The Red Bus Service and Coastal Liner Coaches.

Busways operates services in Gosford City as well as in the following Wyong Shire areas:

- Blue Haven, Mannering Park, Chain Valley Bay (North and South), Lake Munmorah, Summerland Point and Gwandalan;



- Toukley, Noraville, Norah Head, Budgewoi, Buff Point, San Remo, Charmhaven and Doyalson; and
- Tuggerah, Wyong, Tacoma, Wyongah, Tuggerawong, Watanobbi, Warnervale, Woongarra, Hamlyn Terrace, Wadalba, Kanwal, Gorokan and Lake Haven.

Red Bus Service also operates services in Gosford City as well as the following services Wyong Shire:

- The Entrance to Gosford via Killarney Vale, Bay Village and Bateau Bay West;
- The Entrance to Wyong Hospital via Toowoan Bay, Killarney Vale, Glenning Valley, Chittaway Bay, Berkeley Vale, Tuggerah and Wyong;
- The Entrance to Wyong via Berkeley Vale, Glenning Valley, Chittaway Bay and Woodbury Park;
- Wyong to Chittaway Point;
- Bay Village to Wyong hospital via The Entrance, North Entrance, Toukley and Lake Haven;
- South Tacoma to Wyong;
- Mingara Club to Bay Village via Tumbi Umbi and Bateau Bay West;
- Bay Village to Wyong via Ourimbah, Kangy Angy and Tuggerah; and
- Bay Village loop via Killarney Vale, Mingara Club, Tumbi Umbi, Forresters Beach and Bateau Bay East.

Coastal Liner operates weekday route bus services linking Woongarra, Hamlyn Terrace, Warnervale and Jilliby with Lake Haven, Westfield Tuggerah and Wyong and weekend services to/from Lake Haven. They also operate weekday route bus services to/from Wye and Dooralong.

There have been some significant changes to contractual arrangements in terms of ability to pick up people out of a buses contractual area. The NSW Ministry of Transport has negotiated for a degree of flexibility to be exercised so that passengers are not left stranded because they are waiting in another companies contractual area.

The Shire is also serviced by the main Newcastle-Sydney railway line with main stations located at Tuggerah and Wyong. There is a small station at Warnervale, with plans to provide a new rail and bus interchange as part of the proposed Warnervale Town Centre, and at Ourimbah.



Approximately 25% of Central Coast residents had used some form of public transport (i.e. bus, train, ferry or taxi) in the three months prior to the Quality of Life Survey. Of those residents 72% were either mostly or always satisfied with the service. Those in the 18 - 24 year old age group were most likely to use public transport and this group was least satisfied. Residents were asked to nominate the single aspect of service which they thought needed improvement. These included frequency of service (33%), timelines/bus to train connections (11%) and safety and security (7%). Use of public transport was associated with lower income levels and lower wellbeing (CCRF, 2008).

Residents in the consultations repeatedly reported that Wyong Shire is particularly hard to get around without a car. Most residents indicated that the difficulty in accessing public transport is particularly significant for those people who are most economically disadvantaged and who do not have private motor vehicles. This includes young people, older people, culturally and linguistically diverse groups and unemployed people.

The geography together with the current settlement pattern presents a challenge for the provision of public transport links, especially within the smaller communities. Some residents expressed their worry of having to move closer to public transport hubs when they become less active. This possibility was seen as an undesirable compromise, as many people have moved to the more isolated suburbs of the Shire for the peace and quiet and laid back lifestyle.

Residents indicated that they would definitely utilise a good public transport system if available but acknowledged that without significant infrastructure investment, public transport services in the area would not improve. While most residents described the train service as good, there were a number of challenges regarding bus transport.

"We need better train and bus timetables. My husband does shift work and when he catches trains to work it takes 3 hours. We are better off spending \$300 per week on petrol than spending 6 hours per day commuting."

"A very fast train – less time commuting."



The challenges included:

Cost:

"It is so expensive to get from the Northern parts of the Shire to Westfield."

Regularity:

"There is virtually no service in non peak times or on the weekend."

Indirect Routes:

"To get to the beach the bus goes via Lake Haven and then all around the world before it actually gets to the beach, we are on the bus for at least one hour and it is only a short distance."

The Night Owl bus was described as a very valuable service by a large number of people. They reported that this service should be re-instated as it addressed safety, drink driving and transport issues and was well used.

Residents had observed buses driving around at non peak times mainly empty and thought that this was a waste of resources.

"The large buses drive around in non peak times with hardly anyone on them. They should look at using smaller shuttle type buses at these times."

Physical Accessibility and Design:

Not only did residents say that public transport was inadequate in terms of cost, regularity, routes, and availability, residents also mentioned that the physical design of buses made it hard for people to access buses. The lack of "kneeling buses" combined also with the many roads that do not have kerb and guttering make it extra high for people to step up onto the bus, especially people with disabilities, older people, children, mothers with prams etc.



People also talked about the lack of bus stops and especially the lack shelters in local areas, often if there is a sign designating a bus stop, it is nailed to a post or a telegraph pole with no shelter from the weather. Often shelters, because of the sponsorship factor, (advertisements on the shelters which help to cover the costs of a shelter) are not in the right location for people to easily access. This is because they have to have the advertising in a high traffic area, which may not necessarily meet the access needs of the local community.

"Better facilities for public transport, especially the provision of protected bus shelters. Despite being on a major bus route, the bus stop at Wadalba for transport to Wyong has no protection against the weather."

Some residents discussed the lack of lifts at train stations in both Wyong Shire and the wider region. Wyee station (which is significantly utilised by people in the northern parts of the Shire) does not have a lift, instead some eighty plus stairs to negotiate. Often people are travelling south from the Northern suburbs to Wyong station to be able to gain access to trains. People regularly expressed their frustrations at the non existence of the proposed Warnervale Town Centre train station.

Many residents, especially those living in the northern parts of the Shire expressed a desire for this station to be constructed as soon as possible. Residents indicated that the existence of a major rail station (similar to Gosford and Wyong) in the northern half of the Shire would make life easier and have a positive impact on the need to commute, family life and overall quality of life.



Did You Know?**Northern Transport Working Party**

This local working party became the Central Coast Congress Volunteer Group Winners in 2006, representing frustrated northern Wyong travellers. The group of motivated residents had a win with the Ministry of Transport, which enabled the State Transit Authority bus that travelled between Belmont and Morisset (for years) to take on and drop off passengers from the Wyong Shire. Wyee station with its 87 steps is not accessible for many people so the Morisset station with its lifts and regular services saves hours a day for residents that were forced to travel to Wyong Station. The group is a partnership between members of the northern Precinct groups, Progress groups, Mannering Park Country Women's Association and Combined Pensioners Superannuates Association (CPSA), supported by Wyong Shire Council's Community Development Worker.

• Journey to Work

In 2006, there were 2,848 people who caught public transport to work (train, bus, tram or ferry) in Wyong Shire, compared with 38,554 who drove in private vehicles (car – as driver, car – as passenger, motorbike, or truck).

Analysis of the method of travel to work of the residents in Wyong Shire in 2006 compared to New South Wales shows that 5.4% used public transport, while 72.8% used a private vehicle, compared with 12.3% and 64.4% respectively in New South Wales.

The major differences between the method of travel to work of Wyong Shire and New South Wales were:

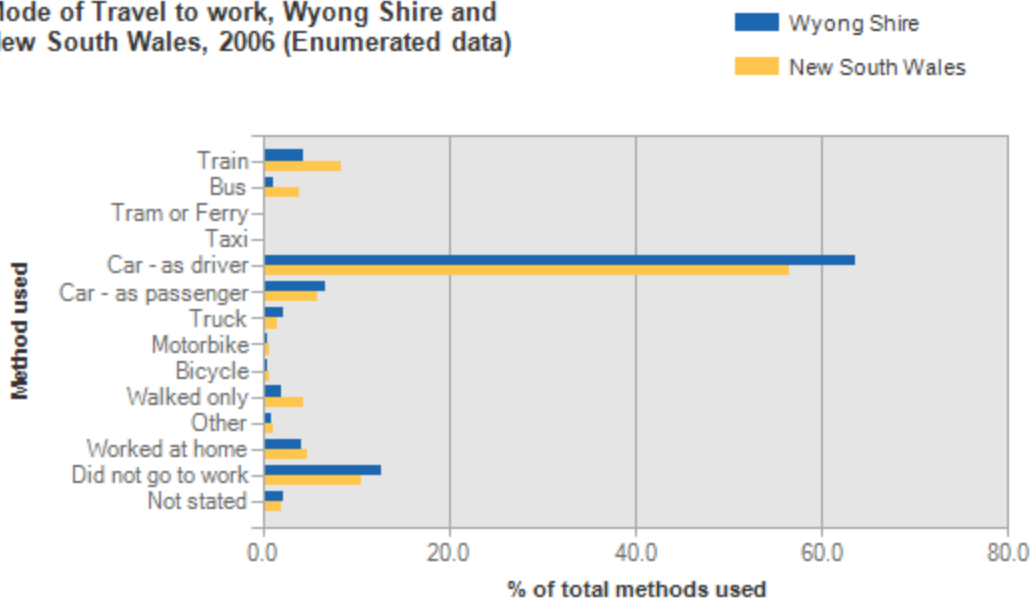
- A *larger* percentage of car - as driver commuters (63.5% compared to 56.5%);
- A *smaller* percentage of train commuters (4.3% compared to 8.3%);
- A *smaller* percentage of bus commuters (1.1% compared to 3.8%); and
- A *smaller* percentage of people who walked only (1.9% compared to 4.4%).



The largest changes in the method of travel to work by resident population in Wyong Shire between 2001 and 2006 were for those nominated:

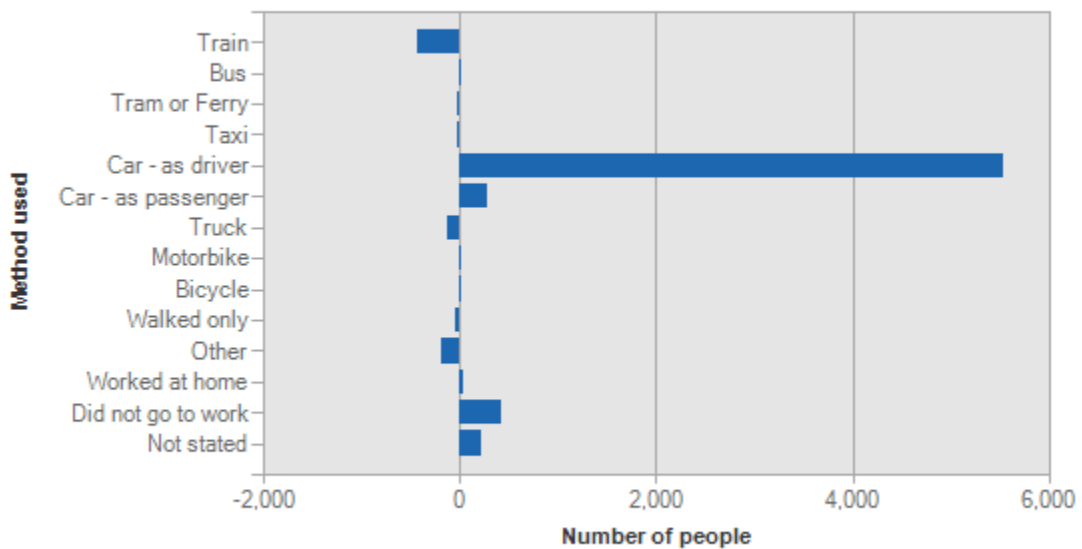
- Car - as driver (+5,546 persons);
- Did not go to work (+429 persons);
- Car - as passenger (+282 persons); and
- Train (-428 persons).

Mode of Travel to work, Wyong Shire and New South Wales, 2006 (Enumerated data)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)

Change in mode of travel to work, Wyong Shire, 2001 to 2006 (Enumerated data)



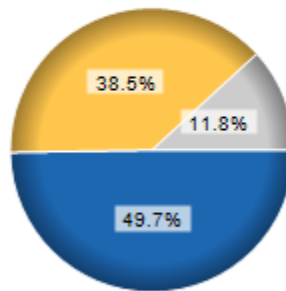
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 and 2001 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated)



In 2006, 49.7% of employed persons living in Wyong Shire (26,784 people) worked within the Shire; 38.5% (20,718 people) worked outside of the Shire and a further 11.8% (6,353 people) worked in a location which was not specified.

Employment location of residents

■ Within the Shire
 ■ Outside the Shire
 ■ Work location unknown or not stated



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Journey to work, unpublished data, 2006

The top 10 local government areas of employment for residents in the Shire were: Wyong (49.7%), Gosford (17.6%), Lake Macquarie (2.8%), Sydney City (2.7%), Hornsby (2.2%), Newcastle (1.9%), Willoughby (1.0%), Ryde (0.7%), Parramatta (0.7%) and Ku-ring-gai (0.7%).

The data shows that 36,292 (67.3%) of employed residents worked on the Central Coast and 17,563 (32.7%) were employed outside of the region. Between 2001 and 2006 the number of people commuting outside of the region for work has increased by 2,302 however, the proportion has remained stable.

- **Transport for Young People**

All population groups, both older and young mentioned the impacts of a lack of appropriate transport on young people, ranging from social impacts to financial and safety impacts.

"It is very important to improve the transport system on the Central Coast for young people – for them it is so hard to get around."

Similarly to the wider population, young people experienced a range of challenges associated with public transport in Wyong Shire.



Costs: The costs of public transport on the Central Coast is especially hard for young people who are on little or very limited income.

Indirect Routes: What would be a fifteen minute trip to the beach is up to 1½ hours on public transport.

Safety: Young people who work casually are often required to work outside of normal working hours. This presents a challenge to young people travelling home on public transport – often they are on their own, travelling significant distances at night.

Social Impacts: Transport in Wyong Shire has significant impacts on the social capabilities of young people. The cost, lack of services and indirect routes make young people quite isolated and unable to get to their social outings without the use of private transport.

Many people suggested special transport services for young people, e.g. a beach bus service, etc.

- **Taxi Services**

Many older residents (especially those living in the northern half of the Shire from Toukley up) discussed the difficulty in accessing taxis.

Their experiences of accessing taxi services were very similar to each other and described that often when they had ordered a taxi, the taxi service would refuse small trips, not arrive at all, or take a significantly long period of time to turn up.

Most people expressed their frustration at this occurrence as often people were requiring taxis for short direct trips (to do the shopping, to and from home, etc.) often with heavy groceries where bus transport was not appropriate.

- **Limit on Driving Age**

Many of the older residents in the focus groups and conversations described the impact of the limits on driving age. People spoke of the difficulties of getting around the Central Coast without a car, especially as an older resident who has previously held a drivers licence.



This event, combined with the lack of good and accessible transport options has been described as the catalyst for many older people feeling isolated and cut off from the wider community.

- **Cycleways and Pathways**

A significant number of residents (particularly older people, young people and families with young children) described walking to local shops, parks and schools as very important to them. For this group the availability of wide, well maintained pathways, shade and places to sit along the way were essential improvements Council could work on.

Children who participated in focus groups described riding their bikes to friend's houses, the park and the shops. The provision of a network of bike paths separate from the road was important to the community.

- **Roads and Traffic**

Whilst road issues on the Central Coast are not a significantly important issue compared to transport, balancing work and life, spending time with families and connecting with neighbours and the community, residents continually mentioned the condition of roads in Wyong Shire as frustrating. Examples included flooding roads, pot holes and inadequate roads for traffic volume.

Some people felt that the appropriate government body, e.g. Council or the RTA does not listen to them in relation to road issues. For example, people indicated that Council should have a better mechanism than the Traffic Committee to be able to listen to and address road issues.

Residents expressed their frustration at the increased traffic and congestion on Central Coast roads. People indicated that poor public transport systems on the Central Coast is the reason for the numbers of cars on local roads.



People acknowledged the difficulty in getting around Wyong Shire without a car and therefore could understand the increase in traffic congestion and the numbers of cars on the roads, however they were increasingly annoyed at the long journey times and time spent getting to and from a destination because of traffic congestion. It was also understood that the current level of congested traffic is clearly linked to the upgrading of many significant roads in the area.

Other people (mostly moving from Sydney) expressed their opinion that Central Coast traffic is fantastic and not congested or busy at all (compared to Sydney).

Did You Know?

Alternative, Innovative Thinking in Transportation Planning

"If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places."

The power of this simple idea is that it reflects basic truths that are rarely acknowledged. One such truth is that more traffic and road capacity are not the inevitable result of growth. They are in fact the product of very deliberate choices that we have made to shape our communities around the private automobile. We as a society have the ability to make different choices-starting with the decision to design our streets as comfortable places for people.

Downtown streets can become destinations worth visiting, not just thruways to and from the workplace. Transit stops and stations can make commuting by rail or bus a pleasure. Neighbourhood streets can be places where parents can feel safe letting their children play, and commercial strips can be redeveloped into grand boulevards, safe for walking and cycling, allowing for faster-moving through traffic as well as slower-paced local traffic.

To be sure, cars have their place, but the newfound ease of walking and "alternative transportation modes" can make driving less prevalent in most towns and cities. As a result, we will see significantly more people on the streets, which will turn into public forums where neighbours and friends can connect with each other.

Project for Public Spaces has a radical idea-transportation can create great places, not destroy them. We see the vast amount of urban land dedicated to cars, traffic, and parking lots as a huge opportunity to create public spaces that serve community. Transportation can be the handmaiden of this transformation - by redeveloping facilities from highways to boulevards, from parking lots to mixed-use transit oriented development, and from nowhere to someplace.



Rule One: Stop Planning for Speed

Speed kills a sense of place. Cities and town centres are destinations, not raceways. Commerce needs traffic-foot traffic. You can't buy a dress from a car. Even foot traffic speeds up in the presence of fast-moving cars. Access, not automobiles, should be the priority in city centres. Don't ban cars, but remove the presumption in their favour. People first! Stop planning for speed by removing the presumption in favour of cars.

Rule Two: Start Planning for Public Outcomes

"Right-sizing" road projects in cities and suburbs can help increase developable land, create open space, and reconnect communities to their neighbours, a waterfront, or a park. They can reduce household dependency on the automobile, allowing children to walk to school, connecting commercial districts to downtowns, and helping build healthier lifestyles by increasing the potential to walk or cycle. Think public benefit, not just private convenience.

Wide footpaths and pedestrian-friendly crossings are transportation improvements with a public benefit.

Rule Three: Think of Transportation as Public Space

The road, the parking area, the transport interchange - these places can serve more than one mode (cars) and one purpose (movement). Footpaths are the urban arterials of communities - make them wide, well lit, stylish and accommodating with benches, outdoor cafes and public art. Roads can be shared spaces with pedestrian refuges, bike lanes, on-street parking etc. Parking lots can become public markets on weekends. Even major urban arterials can be retrofitted to provide for dedicated bus lanes, well-designed bus stops that serve as gathering places, and multi-modal facilities for bus rapid transit or other forms of travel. Roads are places too!

Transportation is public space to be shared by pedestrians, bikes, transit, and cars. Transportation is the process of going to a place. It is important to remember that transportation is the journey, but community should always be the goal.

Source: Planning for Public Spaces Website, 2008



What We Can Do

What Council Can Do:

While Council is not a direct provider of transport or transport services, various sections and specific staff of Council play a role in supporting, lobbying, and planning for transport services in Wyong Shire and for the Central Coast as a whole.

Council employs transportation engineers who are directly responsible for the planning and co-ordination of Council owned roads in the Shire. These staff also work closely with other transport related state government departments such as the RTA, Rail Corp, Ministry of Transport, etc.

The primary role of Council is to advocate for additional transport related resources for Wyong Shire, especially in the isolated village suburbs to the north of the Shire to encourage the improvement and integration of public transport networks.

Developers in new communities are requested to submit reports to Council to show how they are encouraging the use of public transport within their developments.

Council is an advocate and can work with other organisations such as, Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service and local schools to promote and encourage alternative transportation programmes such as cycling.

Council continues to be involved in the Central Coast Transport working group.

Ongoing discussions are continuing with the Ministry of Transport regarding bus servicing arrangements for the Central Coast. The Ministry have advised Council that the Central Coast will be given high priority in its review of bus servicing arrangements.

Council co-ordinates the Wyong Shire Traffic Committee that meets monthly to consider various traffic and transport related issues.



In addition, Council's current role includes:

- Lobbying for improved co-ordination of the various modes of public transport;
- Support for community transport services that specialise in transport for older people and people with disabilities;
- Transport and traffic planning that encourages more effective, safe and accessible transport routes and infrastructure;
- Encouraging and lobbying for improved access to transport options for older people and people with disabilities;
- Advocating an increase in the coordination and frequency of transport services;
- Support alternative transport systems and encourage active transport systems, e.g. mixed use paths for cyclists and pedestrians;
- Planning, constructing and maintaining a system of networks for shared pathways (mixed use) for cyclists and pedestrians; and
- Ensuring the capacity of the transport links between the Central Coast and Sydney are increased to provide adequate links to encourage employment-generating development in the area.

Council also has a leadership role in lobbying government for transport subsidies and work with transport providers to develop strategies to achieve an affordable and efficient public transport system.

Council's role in the future could be enhanced by:

Encouraging the Ministry of Transport and private bus companies to trial a smaller-scale public transport service to provide a regular service to key locations e.g. Shopping centres etc;

Working in partnership to establish a transport taskforce to work collaboratively with State Government departments such as the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA), Ministry of Transport (MOT), Rail Corp, etc.



What Other Organisations Can Do:

- Work in partnership with other agencies, community and Council to improve transport systems in the Shire.
- Encourage community activism.
- Advocate and lobby on behalf of the community.
- Provide alternative community transport options.

What the community Can Do:

- Look at local solutions to transport issues, e.g. Northern Transport Working Group.
- Active lobbying in partnership with Council to improve public transport services in Wyong Shire.
- Adopting positive attitudes to public and alternative transport options.
- Considering energy efficient transport options, e.g. walking, cycling, car pooling.

What I Can Do:

- Provide transport to young people who would not otherwise be able to participate in community activities.
- Use public transportation and start talking with those you regularly see.
- Organise a 'Walking School Bus' that encourages young people to walk to school rather than being driven.



On the Move Action Plan

What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
Improved Transportation Systems	Continue to work actively with government, transport providers and community groups to advocate and lobby for improved bus services through the Ministry of Transport review of bus servicing on the Central Coast.	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning, Community Development.	Transport Action Groups, NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	Within existing
	Assist in the identification of transport needs and work with partners to address transport disadvantage and gaps in Wyong Shire.	Years 1 - 5	Community Development, Future Planning.	Transport Action Groups, NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	Within existing
	Continue to lobby for and encourage small locally based initiatives to help address transport disadvantage e.g. Budgewoi Cinema Bus	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning, Community Development.	Transport Action Groups, NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	Within existing
	Continue involvement and input into the Central Coast Transport Working Group	Years 1 - 5	Future Planning	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	Within existing
	Review the provision of bus shelter design and location to ensure shelters provide accessibility, convenience and shelter from the elements. Recommend appropriate locations.	Year 3	Engineering Services, Future Planning	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members	Within existing
	Advocate to State Rail for continued upgrading of train stations (including Wyee) to ensure accessibility.	Years 1-5	Future Planning	Transport Action Groups, NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members.	Within existing
	Investigate the feasibility of implementing a set route shared ride Maxi Taxi scheme in the Northern areas of the Shire.	Year 3	Community Development, Community Education Unit	Community Groups, Transport Action Groups, Community Members, Taxi Services.	Within existing



What we aim to achieve	How we are going to achieve it and why	Timeframe	Council Section Responsibility & Involvement of Other Sections	Community Partners	Resources
	Investigate the provision of a beach bus service for young people during school holidays.	Year 3	Community Development, Community Education Unit, Future Planning	Youth Advisory Council, Youth Workers, Youth Services, Young People, Bus Companies	Ministry of Transport
	Support existing, and investigate the further provision of 'walking school buses'.	Year 2	Community Education Unit, Community Development.	NGO's, Community Groups, Community Members, Schools	Within existing
	Complete the draft Bike Plan with comprehensive public and other sector consultation and report to Council.	Year 1	Open Space & Recreation	NGO's, Community Groups, Sporting Groups, Community Members, Young People	\$S94 funds
	Provide integrated pathways that connect and link to key areas within and between communities i.e. Parks and open space areas, community centres, town centres, transport hubs, medical facilities, recreation facilities, shops and schools etc.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Open Space and Recreation	NGO's, Community Groups, Sporting groups, People with Disabilities, Community Members	\$S94 funds, revenue, grant funding
	Encourage the RTA to formalise the existing informal parking areas for car pooling at different locations in the Shire e.g. F3 freeway and Wyong Rd, F3 Freeway and Sparks Rd, Ourimbah Interchange, Pacific Hwy and Kanangra Dr.	Current & Years 1 - 5	Future Planning	Roads & Traffic Authority	Within existing







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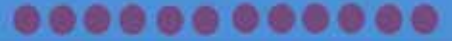
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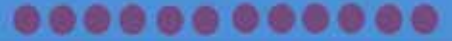
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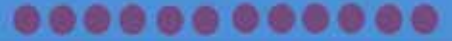
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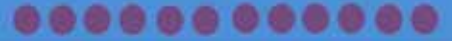
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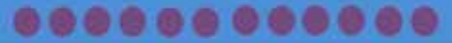
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Appendices

Appendix A - Wyong Shire Community Plan 2002

The Wyong Shire Community Plan 2002 encompassed key social issues focusing on people's quality of life in the community. The plan built on comprehensive consultations held locally and regionally to identify these issues. The Plan set the context for each issue area, outlined Council's response and role and the key strategies and action required to be pursued.

The Community Plan proved to be a valuable resource document for services providers and the community.

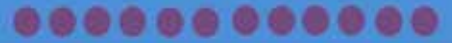
The plan identified over 200 action areas under key themes. Upon review, the Plan was very ambitious and whilst progress was made against many action areas, other actions were not completed due to changing priorities, the large number of actions and limited resources. A key lesson in developing the new Community Plan was to have fewer actions and clearer priorities for each year of implementation to enable improved integration with Council's Management Plan.

Key Achievements of the Community Plan 2002 include:

Community Support

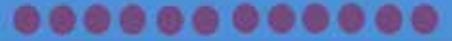
- Construction of multi-purpose community centres at Kanwal, Mardi, Wadalba, Berkeley Vale and Blue Haven.
- Acquisition of the Old Infants School Site and The Entrance and completion of the planning and development for The Entrance Community Centre.
- Construction of "Gravity" multi-purpose Youth Centre at Lake Haven.
- Establishment of a Community Cultural Centre in Wyong.
- Planning and feasibility studies for a Performing Arts Centre in Wyong.





- Advocacy for the continued funding of the Warnervale Family and Community Centre.
- Implementation of the Community Support and Human Services Plan for Warnervale/Wadalba and planning for community facilities within Warnervale Town Centre.
- Support for the establishment of a Police Citizens and Youth Club (PCYC) at EDSACC Bateau Bay.
- Partnership to support and stage the Central Coast Community Congress.
- Success in advocating for the Benevolent Society to receive \$3.5 million Federal Government funding for the 2261 Communities for Children's Project.
- Facilitation of collaborative planning processes between Council, State and Federal Government agencies, the non-government sector and the community.
- Support for the expansion of early intervention and prevention (parenting and family support) programmes.
- Provision of high quality affordable children's services.
- Establishment of a Youth Advisory Committee.
- Funding of the Birth to Kindergarten early intervention literacy programme and introduction of the mother goose pre-literacy programme at Lake Haven Library.
- Financial support for the Family Violence Prevention project.
- Secured Families First and Regional Partnerships Funding for the North Wyong Integrated Child and Family Centre Project (2 years).
- Success in obtaining Area Assistance Scheme Funding for an Aboriginal Youth Outreach Worker based at Gravity Youth Centre.
- Production of the Central Coast: Regional Profile and Social Atlas in collaboration with Gosford City Council, Central Coast Health and the University of Newcastle.





- Development of on-line population and household forecasts for the Shire and sub-areas.
- Upgrading of the Central Coast Community Directory and establishment of a families website www.centralcoastfamilies.com.au.
- Development of a framework to measure and monitor Quality of Life.

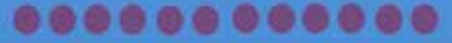
Community Development

- Adoption and ongoing promotion of a strengths-based approach to community development.
- Facilitation of successful asset based community development projects across the Shire.
- Implementation of the Watanobbi Welcome Programme in partnership with Landcom.
- Appointment of a Cultural Planner.
- Development and implementation of A Cultural Plan for Wyong Shire.
- Development and implementation of a Community Benefits Grants Programme and a Cultural Grants Programme.
- Support for cultural diversity and encouragement of residents to participate in cultural activities and events.
- Implementation of Community Art projects.
- Development of a Public Arts Policy and framework to implement public and community art projects.

Education

- Funding of education scholarships for students who were financially disadvantaged.
- Introduction of homework help at Tuggerah Library.





- Successful in advocating for the Central Coast to be considered as an education sub-region.
- Implementation of community education programmes on the environment and road safety.
- Enhanced training and employment opportunities within Council through Trainee Programme.
- Co-operative planning with the Department of Education and Training to identify school sites in Warnervale.
- Co-operative planning with the Department of Education and Training to allow for the expansion of Blue Haven School and the shared use of community and recreation facilities.
- Completed a Community Use of Schools project to provide community use of school facilities out of school hours.

Employment

- Rezoning for the Wyong Employment Zone (WEZ).
- Planning for Warnervale Town Centre.
- Improved processing times for major employment generating developments.
- Town Centre upgrades – Wyong.
- Development of a Central Coast logo.
- Establishment of a Manager Business Development position.

Health

- Partner in the establishment of the Links to Health Medical Centre at Warnervale.
- Provision of space within Gravity Youth Centre for a youth health service.
- Promotion of healthy lifestyle programmes, e.g. Wyong Workfit.





- Support for the development of a strategy to improve the delivery of primary health care.
- Continued advocacy for improved access to GPS for residents.

Housing

- Secured partnership funding under the Department of Housing Local Government Housing Initiatives Programme to prepare an Affordable Housing Strategy.
- Development of the "*Promoting Choice: A Local Housing Strategy for Wyong Shire*".
- Provision of funding for emergency accommodation services in Wyong Shire.

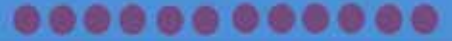
Community Safety

- Secured funding from the Community Solutions and Crime Prevention Strategy for a Youth Place Space Co-ordinator at Lake Haven.
- Engagement of young people in public space planning in Lake Haven.
- Development of a crime risk assessment protocol to identify types of development that require a crime risk assessment as part of the DA process.
- Application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles.
- Support for Community Drug Action Teams (CDATs) at San Remo.
- Development of targeted programmes to improve road user behaviour.
- Establishment of CARES facility at Ourimbah.

Public Transport

- Support for the implementation of the Central Coast Transport Action Plan.
- Continued advocacy for an improved public transport system.

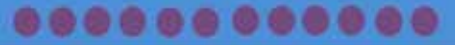




Leisure, Recreation and Open Space

- Completion and implementation of a Local Parks Strategy.
- Completion of a major upgrade of Toowoon Bay Surf Club.
- Completion of Jubilee Park redevelopment.
- Completion of Stage 2 of the Regional Hockey Complex at Pollock Avenue.
- Construction of an Extreme Sports Park at San Remo.
- Completion of a review and update of the Bicycle Plan.
- Upgrade of Lake Haven Recreation Centre.
- Provision of new Skate parks at Lake Haven, Blue Haven and Berkeley Vale.
- Extension of the cycleway, shared pathway networks.
- Commencement of planning for the Warnervale Aquatic Centre.
- Continued support of Landcare groups
- Upgrades to existing sportsgrounds.



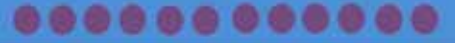


Appendix B - Known participants in the Community Plan Consultations

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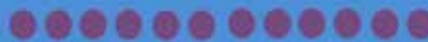
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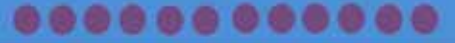
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Appendix C - Consultation Responses relating to each Question Asked

Where Do You Live?

Toukley Social Planning District

Toukley	Noraville	Norah Head	Canton Beach
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San Remo/Budgewoi Social Planning District

Blue Haven	Budgewoi	Buff Point	San Remo
Doyalson	Halekulani		

Gorokan Social Planning District

Gorokan	Lake Haven	Kanwal	Wyongah
Charmhaven			

The Entrance Social Planning District

Bateau Bay	Long Jetty	Blue Bay	Shelly Beach
Toowoan Bay	The Entrance	North Entrance	

Ourimbah/Rural South Social Planning District

Fountaindale	Kangy Angy	Ourimbah	Rural South
Palmdale			

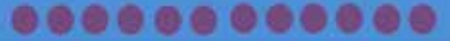
Warnervale/Wadalba Social Planning District

Hamlyn Terrace	Woongarra	Warnervale	Wadalba
Wallarah			

Wyong Social Planning District

Wyong	Tuggerah	Mardi	Watanobbi
Tuggerawong	Tacoma	Tacoma South	Rocky Point
Chittaway Point			





Southern Lakes Social Planning District

Berkeley Vale	Chittaway Bay	Tumbi Umbi	Glennings Valley
Killarney Vale	Tumbi Rural		

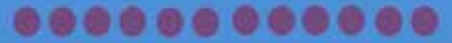
Rural West Social Planning District

Cedar Brush	Yarramalong	Dooralong	Wyong Creek
Jiliby	Kulnura	Lemon Tree	Ravensdale

Northern Lakes Social Planning District

Chain Valley Bay	Elizabeth Bay	Lake Munmorah	Mannering Park
Gwandalan	Summerland Point		





How Long have you Lived in this Community?

There was a broad representation of long term residents, medium term residents and residents who had just moved to the area.

Time spent in the Shire ranged from just a few months to people who had lived in the Shire all their lives. This allowed differing views to emerge about what it's like to live in the Shire.

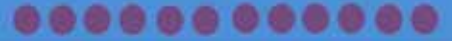
Interestingly, as an example, people who have lived in the Shire for a fairly significant period of time (e.g. 15+ years) remember back to when the Wyong Shire was a much quieter, less busy place that had a limited range of shops, less traffic and less people generally. These people on the whole felt that the area had changed significantly in the time they had lived here – sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse.

On the other hand, people newly arrived to the Shire from other areas felt that Wyong Shire is a peaceful, quiet place with not much traffic or congestion.

Many people who were new arrivals to the Shire indicated that they had a long time familiarity with the area as they had holidayed in the Shire as children and still thought of the area as a tranquil and relaxing area

This is just one example of the diverse range of responses which reflect on the amount of time and perception of change gained from experience of living in the Shire.





What First Brought You/Your Family Here?

"A removalist van" – one of the humorous responses from a member of a focus group held at San Remo.

The most highly reported reasons for moving to the Shire were:

- The lifestyle the area offers;
- Affordability of the area;
- Work purposes;
- To be closer to friends and family; and
- The natural environment the area has to offer.

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

According to residents in the consultations, Wyong Shire is a good or better place than other areas to raise children and bring up a family. Many people commented that they moved to this area specifically to have a family and give their children a better quality of life.

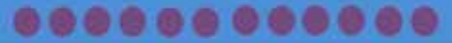
"I grew up here and then moved to Sydney. We got married and had kids and decided to come back here with our children. We wanted our kids to have a similar growing up experience as we did."

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

"We holidayed here as children at Long Jetty and decided to move with the family here permanently."

The affordability category directly related to the (once) greater availability of 'more attractive and larger' houses and land than had been available in other areas, coupled with the close proximity of the lakes and beaches compared to similar in Sydney.





"We moved here because we couldn't afford to live in Sydney anymore."

"We couldn't afford to live in Sydney and have the same type of house we have here."

"It's cheaper to buy a house on the Central Coast than in Sydney."

Comments received from a significant number of residents did indicate that they would not be able to move into the area if they had to purchase a property now, as house and land prices have increased considerably, making the area much less affordable. Many comments from residents indicated this:

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

"Land was cheaper so we could build. This has changed now."

"We moved here because the house was cheap! We couldn't afford to buy here now though."

Many people stated that they moved to the Shire for work purposes, although a majority of residents expressed disappointment and frustration at the lack of employment range in Wyong Shire and on the Central Coast, therefore forcing people to commute thus impacting on their quality of life in their community. There were mixed feelings about living in the Shire from those who moved here for work purposes.

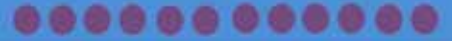
Some people were very disappointed at living in the area:

"We transferred here with work. Not by choice."

While other people who moved here for work purposes, love living in the Shire:

"We relocated here for my husband's new job. We wanted to get out of Sydney and we absolutely love it here."





A significant number of residents stated that they moved to the Shire to be closer to friends and family:

"We moved here to be closer to parents."

"We moved here because it's closer to our relatives in Sydney."

"We moved to be closer to family."

The natural environment rated very highly as a reason for moving to the area. People love the natural environment that Wyong Shire offers. Residents regularly commented on their love of the natural aspects of the Shire such as the lakes, beaches, bushland and animals.

The diversity of the Shire was a feature that was highly valued by residents. Most people regularly mentioned the range of natural features, from the mountains and bushland to the hinterland, rural farming areas, lake foreshore, lakes, beaches and ocean.

"It's a hidden treasure. I love the natural environment – the water, wild birds and the lake edge."

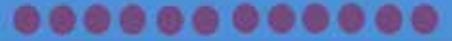
The attractiveness of the area as a place to live directly related to the preservation of the natural environment. People love the natural features of the Shire, but are becoming increasingly concerned about the degradation of these places. There was a strong view expressed by residents that Council has a key role to play in preserving the natural environment. People felt that to preserve the environment, Council should encourage balanced development rather than unchecked population growth, retain the green spaces and replant appropriate lost trees in the area.

What is it Like for You to Live in this Community?

Overall, most residents indicated that living in Wyong Shire is quite good; however there are both positive and negative aspects of life in the Shire.

On a positive note, residents expressed that the area is generally quiet, peaceful and relaxing, especially when compared to where people had previously lived (Sydney, Gosford City, and Newcastle etc). People reflected on the laid back holiday nature of the area and the freedom people feel living here.





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

"We've never been so happy as we are now - living here."

"The area is more crowded, has less trees, is less civilised, less interesting, has less good food – both at restaurants and materials to cook at home. It is much further from my work and work linked social activities, there is a reduced availability of medical services that we need, and our friends are much further away."

The sense of community of a place plays the most critical role in whether people feel good about living within a community. Most residents described that they had never lived in a friendlier place:

"It is wonderful to live in Wyong Shire. It is extremely quiet with plenty of room. It is a great place to raise kids as there are great schools. There is a warm feeling in the community and people are quick to establish caring relationships to catch up with others, chat and establish contacts."

"The people are very friendly here."

"It is an excellent diverse community. Support is there if we need it."

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

"People are so caring here. We are involved with our neighbours and kid's school which is really nice."

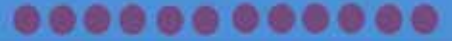
Some residents described a less positive experience – they feel discriminated against, isolated, disconnected and lonely:

"People who you interact with every day are friendly, but people who don't know you behave with prejudice and fear."

"There is not a good sense of community in this area. We feel quite isolated."

"There is no trust amongst the neighbours here."





"It's getting too much like Sydney. People just don't care. We are losing the village atmosphere."

People also generally feel very safe living here, especially when compared to where they previously lived:

"It's great living in the area. At the moment it is very rural, very peaceful and quiet during the day. We have really good neighbours who look out for you. It is a place where you feel safe walking at night. I live in a cul-de-sac street which creates a sense of community and character."

"It's safe to walk around day and night."

There is the increasing fear however, that this is changing:

"It has changed since we moved here. There's more people and traffic. It is still good though. We like it here. There are social problems – my car was stolen last week, but that's a small price to pay."

"People feel that it's not as safe as it used to be."

"There are some aspects of social unrest and fear creeping in."

The environment of the place plays a key role in people having a positive experience of living in the Shire. Most people who have moved to the area initially moved because they were attracted to the natural beauty of the area and the cleaner fresher environment that Wyong Shire offers:

"The birds and the clean environment are wonderful."

"A real sense of peace and visual beauty can be found in the natural environment here."

"We love the water and the waterways. We absolutely love the Central Coast."

People are becoming increasingly concerned however that the physically beautiful, peaceful, friendly and safe nature of the area is rapidly changing. People feel worried that the Wyong Shire they live in today will not be the same in 5 years if it keeps going the way it has been going:

"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."

"Right now it's very frightening, the future of the area is uncertain and under threat. It's not the way we want it to be."

"Friendly but I'm not pleased about the continued level of development."

"I think it's a great area, but I think the lack of infrastructure needs to be addressed."

What do You see your Community or Social Network as being?

Community is not necessarily about connecting with people in a geographic location. Community can be defined in two ways: Communities of place and Communities of interest. Communities of place are defined by geographic characteristics and context. Communities of interest are defined by the mutual identity and interests shared across particular groups of people which can exist within or across communities of place. It is possible for a 'place' to lack a strong sense of community, and conversely, it is possible for there to be a strong sense of community among people who don't share a 'place'.

In the responses to this question, residents demonstrated that very idea. People in our community identified that their community in most cases not just about their geographic suburb, but rather about the people and groups they connect with across the whole of the Shire, the Central Coast and even stretching to other wider areas such as Sydney and Newcastle.

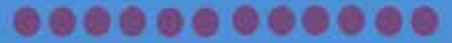
Often, when referring to a 'place' as their community, people were talking about their half of the street, or their cluster of neighbours rather than a group of streets or the entire suburb.

Making connections with people is very important to our community, especially as we have a significant number of new residents moving in to the Shire, who have moved away from their families, friends and support networks.

In responding to this question, residents usually talked about the vast range of communities that they are involved in and also usually allocated a rating to each community for example:

"My family is my first and foremost community."





Involvement in community, sporting, cultural, formal and informal groups, social clubs and volunteering was described by people as the key to firstly fitting in and getting to know the ins and outs of that community and finding a place in the community, and secondly making friends and connections:

"The centre has been an absolute lifeline for me. I came here to try one group and now I am a volunteer involved in so many things."

"Being involved at the kid's school has helped me to get to know a lot of different people and families."

"It's important to get out and be involved. In this community, if you make an effort, you will be involved in the community."

For many people who moved to Wyong Shire from other areas, their neighbours have made all the difference in fitting in and feeling at home in their new suburb:

"Toukley is so friendly. It is just like the country and our neighbours have made us feel so welcome and accepted in the street."

Others felt that their street was not their point for social connection or interaction:

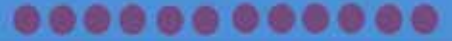
"I would love to get to know the neighbours better, but they are very busy and just don't seem to have the time. My community is the church."

Young people indicated that their communities were centred around both place and interest. Educational institutions such as school, TAFE and University and groups such as dance classes as well as family and friends both in same suburbs and across the wider Wyong Shire were the most important to young people.

Do you Feel like You are a Part of your Community?

Initially, most people responded to this question with an overwhelming yes. This could be attributed the fact that most of the people we spoke with were connected in some form to their community, whether that be through the local school, through their children, through an interest group etc. therefore increasing the positive experience in feeling connected.





After further analysis of the responses to the question, it emerged that the responses were closely linked to how residents defined their communities and social networks in the previous question.

After being asked the previous question “What do you see your community or social network as being?” and responding in a variety of ways, representing both communities of place and communities of interest, people therefore did feel like a part of their community.

For example, many residents responded that their community was not necessarily about the place they live, but it is about the people and groups they connect with, e.g. their family and friends, the craft group, action group, playgroup etc.

Naturally with a range of communities in mind, most people responded that yes they felt connected to their community, in fact many residents felt very connected to, and a part of a range of different communities.

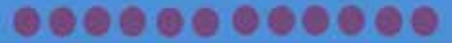
Some people were isolated and did not feel like a part of either their community of place or in terms of communities of interest. For example, some people from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background felt isolated in terms of the place they live and within the wider Central Coast, but felt very connected to the communities of their families, friends and cultural group. People from these groups even felt like a part of the area from which they had come, e.g. particular locations in Sydney where a community of their cultural group lives.

Some people felt like their age excluded them from being accepted in the community where they live, and the wider Shire. Young people are a group who feel sometimes excluded from the wider community, but mostly accepted by their peers.

Some residents also responded that in terms of feeling like a part of the community, it is also the local knowledge and workings of a community that makes you feel like a part of it.

“It’s about familiarity – things you know intimately about the place you live, for example – where to eat, where not to go on a Saturday night, where the ‘secret’ surf spot is – it’s the nuts and bolts of a community.”





What Makes You Feel Happy in your Life?

This question was initially quite hard for people to answer. Most people were quite taken aback and had to think for a few moments before answering.

Being Involved in the Community and Helping People

Keeping in line with the major theme of involvement in community to connect and link people, residents indicated that being involved and active in their community and helping people is a major factor that makes them happy. For many residents, being involved and connected is how they keep busy and feel needed.

"Giving back to the community makes me feel really happy."

"When I can use my skills to see an outcome in the community, e.g. join a community organisation and work on a project and see a result. That makes me happy."

"I like to be doing things that help other people, e.g. at the Senior Citizen's Centre."

"The satisfaction of helping people."

Friends, Family and Connections with People

Obviously, most residents responded by saying that their friends and family make them feel happy. This emphasises the importance of social networks, connections and linkages as well as support networks like family.

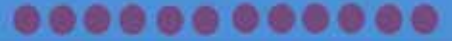
"My family of course – my four children."

"Family – most of my family live close by."

"Family connections first and foremost – my children and grandchildren live close by."

"I am a very social person – with people I am in my element."





Enjoying Life and the Lifestyle the Area Offers

Residents responded that the laid back, carefree and less stressed nature of the area is a factor that makes them feel happy. The 'simple things' in life and the outdoor nature of the area is key to making people feel happy.

"Having a cup of tea out in the fresh air. It's the simple things that make me happy."

"Sitting in a coffee shop by the beach and watching the world go by."

"It's a relaxed and friendly atmosphere."

"It's an outdoor lifestyle – fresh air, ability to get out and walk or cycle."

The Natural Beauty of the Area

The good clean environment and the natural beauty of the area makes people feel happy:

"The beautiful natural environment of the Shire makes me feel happy."

"Being able to breathe clean fresh air."

"The physical environment and the preservation of all the green spaces, lakes and beaches."

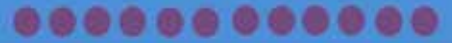
Having Enough Money

Residents meant that by having enough money, they are able to live in an area they want, in a house they like, with enough money left over (after paying the bills and meeting expenses), to be able to enjoy some leisure pursuits e.g. going out to dinner, going to the movies etc. When people responded to this topic they did not mean lavish homes and leisure pursuits, but just more the simple things in life:

"We have always had 2 incomes which makes a difference to quality of life in that we have enough money to do the things we want to do."

"We are fairly well off (without being wealthy) which contributes to being happy."





"We have enough money to be able to live where we wanted. This makes us feel happy."

What are the Best Things/High Points about Living where you Live?

Residents described the environment, the friendly atmosphere and sense of community, feeling safe, the lifestyle of the area and the development of the area as the best things about living in Wyong Shire.

The Friendly Atmosphere and Sense of Community

People rated this highly because of the importance for people to feel accepted, included and connected to their community. Residents generally felt that Wyong Shire is particularly friendly and has a great or even better sense of community than where they lived before. The friendly atmosphere and sense of community is one of the best things about living in the Shire:

"Most people say hello and know each other. It has a real villagey feeling."

"I wouldn't move from here at all. I like the feeling. Community people."

"In the whole community there is a very friendly atmosphere."

"People talk to each other."

"People say hello when you're out walking."

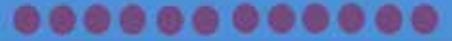
"We can call on the neighbours if we need help – we have called on them before."

"There is a good sense of community on the Central Coast."

"There is a real neighbourly connection – someone always says hello."

"Nice quiet street, good neighbours are important."





The Environment

As previously described, the quality of the environment is an important factor in people initially choosing to move to the Shire. People really love the environment the area offers its residents:

"The clean air."

"Sun and sunsets."

"The environment, lack of congestion, the beach and the outdoor living."

"Wyong Shire has great natural amenities – the beach, lake and bush, all close by."

"A rural area surrounded by trees and wildlife – it is lovely."

"The oceans and mountains – a diverse environment."

"Access to the natural areas and that there is plenty of trees. We need to retain the ridges with trees on them."

"It's a beautiful part of the world."

That the Area is Relatively Safe

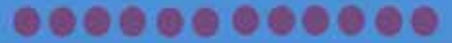
People felt that Wyong Shire is a fairly safe place to live and therefore rated this as one of the best things about living here. In particular, residents feel safe whilst walking around in their communities, in some cases also at night:

"We feel like it's still safe to walk the streets at night."

"We feel safe here."

"We are safe walking around."





The Lifestyle of the Area

This theme was rated very highly as one of the best things about living in the Shire. Many people who are relatively new to the area moved here because of the lifestyle it offers – a less stressed, relaxed laid back area, and a great place to raise a family:

"I like the freedom of the area. We aren't boxed in at all."

"It's a great place for families."

"It's like a country area, relaxed and slower paced."

"People actually say hello when you are out walking."

"Less stressed compared to Sydney."

"A simple life."

"Laid back village lifestyle."

"The pace of life is slower. It's not a rat race and not congested with traffic."

The Location/Proximity of the Shire

One of the best things about living in the Shire according to residents is its close proximity to major cities, freeways and airports combined with the proximity of the lakes, beaches and oceans.

People described the choice between living two hours from Sydney in either Wyong Shire or in Western Sydney, and for the residents who moved to the Shire, their preference was to take advantage of the lifestyle and environment of the area compared to living in Western Sydney (no availability of beaches etc).

People also described the isolated location of suburbs within the Shire as both an advantage and a disadvantage. By this people meant that the quiet, peaceful nature of some of the suburbs is a real positive, but the lack of facilities, distance to get to things and poor infrastructure is a negative.





"Wyong Shire is very well located. It is close to major cities of Sydney and Newcastle and the F3 freeway, airports, etc."

"The isolation of some of the northern suburbs of Wyong Shire is both an advantage and a disadvantage."

"The location of Wyong Shire is perfect. Close to lakes and beaches, and only two hours from Sydney. We moved here because we didn't want to move to western Sydney."

Development

Some of the development on the Central Coast and in Wyong Shire has been considered as positive and progressive, and which has brought many benefits to the Shire. Such developments as described by residents included:

- Ourimbah University.
- The Entrance Outdoor Plaza area.
- Major shopping centres (Westfield Tuggerah, Lake Haven, Bateau Bay).
- F3 Freeway.
- Mingara Leisure Centre.
- Regional athletics facility.

Other residents encouraged balanced development and indicated that some development is good as it brings the appropriate infrastructure.

"Seeing the Coast develop. We welcomed the development of Tuggerah shops and the extension of the freeway."

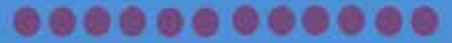
"Ourimbah campus development has been very beneficial."

"The development of The Entrance."

"It's good to have balanced development as it brings financial benefits and hopefully better facilities and services."

"Balanced development. It shouldn't be too overdeveloped."





What are the Most Challenging or Low Points of Living in your Community?

Lack of Entertainment

The lack of entertainment was consistently one of the most commonly mentioned challenges or low points of living in Wyong Shire. By the broad theme of entertainment, residents referred to a lack of both organised and casual opportunities, and both formal and informal facilities for all forms of entertainment to take place.

There was a strong feeling that there is a lack of focus on cultural pursuits versus sporting pursuits, and that significant investigation and funding should also be directed to supporting non sporting focused activities programmes and events.

Residents felt that generally Wyong Shire is lacking in all forms of entertainment such as movie theatres, live music venues and even more so in term of facilities of a specific nature, e.g. Performing Arts Centre, Art Galleries, etc.

Informal and casual opportunities, such as cafés and restaurants for people to meet and gather were also extremely important to residents. Access to affordable and safe entertainment was key.

The lack of entertainment opportunities in the north of the Shire was also of particular concern to residents. The transport issue further emphasises this in terms of making it extremely difficult for people to get to events/programmes/activities in other areas of the Shire.

"There is not a lot to do if you don't play sport."

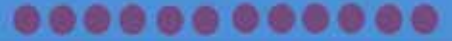
"There is a lack of entertainment opportunities in the north of the Shire."

"It would be nice to have a greater variety of choice in terms of cafes, restaurants, etc."

Development

Development was seen as a major challenge or low point for people living in the Shire. Increasingly there is a consistent worry that the nature of the area is changing rapidly and generally people felt that this is out of control and unchecked.





The lack of infrastructure combined with the increasing population growth was a key worry for our residents. People feel that already the basic infrastructure and services are non-existent or stretched to the limit.

Residents expressed their fears that the small close-knit communities are being lost with the increased development. For residents living in areas of high seasonal tourist influxes, there was a concern about the lack of a permanent population and the fragmentation of the sense of community that is the result.

Most residents acknowledged the need for a range of different housing types in the area, but were insistent that higher and medium density housing be restricted to certain areas, e.g. Warnervale, around town centres and transport interchanges.

"The over development without the infrastructure keeping up. We are constantly playing catch up. People leave the Central Coast and spend time and money elsewhere on the weekends."

"I have frustrations about the lack of infrastructure, e.g. a place for my boys to play to meet and engage with other kids, e.g. a basketball court, a community centre, etc. They need to be out and active in their community, not inside on the computer."

"The continued development is worrying."

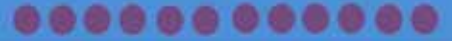
"Infrastructure does not support the growing population. We must try to create balance with residents/tourists/infrastructure."

"Empty development, e.g. The Entrance makes for a vacant disconnected community."

"High rise development is a worry."

"Basic infrastructure – roads, kerb and guttering and footpaths – a lot of places don't even have this."





Identity of the Region

Many residents expressed their frustration that the Central Coast is not recognised as a region in its own right:

"Our identity – are we northern Sydney, Hunter or Newcastle? We are not recognised as our own area."

"The Central Coast should be a separate region."

Some residents suggested that Wyong Shire is often not even considered as a part of the Central Coast and therefore Gosford City always seems to benefit more than Wyong Shire.

"The northern parts of the Shire seem to always be left out."

"I don't see any connection between Gosford and Wyong and their ability to work together."

"Why does Gosford always get the funds and the facilities?"

Health Services

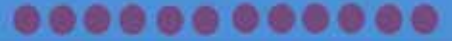
Most residents were extremely critical of health and medical services in Wyong Shire and on the Central Coast. Of particular concern to residents is the lack of GPs in Wyong Shire and the associated ramifications of this including closed patient books, long waiting lists, extremely long waiting times to see a doctor (up to 3 weeks in some cases), lack of bulk billing services and lack of after hours services (including chemists).

The lack of medical specialists was also a worry to residents, with many people experiencing extremely long waiting times to see a specialist and/or travel to Sydney.

"It's very difficult to get a bulk billing GP."

"There is a lack of adequate medical services and GPs. The GP rate per population is very low. Council needs to advocate for more doctors to address the long waiting periods."





"Medical services are bad, e.g. ten day waiting list at Gwandalan, books closed, and some times waiting more than 10 days, e.g. I rang for an appointment on 10 September 2007 but the only available appointment was 17 October 2007."

Residents feel worried about the pollution being emitted from some of the major industries in the Shire and wondered about the long term health impacts of this:

"I am worried about industry development in the northern parts of the Shire and the impacts on health – coal mines, power stations, desalination plants etc."

Wellbeing of residents and their families was also raised as a major challenge to residents. People regularly referred to the increasing obesity problem within Australia, and a culture that is encouraging kids to stay indoors and play rather than being outside. Commuting was seen as a major negative impact on the wellbeing of the commuter, their family and their community. Mental health issues such as depression and suicide are also worrying our residents.

Young People

Young people were consistently mentioned by residents as a challenge and needing an immediate focus for the Shire to move forward for the future.

Many residents felt that young people are responsible for most of the anti social behaviour, vandalism and graffiti that happens in the Shire. People felt that this behaviour happens because there isn't enough for young people to do:

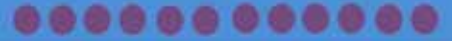
"There are many issues with anti social behaviour from young people. It is scary when a group of young people who start drinking in the park and then they come into the streets."

"The wider community is very judgemental of young people."

Young people themselves repeatedly identified their negative portrayal in the media as contributing to and reinforcing this idea that all young people are "bad":

"The media only portrays negative images and articles of young people."





There was a strong feeling from young people that the views of the wider population are not a good or realistic representation of all young people in the Shire, and that it is a minority of all ages that partake in anti social behaviour.

All residents did agree however that there is a lack of services, alternative education, employment opportunities and entertainment opportunities for young people. This is considered as a significant challenge and low point for all residents:

"There is a lack of everything for young people."

"There's not enough work for young people on the Central Coast. Young people have to leave the area to find work."

Environmental Degradation

The concern of residents regarding the degradation of the natural environment was seen as a consistent low point and challenge for people living in the Shire.

The attractiveness and preservation of the natural environment was very important to residents. People felt that the state of the environment is deteriorating and if something is not done to reverse the damage, it will be lost forever:

"I do not like the mismanagement of the lakes and water systems. The poor quality of the lake is worrying."

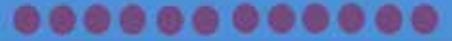
"Detriment to the area I live in. It used to be crystal clear and a healthy living environment for species. Now the lake is filled with silt, sludge and weed."

"Pollution – there is ash coming from the chimneys/smoke stacks – why is this permitted?"

"Any plantings in Wyong Shire should be native to that particular area – no planting or foreign species should be introduced."

"Flooding is an issue in many areas of the Shire. This needs to be addressed."





The water supply was a significant concern to residents. Many residents were worried about the dwindling water supply now and for the future and were enthusiastic about Council effectively managing innovative ways to catch run off water in new developments and estates. People expressed their frustration at the expense of purchasing and installing water tanks and felt that Council could be more proactive in this area.

"Water issues are a concern. People should conserve more water."

The hot issue of the Coal mine was also consistently raised as a worry for residents:

"The coal mine is a worry – who would want to come and live here?"

Community Safety

Although residents generally feel quite living in Wyong Shire, many people felt that this is changing and the area is not as safe a place as it once was. Residents expressed their worries in terms of community safety as:

- Feeling that crime is increasing;
- Increasing anti social behaviour;
- Vandalism and graffiti;
- Not enough police presence;
- Lack of social infrastructure and entertainment; and
- Poor driving skills and increasing road accidents and attitudes.

"Neighbourhood watch is a good community safety initiative, but it needs further support."

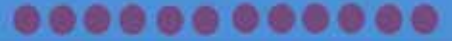
"Vandalism and graffiti is a concern. We need to harness talents and turn it from pollution into art."

"There is not enough police presence and when you call the police, they don't respond quickly enough."

"Seniors won't go out at night because they are worried about their safety."

"There is a lot more anti social behaviour and cars hooning and speeding."





"There is an anxiety around now in regards to safety. People don't feel as safe anymore."

"During the day it is fine but at night we are frightened to go out because of violence and drug issues."

"Parks used to be places for everyone, but now they are just for young people to get drunk in."

Transport and Commuting

As expected, transport and commuting was the most commonly mentioned challenge or low point for residents of Wyong Shire. Public transport (cost, regularity, routing, accessibility, taxi servicing), private transport (costs of running a car, reliance on cars) and transportation infrastructure (roads, traffic, cycleways and pathways) in Wyong Shire is extremely poor.

"The roads are terrible and are getting worse."

"Public transport is terrible. It's difficult to get around without a private vehicle."

"Getting to Sydney can be difficult on public transport."

"You have to have your own transport, otherwise you are very isolated."

"Physical access to public transport and public transport infrastructure is bad. For example, there should be lifts at all stations."

"Commuting is the pits."

"The trains are better than buses, but still inadequate. It takes about 1½ hours to get to Central and there is only 1 train every 1½ hours. You can stand up the whole way there. The train service has declined – there are no available seats. You also have to make sure you are on certain trains, otherwise it is really unsafe and scary."

Residents acknowledged that without significant infrastructure investment, public transport services in the area will not improve.





Negative Nature of the Area

People are very worried that what they love about the area in terms of it being friendly and welcoming, small and close knit, involved and connected, relaxed and carefree is changing and that people are becoming insular and selfish.

"The lifestyle is not as relaxed or as free as it used to be."

There was regular mention about the impact of the liability and insurance requirements which have had a significant impact on the community:

"Rules, regulations, liability and population growth has taken a lot of the old sense of community away."

People were also worried about the loss of the history of the area and the traditional connection with what and who we were:

"We have lost the traditional character of the valleys."

"The changing nature of the small villages is a worry."

"We are so busy moving forward that we have lost the history of the Shire."

There was a strong feeling from residents that the Shire is not really progressive and welcoming to people from different backgrounds:

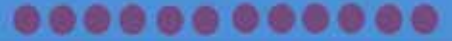
"Racism is still alive in the Shire."

There was also mention of the negative stigma associated with living in certain parts of the Shire:

"There is a stigma attached to living in certain areas in the Shire and even the wider Wyong Shire."

"We have lived in this area for 16 years and have heard all of the negative things people say, but we love it here."





Escalating Costs of Housing

While once considered affordable, the area is now financially out of reach for a large number of people who have grown up on the Central Coast. The increasing price of purchasing and renting has pushed people further and further from where they want to live.

A large number of people have moved to the area in the past ten years as it was considered as a more affordable place to live. People stated that this had changed dramatically:

"The housing prices here are now too high."

"Escalating costs of housing is a worry, especially when I am thinking about my family and them trying to purchase or rent in the area. They are being pushed out of areas where they actually want to live."

What are the Most Important Things that Make Up a Good Community?

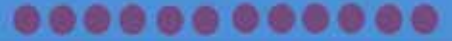
Residents were asked to describe the most important elements that make up a good community. Overall, eight elements were described as being important. These elements are:

Community Spirit

By far, the most important thing that makes up a good community according to residents was Community Spirit. Community Spirit encompassed a wide range of sub-elements as follows:

"A mix of different people, respect for other people, friendly atmosphere, involvement of the community and willingness to work together, trust and looking out for each other."





Mix of Different People

By this residents meant all communities need a variety of people – ages, sexes, backgrounds and interests to make it healthy and happy. Residents were very strongly against developing communities of only one population group of people e.g. older people, People from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background etc. They were very keen to highlight that the success and vibrancy of a community is dependant on a great mix of people, all of whom bring different strengths and opportunities.

"We need all sorts of different people, a different mix of people, cultures and ages."

Respect

People generally feel that there is an increasing lack of respect for people and property. It was felt that this is because of an increasing focus on the individual rather than on each other and the wider community. They also thought this shift is reflective of the way children are raised. Residents felt that respect for others is a very important aspect in building a good community.

"Respect for all people is important."

"Respect for others and their way of living."

Friendly and Welcoming Atmosphere

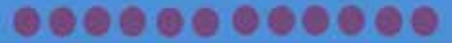
With so many new residents to the Shire, great importance was placed on the need for residents and the general area to be friendly and welcoming. The overall friendly and welcoming atmosphere that currently exists in the Shire has helped people to fit into the place they live.

Involvement in the Community

Many residents explained that being involved in the community, through participating in local activities, programmes and events or being involved through volunteering is the key to feeling connected and developing a range of skills and social networks.

"Knowing people and being involved in groups and clubs is very important."





Trust

Most residents expressed that having some level of trust of the people that you live near is extremely important. Residents felt that being trustworthy and being able to trust others is a very important attribute for residents:

"We have great neighbours that we trust. Trust is important."

Looking Out for Each Other

Residents explained that it is very important to look out for others and have someone look out for you. This mainly related to people keeping a friendly eye out for each other and making sure that all is well.

"My neighbour and I, we check on each other to see if everything is OK. We don't have family nearby so if one of us was in trouble, the other one would help."

Places and Spaces

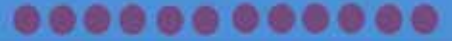
Places and spaces described the formal and informal places for people to come together for a range of reasons. These places included spaces and places like community centres, shopping centres, restaurants, cafés BBQ areas in parks, beaches etc. For more specific purposes such as meetings, activities, programmes and events or for more informal purposes such as meeting people, gather, relax and watch the world go by.

"Local" was a word that was used significantly by residents in the consultations. People described "Local" as providing an opportunity for residents to mix with local people who live in the same or a nearby suburb, therefore increasing the chances for people to meet, make connections and linkages. These type of facilities enable people to easily walk to them and get out of the house and participate in the life of their local community.

"Accessible places for people to walk to and meet in. Kids, young people, adults, older people, families. Places for everyone."

"Cafes and restaurants that we can meet friends and socialise."





"Multi purpose community centres as the hub of a community."

Local Employment

Most residents explained that for them, local employment is a key element in making a good community. Most people who participated in the consultations spoke of the impact of commuting on their family life and their community life.

People explained that in creating local employment, consideration needs to be given to the future focus of the Shire:

- In what type of avenues of employment are residents likely to be needed?
- Will the employment base stay the same or will it change?
- Will the skills of local people place a need to increase the scope of employment types?

Safety

Residents rated safety and security as a key element in making a good community.

"It is most important for residents to feel safe."

"Community safety is important and the community need to take part in initiatives that promote community safety, e.g. neighbourhood watch."

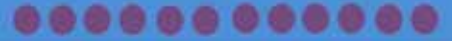
"A good safe feeling in an area is important."

People described their feelings that the area is generally quite safe however residents indicated that this is changing, and the Shire isn't as safe as it used to be.

"It is still fairly safe here compared to other areas, but this is slowly changing."

People described that they would like to see less graffiti and vandalism, less anti social behaviour and more police presence.





Services

People felt that the provision of a wide range of services to meet the demands of a community is a very important element in making it a good place to live. People described the following services as very important:

- Adequate Health and Medical Services (Local Bulk Billing GPs, after hours GPs more accessible Accident and Emergency, Specialist Services, after hours chemists).
- Education (Extended programmes at Ourimbah Campus and local TAFE's, alternative education programmes for young people, further support for traineeships and apprenticeships).
- Community Services (recurrent funding for community organisations, Youth services, child care services, support services for isolated vulnerable people).
- Basic Services (Post office boxes, phone booths).

Transport

Transport (both public and private) is still a major concern for residents of Wyong Shire. The overall experiences of residents of the public transport system on the Central Coast are very similar, with particular challenges for young people, older people, people with a disability and families with young children.

All residents acknowledged that a good public transport system is another element that makes up a good community and that they would use an improved system however recognised that without significant infrastructure investment, public transport services in the area will not improve.

Communication

Residents described communication as both communication between residents living in a community, as well as communication between Council and residents.

People described a healthy and active community as having great communication between its residents. It was thought generally that small village type communities encourage this sort of communication better than in larger communities.





Some residents expressed that high rise accommodation discourages communication between residents. Also, seasonal populations (e.g. holiday makers) are felt to have an adverse effect on the communication levels between local residents.

Welcome kits were seen as a good innovation to welcome and communicate with new residents.

Intergenerational communication was seen as important for both older and younger residents to have an understanding of each other.

Communication between Council and it's residents was also seen as extremely important. Honest, open and transparent communication was seen as the key for a good partnership between Council and the community, as well as taking the time to really sit down, talk and listen.

People described the need for Council to have a distinct welcome and open presence out in the community rather than just behind the concrete walls of the Council Chambers. Residents felt that it was really important for Council to get out into the community and thought that initiatives such as days in the park would be great to build relationships with the community.

People described the importance of Council meeting regularly with residents and Council officers having ongoing conversations and interactions with residents.

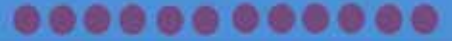
Residents liked the structure of the consultations – many people told us that they were a good start, and that they should be continued across all aspects and functions of Council.

The regularity of contact with the community was also discussed, with people indicating that contact should be regular and routine, not one off or sporadic.

Residents from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) background felt that there was a significant gap in communication from Council to this group. The CaLD community felt generally that Council needs to be more open and user friendly to the steadily increasing population of residents from different backgrounds.

Many residents felt that Council as an organisation was quite bad at listening. They felt that the consultations were great and a great way of valuing what residents have to say.





It was also very important for the community to see their thoughts, opinions and inputs reflected in action:

"Hearing back from Council regarding the various consultations we are involved in is important."

Environment

The natural environment was one of the most important elements that residents felt make a good community. Many residents stated that the beauty of, and the proximity to the natural environment was one of the main reasons they had moved to the Shire, and that if this changes significantly, it would greatly impact on their quality of life and positive feelings towards living in the Shire.

Of great importance to local residents is the amenity and beauty of the natural environment as well as the active and outdoor lifestyle that the natural environment of the area offers:

"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."

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

"The walking trails through the bushland are great."

"There should be more national parks."

What Changes would you Most Like to See in your Community?

Initially, many people responded by saying that they wouldn't change anything:

"We wouldn't change anything – we like it the way it is."

Upon further contemplation they outlined the following as changes they would most like to see in their community:





Local Government (WSC)

Many people felt that there is a lack of forward planning and vision at Wyong Council and that Councillors, staff and the community are not working together towards a commonly agreed long term plan.

"More forward planning by local government. We need a 25 or 30 year plan."

This was considered as an important change to implement to work together for the future.

Residents felt that there is a lack of respect for the community by Council, and that the community is not involved and does not truly participate in the decisions and directions of Council. People felt that Councillors as elected representatives and Council staff should be more visible and out in the community:

"There is a lack of respect in Council for the community and therefore the community doesn't respect Council. People in these positions need to earn respect."

"We want to be involved, not just token involvement. We want to help make the decisions."

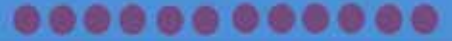
"Councillors should be more involved in community activity and there should be more transparency about decisions."

"Individual Councillors should take on the responsibility of liaising with older people and younger people. Each one should have a designated responsibility to liaise with that group."

Residents mentioned their frustrations at the seemingly endless political 'point scoring' and 'game playing' by Councillors as opposed to action and getting things done.

"I would like to change the political game playing by Council."





Environmental

As previously outlined, residents expressed their increasing concern at the degradation of the natural environment of the Shire. Preserving the environment was considered as a very important change to be made to enable the beauty and diversity of the natural environment to be around in the future:

"Keep waterways true to nature."

"Don't want to see a coal mine in the area."

"Tuggerah Lakes should be revitalised."

"We need better and more affordable water harvesting systems."

"Keep the green open spaces."

"Keep the water restrictions in place. We are used to them now."

"We need appropriate plantings in local areas."

"Encourage and promote the Wyong Shire Garden Competition, Water Festival and National Tree Day."

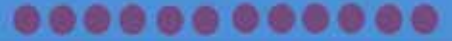
Transport and Transport Infrastructure

Transport and transport infrastructure featured heavily as a challenge to residents that needs to be changed to make life better.

A detailed discussion on the challenges of the public transport system is outlined in the 'On the Move' chapter (page 78). A summary of changes to improve the transport system in Wyong Shire include:

- Public transport (cost, regularity, routing, accessibility, taxi servicing, alternative transport measures);
- Private transport (costs of running a car, reliance on cars); and





- Transportation infrastructure (lifts at stations, road condition, traffic, cycleways and pathways, road lighting).

"More regular, accessible and affordable public transport is needed."

"Bring back the night owl bus."

"Better road infrastructure – it is still catering to a small population."

"Wider roads and more room for parking on the streets."

"Better lighting along roads."

Investment in alternative and healthier options of moving around was also considered as important. Building on the existing great cycleways and pathways to connect more places together where people want to go was considered as a very important change:

"Better cycleways and pathways in the area."

Residents also commented on the RTA plans for an upgrade of the Pacific Highway through or around Wyong:

"The RTA plans for the Pacific Highway to go through Wyong – they should go around Wyong, not through it!"

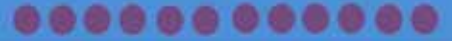
There was acknowledgement from residents that because the current transport system is so poor, significant investment is required and residents were extremely doubtful that this will ever happen.

Activities, Services and Programmes

According to residents, the most significant changes that should be made in terms of activities, services and programmes included:

- Investment in Early Intervention and Prevention programmes (rather than quick fix bandaid solutions):





Many residents indicated that there is significant benefit in supporting and providing funding for early intervention and prevention programmes rather than expending money on quick fix 'bandaid' solutions that offer a short term benefit, but no long term gain.

- A shift in focus from sport to include cultural pursuits:

"Develop arts and culture more."

"Programmes and activities for kids who aren't into sports."

- A shift to acknowledge the community benefit versus profit making:

"A monetary value should be placed on the contribution of organisations and services to the community. Council expects a market rent for use of community facilities so the benefit to the community should be attributed a high value."

"Council needs to look at the community benefit rather than profit. For example child care centres should be about educating and providing quality care for children, not about profit. Who are we looking after here? Why is it always about profit?"

- Local activities, programmes and events:

"There needs to be more outdoor events and activities – festivals, concerts, picnics, BBQ's in the park to bring people together."

- Casual opportunities to meet and socialise:

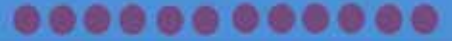
"Encourage more casual opportunities for neighbours to get together."

- Recurrent funding for services:

"There needs to be more support for the operations side of community centres. There is the funding to build facilities, but not to operate them."

"Before and after school care, vacation care, child care."





"Low cost activities for children and families in the school holidays."

Development

Infrastructure keeping up with population growth is one of the most important changes that should be made according to residents. Already, people stated that development of infrastructure has not kept up with the population growth and this needs to be addressed immediately:

"We moved here because of the promised services and facilities – where are they? We should have just stayed where we were – at least there was proper infrastructure there."

"The state government should spend more money on infrastructure in the area, e.g. schools, hospitals and roads."

Residents felt that there is too much medium and high density housing in the Shire. People felt that this type of housing should only be allowed in designated areas e.g. town centres and around transport interchanges:

"We should be careful about the types of development that is allowed in the Shire."

"Medium and higher density housing should be appropriately located."

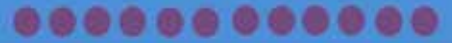
There was also concern that there is a lot of high rise development that is empty and residents suggested that maybe more medium density should be constructed that would be adequately filled:

"It seems that development is solely based on developer profit instead of what is sensible. For example, instead of constructing more high density housing which is empty, more medium density housing which would fill up easily should be constructed."

Many residents commented on the design of new suburbs, suggesting changes such as wider roads, houses with eaves and backyards, etc:

"The streets should be wider in the new suburbs."





Many residents were concerned at the lack of affordable housing on the Central Coast and were particularly concerned about how future generations would be able to afford to live in the places they have grown up in:

"There needs to be more affordable housing in the Shire. This is a very important issue."

Many people were supportive of some balanced development but there was a concern that the identity and history of the Shire should be preserved for future generations:

"We need some development, but we 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."

"Keeping the identity of who we are now and who we were – we still need a link top the past while at the same time moving forward for the future."

Young People

Residents felt that there needs to be a real focus for change on young people to enable them to make the best of their lives and move forward for the future.

Every participant across every age group and background mentioned that there needs to be a significant change in the attitudes if young people themselves, the attitudes and prejudices of the wider community and in the plans and polices that affect young people.

Most residents felt that there is not much for young people to do socially and this situation need to be addressed:

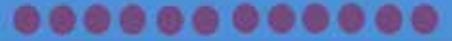
"There needs to be something for young people – a youth centre for example. This would help to get young people moving in a different direction."

"We need more of everything for young people here in Wyong Shire."

"More activities and programmes for mainstream young people."

"Places for teenagers to go."





"Buses to transport young people to where they want to go."

Education, training and employment opportunities for young people are limited, and all residents stressed that this needs to be changed to ensure that we have a vibrant, skilled, educated community in the future:

"There needs to be more education, training and employment opportunities for young people."

Community Spirit

Although people felt that generally Wyong Shire is warm, welcoming and friendly there were many instances where this is not the case and people felt that the lovely nature of the place is slowly being eroded away, people are becoming less involved and more insular and selfish.

Some residents felt that the Central Coast is a backwater mono culture, and people from different cultural backgrounds are not always welcomed openly or accepted and that there is a great opportunity to change this:

"Encourage and support people from different backgrounds."

"Encouraging culture in all ways – schools genders backgrounds."

"There needs to be a cultural shift – there is still a lingering of old fashioned, racist ways of doing things."

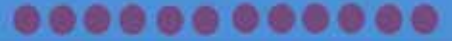
"Better coverage from Council of cross cultural issues and positives, etc."

Regularly, residents mentioned the difficulty in attracting new volunteers into groups and organisations:

"We should encourage more people to be involved in volunteering. The same volunteers are being asked all the time to do the work."

Residents felt that from Council's perspective, community, social and community development should be further promoted rather than just roads, rates, rubbish and water:





"We need to encourage programmes and activities that connect and link people. Community Development has an important role."

For residents living in suburbs that attract tourists, it was felt that there should be a real focus on developing and encouraging community spirit within the permanent population, rather than focusing all the time on tourists.

Places for People to Come Together

Local places and spaces for people to come together encompassed both formal and informal places and spaces such as local community centres, shopping centres, restaurants, cafes, parks, BBQ areas, playgrounds, reserves, walking trails, bike tracks, lakes and beaches.

Residents felt that there needs to be more of these facilities in local areas:

"Less emphasis on tourists and more emphasis on the permanent residents of the Shire."

"More local meeting places."

"We are looking forward to the new performing arts centres."

"Places where people can experience something different and a bit out of the ordinary, e.g. an art gallery."

"We need to create places that attract a range of different people and different interests."

"Local community centres in local areas."

"Local places and facilities e.g. community centres, parks, open space and recreation areas."

"BBQ's, parks and playgrounds are casual spaces where people can run into one another and get to know each other."

"Multi purpose community centres."





More Local Employment

Residents felt that a lot more could be done to change the current situation of residents commuting to Sydney. People felt that Council should encourage a range of industries to be established in the Shire that offer a range of job types with an equitable pay structures:

"Commuting away from the Central Coast really impacts on family time and the ability to be involved in groups and service clubs. Commuting doesn't allow for people to make connections with their community or develop a sense of community."

"We need to have more employment locally that offers a range of different job skill types and appropriate wages."

What Services, Facilities, Activities or Programmes would Assist/Benefit or Make Life Easier for You/Your Family in your Day to Day Life in your Community?

Greater Availability of Affordable Housing

Residents felt that a greater availability of both rental and owner/buyer properties would assist and benefit residents and make life easier. Many residents mentioned that although they had purchased their property a number of years ago, they would not be able to do so now, and expressed fear for their family at the lack of available affordable housing in the areas they would like to live:

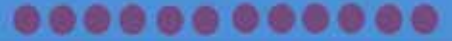
"More affordable housing – rental and home ownership."

"What would make our life easier is more accessible housing availability and prices."

Better Transport

Residents indicated that a better public transport system and a more accessible transport infrastructure would make life easier. Many people mentioned that because of the poor public transport system, they are resigned to having to own two cars to get everywhere they want to go. People indicated that if the public transport system was reliable, affordable and accessible then they would use it:





"As an older person – accessibility to get around e.g. better bus services and public transport in general."

"People are isolated. If they don't have a car then it's very hard for people."

"More public transport that is frequent, accessible and affordable and covers more routes."

"There should be lifts at all train stations."

"Bring back the night owl bus."

"A community bus that you can ring and it will come and get you and take you to where you want to go."

Local Employment

For many residents, the need to commute has had a significant impact on their lives, the lives of their family and their community life. Most people who travel out of the area to work do not feel a real connection or link with their community.

Many people who leave the area on a daily basis to travel to work have indicated that there just aren't the professional employment opportunities or pay structures as in other areas like Sydney or Newcastle:

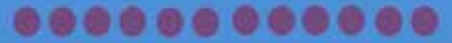
"We need more local employment here in Wyong Shire."

"Provide services and facilities that will attract businesses to the Shire."

"There needs to be more jobs in the area – unemployment is an issue."

"There are limited local employment opportunities on the Central Coast."





Community Facilities

Local facilities in local communities are very important to residents. Places where people can walk to such as community centres, parks, playgrounds, BBQ areas etc are key in people meeting others and feeling linked and connected.

Residents felt that the maintenance of these facilities is important and key in making these places attractive, vibrant and well utilised.

'Hubs of facilities' and activities are also very important to residents. They want to see clusters of facilities where there is lots of activity and people are attracted there:

"Look after facilities so people utilise them and find them attractive and want to use them."

"Accessible performing arts centre - affordable fees for use."

"Secure exhibition space – ability to exhibit works easily for use by all groups in Wyong Shire with a priority for community use."

"More local community centres – they need to be done in a way that involves the community and connects them."

"Hub of facilities in a place of activity – not just a facility for young people all on it's own, it should be incorporated into other features such as restaurants and outdoor spaces."

"Publicity/advertising of facilities and what's on there."

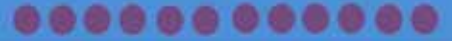
"Local facilities in local communities."

Services, Programmes and Activities

According to residents, the most significant changes that should be made in terms of activities, services and programmes included:

- Investment in Early Intervention and Prevention programmes (rather than quick fix bandaid solutions);





- A shift in focus from sport to include cultural pursuits;
- Local activities, programmes and events;
- Casual opportunities to meet and socialise; and
- Recurrent funding for services.

"Programmes, events and activities that aren't just about sport."

"Activities and facilities for families."

"Enough programmes and activities for elderly people in the future – especially in home services."

"Services to address the sense of isolation for many residents."

"Wyong Shire has an excellent library service – but a mobile one would be good."

"Funding for services to continue services and programmes."

"Programmes that link older men into activities to prevent loneliness and suicide – there are hardly any men's groups on the Coast."

Entertainment Opportunities

More options for entertainment was important to residents. Many people related their experiences in terms of the lack of entertainment opportunities and the difficulty in accessing available options.

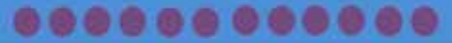
A variety and choice of options was another key focus for residents. A number of stories emerged from people during the consultations that they are often travelling out of the Shire to Sydney, Gosford City and Newcastle to go out to dinner, catch a movie and see a live show.

"Places of entertainment that are affordable e.g. time zone, movie theatres, outdoor cinema at the beach, fete and stalls at Blue Haven Community Centre all year."

"Availability of a variety of shops and restaurants."

"A cinema in the Northern half of the Shire."





Young People

Residents felt that there needs to be a real focus for change on young people to enable them to make the best of their lives and move forward for the future.

Every participant across every age group and background mentioned that there needs to be a significant change in the attitudes of young people themselves, the attitudes and prejudices of the wider community and in the plans and policies that affect young people.

Most residents felt that there is not much for young people to do socially and this situation needs to be addressed:

"There isn't enough for young people to do."

"Something casual for young people – like a café is needed."

"Develop the cultural skills of young people – not just sports."

Community Safety

Although residents generally felt that the Shire is fairly safe, people thought that there is a lack of police presence in the Shire and an increased police presence would make their lives easier:

"Police station in the northern parts of the Shire – it takes the police too long to get up here."

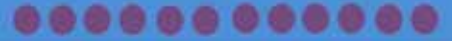
"More police presence, foot patrols – visible law enforcement."

"Need more police in the area to improve response times."

Medical Services

All residents thought that the medical services in Wyong Shire are significantly lacking and need much improvement:





"The medical services in the area are not great – we stay with the doctors in Sydney and go to Sydney to see the doctor."

"We have no confidence in the hospital or medical/health system."

"It is so hard to get to see a GP in the north of Wyong Shire."

"Hospitals need a room for Muslim people to pray."

"After hours medical facilities and a chemist would be good."

Water

The water supply was a hot issue for residents during the community consultation phase. Most people were extremely concerned about the poor water supply on the Central Coast and the lack of forward planning to address this. Most residents suggested that the water restrictions should stay in place as they are now used to using less water, however, some people highlighted the financial and emotional impacts (particularly on elderly people) at not being able to get out and water their gardens.

The purchasing of tanks was also raised as quite difficult for a majority of residents, and suggestions to alleviate this included a loan scheme etc:

"We should have better water collecting infrastructure."

"We need financial support to be able to get a tank."

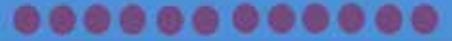
"Water infrastructure should be improved before there is anymore population growth."

Community Information

People emphasised the importance of communication both between residents and between Council and residents:

"Communication from Council to the community is key."





"Communication about what's happening in the Shire is very important, e.g. What's happening in the libraries, activities that I can do with my kids, etc."

Residents discussed the trend to supply information to the community via electronic mediums e.g. email websites etc. and they highlighted the importance of provision of hard copy material:

"Internet based information isn't very helpful."

"Community information in brochure/hard copy form not just on the internet, especially information about seniors activities."

Imagine Wyong Shire as you would Most Like it to be in a Generation from Now, and Taking into Consideration what you would still like to be here in 20 years.

What is the Area Like?

This was an interesting question to ask residents. It enabled them to think more broadly and wider and for the future, rather than just thinking about living in their community today.

The question got people thinking about life in Wyong Shire in the future for themselves, their children and their grandchildren.

This question asked people about what they would most like to see – a real visioning question. Some people found it hard to answer this question in terms of what they would most like to see and often reverted to how they think it will be – often a very different proposition and often quite negative:

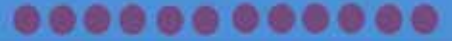
"It will be too busy, too developed and will have lost all of its positive features."

This question related to people's hopes and dreams for the future which emerged as follows:

"There will be an even Greater Sense of Community."

Most residents were very impressed and positive at the sense of community and levels of community spirit in Wyong Shire. There was some concern however, that this is slowly changing and people are less connected to their communities and are less and less involved in their communities.





For the future, people hoped that there will be an increased sense of community and a real shift (from both government and community) back to a focus on people and community building.

All people will be able to have a positive experience of living in the Shire. New people will initially be welcomed (with welcome kits by friendly open people), they will easily make connections and linkages with people, and through great communication and information provision will know how to become involved in the local community. This will make people want to stay and live in Wyong Shire in the long term.

There will be many more young people involved in community volunteering, and there will be less reliance on the same people to take on everything. Council will be a leader in encouraging and supporting volunteers.

Residents emphasised that in the future people from different backgrounds will be encouraged and welcomed in the Shire. Council will provide bi lingual information, will openly welcome people from different cultures and will recognise the specific strengths of people from a different background.

There will be better intergenerational linkages and understanding between young and older people:

"There will be a mix of different people - ages, backgrounds, interests living in our community."

"The existing strong sense of community will be maintained and built upon."

"There will be more diversity and multiculturalism."

"People will still look out for each other and care about their neighbours and community."

"Young people will be valued as important members of the community."

"I would like to maintain the small village type feeling of the community."

"There will be festivals, activities and programmes that link and connect people."

"There will be recognition and respect between the generations, e.g. older people are not past their used by date and young people are not the terror of the community."





The Area will be Better Planned

Many people hoped that Wyong Shire would be better planned in the future than it is today. Residents felt that there is a real lack of vision for the Shire and how it will be in twenty plus years:

"There will be a real, achievable vision for where we're going that is shared by Council and the Community."

"Planning for the future won't be hotch potch, it will be well co-ordinated and strategic projects will be fully followed through."

"Council will implement big picture planning strategies, will move away from small parochial thinking and will embrace the bigger picture."

"Sub divisions will be done better and there will be a lot more public space within communities e.g. parks."

People indicated that they were worried about the current levels of development, especially in relation to the increased population with no infrastructure to support it. Their hopes for the future are that development is progressed, but at a steady and sustainable rate with infrastructure such as social infrastructure, adequate water supply, sewer and roads:

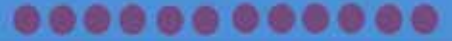
"It's OK to see some development, but not too much. We don't have the infrastructure to support the population now, let alone in the future."

"Infrastructure will be kept in balance with growth."

"Infrastructure will keep up with the population growth, e.g. schools, community facilities, roads, water. This should have happened before the population."

"The area in the future should still have elements of the past. The current over developments with a definite lack of infrastructure and other vital facilities have been overlooked. The constant worry about water problems underlines the need for better forward planning. Newcastle has much to offer but I believe this area can be superb if action is taken now."





People felt that the Shire in the future will have balanced development in that there will be a range of accommodation types (low, medium and high density) in appropriate areas (e.g. higher to medium development around town centres and transport interchanges) to suit and cater to the different stages of life but not more high rise development:

"We need a range of accommodation that reflects life stages such as medium density housing that is designed well e.g. has light airy spaces, quiet, etc."

People felt that in the future, they will see the current trend of a lack of parks playgrounds and open spaces will be reversed and we will instead see open spaces, parks playgrounds and bushland retained for the use of the community.

The diverse nature of the area will also be retained. People love the natural scope of the Shire from the mountainous forests to the beaches, encompassing both rural and suburban areas. People feel a great affinity with the natural aspects of the area, and for many people this is the reason they moved to Wyong Shire. Residents emphasised that this needs to be preserved.

Residents described that in the future each community would have a distinct identity and there will be no more bland, mass produced estates. Estates will have individuality and identity, entry statements, wide streets. Houses will be different to each other and will have eaves, backyards and trees:

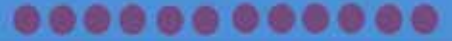
"The new estates will have individuality and character. They won't be boring, bland estates with no character. The design of houses will encourage interaction between neighbours."

"Planning of communities to give them an identity. Such assets as a central village green do much to provide communities with a central focal point."

Businesses will be Diverse and Revitalised

People had observed that currently there are many shops and businesses in the Shire that have closed down, leaving empty and dilapidated shop fronts. Residents stated that in the future they would like to see flourishing town centres where small individual businesses will be supported and there will be more diversity and choice.





People regularly commented on the 'duopoly' of the large shopping centre chains and lack of the more individual niche market shops. People imagined flourishing, bustling, vibrant town centres with lots of people enjoying a mix of diverse restaurants, cafes and shops:

"There won't be an overkill of the big retail supermarkets. Some individuality and diversity of shopping options would be good."

"In twenty years there will be a diversity and larger mix of local shops."

"Wyong Council will promote the importance of locally grown produce and link farmers with the community."

There will be plenty of local Community Facilities

Currently, people discussed the lack of local community facilities in their local communities.

In the future, people stated that there would be lots of community facilities locally such as: Multi purpose community centres, community theatres, senior citizen's centres, etc.

Local is extremely important to our residents. The nature of the topography of the Shire, combined with the lack of accessible public transport and the number of newer residents means that local facilities are the key in connecting people.

People indicated that in the future, public facilities will be well maintained to a standard that makes them open, inviting, welcoming and able to be used at any time:

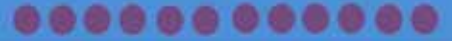
"Each development or new suburb will have it's own community facilities such as a community centre, parks, playgrounds etc. Community facilities will have the supporting infrastructure with them for example, courts, bubblers, toilets, BBQ areas etc."

"Community Facilities will have the recurrent funding, operating and programming dollars to ensure that they meet the growing needs of the local community."

"In the future there will be local facilities in walking distance of residents."

"There will local parks and green open spaces so that kids can play."





It will be a more Affordable Area

Many people mentioned that the Shire is much less affordable than in the past, and it will be much less affordable in the future. People's hopes for the future were that there would be much greater availability of more affordable housing types. This included low, medium and higher density housing located in the appropriate areas, e.g. town centres and transport interchanges.

It was seen that attracting a range of affordable housing in Wyong Shire enables better community mix, community connections and networks:

"In the future there will be a range of different housing choice that will enable a mix of different people to live here."

"My children will be able to have a choice of where they want to live, rather than being forced out of the areas they would like to live because it is too expensive."

"There will be a range of choice, e.g. higher and medium density housing in the appropriate areas"

There will more Participation and Involvement of the Community in Council

Currently people involved in the consultations felt that they are not welcome or encouraged to participate in the functions and decisions of Wyong Shire Council.

For the future, residents hoped that there will be a real partnership approach from Council, and residents will be considered as valuable contributors to processes and projects rather than inhibitors:

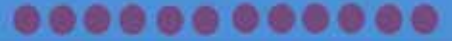
"People will be more involved with Council."

"Council will communicate better with the local community."

"Council will be more accessible and there will be more avenues for community and individuals to be involved with and approach Council."

"Council will openly welcome and value input from the local community."





There will be more Local Employment and Education Opportunities

For the future, residents emphasised the importance of local employment which will support the population growth, therefore limiting the need for residents to commute out of the Central Coast for work:

"There will be a lot more local employment for all people. Young people will be employed here and there will be a range of jobs and appropriate wages so that people don't have to leave the Central Coast for work."

"There will be many more opportunities for professional employment."

"More professional wages – equivalent to Sydney!!"

People also emphasised the need for a range of employment types in the future, young people will be able to stay on the coast for both education and employment opportunities:

"There will be more diverse local tertiary education facilities and Ourimbah University will be bigger and stronger."

"Quality and diverse education opportunities at University of Newcastle Ourimbah."

People stressed that in the future there should be better support for local businesses to employ more local people and support for locally grown produce to be sold in the Shire:

"More businesses in the area to support the employment of future generations."

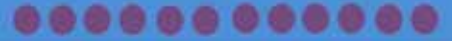
"The viability of small local village businesses will be improved."

"The Shire will have fresh local produce markets."

"Wyong Council will employ locally based contractors."

"There will be a real balance between work and home life."





We will have a Great Transport System

This was a key focus for the future as the current public transport system on the Central Coast is inadequate and concerning.

People described a public transport system for the future that:

- Has adequate infrastructure (bus stops and shelters, physically accessible buses, lifts at train stations);
- Is affordable;
- Is regular and reliable;
- Utilises alternative systems in smaller isolated communities;
- Goes to where people want to go; and
- Is safe.

There was some acknowledgement amongst residents that there would need to be significant investment from the State Government if there is any chance of improving the public transport system:

"Public Transport will be more affordable, accessible and reliable."

"There will be much better transport services."

"There will be good bus services and better access for isolated areas."

"There will be less traffic on the roads, easier flowing traffic and better roads."

The Environment will be Preserved

People love the natural environment of Wyong Shire, and want it to be restored and better maintained and preserved for the future:

"Maintain the natural environment of the area."

"In the future the waterways, lakes and beaches will be pristine."





"There will be balance between urbanisation and green areas."

"Fish and prawns in the lakes will be alive and healthy."

"The beaches will stay clean and beautiful."

"There won't be any more coal mining."

"We will be able to hear birds everywhere."

"We will have beautiful gardens because we will be able to water them."

"There will be lots of Indigenous vegetation and new plantings."

"We will have a secure water supply."

"Some level of water restriction will stay in place, so that we use less water."

"Tuggerah Lakes will be healthy and vibrant."

The Infrastructure will keep up with the Population Growth

"The infrastructure needs of the current population should be met before we grow any further."

"Population increases are OK, as long as there is appropriate infrastructure to support it."

There will be an adequate Health and Medical System

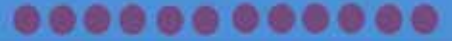
"There will be improved medical services. They will keep up with the increased population."

"There will be more support and understanding for people with a mental illness."

"Healthy Harold should still be around."

"There will be lots of doctors with no waiting lists."





"There will be specialists located on the Central Coast so we don't have to travel to Sydney all the time to see them."

Wyong Council will be Different

"There will be a lot more women Councillors on Council. More women than men, or at least a gender balance."

"Councils will be leaders in the community in terms of community development rather than roads rates and rubbish all the time."

"There will be younger Councillors."

"Wyong Council will communicate better with its residents."

We will be a Region with a Distinct Identity

"The Central Coast will be recognised as a region and therefore the subsequent funding will be allocated to the Coast. We will be separate in terms of Health, Education etc."

When you think about the Central Coast, what particular Places, People or Images Represent Wyong Shire to you?

Resident's responses to this question emerged in seven main ways:

The Natural Environment

The beautiful beaches.

Lakes.

Norah Head Lighthouse.

The Ocean.

Rural Aspect through the Valleys.

The Pelicans at The Entrance.

The diversity of the environment.

The birds and animals that you can see everywhere.





Places and Spaces

The Entrance.

Soldier's Beach.

The Valley's.

Vera's Water Garden at The Entrance.

North Shelly Beach.

Magenta Shores.

Koondah Waters.

The bushland and forests.

Mingara.

Regional Sporting Facilities at Mingara.

People

Friendly and welcoming.

A transient holiday population.

A commuting population.

People becoming busier and busier.

Lifestyle

Feels timeless.

A time warp – it's like stepping back in time.

Relaxed lifestyle.

Very welcoming and open and friendly.

It's like the country but on the water.

Casual lazy summers.

Laid back and less busy.

Less stressed.

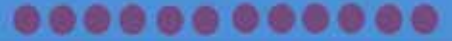
History of the Area

Originally, Pioneers were involved in the timber industry followed by farming.

1960's it was a dairy farm and orchards.

The Shire is getting further and further away from its history.





Location

Location on the coast is wonderful.
Proximity between Sydney and Newcastle.
Geographically defined.
Centrally located.

The Built Environment

A place where the infrastructure has not kept up with the population growth.
Development.
As an extended suburb of Sydney.
Big shopping centres – representative of a growing area.

What's the Best Way for Us and Others to Work Together for the Future?

Most residents loved being asked this question as it gave them an opportunity to respond in terms of their opinions of the best ways that Council should work with the community for the future.

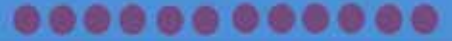
Every participant acknowledged the importance of communication. People thought that communication between Council (as an organisation) and the community could be better. Some community members indicated that they have a very good relationship with individual Council officers. Residents considered the establishing, and maintaining of relationships between Council and the community is very important and key to working together for the future of the Shire with so that Council is informed about the community and the community is informed about Council.

Residents gave examples of where they thought Council was doing a good job in terms of communicating with Council:

- Wyong Council page in newspaper
- Radio Articles
- New resident's guides

Residents stated that the methods used during the consultations (conversations and focus groups) were a great way to engage with residents to hear from them about what it's like to live in Wyong Shire.





"Continue with these community conversations."

"Keep talking to residents and seeking their opinions."

"The individual conversations are great – this is a good way of going about it."

"Conversations are a good start – it good to get an understanding of the depth and breadth of what the people think."

"It's important that Council values what people have to say."

And also gave their opinion as to how this could be better improved:

Many residents expressed a belief that Council is exclusionary and does not openly welcome input, opinion or involvement from local residents. Regularly people expressed that active residents are considered not to be valuable to a process, but instead a hindrance.

Residents felt that they have a lot to offer Council, and as local residents they often have the knowledge and solutions to local problems:

"We want to be involved, not just token involvement."

"We need to fully participate in Council. By participation we don't just mean attending programmes, activities or events we mean helping to make decisions and informing Council of the positive and negative things happening in our communities."

