

Wentworth Shire Council

# Local Strategic Planning Statement

A VISION TO 2040 AND BEYOND



# ***Foreword***

Wentworth Shire Council has had the privilege of working with the Department of Planning, Industry & Environment Chief Planner's office and Western Region staff to prepare this Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS).

The purpose of the LSPS is to develop a vision for land use in the Shire for the next 20 years by recognising and understanding the current land use trends and anticipate those that may likely emerge.

Our LSPS identifies three trends that have the ability to play a significant role in our future population and economic growth. These trends include changes to our agricultural industry, the demand and opportunities for new tourism enterprises and new residential development.

Wentworth Shire Council is committed to achieving the goals of the Community Strategic Plan. We believe the LSPS will provide the mechanism to support and facilitate our economic growth, social cohesion and environmental sustainability for the next twenty years and beyond.

**Cr Melisa Hederics**

**MAYOR WENTWORTH SHIRE**

Version	Date	Approved by
Draft v1	13 November 2019	Michele Bos
Draft v2	6 March 2020	Michele Bos

# ***Acknowledgement of Country***

Wentworth Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging-



*Figure 1 - "Mungo - meeting place" by Craig Charles, Mutthi Mutthi*

This painting represents spirit and place – the coming together of three tribes, the Mutthi Mutthi, Paakantji, and Ngilyampaa.

The centre of the spiral represents the middle of the Lake, the Walls of China and sacred sites. The many captions of gold leaf on the black swirls signify special 'sites' – uncovered and swept away by the winds. These white swirls signify ceremonial grounds and the various lines and squares represent man-made sites which have come and gone. The gold represents the richness of the land and strength of its people. <sup>1</sup>

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## About this statement

This Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) sets the land use framework for Wentworth Shire's economic, social and environmental land use needs over the next 20 years. It addresses the planning and development issues of strategic significance for the Shire through planning priorities and actions, spatial land use direction and guidance.

The LSPS gives effect to the *Far West Regional Plan 2036* implementing the directions and actions at a local level. It is also informed by other State-wide and regional policies including *Future Transport Plan 2056* and the *NSW State Infrastructure Strategy 2018 – 2038*. It also adopts other relevant planning or related policies and strategies mentioned throughout this document.

The LSPS works concurrently with Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) to deliver the community's vision for the Shire. The planning priorities and actions identified in the LSPS provide the rationale for decisions about the use of land to achieve the community's broader goals and drive updates to the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP).

This LSPS has been prepared in accordance with Section 3.9 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act).

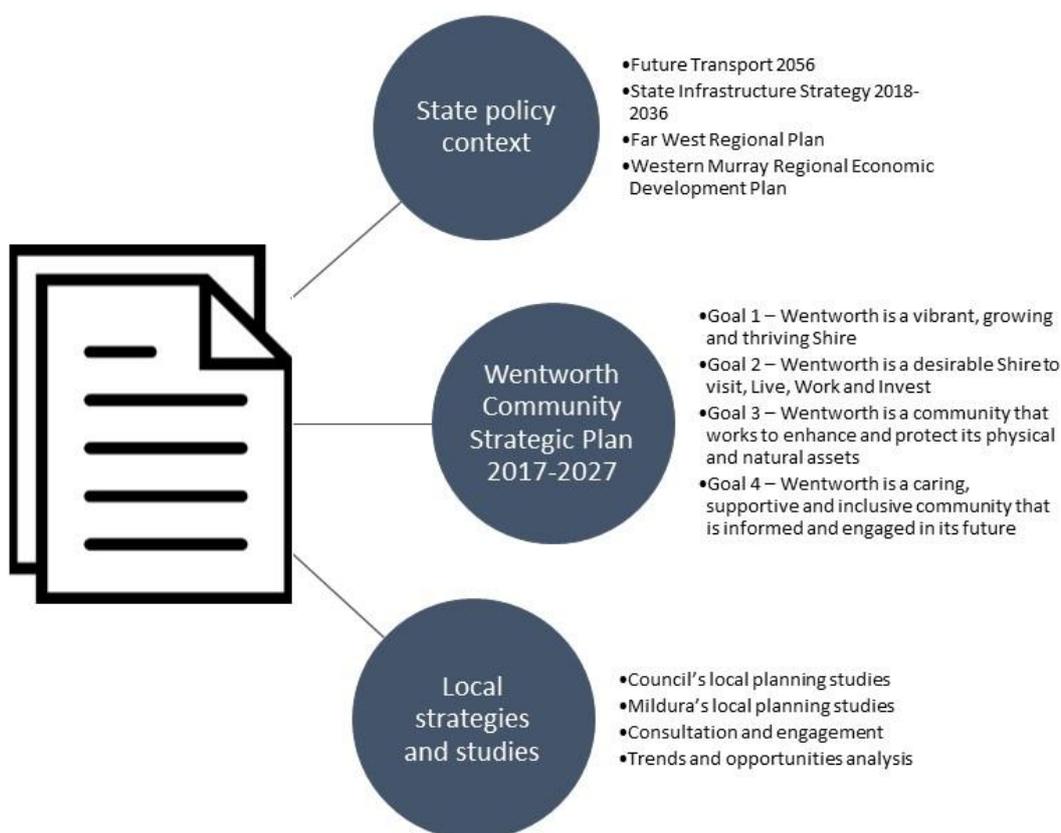


Figure 2: Summary of the plans, policies and strategies that inform the Local Strategic Planning Statement

## **Consultation**

**This LSPS has been prepared following:**



# Strategic context

## Regional context

The Far West Region of NSW covers a vast area of landscapes ranging from the 'outback' semi-arid desert areas to rich farmlands, rangelands and wetlands in the west of NSW. It is one of the most environmentally diverse regions in NSW, home to bushlands, nationally and internationally recognised wetlands<sup>i</sup> including the Willandra Lakes Work Heritage Area and Mungo National Park.

The nationally significant Murray and Darling rivers and the Menindee Lakes systems provide water for agricultural-based communities across the region. This includes intensive and irrigated horticulture, kangaroo and goat production, cropping and pastoral farming. Agriculture, mining, manufacturing and tourism make up the key regional economic specialisations in the Western Murray functional economic area<sup>ii</sup>.

Wentworth Shire is located across the Murray River from the growing regional city of Mildura. Wentworth has strong links to the capital cities of Melbourne and Adelaide via the national road transport network and Mildura Airport. Wentworth is positioned to capitalise on its strategic location and connectivity (Figure 3).

This strategic connectivity means that Wentworth can take advantage of and leverage its natural assets, economic strengths and specialisations identified in the *Western Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022*.

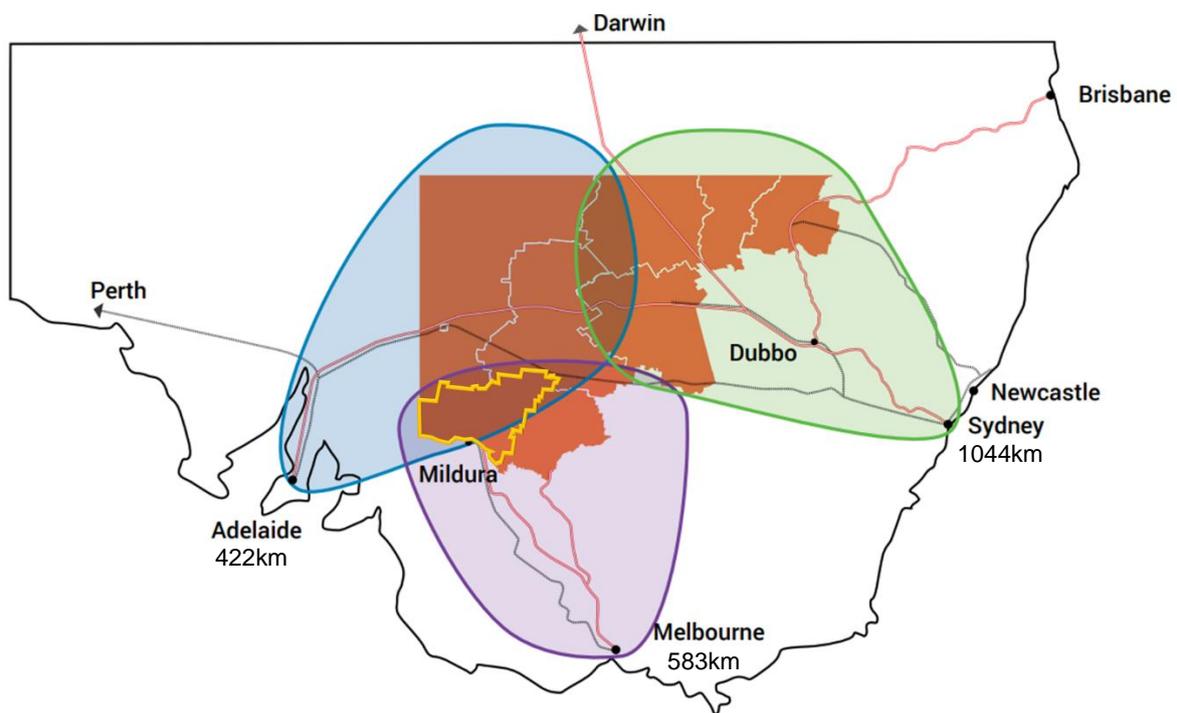


Figure 3: Wentworth Shire (yellow outline) in the Far West Region of NSW, proximity to Mildura and relationship to Adelaide and Melbourne.



Figure 4: Satellite image to illustrate terrain of area identified in Figure 3.

## ***Local context***

Wentworth Shire encompasses an area of approximately 26,000 square kilometres and is the meeting place of Australia's largest and most iconic river systems – the Darling and the Murray. The Darling and Murray rivers intersect the arid and semi-arid landscape, running north to south and east to west, respectively.

These two river systems are the single most influential feature driving land use and activity in Wentworth Shire and shape the economy, the livelihood, identity and history of the community and the environment.



*Figure 5: Murray River/Darling River Junction Wentworth*



*Figure 6: Perry Sands Hills Wentworth*

### ***Western Land Leases***

Most of the fragile semi-arid landscape of the Shire is managed under long-term leaseholds by the Crown Lands Commissioner under the Crown Land Management Act 2016, while privately-owned freehold properties are generally located in settlements and along the Murray and Darling rivers.

## ECONOMIC

### AGRICULTURE

Our communities rely heavily on our rivers that are a critical input into the local agricultural industry, which is the backbone of the local economy. Secure water supply and access to domestic and international markets via key freight routes, makes Wentworth Shire an attractive location for irrigated horticulture.



### TOURISM

There are opportunities for growth in this industry leveraged on both built and natural assets. River-based recreation, our reputation as the 'gateway to the outback', agritourism, cultural and built heritage are all supported by co-location with to key transport routes and air travel connections to major cities.

### MINING & RENEWABLE RESOURCES

The Shire is host to one of three major mineral sands resources in NSW. There is also potential to generate renewable solar and wind energy in areas close to existing electricity transmission infrastructure. These industries offer positive flow-on effects for many other industries such as construction, transport and professional services.



## SOCIAL

### POPULATION

Wentworth Shire has an estimated 7,042 people. The total number of people that were usually resident in Wentworth Shire on Census night in 2016 was 6,798 which is an increase of 2.8% from 6,610 people that were resident on Census night in 2011iii. This equates to an annual growth rate of 0.56%. Most reside in the Shire's four townships (Map 2 - Primary Settlement Area)iv.



### SETTLEMENT

Wentworth Shire experiences the benefits and challenges associated with proximity to the growing regional city of Mildura. New urban development has spilled over the Murray River leading to an increase in housing demand in Buronga and Gol Gol which is expected to continue. The township of Wentworth is popular for retirees as they are attracted to the rural qualities and amenities of the Shire and the services of nearby Mildura.



## ENVIRONMENTAL

### WATER

Wentworth Shire forms part of the Murray Darling Basin, the largest and most complex river system in Australia and is home to a unique and highly valued environment, including the confluence of the iconic Darling and Murray rivers and the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area.



### LAND AND HERITAGE

The internationally significant Willandra Lakes area contain RAMSAR wetlands and Mungo National Park which is home to Mungo Man and Mungo Lady – the earliest evidence of humans outside of Africa and the oldest known cremation in the world. These incredible sites are part of a rich indigenous history with records of human occupation dating back over 40,000 years.

# ***Strategic vision, intent and priorities***

Over the next 20 years Wentworth Shire will leverage the area's rural, industrial and residential strengths to generate economic and social growth opportunities.

Horticulture/agriculture, industry and local businesses complimented by opportunities for tourism and residential investment will drive prosperity in the Wentworth Shire as the area capitalises on its close proximity to the Murray and Darling river systems and its favourable climate conditions.

Local, regional, state and national road transport and freight networks provide access to national and international locations and markets which are fundamental for the success of the economic growth of Wentworth Shire. We will continue to work with all spheres of government to promote and enable the delivery of appropriate infrastructure to support the region.

Wentworth Shire will be open for business and Council will actively support the development of tourism, business and industrial sectors. Council will investigate and review land use pressures to ensure the shire has a complimentary balance of residential and commercial development opportunities to encourage population growth.

Wentworth Shire Council will continue to recognise the importance of the rural city of Mildura and our community's ability to access higher level services, such as higher education, health services and employment. Recognising and enhancing this connection will be a key driver to the success of Wentworth Shire.

Our towns and villages will capitalise on growth opportunities so that they continue to service our local communities. Our towns will offer a variety of housing choice to support a growing population and as our towns continue to support new growth, our economic base will diversify. Our townships will be vibrant active places to visit and live, providing a variety of basic economic and community services.

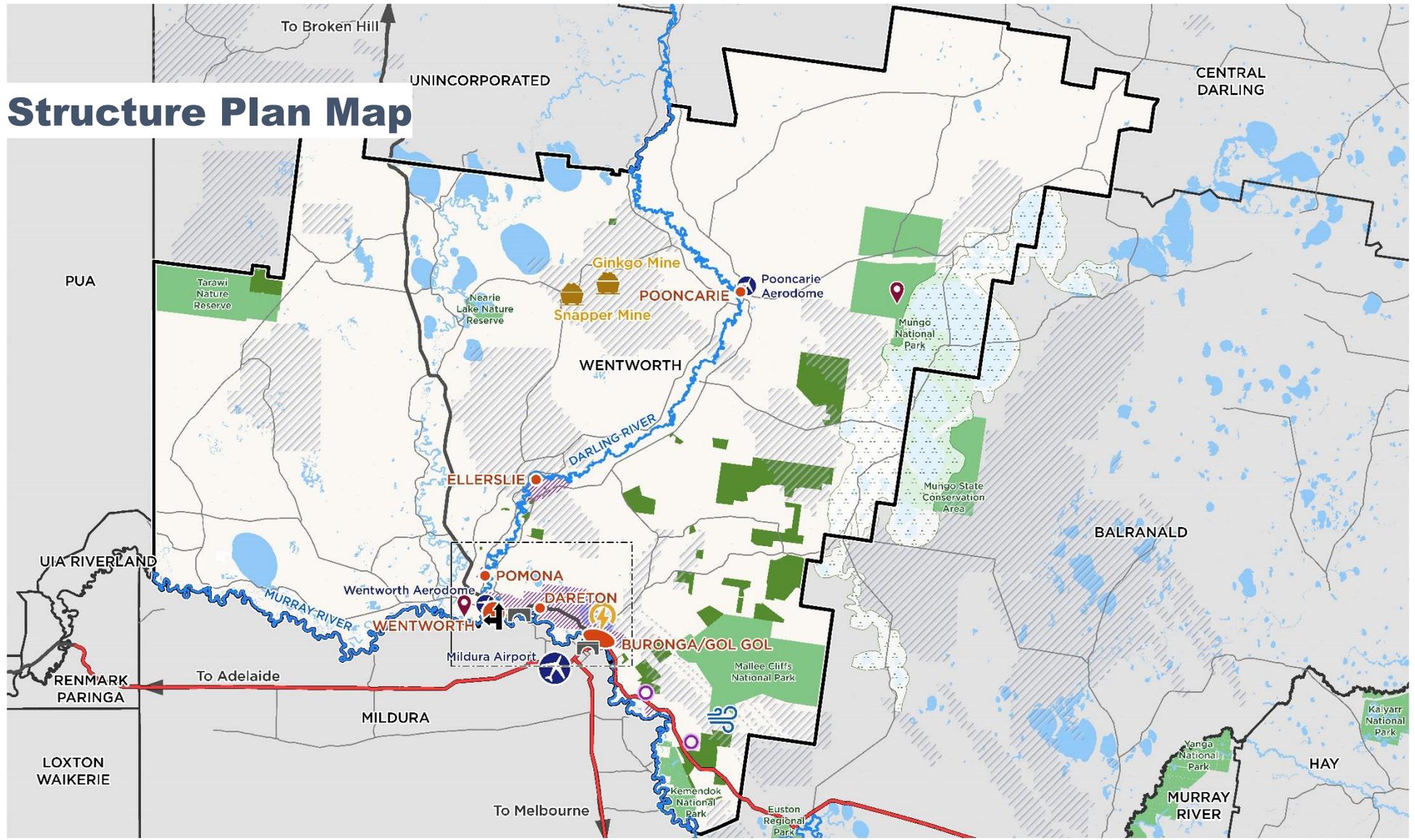
Our natural environment will be fully understood and appreciated. Our existing environmental assets, national parks, river and water bodies will be leveraged off. Significant environmental areas adjoining our development areas will be identified, understood and protected. Our new development areas will respect environmental values and will also leverage off these features to make Wentworth Shire a great place to live and visit.

Wentworth Shire Council will also seek to establish a positive working partnership and relationship with the local Indigenous Barkindji people as the custodians of the land to ensure any future land use strategies, proposals or developments will co-exist with native title where possible. Council will work collaboratively with the Barkindji people to protect and preserve sites of heritage and cultural significance.

Council believes and will continue to promote that what we have to offer here in Wentworth is ***'Worth the Drive'***.



# Structure Plan Map

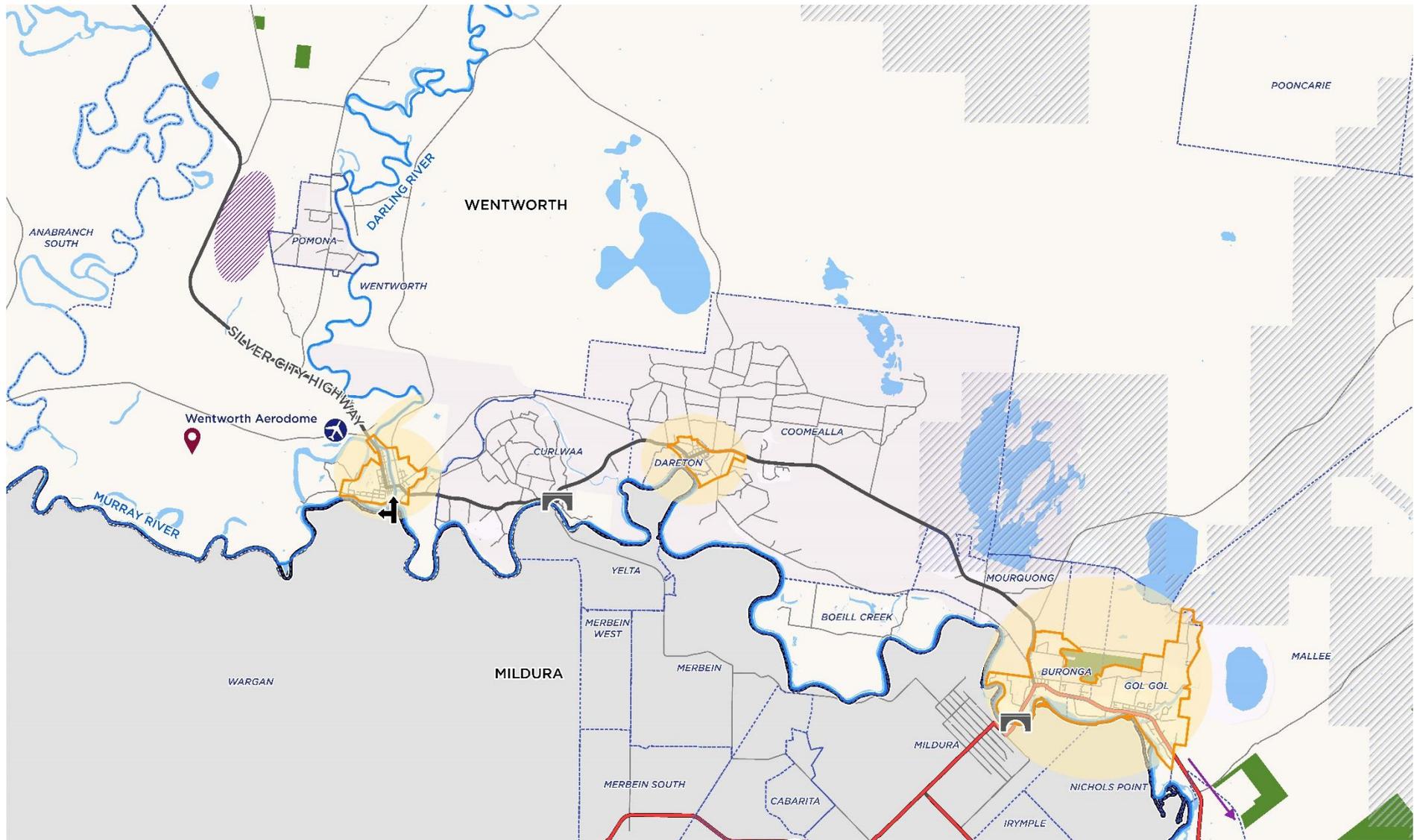


## Legend

- |                |  |                         |                       |  |                                     |                            |
|----------------|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Settlement     | Operating Mine                             | Key Tourism Area        | Road                  | New Irrigation Area: Trentham, Paringi & Monak | Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area | National Park              |
| Airport        | Electricity Network Connection Opportunity | Murray Darling Junction | Key Freight Route     | Irrigation Districts                           | Rural Land                          | Environmental Conservation |
| High Wind Area | River Crossing                             | Primary Settlement Area | Local Government Area | Mineral Sands Exploration Licences             | Water Feature                       |                            |



Map 1 - Structure Plan Map



**Legend**

- |                  |                         |                                    |                     |  |                      |                            |
|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|--|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Airport          | Murray Darling Junction | Road                               | Settlement Boundary | New irrigation areas towards Trentham, Paringi and Monak | Irrigation Districts | Environmental Conservation |
| Key Tourism Area | River Crossing          | Key Freight Route                  | Settlement Area     | Local Government Area                                    | Water Feature        |                            |
|                  |                         | Mineral Sands Exploration Licences | New Irrigation Area | Suburb Boundary  |                      |                            |



Map 2 - Primary Settlement Area

## ***A productive Shire***



*Figure 8: Viticulture production throughout the LGA*

# Planning Priority 1 – Promote agriculture and value-added manufacturing

*gives effect to:*

**Direction 2:** *Protect productive agricultural land and plan for greater land use compatibility of the Far West Regional Plan*

Agriculture is the main land use in Wentworth Shire (dryland cropping, pastoral farming and irrigated horticulture) and the top driver of the local and regional economy in terms of output and employment. Irrigated horticulture is the backbone of the agricultural industry in Wentworth Shire and accounts for over 80% of the gross value of this sector. It has strong connections to manufacturing, transport and construction sectors.

Irrigated horticulture is concentrated near established water infrastructure in irrigation districts of Pomona, Curlwaa, Coomealla, Buronga, Gol Gol and Ellerslie or on land adjacent to water sources of the Darling and Murray Rivers and the road transport network. Horticulture and the irrigated landscape are important elements of the identity and lifestyle of Wentworth Shire's townships and communities.

Value-added manufacturing businesses such as food and beverage manufacturing and processing facilities have set up near farms on the Sturt and Silver City Highways to connect producers to export markets via the national road transport network to Adelaide and Melbourne.

Growth in the local irrigated horticulture and related manufacturing sectors is expected in response to growing demand from Asian economies for more and high-value agricultural food produce. This has been observed along the NSW and Victorian sides of the Murray River as investors seek to establish new irrigated horticultural plantings close to water sources and new manufacturing plants near transport routes.

Three key trends are emerging in the agriculture industry. New irrigated horticulture plantings are growing in prevalence; there is a continued shift toward larger landholdings; and an increase in decoupling of water entitlements to development outside traditional irrigation districts.

The growth and scale of new irrigation development has triggered the necessity for affordable accommodation for seasonal workers in rural areas. Meanwhile, there is a growing demand for permissibility of tourism uses in the rural zone to capitalise on our natural assets and environment in rural locations.

This planning priority sets in place Council's land use planning response that aims to protect and grow new agriculture, irrigated horticulture and related value-added manufacturing in Wentworth Shire in line with the *NSW Right to Farm policy*, strategic land use directions in the *Far West Regional Plan 2036*, the *Western Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018 – 2022*.

## ***The Sunraysia District***

Sunraysia is one of the most productive horticultural areas in Australia and is known for sunshine, high-quality and high-value food and beverage products, including wine, grapes, citrus, vegetables and nuts. The district is an informal region spanning both sides of the Murray River and incorporates parts of Wentworth and Balranald Shires (NSW) and the Rural City of Mildura (VIC).



## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



- A. Protect irrigated horticultural land uses in pumped irrigation districts and general irrigation lands outside of pumped irrigation districts by:
- avoiding the fragmentation of land through subdivision to ensure large areas of land are available for new, expanded or consolidated irrigated horticulture.
  - avoiding the establishment of sensitive land uses that are incompatible with normal farming operations.



- B. Manage change in pumped irrigation districts of Pomona and Curlwaa by balancing the need to support the productive and sustainable function of existing water infrastructure with pressure for new rural and hobby farm living by:
- protecting established irrigated horticultural land uses.
  - enabling rural living opportunities such as hobby farming and environmental living in areas experiencing change.
  - manage the interface between agricultural, residential development and environmentally sensitive land, particularly river-front land through local development controls.



- C. Prioritise new irrigated horticulture on suitable land by:
- enabling the subdivision of land to enable new irrigated horticultural development.
  - preventing the development of incompatible land uses on or near these areas.



- D. Support other agricultural land uses, including dryland cropping and pastoral farming by:
- minimising subdivision to new or smaller lots unless in areas identified suitable for irrigated horticulture (refer c above).
  - preventing the establishment of dwellings not associated or required for the agricultural use of the land.
  - supporting the transition from one type of agricultural land use to another subject to any relevant land management considerations that may apply in lease agreements issued under the Western Lands Act 1901.

E. Facilitate the development of new, innovative and compatible non-agricultural land uses and development, particularly tourism on or near productive agricultural land by reviewing and amending the rural zone land use table.

F. Prioritise new value-added manufacturing (food processing, packaging and manufacturing) including on site sales (farm gate retail) and related transport facilities on land with safe access to the key regional freight route consisting of the Sturt and Silver City Highways.

## Actions

1. Review and update the *Wentworth LEP 2011* to give effect to the strategic directions in this Planning Priority – *Short term*
2. Develop supplementary guidance (such as a DCP) that provides local guidance on suitable non-agricultural land use development on rural land – *Medium term*



Figure 9: Pomona irrigation pipes

## Planning Priority 2 – Grow tourism

*gives effect to:*

**Direction 5:** *Promote tourism opportunities*

**Direction 10:** *Enhance the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities*

*of the Far West Regional Plan*

Tourism is a key driver of growth in Wentworth Shire and opportunities presented by sustainable, cultural and experiential tourism can enhance and diversify the economy.

Tourism offerings include the two major river systems, national parks, food and agritourism, and pioneering and aboriginal cultural heritage.

River-based tourism is increasingly popular with much of the region's tourism driven by recreational and whole of river experiences along the Murray. Visitors to Wentworth Shire have the unique ability to access attractions directly from the water including Coomealla Golf Club, Wentworth township, the Gol Gol Hotel and Trentham Estate Winery.

Improving access and connections (Planning Priority 4) to the Murray and Darling rivers will play an important role in continuing to attract visitors to Wentworth as well as enhancing the whole of river experience. Healthy and functioning waterways must be a priority to ensure the continued growth of tourism in the Shire and region (Planning Priority 9).

Wentworth Shire can leverage its proximity to Mildura but differentiate itself by showcasing the local environmental, pioneering and indigenous heritage features. The historic township of Wentworth will build on its existing local character and sense of place and the Shire can further its reputation as the 'Gateway to the Outback' by encouraging modern tourism facilities to locate on sites that take advantage of the river, rural landscape or nature-based settings.

This planning priority sets in place a land use planning framework to support and grow tourism in the Wentworth Shire and aligns with the projects outlined in the *Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan*, strategic land use directions in the *Far West Regional Plan 2036* and the *Western Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy*. It also reflects the community's aspirations in the CSP to increase investment in tourism, expand and promote events, and develop a local tourism strategy.

## ENCOURAGE...

a. Encourage a range of tourism and visitor accommodation development where it benefits from the co-location with a primary productive use or benefits from a rural landscape setting.

## CONSIDER...

b. Consider ecotourism facilities as a land use to manage conflicts between horticulture activities and existing rural residential areas in Buronga (identified in Planning Priority 1 and 6) in conjunction with built form controls developed in the Buronga/Gol Gol Structure Plan 2019 and DCP.

## RANGE...

c. Encourage a range of tourism development and amenities within settlement boundaries to leverage the availability of established infrastructure and connections to the river.

## LEVERAGE...

Leverage existing access to the rivers and embellish public land along the rivers with walking and cycling pathways, playgrounds and other amenities to create a Green Grid (Map 3 – 5) for residents and visitors.

## SUPPORT...

e. Support tourism developments along the river that do not impact on the health and amenity of the Darling and Murray Rivers.

## REINFORCE...

f. Reinforce Wentworth township's riverfront precinct through appropriate zoning and public infrastructure upgrades along Darling Street, integrated with linkages to the Darling and Murray riverfront area through the Wentworth Riverfront Development Strategy.

## LOCATE...

g. Locate cluster moorings and commercial mooring sites close to towns, villages and tourist destinations to prioritise connections to the river and to support the local economy.

## PROMOTE...

h. Promote high quality public spaces that align with NSW Better Placed Design policy and the Urban Design Guide for Regional NSW.

## IMPROVE...

i. Improve and maintain access for connectivity to all places of heritage significance, adjoining states/towns and popular or new tourist destinations to strengthen tourism in the region.

## DELIVER...

j. Deliver new or upgraded public infrastructure across the Shire that reflects the strong, vibrant and diverse aboriginal culture and history of the land

## CONSOLIDATE...

k. Consolidate the far west tourism experience by working collaboratively with the Far West Joint Organisation and the associated Councils (Broken Hill, Central Darling and Balranald) to prepare a Far West Heritage Trail map and information booklet.

## **Actions**

1. Advocate for funding to upgrade unsealed roads to improve access and connectivity to places of significance, adjoining states and townships and tourist destinations – *Immediate and ongoing*
2. Review and update the *Wentworth LEP 2011* and give effect to the strategic directions in this Planning Priority – *Short term*
3. Prepare a local tourism strategy and give effect to the strategic directions within this Planning Priority – *Short term*
4. Prepare the *Wentworth Riverfront Development Strategy* and give effect to the strategic directions within this Planning Priority – *Short term*

## Planning Priority 3 – Manage resources and renewable energy

*gives effect to:*

**Direction 3:** *Sustainably manage mineral resources*

**Direction 4:** *Diversify energy supply through renewable energy generation*

*of the Far West Regional Plan*

Wentworth Shire is endowed with world class mineral-rich sand deposits and land suitable for solar and wind energy productions. These resources are significantly underutilised and have the potential to grow the mining and construction industries in the local government area.

### Mining

The Murray Basin has the potential to become one of the world's major new mineral sands provinces, with much of the identified deposits located within Wentworth Shire (Figure 10). Heavy minerals sand resources such as ilmenite, leucoxene and zircon are already being extracted from existing mines, with current sector output of \$147 million in the LGA. These resources are transported by road train to Broken Hill for processing before transport via rail to Adelaide Port.

Recent developments in mineral separation technology could improve the potential viability of deposits within Wentworth Shire. Investment in transport infrastructure to link mineral deposits and intermodal facilities that move products to export destinations is required to enable further development of these resources (*Planning Priority 4*).

It is expected that the mining sector will continue to provide an important contribution to the local economy into the future as a sustainable mining sector generates direct employment and flow-on benefits to the community.

### Renewables

NSW is transitioning towards renewable energy production and Wentworth Shire is well placed to take advantage of its solar and wind endowments as well as its strategic location on the transmission network.

Wentworth Shire has significant levels of solar exposure (Figure 11), high wind speeds (Figure 12) and TransGrid has identified Buronga as a potential additional connection point as part of the interconnector proposal between South Australia and NSW (Map 1 - Structure Plan Map). The new interconnector, in conjunction with the new energy storage generated from Snowy 2.0 pumped hydro scheme, will provide security of energy supply and facilitate large-scale solar and wind projects in the Shire.

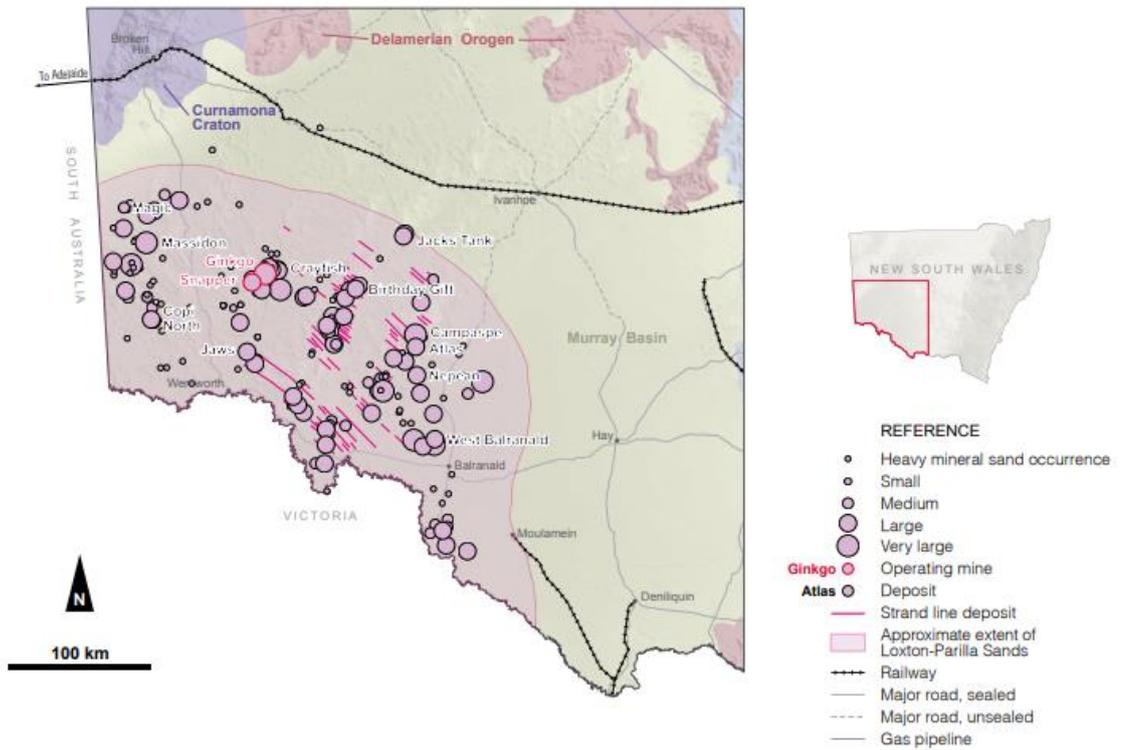


Figure 10 - Mineral Sands Occurrence in the Far West (Source: Department of Planning, Industry and Environment - Resources and Geoscience)

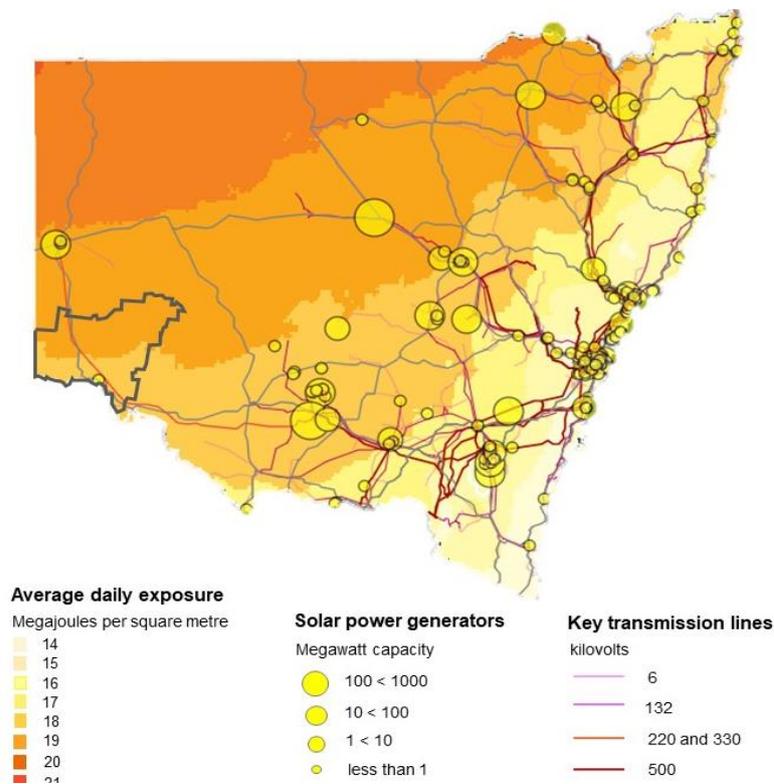


Figure 11 - Solar energy resources (Source: Department of Planning, Industry and Environment - Resources and Geoscience)

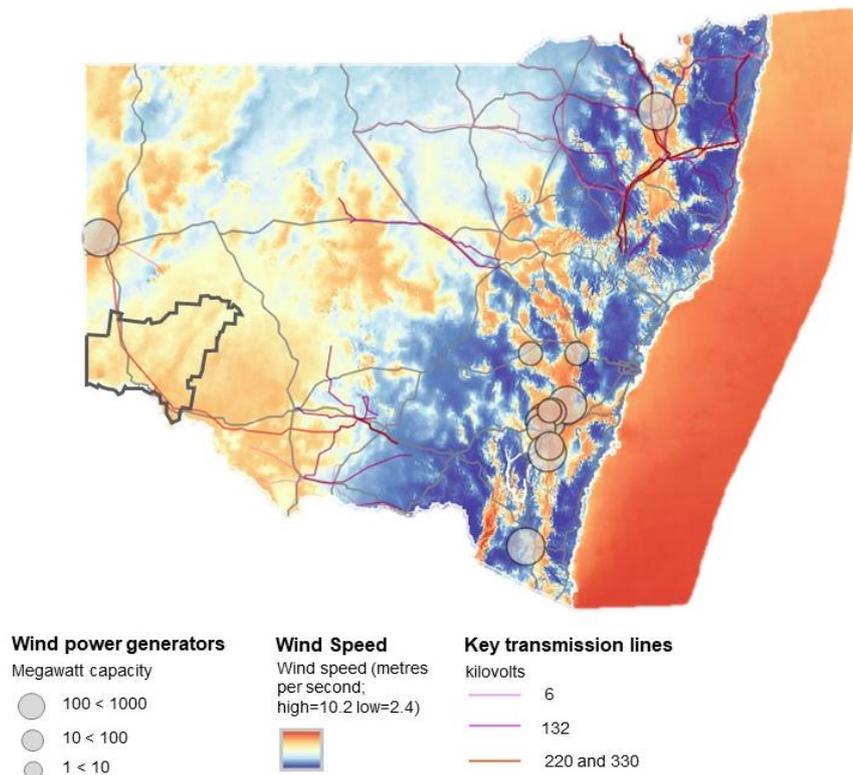


Figure 12 - Wind energy resources (Source: Department of Planning, Industry and Environment - Resources and Geoscience).

The growth in this industry will also require an adequate supply of affordable accommodation for workers and necessity managing the cumulative impacts of demand for temporary workers accommodation associated with future mining and renewable projects in Wentworth and adjoining council areas.

The impact of future mining and renewable energy projects must be considered and balanced against Wentworth's agricultural industry. As outlined in Planning Priority 1, agriculture output in Wentworth Shire is primarily driven by irrigated horticultural lands and these areas must be protected. Impacts on other agricultural land and agri-processing developments in the Shire must also be considered.

This planning priority sets in place a land use planning framework to grow the mining and construction industries to capitalise on Wentworth's mineral and solar endowments and gives effect to the directions in the *Far West Regional Plan 2036* and the *Western Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022*. It also reflects the actions and land use directions outlined in the *NSW Transmission Infrastructure Strategy* and the *NSW Minerals Strategy*.

# ENERGY INDUSTRY STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

**AVOID** mining and renewable energy developments within pumped irrigation districts and on identified strategic agricultural land.



**REQUIRE** consideration of the value and cumulative loss of all other agricultural land (outside of pumped irrigation districts) throughout Wentworth Shire when a new mining or renewable development is proposed. This includes land lost through secondary impacts from the development on adjacent land.



**LIMIT** subdivision in areas of known mineral sands deposits in the north and north east of the Shire (Map 1 - Structure Plan Map) to support development of the mineral sands mining sector.



**ENSURE** the rehabilitation of mines and proposed post-mining land uses minimise the sterilisation of land and maximise beneficial economic, social and environmental outcomes for the Sunraysia region.



**INVESTIGATE** flexible subdivision provisions in association with renewable energy projects where it does not sterilise the land for future mineral extraction.



**FACILITATE** the development of temporary workers accommodation associated with large infrastructure and construction and consider the impacts on temporary accommodation for seasonal agricultural worker.



## Actions

1. Update mineral sand resource mapping in consultation with Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) - Resources and Geoscience – *Short term*
2. Collaborate with TransGrid to ensure all electricity easements for the proposed Interconnector project are identified in Council's GIS database for development assessment referral purposes – *Short term*
3. Investigate flexible subdivision provisions in association with renewable energy projects where it does not sterilise land for future mineral extraction and agricultural purposes – *Medium term*



Figure 13: Sunset on outskirts of Wentworth

## Planning Priority 4 – Efficient transport and connectivity networks

*gives effect to:*

**Direction 1:** Grow the agribusiness sector, value-added manufacturing opportunities and supply chains

**Direction 12:** Enhance the productivity of employment lands

**Direction 24:** Enhance access to education and training

*of the Far West Regional Plan*

Efficient transport and connectivity networks for Wentworth are important to:

- connect local growers, producers and miners to domestic and international export markets.
- connect residents to other communities of interest, particularly Mildura but also amongst Wentworth’s townships and settlements.
- support new and emerging economic opportunities, such as tourism and other activities on key sites

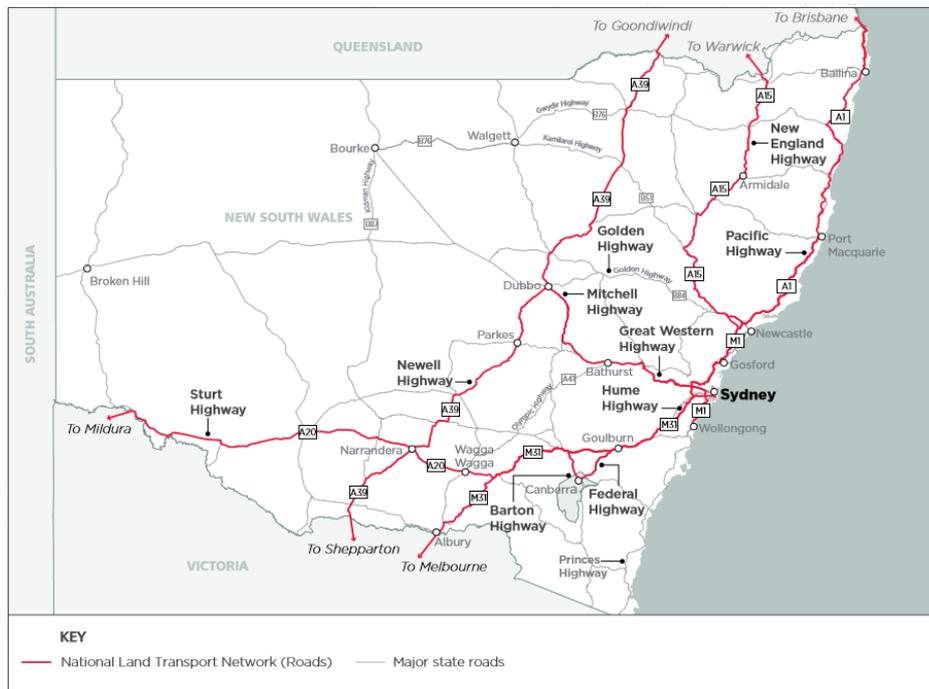


Figure 14 - National Land Transport Network and major State roads in NSW (Source: NSW Freight and Ports Plan 2018-2023)

Wentworth benefits from its strategic location on the intersection of the National Land Transport Network (Sturt and Calder Highways) that connects the eastern cities of Brisbane, Sydney and Canberra with Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. The Sturt and Calder Highways form part of a key regional freight route

that connects growers and producers in Wentworth and nearby regions to domestic markets and export portals of Adelaide and Melbourne via two strategic river crossings, the George Chaffey Bridge and the Abbotsford Bridge. The Silver City Highway connects the Shire to the specialised mining service hub of Broken Hill and the rail network to Adelaide.

The main form of transport for Wentworth's communities is private car or limited bus service to access local amenities and services in townships. Many of Wentworth's townships and settlements have insufficient demand for more regular public bus transport services and some have walking and cycling tracks that encourage active transport.

The George Chaffey and Abbotsford Bridge are also important river crossings for Wentworth's residents to access the regional services and amenities, education, jobs and health available in the rural city of Mildura.

Air-transport is available at Mildura Airport, the busiest regional airport in Victoria. Mildura Airport provides strategic connections to Melbourne, Broken Hill, Sydney and Adelaide and is a key tourism gateway for the region.

The NSW Government is investing \$8.4 million to upgrade Wentworth aerodrome to support local businesses and emergency services and enable pilot training currently operating at Mildura Airport to relocate to Wentworth. This investment will improve air connectivity and offer new economic opportunities that Wentworth can leverage to further diversify the local economy through pilot training services, emergency services, agriculture and farm management and air passenger and freight.

The two significant challenges facing Wentworth Shire Council into the future include:

- the numerous unsealed roads that inhibit access, particularly in wet conditions, for communities, growers, producers and visitors to key attractions and adjoining localities (refer Planning Priority 2) and
- managing congestion as growth in Buronga and Gol Gol increases vehicle movements on the key regional freight route and the George Chaffey Bridge.

Council will plan, design and operate the road network to deliver movement and place outcomes where the National Land Transport Network and key freight route passes through local communities. This requires careful management of land to enable and activate centres, particularly the town centres of Buronga and Gol Gol, without compromising the efficiency of the key freight route (refer Figure 14).

While Wentworth Shire does not contain any rail infrastructure at present, consideration for the future development of this mode of transportation to connect to Mildura's rail network, and the northern rail link should be considered.

A Movement and Place framework would be delivered in line with *Future Transport 2056*, the *NSW Freight and Ports Plan 2018-2022* and the Movement and Place Practitioner's Toolkit.



Figure 15: Examples of transport operating in the LGA

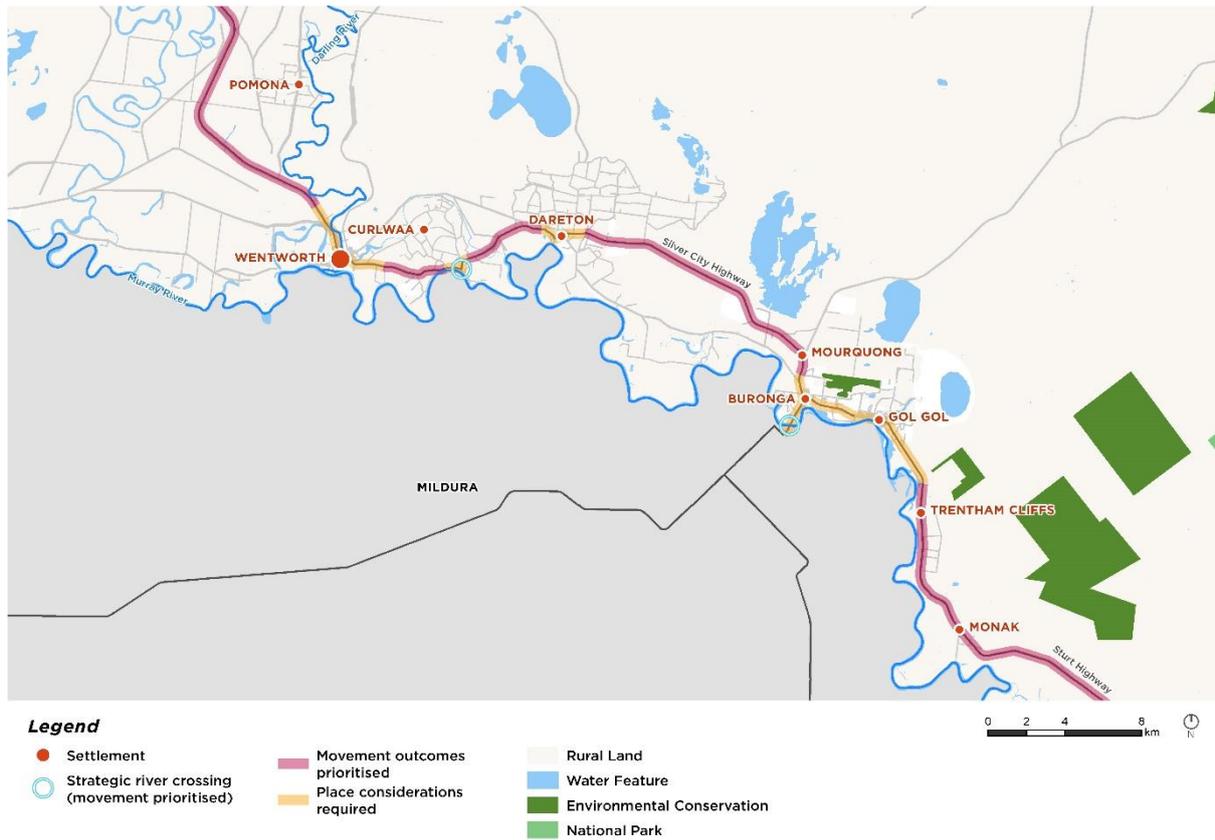


Figure 16 - Wentworth's movement and place approach in Wentworth, Dareton, Buronga and Gol Gol

## Actions

1. Develop a local movement and place guideline for projects that deliver new or enhanced road transport infrastructure (either by Council, government partners or private developers as part of subdivision, development agreements or conditions of consent) that reflect the local movement and place priorities in Wentworth Shire – *Short term*
2. Review and update the Wentworth Aerodrome Master Plan to provide for the new economic opportunities that will be available following the upgrade of the runway to a sealed all-weather surface, including potential economic opportunities in nearby Wentworth for related businesses or service sectors to support activities such as pilot training, mechanical servicing or passenger and freight air transport – *Short term*

# TRANSPORT STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Protect the national land transport network (including the Sturt, Silver City and Calder Highways) and the strategic river crossings (including the George Chaffey Bridge and Abbotsford Bridge) to ensure the efficient, safe and reliable movement of people and goods.



Lobby with relevant State Agencies and State Government for funding to improve and/or seal local roads.

Consult and lobby with State and Federal Government for an additional bridge across the Murray River to Mildura and future rail services.



Consider the function, identity and character of settlements, including Wentworth, Dareton, Buronga and Gol Gol on the national land transport network when planning new or enhanced road infrastructure (refer Figure 16).

Development must consider the impact on the existing and future capacity of the road network.

Ensure land use, structure and master plans consider maintenance and capacity enhancements of the Sturt and Silver City Highways and State and local roads, including lane and shoulder widths, intersections and crossings, bridges and other safety upgrades (refer NSW Freight and Ports Plan 2018-2023).



Avoid locations for new development that may be sensitive to the movement function of the national land transport network outside of settlement boundaries (refer Planning Priority 6). Use development controls to ensure that sensitive land uses are located, designed and constructed to minimise potential impacts from the national land transport network



Encourage a shift from private vehicles through:

- i. new walking and cycling opportunities in and between Wentworth, Dareton and Buronga/Gol Gol.
- ii. advocate for a new public transport bus service to connect towns to one another and Mildura.
- iii. investigate opportunities for river-based transport.



Encourage the location of new development at Wentworth Aerodrome and in nearby Wentworth that leverages new economic opportunities from investment in the new runway surface and ancillary infrastructure, such as pilot training, emergency services, agricultural and farm management support and passenger and freight transport services.

Manage new residential development at Wentworth Aerodrome to ensure land is available for new businesses that require co-location on or near the aerodrome to support (g) above.



## Planning Priority 5 – Aboriginal economic self determination

*gives effect to:*

**Direction 10:** *Enhance the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities*

**Direction 22:** *Collaborate and partner with Aboriginal communities*

*of the Far West Regional Plan*

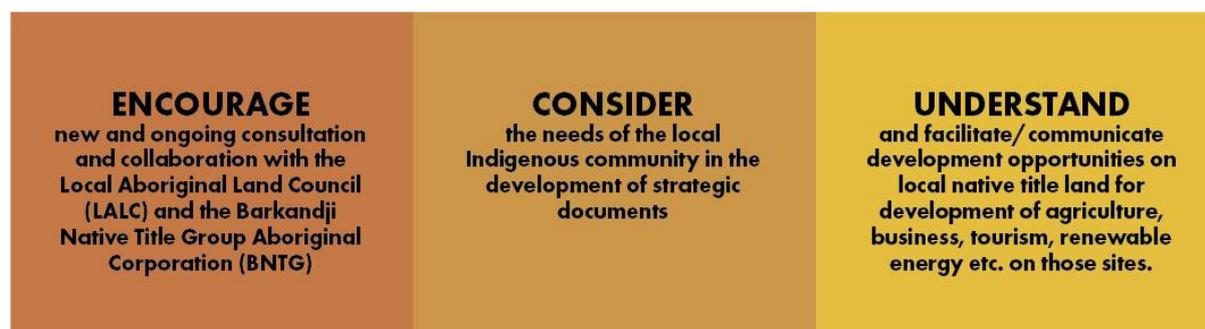
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people make up approximately 10% of the Wentworth Shire's population compared to the NSW State and Australian average of about 3%. The Barkandji people are the main recognised Aboriginal people in the Shire. The Barkandji nation of far west NSW holds native title for over 128,000 square kilometres of land, of which a significant proportion is located within Wentworth Shire under Barkandji Native Title Group Aboriginal Corporation.

The Shire's relatively large indigenous population and native title claim present opportunities for planning for land uses and development that promote the economic wellbeing and independence of the Aboriginal people.

Understanding and capitalizing on these opportunities will require Council to actively engage and collaborate with the indigenous community to determine and consider the economic benefits and impacts of land use planning decisions. Council will align with existing federal and state strategies, such as the Australian Government Indigenous Economic Strategy and the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council Strategic Plan 2018-2022 which seek to promote economic development, social wellbeing and cultural protection of Aboriginal people.

While many of the actions of the state and federal documents fall outside the planning system, Wentworth Shire can draw on these documents to build a greater understanding of the Indigenous communities social and economic priorities, how they relate to the opportunities on indigenous owned land and to initiate meaningful engagement with indigenous people.

In order for Council to achieve this, more strategic work is required. There is opportunity for Council to review existing consultation processes and how it engages with the local aboriginal community; and develop an agreed protocol in order to provide advice and facilitate planning and development opportunities on Indigenous owned land.



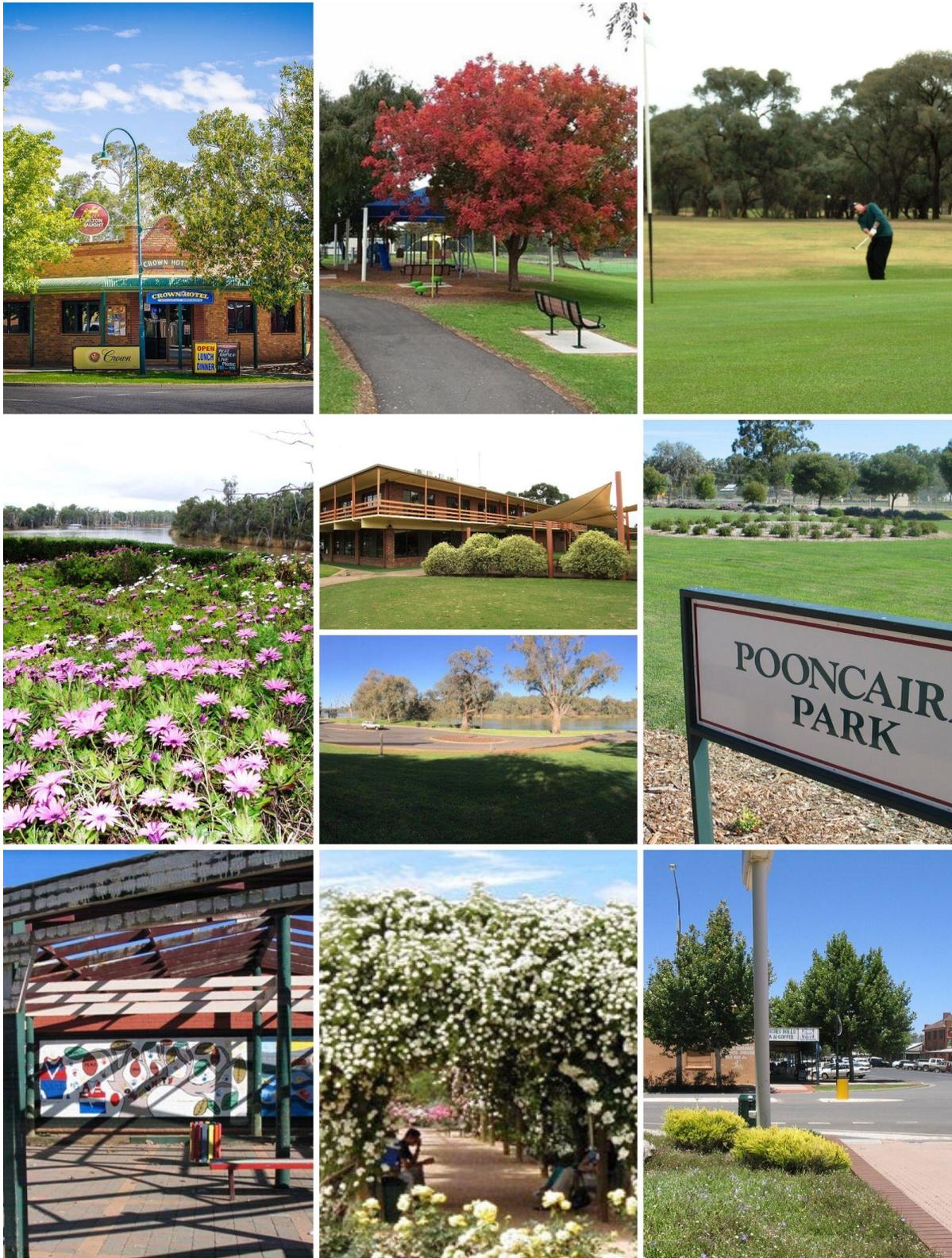
## Actions

1. Develop a list of contacts in collaboration with the LALC and BNTG – *Short term*
2. Develop a process of consultation with the LALC and BNTG when exhibiting strategic documents or notification of development applications – *Short term*
3. Map local indigenous land and develop a document that details the zone of each parcel, the development opportunities and constraints in collaboration with DPIE, LALC and BNTG – *Medium term*



Figure 17: Aboriginal Language Map NSW

# *An attractive Shire*



*Figure 18: Crown Hotel Wentworth, James King Park Gol Gol, Golfer at Coomealla Golf Club Dareton, Drings Hill Gol Gol, Coomealla Golf Club, James King Park, Pooncaira Park Pooncarie, Mural & Pergola Dareton, Australian Inland Botanical Gardens Buronga, Wentworth Streetscape.*

## Planning Priority 6 – Sustainable settlements

*gives effect to:*

*Direction 20: Manage change in settlements*

*Direction 21: Strengthen communities of interest and cross-regional relationships*

*Direction 27: Provide greater housing choice*

*Direction 28: Deliver greater opportunities for affordable housing*

*of the Far West Regional Plan*

The four townships of Wentworth Shire each have a unique identity and function:

- Wentworth is located at the meeting place of two of Australia's most iconic river systems and is a place of historical, social and environmental significance. It is the primary administrative hub for the Shire and home to the local hospital, a public primary school and recreational amenity along the river-front, which together with historic built and cultural heritage is an attractive tourist destination.
- Dareton is a local service centre and community that provides services and amenity to the nearby productive irrigation district of Coomealla. Key services and amenities include agricultural-oriented services and retail on the main high street (Tapio Street/Silver City Highway), a local primary and high school and recreational amenity, Rural Fire Services and NSW Police. Recreation opportunities include the Coomealla Memorial Sporting and Golf Club, the George Gordon Oval Recreation Reserve and nearby mountain biking trails. Dareton benefits from a large extent of public recreation land along the northern bank of the Murray River.
- Buronga/Gol Gol is a growing urban area that has evolved from two distinct villages as growth from Mildura has flowed across the border, seeking new residential options close to the amenity of the Murray River and employment and services available in Mildura. The two townships are developing as a new urban identity as a single township located on the banks of the Murray River set amongst an agricultural landscape of irrigated horticulture and an entrance way from Victoria into NSW.
- Pooncarie is a small village located on the Darling River approximately 120 kilometres north east of Wentworth. Pooncarie provides limited services to the resident community and its surrounds. These include a hotel, cafés, post office/library/community centre, camp ground and several heritage items of local significance. Pooncarie is predominantly surrounded by pastoral grazing land.

# PRIMARY SETTLEMENT AREAS STRATEGIES

In Buronga and Gol Gol new urban development is to:

- i. be located in the identified settlement boundary. The settlement area is bounded by the environmentally sensitive land in the north, Native Ridge Lane in the east and Silver City Highway and Pitman Avenue West in the west (Map 5 – Buronga Gol Gol Townships).
- ii. provide for rural residential development in suitable locations subject to further investigation.
- iii. support the development of the new local centre at Midway Drive by concentrating new commercial, retail, community and other non-residential development in the vicinity.
- iv. deliver a new publicly accessible green grid (pedestrian and cycleway) along the northern banks of the Murray River out to Trentham Cliffs (Planning Priority 2), and linking to the local centre at Midway Drive.

In Dareton, new urban development is to:

- i. be located in the identified settlement boundary. The settlement area is bounded by Burtundy Street in the north east, School Road in the north, Boronia Crescent in the east, the Murray River in the south and School Road in the west. It includes the future residential and rural residential lands on River Road.
- ii. provide for rural residential development located along River Road within the settlement boundary.
- iii. concentrate new retail, commercial and community development along Tapio Street (Sturt Highway).
- iv. deliver a new publicly accessible green link (pedestrian and cycleway) from the centre of Dareton through the growth area lands on River Road to connect to the green grid public recreation land along the Murray River (Planning Priority 2).

In Wentworth, new urban development is to:

- i. be located in the identified settlement area. The settlement area is bounded by Renmark Road in the north, end of Armstrong Avenue in the east and Wilmont Street in the west.
- ii. utilise existing zoned and serviced land for a range of urban development outcomes, including housing for older people and affordable housing near existing services and amenities.
- iii. identify and promote the local commercial town centre function on land bound by the Silver City Highway, Darling Street and Adam Street.
- iv. improve walking and cycling connectivity along the Murray and Darling river front areas through a connected green grid of publicly accessible land as part of a Riverfront Development Strategy (Planning Priority 2).
- v. investigate new rural residential development opportunities outside the township boundary.

In Pooncarie, investigate opportunities and constraints for new activity/ attractions in and around the township aimed at sustaining population and services.

Manage change in the settlements of Pomona and Curlwaa due to the changing nature of agriculture and capitalise on new opportunities for:

- i. rural residential or other forms of development compatible with the existing use of land for agriculture in Pomona and Curlwaa.
- ii. recognise the local village function of the existing settlement at Curlwaa on the Silver City Highway.

Outside the townships and villages, land is to be maintained for rural, landscape and biodiversity values, including agriculture and value-added manufacturing, tourism and natural areas.

New urban and rural residential development should generally avoid encroachment on productive agricultural, employment and environmentally sensitive lands, particularly the irrigation areas of Coomealla, parts of Curlwaa, Monak and Trentham Cliffs and the emerging irrigated horticultural areas outside of the Pomona and Ellerslie irrigation districts.

New urban development in the primary settlement areas is to:

- i. provide a range of housing options, including affordable housing, housing for older people, family housing and temporary worker accommodation based on an analysis of local demographics and future demand.
- ii. promote high-quality urban design in line with NSW Better Placed design policy and the Urban Design Guide for Regional NSW.
- iii. manage land use conflict through the use of setbacks and buffer zones in subdivision layouts, mitigate potential impacts in building location and design and generally avoid affecting the economic viability of land needed to support key sectors of the local economy.
- iv. deliver improvements to connectivity, transport and access for existing and future planned communities to Mildura, Broken Hill, Renmark, local town centres and amenities, particularly river-front and recreational facilities and land.

Ensure new employment development that requires separation from urban development due to potential amenity impacts, is located in suitable areas.

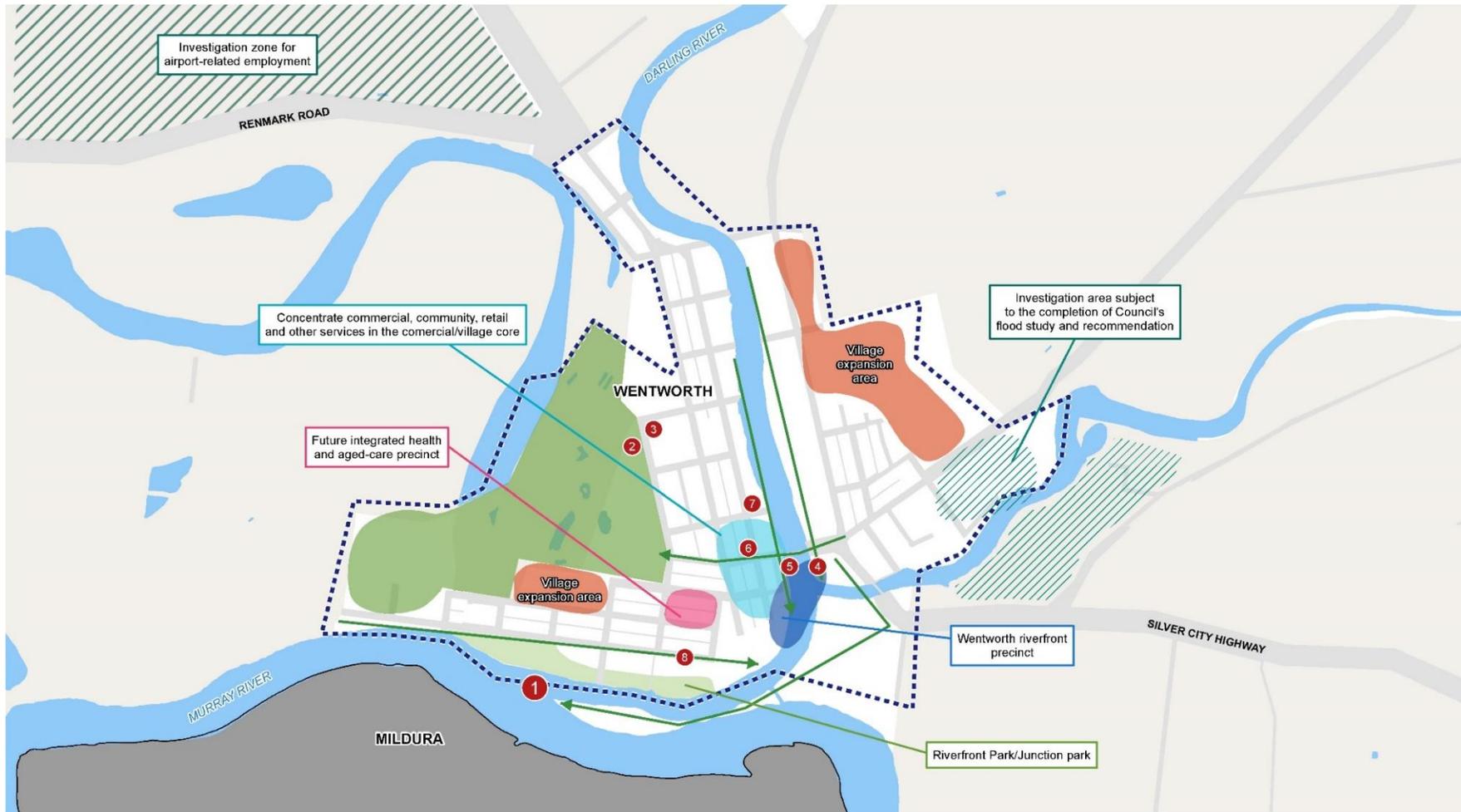


## Actions

1. Develop a *Sustainable Dareton Strategy* to guide future development opportunities in this township – *Short term*
2. Develop a *Sustainable Pooncarie Strategy* to determine the opportunities and constraints within the township for sustaining current population and services – *Short term*
3. Develop rural living strategies for Pomona and Curlwaa to guide the transition from irrigation settlements to lifestyle settlements – *Medium term*
4. Investigate and identify suitable locations for future rural residential development outside the Wentworth town boundary – *Medium term*.



Figure 19: Township aeriels of Wentworth, Dareton, Mourquong, Trentham Cliffs, Buronga/Gol Gol, Curlwaa, Ellerslie, Pomona, Pooncarie



**Wentworth Township**

Wentworth Heritage Highlights:

- |   |                                       |   |                       |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Junction of Murray and Darling Rivers | 4 | PS Ruby               | 7 | St John's Anglican Church and Rectory |
| 2 | Old Wentworth Goal                    | 5 | The Old Wharf         | 8 | St Ignatius School                    |
| 3 | Pioneer Museum                        | 6 | Wentworth Post Office |   |                                       |

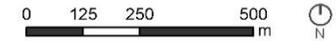
- |  |   |  |                     |
|--|---|--|---------------------|
|  | Green grid links to public recreation and river-front amenity |  | Recreation area     |
|  | Wentworth Aerodome  |  | Settlement Boundary |
|  | Rural Land  |  | Water Feature       |



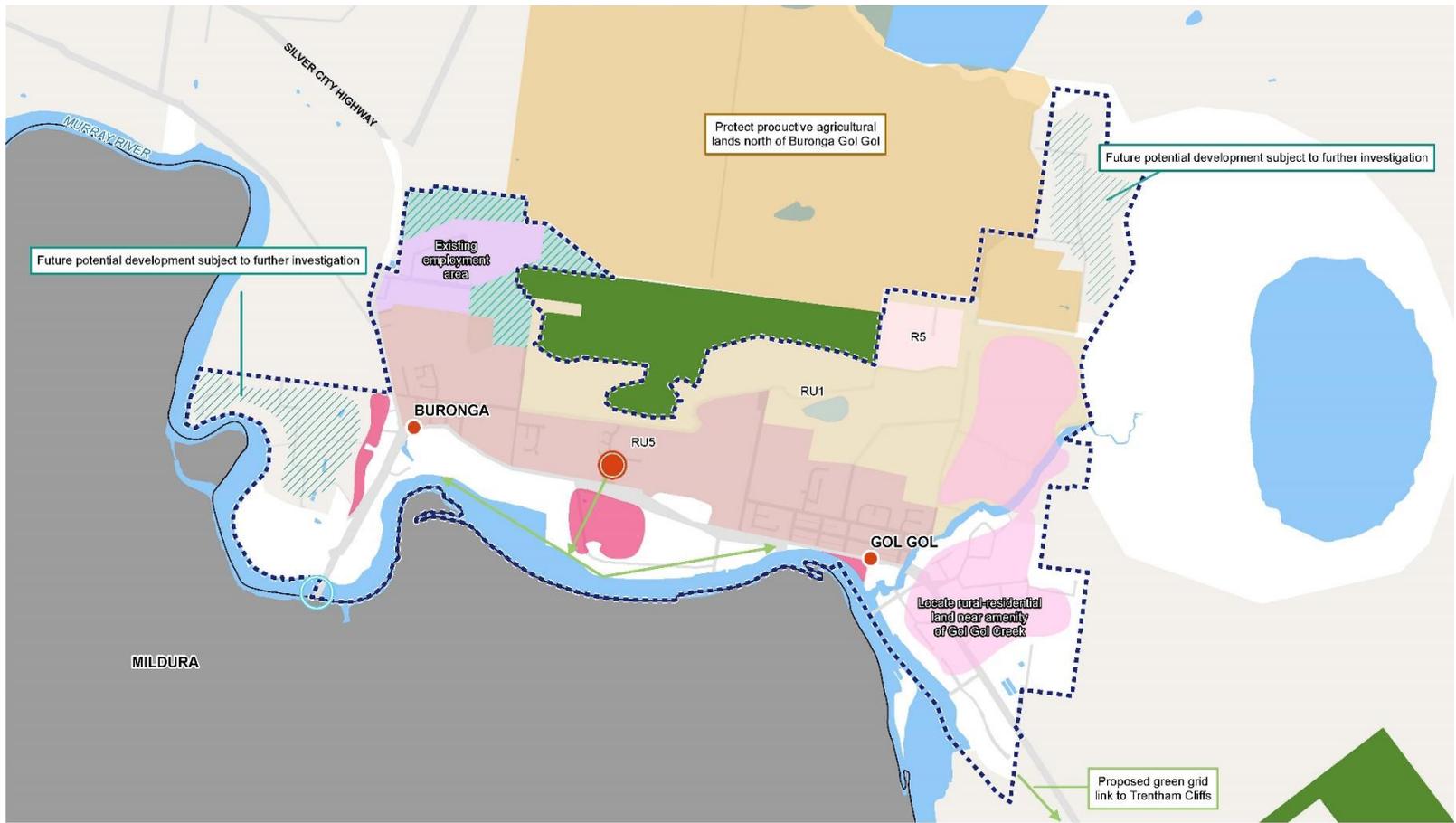


**Dareton Township**

-  Green grid links to public recreation, high street and river-front amenity
-  Future envisaged green grid links in new residential growth areas
-  Value-added manufacturing and employment
-  Productive agricultural land
-  Rural Land
-  Settlement Boundary
-  Water Feature



Map 4 - Dareton Township



**Buronga Gol Gol Townships**

- |  |  |                              |                            |
|--|--|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| New town centre  | R5 - Large Lot Residential               | Land for public recreation   | Water Feature              |
| Strategic river crossing   | RU1 - Primary Production                 | Productive agricultural land | Environmental Conservation |
| New green grid to connect river front amenity, public recreation and new commercial centre | RU5 - Village                            | Rural Land                   |                            |
|  | Value-added manufacturing and employment | Settlement Boundary          |                            |



Map 5 – Buronga Gol Gol Townships



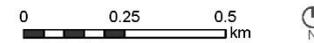
**Pooncarie Village**

- Settlement Boundary
- Green Grid Connections
- Aerodome
- Recreation Area

- Rural lands
- Rural Village
- Water feature

**Pooncarie Heritage Highlights**

- 1 Post Office
- 2 Police Station
- 3 Telegraph Hotel
- 4 Cemetery
- 5 Town Water Supply



Map 6 - Pooncarie Township

## Planning Priority 7 – Infrastructure and services

Gives effect to:

*Direction 8: Enhance access to telecommunications*

*Direction 30: Create healthy built environments*

*of the Far West Regional Plan*

Well planned infrastructure, services and community facilities improves the liveability of urban areas for the Shire's residents both now and into the future. This is particularly apparent when consideration is given to the needs of children, youth, singles, families, those with disabilities and senior residents.

As the population expands, particularly in Buronga/Gol Gol, it is imperative that utility infrastructure and services have the capacity to cope with the increase in demand. Understanding the current capacity and committing to investment for future planning and development of infrastructure will assist with the provision of water, sewer and stormwater services. This will enable the continuation of sustainable urban development and economic growth<sup>ii</sup>.

Council has committed to and commenced works on major sewer upgrades to the townships of Dareton and Wentworth, which will enable Council to accommodate and service any growth in these locations.

In order to relieve pressure on Council's existing stormwater and water infrastructure networks and to respond to the fluctuation in climatic events and water security challenges, water sensitive urban design techniques will be incorporated through the strategic planning and development phases, which will support catchment, retention and reuse both on private and public land. Wentworth Shire Council taking the lead and providing example to the community.

As our communities continue to grow and change it will be necessary for Council to accommodate the change by ensuring that suitable open space, sporting and community facilities are provided. Understanding our existing open space, community and sporting facilities provided and its ability to support a high quality of lifestyle for both existing and new residents will be important when developing Council strategies through to the different phases of development. Through Council's Operational and Delivery Plans, Council has committed to a number of key community infrastructure projects. To ensure the success of these and future projects Council will actively pursue funding opportunities so that as development occurs, community facilities will also be improved.

Digital connectivity will play a greater role in supporting the connectivity of communities for social and economic purposes, such as distance education, training and health services for communities, accessing customers and suppliers for growers and producers, enabling precision agriculture techniques such as spraying, virtual fencing and optimal harvesting and supporting digital trends in product differentiation such as distributed ledger tracking and verification for farm-to-plate goods.

Working together with key telecommunication providers and other levels of Government, to identify new suitable locations and fill telecommunication gaps in the Wentworth Shire will be an important role for Council. Council will assist providers in identifying these areas and facilitate the establishment of new telecommunication facilities.

The key strategic directions for maintaining existing and enabling new infrastructure and services are:

A. Support new infrastructure investment in digital connectivity, including the National Broadband Network, upgrades to existing and new telecommunication infrastructure such as mobile phone towers

B. Enable continued growth of townships by ensuring that adequate water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure is provided

C. Investigate the necessity for and location of major stormwater storages, reuse and passive recreation areas, particularly in Buronga and Gol Gol

D. Ensure the public open space in all urban townships is appropriately located, functional and accessible by shared pathways and road networks.

E. Support the ongoing use of existing and development of new community facilities in the townships

F. Promote the opportunities for reuse of stormwater

G. Advocate and support the establishment of new telecommunication facilities; to provide opportunity for the wider community to benefit from new developments

H. Ensure the Servicing and Contributions plans are maintained and aligned with service and infrastructure requirements

### Actions

1. Develop a water/wastewater management plan to ensure the services have the capacity to service current demand and future growth – *short term*.
2. Develop a stormwater management plan to cater for and align with anticipated future growth for Buronga/Gol Gol – *short term*.
3. Complete current projects as identified in the Operational Plan 2019/20 – *Short term*



Figure 20: Midway Centre Buronga, water and sewer connection, drainage basin, Sturt Highway roundabout Buronga

## Planning Priority 8 - Preserve and promote heritage

*gives effect to:*

*Direction 18: Respect and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage assets*

*Direction 19: Conserve and adaptively re-use European heritage assets*

*of the Far West Regional Plan*

Wentworth Shire retains a strong sense of place and identity which is shaped by its historic assets of pioneering vintage and places and landscapes tied to Aboriginal cultural heritage. The junction of the Darling and Murray rivers is a traditional meeting place for Aboriginal people and also significant to Wentworth's paddle steamer heritage during early European settlement.

The River Murray, its foreshores, tributaries and adjacent lakes are home to a large distribution of aboriginal artefacts, middens, and burials. Aboriginal cultural heritage values are, and will continue to be recognised and respected in spatial planning and community partnerships. Updated mapping of archaeological sites and places of Aboriginal heritage significance will guide decision making on future development proposals and recognition of known key cultural sites will be undertaken in collaboration with the community.

The historic township of Wentworth comprises a rich built heritage contributing to local character and future development in the town centre should contribute to its unique identity and sense of place. This includes structures and buildings located along the commercial core of Darling Street, and notable buildings such as the Old Wentworth Gaol and the Wentworth Post Office (Map 3 - Wentworth Township). Adopting a principle of ongoing and adaptive reuse of heritage buildings and places is a precondition to increasing amenity and vibrancy, both for investment and development of a quality-built environment for residents and visitors.

This planning priority sets in place a land use planning framework to preserve and promote Wentworth's heritage and gives effect to the strategic land use directions in the *Far West Regional Plan 2036* and strategies outlined in Wentworth's CSP.

### KEY STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING HERITAGE

A. Exercise due diligence and caution where development is proposed in or near landscape features that are likely to indicate the presence of Aboriginal objects of cultural significance. Generally, areas of environmental sensitivity coincide with these areas. Updated mapping that extends beyond Buronga and Gol Gol will be completed by Wentworth Shire Council to inform the development assessment process and updated development controls.

B. Establish a consultation framework with the Local Aboriginal Land Council for development assessment through the Community Participation Plan (CPP) to inform development assessment processes.

C. Acknowledge and identify known key cultural sites in an appropriate and respectful way in collaboration with the local aboriginal community.

D. Manage built heritage in Wentworth Shire in accordance with the Burra Charter's best practice conservation principles, Heritage NSW guidelines and the Government Architect's NSW Design Guide for Heritage.

E. Manage Council owned heritage buildings, to accommodate and promote additional uses.

## Actions

1. Consult with the Local Aboriginal Land Council to determine the best mechanism for development assessment referral and update the Community Participation Plan accordingly – *Short term*
2. Conduct a review of the current Wentworth Shire Heritage Study 1989 – *Medium term*
3. Update the Wentworth DCP following a Shire review of Aboriginal archaeological sites and places of Aboriginal heritage significance– *Medium term*



Figure 21: Pooncarie Police Station, Wentworth Court House, State Bank Dareton, former Wentworth Post Office, Paddlewheel Hotel Gol Gol, Ruby Paddle Steamer Wentworth.

## ***A sustainable and resilient Shire***



*Figure 22: Types of Solar panels, Wine tanks and barrels and factories that can be seen in the LGA*

## Planning Priority 9 – Sustainable river systems

*gives effect to:*

*Direction 14: Manage and conserve water resources for the environment*

*Direction 15: Manage land uses along key river corridors*

*of the Far West Regional Plan*

The Murray River, Darling River and Great Anabranch of the Darling are integral to Wentworth Shire. Irrigation, tourism and settlements rely on these river systems to survive and prosper and both aboriginal and pioneering heritage are inherently connected to the rivers and waterways.

The environmental values and assets along the river systems are dependent on environmental water flows and water quality, as well as the general health of the river channel and the aquatic environment.

Within the broader context of water management in the Murray-Darling Basin, Council can contribute to sustainable river systems through consideration of land uses along the river, as well as committing to using water resources responsibly, championing sustainable water use and delivering upgraded waste disposal infrastructure for both on and off water uses.

This planning priority sets in place a land use planning framework to support a healthy and functioning river and aligns with the strategic directions in the *Far West Regional Plan 2036*. This priority will be updated to reflect the recommendations and strategies described in the *River Murray Riverfront Strategy* upon its release. The *Riverina Murray Destination Management Plan* recognises the need to upgrade aging houseboat waste disposal infrastructure for improved river health and to facilitate the ongoing success of the houseboat industry.

The document also reflects the community's aspiration to recognise the importance of a healthy Murray-Darling River system outlined in the CSP.

## SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE RIVER SYSTEMS

- A. Prioritise public river areas and allow riverfront development where public use and access is prioritised.
- B. Develop green grid links as identified in Planning Priority 2 and 7.
- C. Support development that achieves reasonable environmental performance levels that are sustainable, practical, and socially and economically viable.
- D. Support development inside settlement boundaries (Map 2 - Primary Settlement Area) where it improves the quality of water draining from urban developments into the Murray and Darling rivers and their tributaries. This is reinforced through relevant stormwater and wastewater controls in Wentworth LEP 2011 and DCP.
- E. Integrate sustainable stormwater treatment into the rural and urban landscape.
- F. Investigate and support new ways to re-use/ recycle water for residential and agricultural use.
- G. Protect river corridors, wetlands and sensitive landscapes with appropriate setbacks and vegetation protection. Development on the riverfront is not permitted unless it can demonstrate that it will not cause environmental harm.
- H. Avoid development on areas containing acid sulfate soil occurrence to reduce impact on riverine environment.
- I. Avoid development of steep slopes and any development along the riverfront should protect and maintain the stability of the river bed and banks.
- J. To conserve and enhance the riverine environment of the River Murray for the benefit of all users, consistent with the aims of the Murray Regional Environmental Plan No 2 – Riverine Land.
- K. Incorporate water sensitive urban design into the delivery of infrastructure projects to avoid negative impacts on the natural water cycle and to protect the health of aquatic ecosystems.
- L. Upgrade houseboat waste infrastructure to facilitate the ongoing success of the houseboat industry and to protect the health of aquatic ecosystems.

### Actions

1. Undertake the Wentworth Houseboat Infrastructure project to upgrade ageing facilities used to dispose of waste from the house boat industry and prepare a public mooring strategy – *Medium term*
2. Finalise the Integrated Water Management Cycle Plan for Wentworth – *Medium term*



*Figure 23: Swan taking flight on the Murray River, Abbotsford Bridge Curlwaa, Murray River Landscape, Murray River/Darling River Junction Wentworth, River front property with retaining wall.*

## Planning Priority 10 – Manage natural hazards and climate change risks

*gives effect to:*

**Direction 16:** *Increase resilience to climate change*

**Direction 17:** *Manage natural hazard risks*

**Direction 30:** *Create healthy built environments*

*of the Far West Regional Plan*

Wentworth Shire's unique geographic character and natural environment are rich assets to the LGA. However, this unique environment makes it susceptible to the impacts of climate change. Regional temperatures are expected to increase throughout the Sunraysia region, resulting in heightened risk of the frequency and severity of natural hazards and climate risks.

Drought, water security and floodplain management are essential natural hazard management priorities for Wentworth Shire. The impact on agricultural production, particularly Wentworth's highly productive horticultural industry, requires informed land use decision-making and an increase in sustainable agricultural practices by land owners.

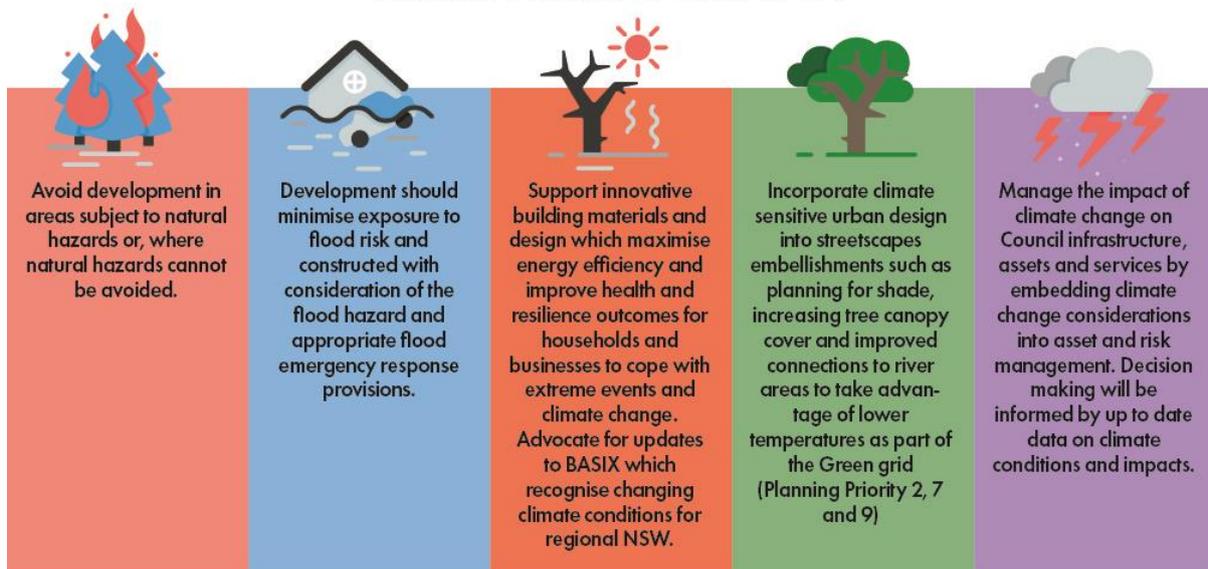
Council and the community must be well informed, resilient and able to adapt and plan for future climate risks and land use planning plays an important role by reducing future carbon impacts of development as well as improving resilience of the built environment and the population. Sustainable urban development includes water sensitive urban design in new subdivision development, the planting of endemic species and drought-resilient landscaping, the use of trees to mitigate heat island effects in more urban townships and building design that reduces the need for energy-intensive heating and cooling of new housing and water consumption.

Wentworth Shire Council will also show leadership by committing to transitioning its energy needs to renewable sources, setting a target of zero net emissions by 2050 and creating healthy public spaces and resilient infrastructure.

This planning priority sets in place a land use planning framework for reducing current and future impacts associated with climate change and natural disaster risk, in accordance with NSW Government's *Climate Change Policy for NSW* and the initiatives in the *Western Enabling Regional Adaptation* project. The planning priority also gives effect to the strategic land use directions in the *Far West Regional Plan 2036* and reflects the community's aspirations regarding water management, preparing for climate change risks and protecting assets from natural hazard.

The strategic directions to increase resilience to climate change, create healthy built environments and manage natural hazard include:

## CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY



### Actions

1. Finalise and implement the Floodplain Risk Management Study & Plan, including any updates to *Wentworth LEP 2011* and DCP – *Short term*
2. Finalise and regularly update Wentworth Shire Council's Climate Change Risk Assessment, Floodplain Risk Management Plan, Bushfire Protection Measures and other natural disaster strategies – *Short term*
3. Collaborate with DPIE to develop a monitoring and reporting program on climate conditions and projections using data from AdaptNSW – *Short term*

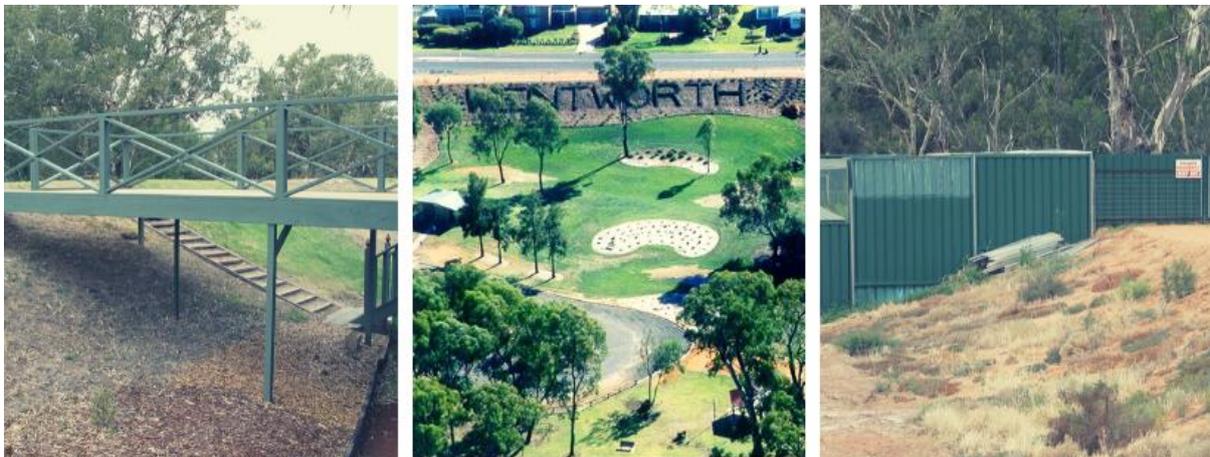


Figure 24: Wentworth Levee Bank

## Planning Priority 11 – Protect areas of environmental value

*gives effect to:*

**Direction 13:** *Protect and manage environmental assets*

**Direction 18:** *Respect and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage assets*

*of the Far West Regional Plan*

Two of Australia’s most important waterways, the Barwon-Darling and the Murray River systems meet at Wentworth and connect waters from Queensland and NSW through to South Australia. In addition to the important economic value of supplying water to support the local economy, the two river systems provide a range of biodiversity, aquatic ecology, water quality and Aboriginal and cultural heritage functions.

Wentworth Shire’s character and identity are not only shaped by the important economic value of water but also by the rivers contribution to the environment, amenity and culture. This should be protected now and for future generations.

The famous Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area encompassing Mungo National Park is one of six World Heritage Areas in NSW and is on the National Heritage List. This area presents the fossil remains of a series of lakes and sand formations from the Pleistocene and archaeological evidence of human occupation dating 45 – 60,000 years ago<sup>ii</sup>. The land is of great significance to three local Aboriginal tribal groups including the Paakantyi, Mutthi Mutthi and Ngyiampaa, and is recognised for cultural, archaeological, landscape, biodiversity and research values at a global scale and social, economic and recreation values at the State and regional level<sup>v</sup>.

Wentworth Shire is also home to other National Parks (including the Mallee Cliffs and Tarawi National Parks) and State Parks and Reserves that are managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Across the Shire, most land is owned by the Crown and administered by NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment– Crown Lands through long-term lease agreements. Under this arrangement, measures are established to protect the environmental values of land. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) has mapped biodiversity values at a regional scale and this information is used as an input to decision-making as proposals are brought forward on a site by site basis.

A major challenge is to protect the important values of these environmental areas for future generations while managing the potential negative consequences that may arise from land clearing, feral animals, drought, overgrazing, climate change and development. This requires a coordinated approach across Council’s operations and is guided by these planning priorities.

### **Mungo**

Mungo Lady and Mungo Man, found resting just metres apart, were buried more than 42,000 years ago on Lake Mungo’s shores. The planet’s oldest ritual burials, Mungo Lady was cremated, Mungo Man adorned with ochre. They represent the early emergence of human spiritual beliefs and provide a glimpse into the care provided to kin throughout Australia’s deep history. Along with 20,000-year-old fossil human footprints, they tell an incredible story of First Australians’ long history and led to the establishment of Mungo National Park.

This planning priority reflects the CSP and also recognises the important links between a sustainably managed natural environment and local economic activity, particularly in agriculture, tourism, mining and related sectors.

This priority aims to deliver a healthy, resilient, protected and productive environment by:

<p>Protecting, conserving and promoting the world heritage values of the Willandra Lakes region for future generations in accordance with:</p> <p><b>'SUSTAINING THE WILLANDRA' PLAN</b></p> <p><b>MUNGO NATIONAL PARK PLAN OF MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p><b>WILLANDRA LAKES REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN NO 1</b></p> <p><b>THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION ACT 1999</b></p>	<p>Protecting and managing environmental assets from incompatible development that may impinge on the environmental, social or productive values, including:</p> <p><b>AREAS SECURED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL OFFSET PURPOSES</b></p> <p><b>GROUND-WATER DEPENDENT ECOSYSTEMS AND AQUATIC HABITATS</b></p> <p><b>STRATEGICALLY SIGNIFICANT AGRICULTURAL LAND</b></p>
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### Actions

1. Maintain a publicly available register and map of land covered by carbon offsets or conservation agreements under NSW or Commonwealth legislation to ensure future protection and inform land use planning decisions – *Medium term*
2. Review council owned land to identify offset requirements for future development and any opportunities to use council land for Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements – *Medium term*
3. Review Wentworth LEP 2011 controls (e.g. biodiversity mapping and appropriate zoning of high value environmental areas, adopting a clause to permit undersized lot subdivision for environmental conservation) to protect biodiversity – *Medium term*

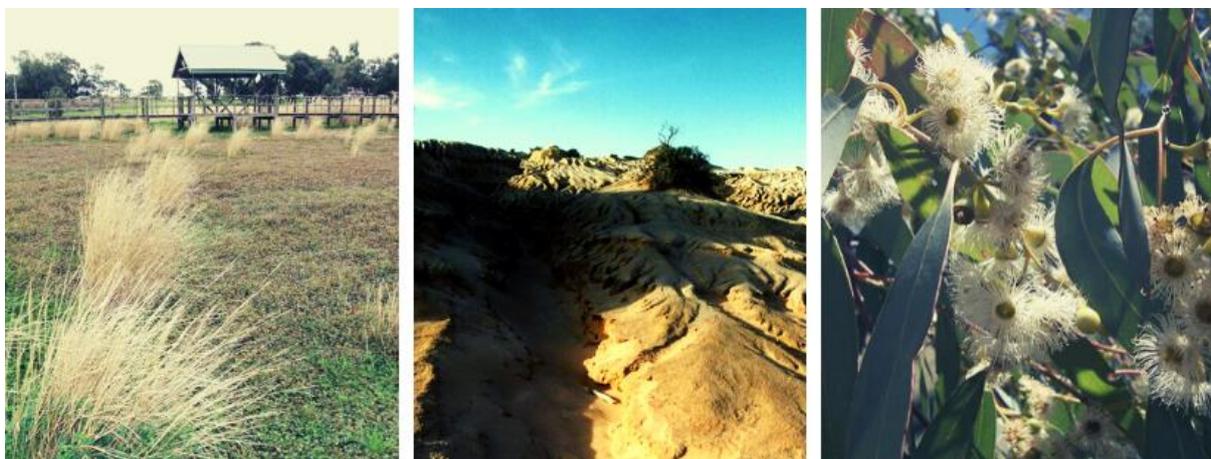


Figure 25: Buronga Wetlands, Mungo National Park, Eucalyptus flower

# ***Implementation, monitoring and reporting***

## ***Implementation***

An open, accountable and strategic-based planning system is essential to achieving the vision for Wentworth Shire region in this LSPS. Openness and accountability create trust that enables effective planning while a long-term strategic approach will ensure good public interest outcomes.

### **Cross-border partnerships and existing governance**

Many of the planning priorities identified in this plan can be optimised and enhanced through strengthened engagement and collaborative cross-border planning initiatives between Wentworth Shire Council and Mildura Rural City Council.

The first action of this plan is for Wentworth Shire Council to proactively engage and collaborate with Mildura Rural City Council on local planning policy, strategies and delivery.

Existing governance arrangements such as reporting to the Far South Joint Regional Organisation of Councils will also be utilised to support effective approaches to cross boundary issues.

The need to work effectively with other councils in the region recognises the wider role that Council's strategic planning and decision-making plays in achieving the objectives of the Far West Regional Plan 2036. It also recognises the potential impact that strategically important decisions taken by Council may have on the plans of adjoining councils.

These valued cross boundary partnerships will also support Wentworth Shire to realise its vision by driving efficiencies in accessing government funding, attracting inward investment and accessing a wider field of expertise.

The LSPS also provides a framework for the coordinated action of many other partners in delivery. Council will continue to work to establish effective partnerships with State government agencies, the community and other organisations to support the realisation of the plan.

## ***Monitoring and reporting***

Council will monitor, review and report on its LSPS to ensure that its planning priorities are being achieved. Council will use the existing Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework under the *Local Government Act 1993* for the purpose of monitoring implementation of the LSPS.

Council will commence its first full review of the LSPS in 2024 and again every four years to align the review period with Council's overarching community strategic planning and IP&R under the LG Act.

Regular reviews will ensure that the LSPS reflects the vision the community has for the future of Wentworth Shire and is aligned to the latest trends and information available about the environment and the community's social and economic need.

# ***Measures and indicators***

## **A productive Wentworth**

- Jobs by industry
- Level of employment
- Gross Regional Product
- Vacancy rates
- Visitor numbers
- Infrastructure projects
- Renewable energy projects

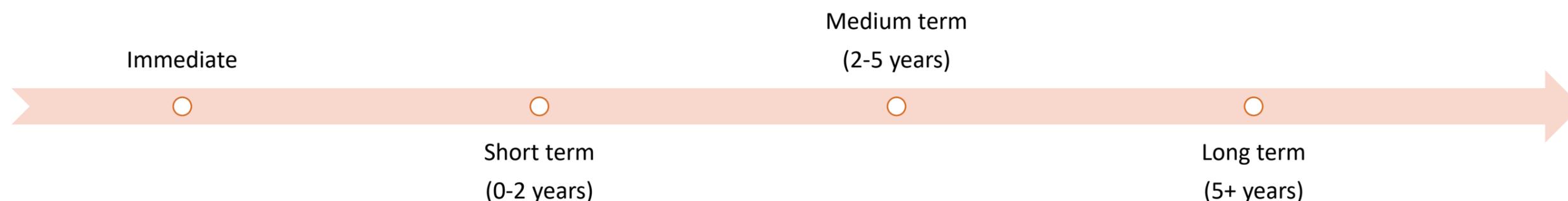
## **An attractive Wentworth**

- Population growth
- Dwelling approvals by location and type
- Residents' satisfaction with built environment
- Visitor numbers
- Awareness
- Understanding and respect of Aboriginal cultural heritage
- Coverage of mapping for archaeological sites and places of Aboriginal heritage significance

## **A sustainable Wentworth**

- Environmental indicators (water quality, air quality etc)
- Tree canopy coverage
- Green grid connections
- Public access to rivers
- Flood and bush fire disaster-cost and property damage

## Action plan



Planning Priority	Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility
Implementation	Proactively engage and collaborate with Mildura Rural City Council on local planning policy, strategies and delivery	<i>Ongoing</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council Support: Mildura Rural City Council
<b><i>A productive Wentworth</i></b>			
Planning Priority 1 – Promote agriculture and value-added manufacturing	Review and update the <i>Wentworth LEP 2011</i> to give effect to the strategic directions in this Planning Priority	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council
	Develop supplementary guidance (such as a DCP) that provides local guidance on suitable non-agricultural land use development on rural land	<i>Medium term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council
Planning Priority 2 – Grow tourism	Advocate for funding to upgrade unsealed roads to improve access and connectivity to places of significance, adjoining states and townships and tourist destinations	<i>Immediate and ongoing</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council Support: TransportNSW
	Review and update the <i>Wentworth LEP 2011</i> to give effect to the strategic directions in this Planning Priority	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council
	Prepare a local tourism strategy and give effect to the strategic directions within this Planning Priority	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council
	Prepare the Wentworth Riverfront Development Strategy and give effect to the strategic directions within this Planning Priority	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council
Planning Priority 3 – Manage resources and renewable energy	Update mineral sand resource mapping in consultation with Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) - Resources and Geoscience	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Department of Planning, Industry & Environment Support: Wentworth Shire Council
	Collaborate with TransGrid to ensure all electricity easements for the proposed Interconnector project are identified in Council's GIS database for development assessment referral purposes	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: TransGrid

			Support: Wentworth Shire Council
	Investigate flexible subdivision provisions in association with renewable energy projects where it does not sterilise land for future mineral extraction and agriculture purposes	<i>Medium term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council
Planning Priority 4 – Efficient transport and connectivity networks	Develop a local movement and place guideline for projects that deliver new or enhanced road transport infrastructure (either by Council, government partners or private developers as part of subdivision, development agreements or conditions of consent) that reflect the local movement and place priorities in Wentworth Shire	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council Support: TransportNSW
	Review and update the Wentworth Aerodrome Master Plan to provide for the new economic opportunities that will be available following the upgrade of the runway to a sealed all-weather surface, including potential economic opportunities in nearby Wentworth for related businesses or service sectors to support activities such as pilot training, mechanical servicing or passenger and freight air transport	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council
Planning Priority 5 – Aboriginal economic self determination	Develop a list of contacts in collaboration with the LALC and BNTG	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council Support: LALC & BNTG
	Develop a process of consultation with the LALC and BNTG when exhibiting strategic documents or notification of development applications	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council Support: LALC & BNTG
	Map local indigenous land and develop a document that details the zone of each parcel, the development opportunities and constraints in collaboration with DPIE, LALC and BNTG	<i>Medium term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council Support: LALC & BNTG & DPIE
<b><i>An attractive Wentworth</i></b>			
Planning Priority 6 – Sustainable settlements	Develop a <i>Sustainable Dareton Strategy</i> to guide future development opportunities in this township	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council
	Develop a <i>Sustainable Pooncarie Strategy</i> to determine the opportunities and constraints within the township for sustaining current population and services	<i>Short Term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council
	Develop rural living strategies for Pomona and Curlwaa to guide the transition from irrigation settlements to lifestyle settlements	<i>Medium term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council
	Investigate and identify suitable locations for future rural residential development outside the Wentworth town boundary	<i>Medium term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council
Planning Priority 7 – Infrastructure and services	Develop a water/wastewater management plan to ensure the services have the capacity to service current demand and future growth	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council
	Develop a stormwater management plan to cater for and align with anticipated future growth for Buronga/Gol Gol	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council
	Complete current projects as identified in the Operational Plan 2019/20	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council

Planning Priority 8 - Preserve and promote heritage	Consult with the Local Aboriginal Land Council to determine the best mechanism for development assessment referral and update the Community Participation Plan accordingly	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council Support: LALC & BNTG
	Conduct a review of the current Wentworth Shire Heritage Study 1989	<i>Medium term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council Support: Heritage Consultant
	Update the Wentworth DCP following a Shire-wide review of Aboriginal archaeological sites and places of Aboriginal heritage significance	<i>Medium term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council Support: LALC & BNTG
<b><i>A sustainable Wentworth</i></b>			
Planning Priority 9 – Sustainable river systems	Undertake the Wentworth Houseboat Infrastructure project to upgrade ageing facilities used to dispose of waste from the house boat industry and prepare a public mooring strategy	<i>Medium term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council Support:
	Finalise Council's Integrated Water Management Cycle Plan for Wentworth Shire	<i>Medium term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council Support:
Planning Priority 10 – Manage natural hazards and climate change risks	Finalise and implement the Floodplain Risk Management Study & Plan, including any updates to <i>Wentworth LEP 2011</i> and DCP	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council Support: External consultants
	Finalise and regularly update Wentworth Shire Council's Climate Change Risk Assessment, Floodplain Risk Management Plan, Bushfire Protection Measures and other natural disaster strategies	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council Support: DPIE, RFS
	Collaborate with DPIE to develop a monitoring and reporting program on climate conditions and projections using data from AdaptNSW	<i>Short term</i>	Lead: DPIE Support: Wentworth Shire Council
Planning Priority 11 – Protect areas of environmental value	Maintain a publicly available register and map of land covered by carbon offsets or conservation agreements under NSW or Commonwealth legislation to ensure future protection and inform land use planning decisions	<i>Medium</i>	Lead: DPIE Support: Wentworth Shire Council
	Review council owned land to identify offset requirements for future development and any opportunities to use council land for Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements	<i>Medium term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council Support: DPIE
	Review <i>Wentworth LEP 2011</i> controls (e.g. biodiversity mapping and appropriate zoning of high value environmental areas, adopting a clause to permit undersized lot subdivision for environmental conservation) to protect biodiversity	<i>Medium term</i>	Lead: Wentworth Shire Council Support: DPIE

## ***References***

- i. Far West Regional Plan 2036, Department of Planning and Environment, 2017
- ii. Western Murray Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022
- iii. REMPLAN Community Profile viewed 5 February 2020,  
<https://www.communityprofile.com.au/wentworth/population/age#!bar-chart;i=0>
- iv. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census QuickStats, viewed 1 April 2019,  
[https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA18200](https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA18200)
- v. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – World Heritage Centre - World Heritage List – Willandra Lakes Region <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/167>