



WALGETT SHIRE COUNCIL

LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENT



Mayoral Note

There is nothing better than having a good plan for the future. The Local Strategic Planning Statement will set out vision for land use in the Walgett local government area. It gives us a clear path for our planning strategies to pursue economic, environmental and social goals over the coming years. Once completed it will provide linkage between Council's Community Strategic Plan and land use planning strategies.

I reach out to my community and ask for their support and trust in the Walgett Shire Council so together we can ensure a fruitful and a beneficial future direction for our community. To allow our Shire to retain and better utilise its current resources and to grow further, will involve the allocation of direction that will positively affect local business activity, job creation and environmental development through the good use of our planning policies.



Mayor Cr. Manuel Martinez

Acknowledgement to Country

Walgett Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Gamilaroi, Yuwaalaraay, Waiylwon and Ngemba nations within the Shire and all other Aboriginal people residing in the Shire.

WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned that this document may contain images of people who have died.

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This document was adopted by Council on XdateX 2020 and uploaded to the NSW Planning Portal in XmonthX 2020.



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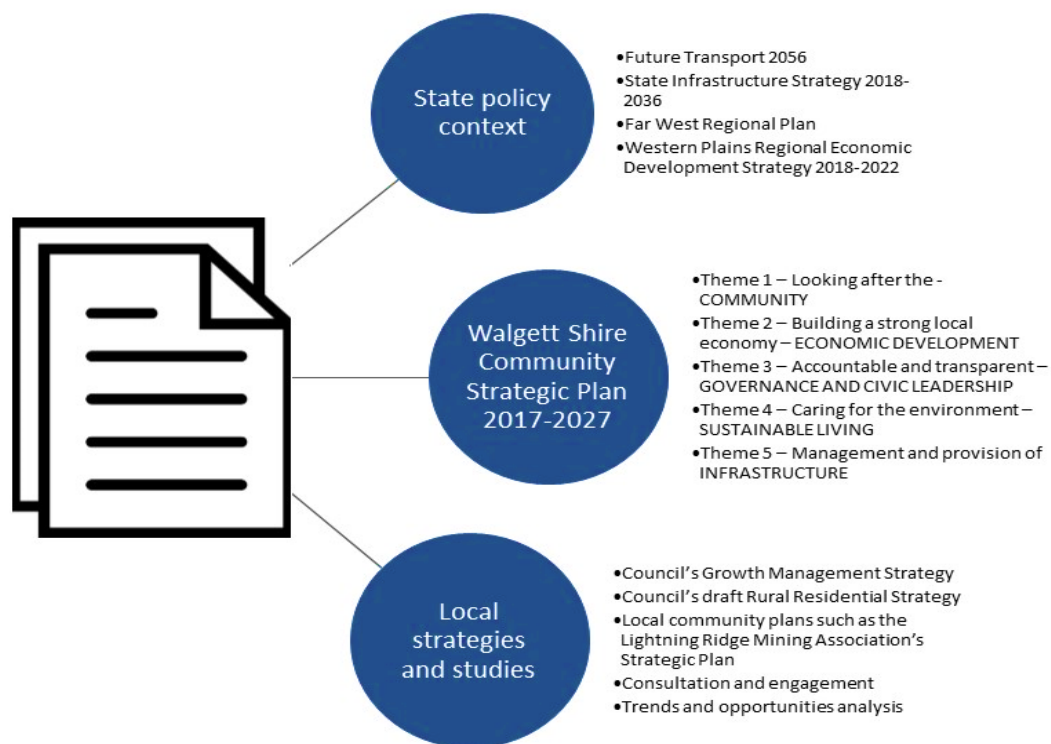
Introduction

This Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) sets the framework for the 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 draft LSPS has been prepared to give effect to the Far West Regional Plan, 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, NSW State Infrastructure Strategy 2018 – 2038 and the Western Plain Regional Economic Strategy 2018-2022 (WPREDs). It also adopts other relevant planning or related policies and strategies where identified throughout this document, including land use planning in adjacent Councils.

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 will provide the rationale for decisions about the use of land to achieve the community's broader goals and drive future 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).



State and Regional Context

The LSPS has been prepared within the context of overarching State and regional planning policy which identify priorities and key direction for local plans and policies including councils CSP and LSPS.

For land use planning purposes, Walgett Shire is located within the Far West Region of NSW. The region 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 and nationally and internationally recognised wetlands.

Despite the region stretching from the border with Queensland in the North and Victoria and South Australia in the South, many of the communities face shared challenges, primarily driven by their relative remoteness and small populations.

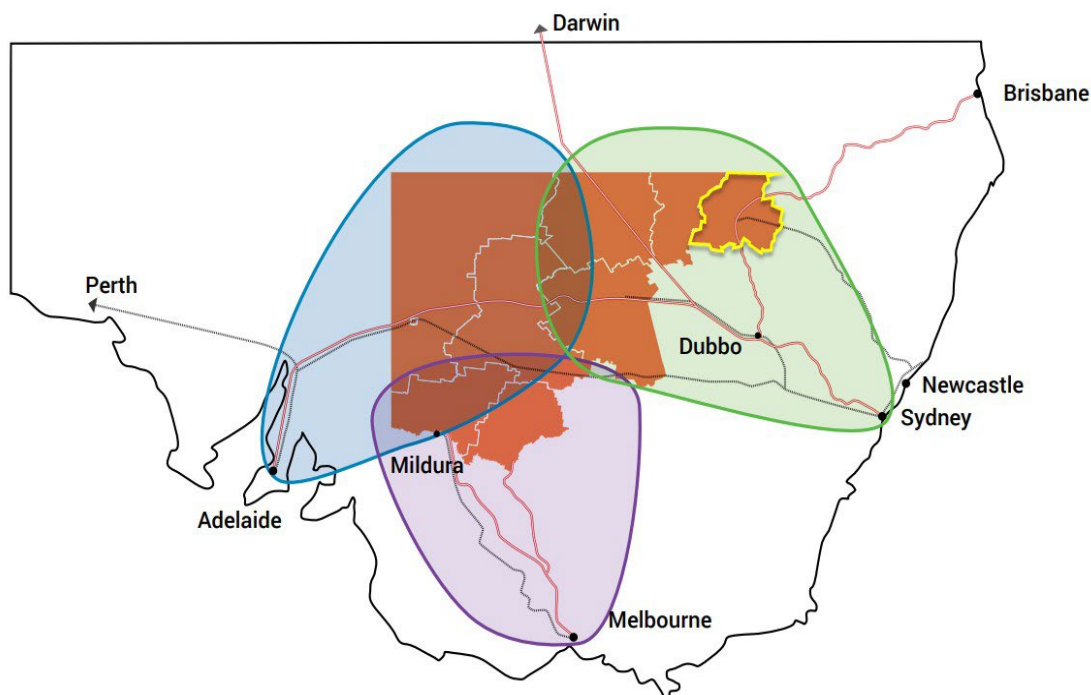


Figure 1: Walgett Shire Council (yellow outline) in the Far West Region of NSW

Walgett Shire also borders the New England North West and the Central West Orana Regions and has strong connections to Dubbo and Tamworth. Many of the Shire's settlements and surrounding rural landholders utilise services within larger centres outside of the Shire, including Moree, Narrabri, Dubbo or Tamworth. This is particularly so for health and welfare services provided by State and federal Governments which are mainly provided within Dubbo, the closest regional centre for much of the Shire's population

The Far West Regional Plan 2036 recognises that small populations and vast distances present significant challenges for all tiers of government and service providers. A critical area of focus for the future of the Far West is to leverage competitive advantages and unlock the potential for unique economic opportunities.



Overview of the Walgett Shire

Walgett Shire comprises 22,000 square kilometres of land, located along the banks of the Barwon and Namoi Rivers. The land is characterised by flat productive alluvial soils, opal enriched underground, red sandy ridges and occasional rocky outcrops over the Great Artesian Basin.

ABC Census data indicates that the Shire's estimated population is 6,107 people. Most of the population live within the Shire's two largest towns, Walgett (2,145) and Lightning Ridge (2,284)¹. It is estimated that, 29.4% of which are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origins. The remainder of Walgett Shire comprises a number of towns and villages including, Collarenebri, Burren Junction, Carinda, Rowena, Pokataroo, Cumborah, Cryon and Come-by-Chance, Grawin, Glengarry and Sheepyards.

Population %

19 or less - 26.25%
20 to 59 - 50.05%
Above 60 - 23.7%

Unemployment Rate

8%

Average Family Size

2.3

Private Dwellings

3846

Largest Employment Sector:

Sheep, Beef Cattle and Grain Farming



Figure 2 :

¹ It is widely recognised that ABS data does not accurately reflect the transient population of Lightning Ridge with the post office estimating the population to be approximately 2,800 people.

The Walgett Shire is well known for the production of agricultural commodities such as wheat, cotton, cattle and sheep, as well as the famous black opal and the iconic Lightning Ridge. Tourism also presents a significant employment sector, with Walgett Shire playing host to a number of iconic outback destinations and unique experiences including car door tours in the opal prospecting areas, the Club in the Scrub and the Hot Artesian baths in Walgett and Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri.



Some of the key elements and trends which impact on Walgett Shire include:

- The sheep, grains, beef and dairy cattle sector is a major employer in the Shire and worth \$57 million per year;
- A declining population base which is projected to decrease by about 19% by 2036 if there are no catalyst events or development which would see the trend reversed;
- Climatic changes including the impacts of drought, changing rainfall patterns and increased instances of heatwaves and storm events influencing economic prosperity and wellbeing;
- The requirement to better match the Shire's housing stock to housing demand and need;
- Continued restructuring of the local and regional economy, rationalisation of and new methods of delivery of many community services, and changing workforce requirements;
- Megatrends including technological change and a rising global middle driving increased spending in tourism based on unique experiences and the natural environment.

Our Shire

The name Walgett originates from a Gamilaraay word meaning “the meeting of two waters”.

Aboriginal Settlement

Walgett Gamilaraay Aboriginal Community Working Party – Community Action Plan 2019 states that:

“The Aboriginal people of Walgett are mostly from the Gamilaraay, Yuwaalaraay and Ngayimbaa nations. They have a renowned cultural heritage of warrior weapon making and an active artists community.

Two Aboriginal communities are located close to Walgett on Aboriginal land: Gingie Village (171 ha) is situated 10 kms west of Walgett and Namoi Village (42.9 ha) is 3kms north of Walgett. Both communities are home to up to 100 Indigenous families in total.

Reserves were established under Aboriginal Protection Acts both in and out of New South Wales towns as early as the 1880s. Gingie (formerly Barwon) Mission was first gazetted in 1895. Namoi Reserve was established in 1952.

By 1969, the NSW Housing Commission assumed responsibility for Indigenous rental housing in towns and on some reserves. With the reform to Aboriginal Affairs in the early 1970s and the Aboriginal Land Rights 1983 (NSW) Act, many town campers gained freehold tenure and funding to build conventional houses and install infrastructure on their old town camp sites. Title to Namoi and Gingie was transferred to the Walgett Local Aboriginal Land Council after the passing of the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act in 1993. Walgett Local Aboriginal Land Council (Gamilaraay), Collarenebri Land Council (Gamilaraay) and Lightning Ridge Land Council (Yuwaalaraay) along with other Aboriginal housing providers own many houses and blocks of land in the townships across the Shire”.

European Settlement

Captain Charles Sturt was the first European to see Barwon River in February 1829 while exploring western NSW. Two of the first non-Indigenous settlers in the area were Mrs. Ulambie and Mr. Henry Cox, who arrived in 1848. Mr. Cox was the owner of the “Wareena Run”, which later became the site of the town of Walgett. During early settlement Walgett was variously referred to as Walgett, Walchate, Wingate, Warrena, Warrana and Walgett.

The town of Walgett was officially proclaimed on 20 March 1885.

Walgett

Walgett is the largest settlement in the Shire and home to Council chambers, Walgett Hospital, Walgett Community College, Walgett Aboriginal Medical Services and a range of recreational and community facilities. The town is serviced by Walgett Airport and the Walgett rail siding and is located at the junction of four major highways.

The town is characterised by a rich pioneering and cultural heritage as well as natural features such as the bore baths from the springs of the Great Artesian Basin. A former paddle-steamer port, Walgett is the northern gateway to the Darling River Run and is also a stop on the Great Inland Way, a tourist route that travels 2,956 kilometres from Sydney to Cairns, through inland NSW.

*Walgett Community College
Image Courtesy of Google*



Walgett is the home of strong community-led organisations, including the Dharriwaa Elders Group (DEG) and the Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service that advocate for a prosperous and well Walgett. The DEG leads important initiatives such as the 'Understand Walgett' induction for workers, and 'Walgett Tours' for visitors.

Walgett's commercial and retail core extends along Castlereagh Highway between Euroka and Montkeila Streets and is bounded by Apex Park (Walgett Bore Baths, Walgett Sporting Club and Walgett Golf Course) and the Namoi River to the north. Most residential development is located south of the Namoi River immediately surrounding the urban centre.

Given the higher concentration of professional workers in Walgett, than elsewhere in the Shire, there is growing demand for rural residential development in close proximity to the centre's services and employment base. This is equally true for the Shire's ageing population seeking smaller, more manageable land holdings, closer to town.



*Walgett War Memorial
Image via walgett.nsw.gov.au*

Councils Rural Residential Strategy 2019 identifies that there is a need for rural residential land in proximity to Walgett. There is growing demand for residential lifestyle blocks along the river corridor with an uptake of large lot rural residential development along the Namoi River, East of Walgett. An analysis of suitable sites for rural residential sites has been undertaken in Councils Rural Residential Strategy (2019). The strategy identified an area of land immediately to the east of the Showground on Come By Chance Road Walgett as a key investigation area for Large Lot Residential development. Further investigations need to be undertaken to appropriately rezone this land in accordance with environmental factors including, flooding, servicing and biodiversity conservation.

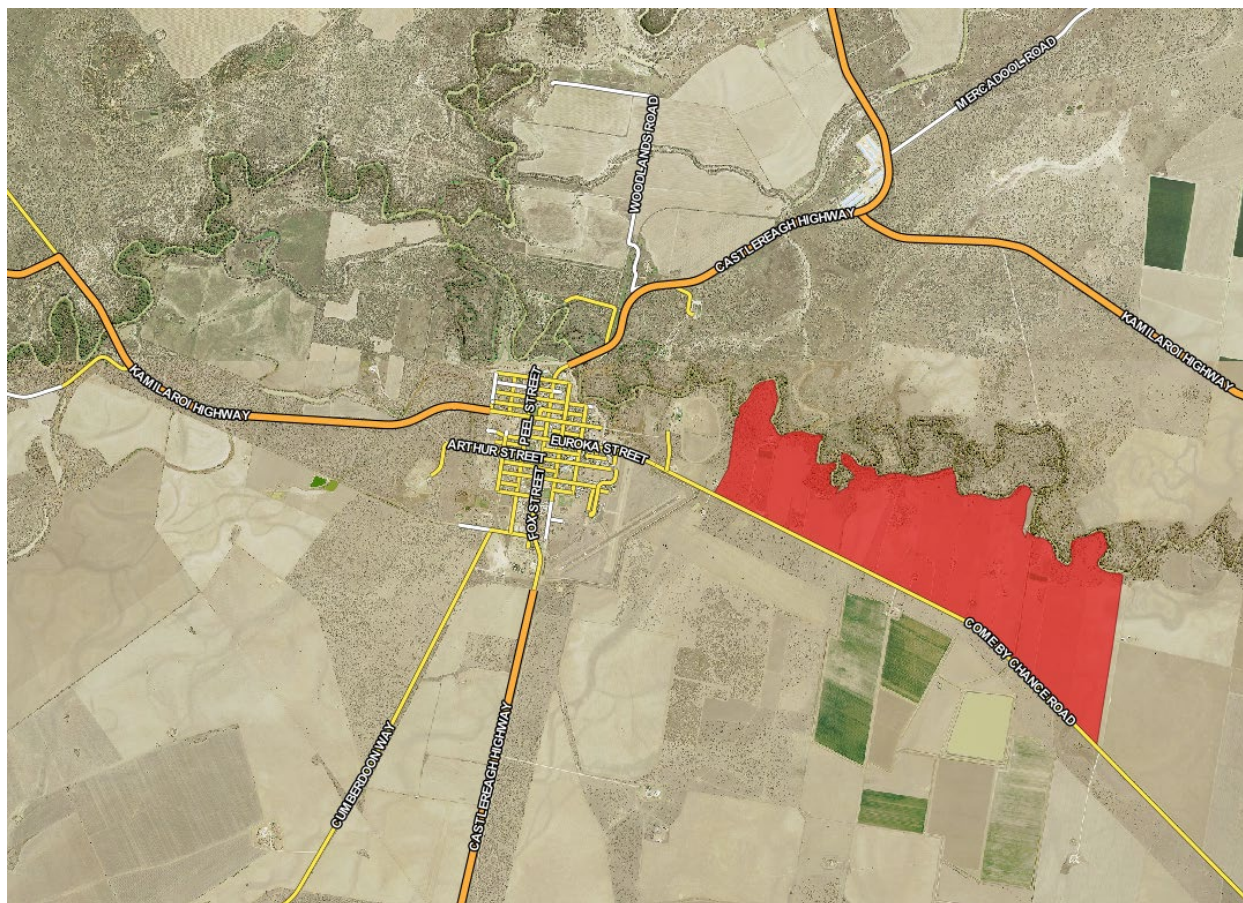


Figure 3: Walgett Large Lot Residential Investigation Area – Source: Walgett Council GIS

It is anticipated that other housing and all other land use typologies can be provided within Walgett's existing footprint under current zoning and land use controls. However, demand and supply in Walgett and surrounds will continue to be monitored to ensure the Shire's housing needs can be met.

Lightning Ridge

Lightning Ridge is a unique and historic mining town and is the only place in Australia, and one of the few places in the world, where economic deposits of the highly prized black opal is found. It is the Shire's largest settlement and is serviced by an airport, hospital, central school, and several social and sporting facilities, including a golf course, pistol club and archery club.

While the main commercial and retail core takes a linear form and is situated along Morilla Street between Onyx and Brilliant Streets, the rest of Lightning Ridge does not follow a traditional urban pattern. While the unusual urban form can sometimes be the cause of land use conflict, it is also the district centre's greatest opportunity.

Characterised by vernacular architecture and surrounded by Opal Prospecting Areas, Lightning Ridge has an outback frontier character which can be leveraged to grow tourism in the region. Finding a balance between growth in visitor numbers while maintaining Lightning Ridge's iconic character and opal industry is a key challenge for the centre in the future.



Black Opal - Image Courtesy of Google

The Lightning Ridge Miner's Association (LRMA) has developed a strategic framework for the town, 'Lightning Ridge: Towards 2030'. The strategic framework articulates the LRMAs aspirations for Lightning Ridge and includes actions to grow the opal mining and tourism industries as well as ensure a strong and connected community. To facilitate these outcomes, a key principle of repairing country has been identified.



The vision and intent for Lightning Ridge articulated in the strategic framework is supported by Walgett Shire Council. The land use strategies and actions in this LSPS will support the realisation of the vision. A central part of the planning strategy for Lightning Ridge is the acknowledgement of opal mining as the historical land use, with other proposed uses of land located in such a way as to minimise impact on opal resources.

Chambers of the Black Hand, Lightning Ridge Underground Opal Mine - Image Courtesy of Google

The Walgett Shire Rural Residential Strategy (2019) has identified the need for rural residential development in proximity to Lightning Ridge and an analysis of suitable has identified Sherman's Way and Lorne Road Lightning Ridge as key investigation areas for Large Lot Residential development. Further investigation of these areas will need to be undertaken to appropriately rezone

this land in accordance with environmental factors including, flooding, servicing and biodiversity conservation.

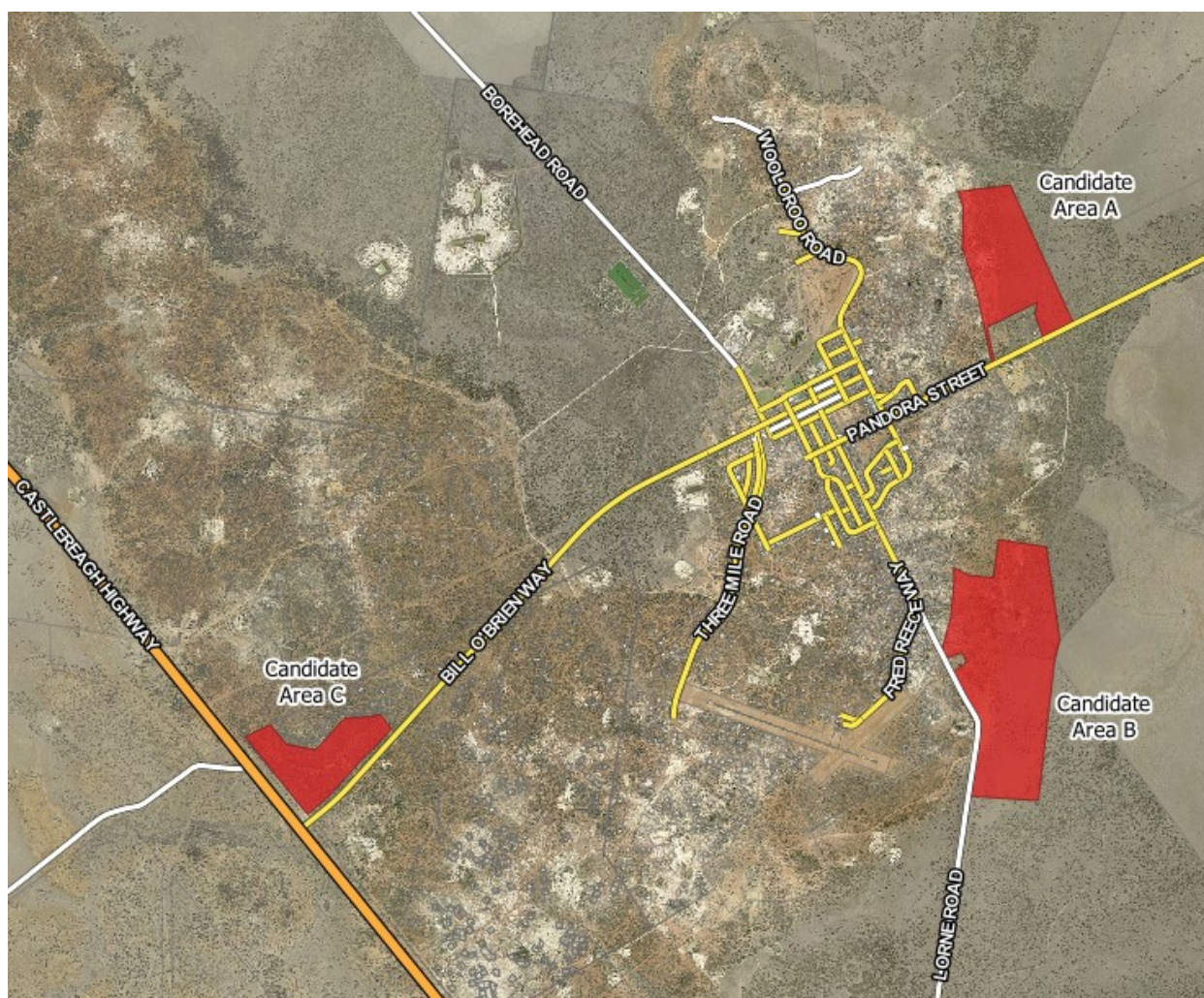


Figure 4: *Lightning Ridge Large Lot Residential Investigation Areas – Source: Walgett Council GIS*

It is anticipated that other housing and land use typologies can be provided within Lightning Ridge's existing footprint under current zoning and land use controls, and notwithstanding this, demand and supply in Lightning Ridge and surrounds will continue to be monitored to ensure the Shire's housing and other land use needs can be met.

Council has resolved to support opal prospecting and mining of this area, subject to the land being rehabilitated to current standards.



Amigo's Castle - Image Courtesy of Google

A dominant feature of Lightning Ridge and other communities on opal country is the siting of residential camps on existing mineral claims within the preserved opal fields. Residential use of mineral claims is considered a temporary arrangement and ancillary to the primary purpose of mining.

Co-located among the mining camps are tourist facilities and businesses which are accessed via car door tours. These tourist drawcards range from accessible working mines and preserved miners' camps, through to more eccentric undertakings uniquely characteristic of Lightning Ridge, including Amigo's Castle and Bevan's Cactus Gardens among others.

These residences are un-serviced by infrastructure including mains electricity, sewerage and potable water. Access is also provided via unsealed roads. Use of the land for mining and temporary residential accommodation is jointly managed by Council under the EP&A Act 1979 and the Resources and Geosciences Division of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

While mining camps are technically temporary, it is important to recognise historically there is a degree of permanency and security to the living arrangements under the terms of leases which permit the arrangements. While the town on Lightning Ridge provides many services, the lack of infrastructure and accessibility is understood to be problematic for residents particularly in more remote communities. Longer-term ageing residents are particularly challenged by these conditions as they can struggle to access local health and support facilities.

Collarenebri

Collarenebri, home to around 650 people is located on the Barwon River – and is renowned for being one of Inland Australia's best places to fish. Home to the 'Squatters Arms' pub, the town provides a range of local services and a variety of employment, but its population rely on the District Centres for other services and opportunities.

Industries in the area include cotton and wheat farming, sheep and beef cattle breeding. However, the number of people employed in these industries has fallen in recent years due to drought, mechanisation, technology improvements and the recovery of water for the environment. As a result, people have made the decision to leave town, causing many vacant homes and business premises.

Collarenebri has long been recorded as a significant site for Aboriginal people living in the area. There are many artefacts and significant sites along the Barwon River including a unique Aboriginal Cemetery



The Gwydir Highway that runs through Collarenebri is the towns focal point for local services. Here, the many buildings dating back to 1910 provide an important heritage asset for the town.

Villages and Rural Localities

The remainder of Walgett Shire's population is dispersed among the villages and mining areas of Burren Junction, Carinda, Cumborah and Rowena, along with smaller rural localities such as Come by Chance, Grawin, Glengarry, Merrywinebone, Pokataroo and Sheeppark.

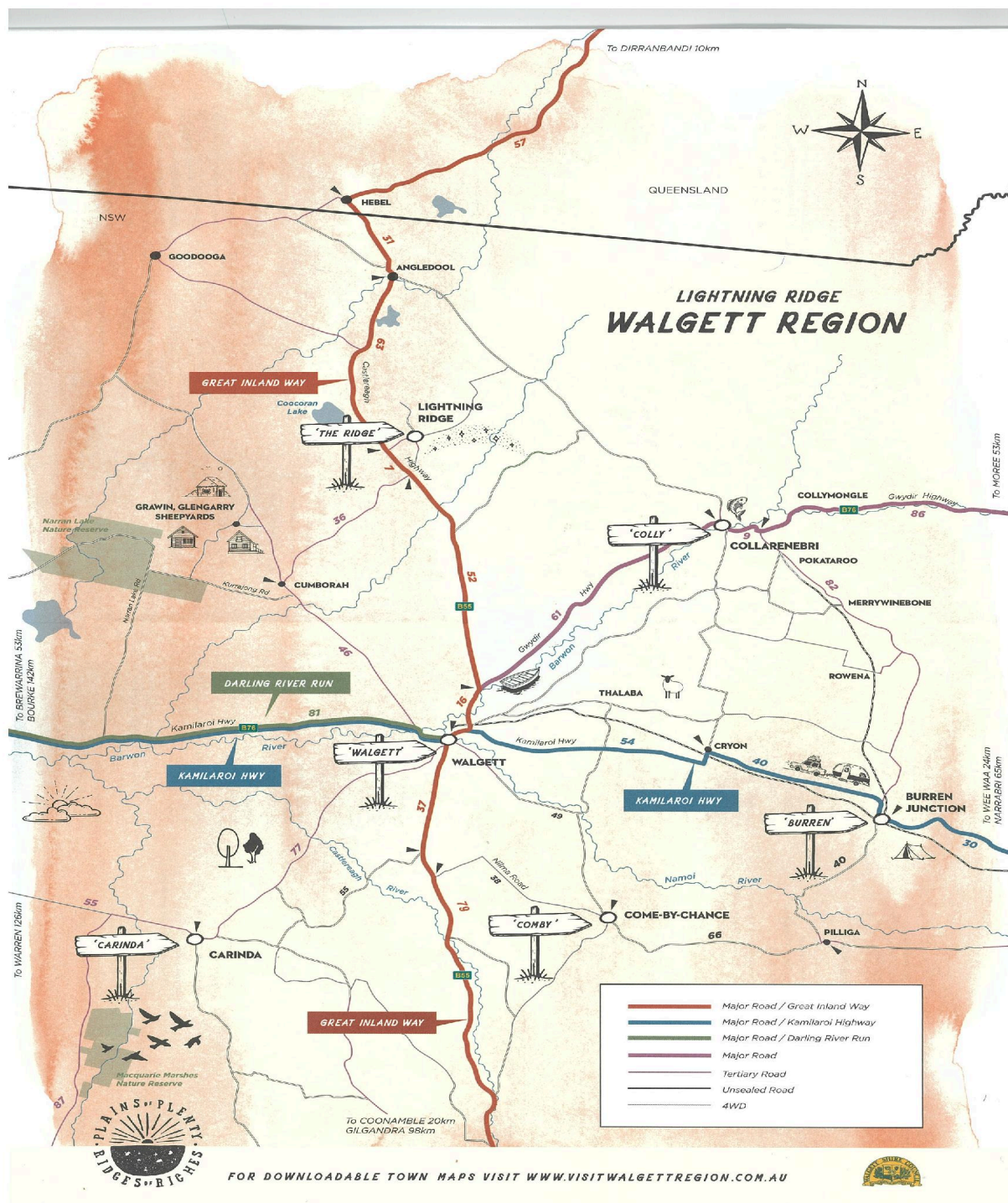


Figure 5: Settlement Areas in the Walgett LGA – Source: Walgett Tourist Information Centre

These communities have strong communities and identities. However, the size and success of these settlements is inextricably linked to the industries upon which they rely. In Glengarry, Grawin and Sheepyard, settlement is associated with Opal mining leases, while other settlements are associated with grazing and broad-acre crops.

These settlements are generally subject to flood risk, are not serviced by reticulated water or sewerage, and only provide for a limited range of services with the population largely reliant on the district centres of Walgett and Lightning Ridge for service provision.

Like the rest of the Shire, these areas have experienced population decline due to demographic influences such as low replacement birth rates, pro-longed drought, and other factors impacting the productivity of local industries. This resulted in a number of vacant lots, with the Shire's Growth Management Strategy 2011, which preceded the making of Council's Local Environmental Plan resulting in the application of new land use planning controls which sought to limit the expanse of village zones and align dwelling entitlements with the capacity of land to be serviced by effluent disposal. These arrangements are likely to be adequate for the remainder of the Plan.

It is important to ensure that residents of these villages can continue to access a range of services either from within their village or locality or via connections to other area such as Walgett, Lightning Ridge, Moree or Narrabri.

The unique characteristics of the Shire's villages, rural localities, and attractions such as Grawin's Pub in the Scrub are anticipated to continue to play a key role in attracting tourists in the area and serve the locality.

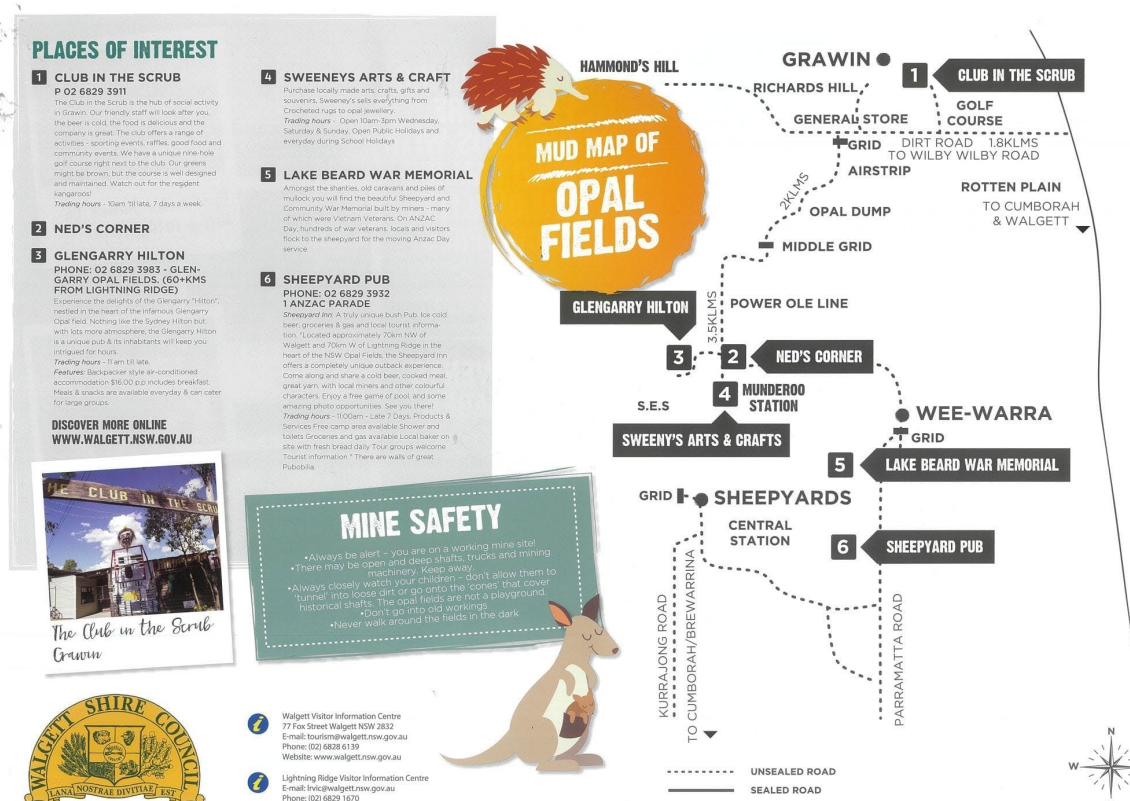


Figure 6A: Mud Map of Tourist Locations – Source: Walgett Visitor Information Centre

Land Use and Development Vision

The following vision statement seeks to reflect the aspirations of Walgett Shire Council and the community's aspirations for a desired future state of land use and development in Walgett Shire

You can also format text directly by using the other controls on the Home tab. Most controls offer a choice of using the look from the current theme or using a format that you specify directly.

A vision for Walgett Shire in 2040

"That the community utilise the opportunities that arise from our environment to improve their quality of life whilst embracing its ethnic and social diversity, for the benefit of all".

Walgett Shire is a unique and welcoming place that is proud of its diverse community and history. It is home to a resilient and resourceful community located in the Far West of NSW, but is increasingly connected to the state, nation and the world through its growing tourist visitation, agricultural exports and enhanced telecommunications.

Walgett Shire has embraced the opportunities that have arisen from the Region's significant drawcards and endowments, including the Opal Fields and other natural attractions, as well as significant Aboriginal cultural heritage. The Shire has leveraged the magic of Lightning Ridge to become a destination of choice for tourists seeking an authentic frontier experience, while Aboriginal cultural tourism offers visitors deep and diverse insights into thousands of years of accumulated knowledge, wisdom and lore. The growth of tourism in Walgett Shire has led to economic and social benefits for the whole community.

Agribusinesses and manufacturing enterprises have enhanced access to export and consumer markets through improved investment in road corridors and upgrades to the Walgett rail siding which positions the Region well with respect to the intermodals of the Inland Rail. Agriculture, mining and tourism operations adapt, specialise, and integrate new technology into their businesses through enhanced telecommunications and access to improved weather data.

The Shire is resilient and adaptive in the face of climate change and natural hazards and has the infrastructure in place to ensure water and energy security in times of extreme weather.

Each of Walgett's towns, villages and localities has retained its rich history and rural charm and the centres of Walgett and Lightning Ridge are healthy and vibrant with a strong sense of place and civic pride. Streetscape improvements and the provision of essential services and recreational facilities in the centres has helped to attract visitors, retain young and skilled workers and created a strong community culture.

Planning Priorities

Council has identified the following Planning Priorities for the Shire, based on the State and Regional context, the aspirations for Walgett Shire's future and the factors influencing the potential to make that vision a reality:

Themes	
Looking after the Community	
• Settlement	1. Promote development that contributes to the unique character of the towns and villages within Walgett Shire and meets the needs of a changing population.
• Aboriginal Community	2. Protect and respect Aboriginal Communities through promoting management and ownership of land of which they have a traditional association, or which can assist with their social, cultural and economic development.
Building a Strong Local Economy - Economic Development	
• Sustainable Economic Development	3. Support sustainable economic development including agriculture and new industries based on the Shire's built and natural assets and locational advantages.
• Employment Lands	4. Promote preferred locations for industrial growth and development.
• Economic Opportunities for Aboriginal People	5. Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in employment or education, with an emphasis on workforce participation and opportunities.
• Tourism	6. Promote tourism as a significant component of the Shire's economy.
Caring for the Environment – Sustainable Living	
• Sustainable Land Management and Productivity	7. Encourage sustainable management of the Shire's natural assets and environmental features.
• Our Natural Environment'	8. Protect and enhance the natural environment and improve biodiversity.
• Heritage	9. Protect items, places, and areas of natural and cultural heritage.
Management and Provision of Infrastructure	
• Transport and Connectivity	10. Ensure that future urban development is supported by adequate infrastructure and access to a range of social and community facilities sufficient to support the future population base of the community.

Looking after the - COMMUNITY



Walgett Community Strategic Plan Alignment

C1.1	Develop a connected, informed, resilient and inviting community.
C1.2	A safe, active and healthy Shire.
C 1.3	A diverse and creative culture.

Settlement

The towns of Walgett Shire and Lightning Ridge are the Shire's largest and most populous towns. These towns play a district centre role and are host to a full range of local services and some higher order services such as high schools, health care, major recreation facilities, large mixed commercial areas and supermarkets.

Higher order services such as major hospitals, TAFE and higher education and regional offices for State Government Departments are provided access from neighbouring Shire's in the Regional Centres of Dubbo and Tamworth.

The remainder of the Shire's settlements are smaller rural towns, villages and rural centres which to varying degrees rely on the services of the district centres within the Shire and those outside of the Shire such as Narrabri and Moree. Walgett Shire's centres, towns and villages all have unique identities. The character of these towns is defined by their rural settings or industrial heritage, built heritage and rich community culture.

The hierarchy of settlements, depicted in Figure 6 below, is a longstanding approach to planning derived from the Walgett Shire Growth Management Strategy (2011). This remains a suitable approach to planning for the future of the Shire.



Figure 6: Settlement Hierarchy – Source: Walgett Shire Growth Management Strategy (2011)

Where a settlement is placed in the hierarchy is based on the town's population as well as its role and function. Understanding the functions and characteristics of the settlements helps to explain the way in which the centres relate to each other and how they relate to those in the wider region. This sets an expectation for the provision and location of levels of community services, facilities and infrastructure within the locality. Given the changing demographics of the Shire, it is important to strengthen the existing settlement pattern so that adequate services and infrastructure can be provided where growth can feasibly occur.



The approach recognises that the populations within the villages and rural localities are not currently at a level which is able to attract and maintain the necessary services and facilities to provide a quality of life to residents and the surrounding farmers. As a result, further population growth is unlikely to eventuate in these areas, particularly in the context of projected decline for the Shire overall.

To ensure an adequate level of services and facilities are maintained within the Shire, the LSPS adopts a deliberate strategy of preferencing a concentration of development, and the allocation of limited resources within the district centres of Walgett and Lightning Ridge, followed by the town of Collarenebri. Concentrating development in these towns is preferred due to their greater potential for growth or revitalisation based on their:

- Population size
- Location
- Environment
- Economic opportunities

Concentration of development and investment in these towns will support a sustainable use of resources, such as the efficient use of existing infrastructure while supporting objectives of conserving the natural environment, limiting land use conflicts and maintaining and enhancing the overall level of service provision for the Shire.



Collarenebri Newsagency – Image Courtesy Google

While these towns are identified as having a higher potential for growth, a key part of Walgett Shire's aspirations for the future is to maintain quality of life and access to services provided in the Shire's villages and rural localities.

Planning Priority 1	Promote development that contributes to the unique character of the towns and villages within the Walgett Shire and meets the needs of a changing population
Far West Regional Plan Alignment	
Direction 10	Enhance the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities.
Direction 11	Support new planning and land management arrangements.
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 housing choice.
Direction 29	Manage rural residential development.

Strategy	Action	Timeframe
Encourage consolidation of development and growth to take place within the urban areas of Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri	Review and application of appropriate zones and additional local provisions in the LEP.	Ongoing
	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Ongoing
	Investigate the suitability of existing zoning and ensure the appropriate application of business, industrial, residential and other relevant zones in the LEP.	Medium - Long Term
	Create and maintain a land development monitor to ensure appropriate land is available for development.	Short – Medium Term
Ensure any rural residential development is located within close proximity of existing district centres in accordance with the Rural Residential Strategy (2019)	Complete Bridging Document to support the Large Lot Residential Land Strategy.	Immediate
	Undertake bushfire and biodiversity assessments.	Short Term
	Prioritise need between the four Candidate areas.	Short Term
	Ensure that planning proposals to amend the LEP for rural residential development are in accordance with the Rural Residential Strategy, and adequately consider environmental factors including, flooding, servicing and biodiversity conservation.	Ongoing
	Ensure controls within the DCP are updated to reflect development controls of the individual characteristics of each Candidate area.	Short Term
Encourage alternative/ and or additional use of vacant housing stock where residential amenity is not compromised.	Undertaking monitoring of the current housing stock.	Short Term
	Encourage the development of a variety of housing types in appropriate locations to cater for different needs of households. Particularly rural residential, medium density housing and accommodation for elderly people.	Ongoing
	Recognition is given in any applicable strategic planning documentation that affordable housing (including public and community housing) is classified as essential infrastructure.	Short – Medium Term



Ensure housing is in urban centres and does not extend into mining areas.	Review and application of appropriate zones and additional local provisions in the LEP.	Ongoing
	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Ongoing
All new development should support the Movement and Place Framework.	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Ongoing
	Retain flexible RU5 zone in Collarenebri to facilitate appropriate development without compromising the amenity of the locality.	Ongoing
Protect existing residential amenity and provision of housing choice.	Review and application of appropriate zones and additional local provisions in the LEP.	Ongoing
	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Ongoing
	Prepare guidelines for local housing strategies that will provide guidance on achieving greater housing diversity and planning for local social and affordable housing needs.	Medium Term
	Incorporate an integrated approach to vehicular, pedestrian and public transport to support the diversity in housing choices.	Medium Term
	Ensuring development applications and planning proposals to amend the LEP are determined in accordance with the relevant Land Use Strategy.	Ongoing
	Undertake continuous monitoring of the level of service provision to settlements within the Shire.	Ongoing
	Retain appropriate minimum lot sizes to avoid environmental impacts of on-site effluent disposal.	Ongoing
	Ensure residential areas are planned so that they have minimal environmental impacts.	Ongoing
	Recognition is given in any applicable strategic planning documentation that affordable housing (including public and community housing) is classified as essential infrastructure.	Short – Medium Term

Ensure equitable access to minimal provision of service delivery by government and private sectors to support quality of life for all residents.	Directing the future provision of private and government services and physical infrastructure to investment to those settlements identified as being most accessible and which have the highest potential to maintain a viable population base.	Ongoing
	Undertaking continuous monitoring of the level of service provision to settlements within the Shire.	Ongoing

Aboriginal Community

Walgett Gamilaraay Aboriginal Community Working Party – Community Action Plan 2019 states that:

“According to the Baseline Mapping Report, completed in 2010 under the Remote Service Delivery Initiative, the Aboriginal population of Walgett was projected to grow from 1002 in 2011 to 1748 in 2026. The number of Aboriginal people aged under 20 was predicted to increase from 329 to 681 over this period. The changing size and age composition of the Indigenous population of Walgett will increase the need for housing, employment opportunities, and particularly aged care and health services (Data from the Baseline Mapping Report which was completed in 2010 under the Remote Service Delivery initiative)”.



The Walgett region has one of the lowest socio-economic statuses in NSW. Under the ARIA Remoteness Index, Walgett is classified as Remote.



In 2003, Walgett local government area is within the north-east Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (MPRA). The MPRA is the peak Aboriginal governance body for the Murdi Paaki Region representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout western NSW. With the establishment of their community reference group they were able to engage with government agencies to start a planning process to address the basic needs of the Aboriginal communities.

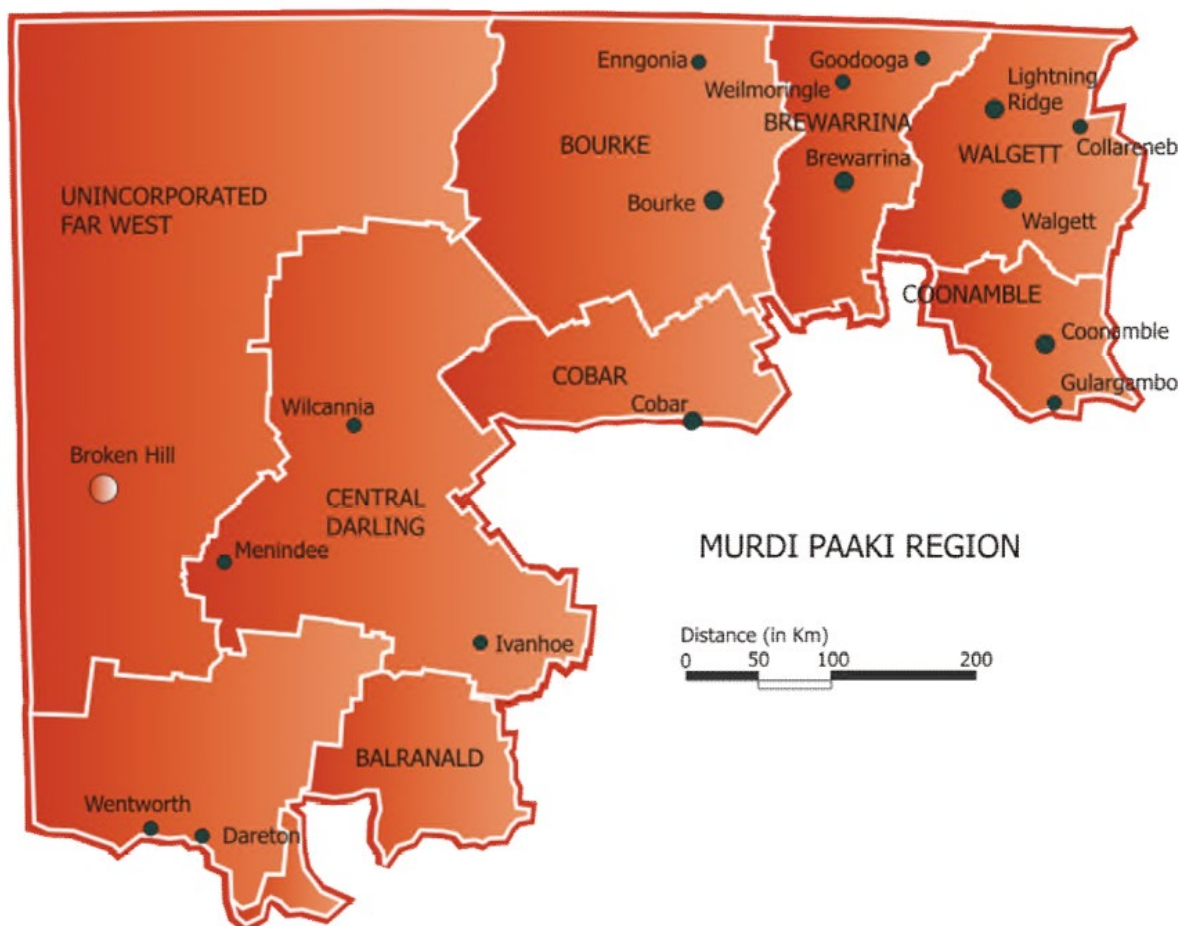
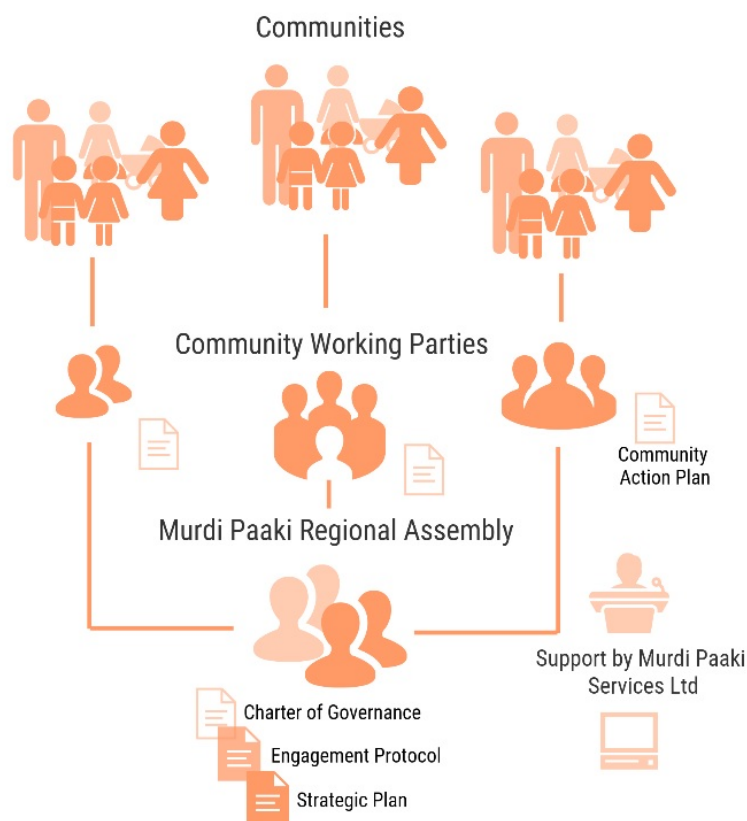


Figure 7 The Murdi Paaki Region - Source: Murdi Paaki Regional Plan

The NSW Government and the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (the Assembly) have entered into an Agreement (under the auspices of the Murdi Paaki Local Decision-Making Accord) to work together to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people in the Murdi Paaki Region. The NSW Government and the Assembly have further agreed, among other initiatives, to work in partnership through the Agreement to improve Aboriginal social housing outcomes in the Murdi Paaki region. This Agreement is underpinned by the Accord signed between the Assembly and the NSW Government, and the governance established under this Agreement may be considered in other aspects of Accord implementation



The Regional Aboriginal Housing Leadership Assembly (RAHLA) is tasked with devising and pursuing actions as a joint decision-making body to commence the co-design of an Aboriginal social housing plan for the region which advise government and the Assembly on ways to direct social housing programs and policies to operate effectively and efficiently, to respond to the priorities of Aboriginal communities in the region and establish mutually agreed service outcomes with the NSW Government.

The peak Indigenous body for far west NSW is working on developing a new regional model for social housing in the region, to address what it says is increasing housing disadvantage.

Figure 8: Regional Aboriginal Housing Leadership Assembly Hierarchy - Source: Murdi Paaki Regional Plan

Planning Priority 2	Protect and respect Aboriginal Communities through promoting management and ownership of land of which they have a traditional association, or which can assist with their social, cultural and economic development.	
Far West Regional Plan Alignment		
Direction 10	Enhance the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities.	
Direction 20	Manage change in settlements.	
Direction 21	Strengthen communities of interest and cross-regional relationships.	
Direction 22	Collaborate and partner with Aboriginal communities.	
Direction 23	Improve access to local health services, aged care and senior' housing.	
Direction 27	Provide greater housing choice.	
Direction 28	Deliver greater housing choice.	
Direction 29	Manage rural residential development.	
Direction 30	Create healthy built environments.	
Strategy	Action	Timeframe
Protect Aboriginal housing estates	Directing the future provision of private and government services and physical infrastructure to investment to Aboriginal housing estates in Walgett and Collarenebri.	Ongoing
	Undertaking continuous monitoring of the level of service provision to Aboriginal housing estates.	Ongoing
	Prepare guidelines for local housing strategies that will provide guidance on achieving greater housing diversity and planning for local social and affordable housing needs.	Medium Term
	Incorporate an integrated approach to vehicular, pedestrian and public transport to support the diversity in housing choices.	Short – Medium Term
	Encourage the development of a variety of housing types in appropriate locations to cater for different needs of households.	Ongoing
	Support affordable and social housing initiatives.	Ongoing



Support the delivery of social housing outcomes in the Murdi Paaki region.	Advise government and the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly on ways to direct social housing programs and policies to operate effectively and efficiently, to respond to the priorities of Aboriginal communities in the region.	Ongoing
Build a resilient community.	Prepare guidelines for local housing strategies that will provide guidance on achieving greater housing diversity and planning for local affordable housing needs.	Medium Term
	Partner with agencies and service providers to develop social enterprise opportunities.	Ongoing
	Identify sites for affordable and social housing. This could be land already owned by the LALCs or land that may come across to the LALC through the ALA process.	Medium Term
	Provide/support a comprehensive range of services (e.g. Health, education, entertainment, recreation etc.) which meet the needs of all age groups.	Ongoing
Collaborate with Aboriginal communities to respect, protect and celebrate Aboriginal communities.	Develop partnerships with Aboriginal communities to facilitate engagement during the planning process, including the development of engagement protocols.	Short Term
	Ensure Aboriginal communities are engaged throughout the preparation of local planning strategies and local plans.	Short Term
	Develop protocols on processes for DA's, Planning Proposals etc.	Short Term
	Develop a MOU between LALCs and Council to formally implement engagement protocols on land use issues.	Short Term
	Develop a MOU between Murdi Paaki and Council to formally implement engagement protocols on land use issues.	Short Term
Support public transport access for communities.	Investigate provisions public transport access viability.	Medium Term
	Acknowledge and support the role of the Hub and Spoke Network (Future Transport 2056).	Short – Medium Term
Encourage dwellings that are accessible and designed/modified so that older residents can age in place.	Develop a MOU between Department of Communities and Justice and Aboriginal Housing Organisation and Council to formally implement engagement protocols on land use issues.	Short Term

Building a strong local economy – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Walgett Community Strategic Plan Alignment

E 2.1	An attractive environment for business, tourism and industry.
E 2.2	Employment opportunities that supports local industries.
E 2.3	An efficient network of arterial roads and supporting infrastructure; town streets and footpaths that are adequate and maintained.
E 2.4	Communities that are well serviced with essential infrastructure.

Sustainable Economic Development

Rich productive agricultural land and black opal deposits in Lightning Ridge are the natural assets which provide the foundations for supporting long term prosperity. In order to capitalise on these natural assets, agricultural and opal mining sectors will be supported, and the most productive land protected from land use conflict.

The region is also capable of Australia's best solar irradiation which provides opportunities to grow employment opportunities in renewable energy sector and diversify the Shire's economic base.



Making the most of Walgett Shire's solar potential requires identification of preferred locations based on minimal impact on productive agricultural land and proximity to existing and planned infrastructure.

Opal mining has occurred within parts of the Lightning Ridge and Cumborah localities for more than 100 years and continues to be integral to the identity and economy of the area. The opal is found on a system of ridges running north to south southwest from the Queensland border to Barwon River in the south and bounded by the Narran River in the west and the Big Warrnambool in the east. Lightning Ridge is the industry centre for the local opal mining industry and as a result has become an iconic tourist destination.

The contribution of Opal to the Shire's economy is significant both in terms of mining (\$70 million) and as a visitor attraction. With a clear understanding between the needs of a functioning industry centre at Lightning Ridge and a unique tourism offering which will continue to grow as evidenced by the construction of the Australian Opal Centre.

Management and rehabilitation of opal prospecting sites in and around the Lightning Ridge area has historically been ad-hoc. This has resulted in changes to the landscape and remains a source of land use conflict. Council recognises that it will be important for the Shire to work with the Lightning Ridge Miners Association and NSW Government to improve the regulatory environment in a way which both avoids and mitigates sources of land use conflict, while supporting the continued viability of opal mining in the Shire.





Planning Priority 3	Support sustainable economic development including agriculture and new industries based on the Shire’s built and natural assets and locational advantages.	
Far West Regional Plan Alignment		
Direction 1	Grow the agribusiness sector, value-added manufacturing opportunities and supply chains.	
Direction 3	Sustainably manage mineral resources.	
Direction 4	Diversity energy supply through renewable energy generation.	
Direction 6	Unlock economic potential through improved freight transport infrastructure.	
Direction 8	Sustainable manage water resources for economic opportunities.	
Strategy	Action	Timeframe
Support the productive use of rural land for the purposes of agricultural production and value adding industries.	Review and application of appropriate zones and additional local provisions in the LEP.	Ongoing
	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Ongoing
	Support growth that fosters resilience and diversification by ensuring planning provisions accommodate the changing needs of agriculture.	Ongoing
	Promoting investment in sustainable agriculture, the agricultural supply chain and niche market crops.	Ongoing
Focus urban growth and economic development in and around existing settlements in the Shire.	Review and application of appropriate zones and additional local provisions in the LEP	Ongoing
	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Ongoing
	Coordinate the provision of essential infrastructure to support urban settlements and economic development.	Ongoing
Support the productive use of the Opal Fields by recognising Opal as the dominant land use in and around Lightning Ridge.	Continue to utilise the SP2 zone in Council’s LEP to protect opal fields from encroachment of housing.	Ongoing
	Support the continued viability of Opal mining in the region by recognising Lightning Ridge as the opal capital of NSW.	Ongoing
	Continue to support the Development of the Australian Opal Centre in Lightning Ridge.	Short – Medium Term

Promote sustainable and appropriate economic developments, including appropriate commercial, industrial, and quality tourism developments in preferred locations.	Target and pursue new businesses, investment and economic activity.	Ongoing
	Review and application of appropriate zones and additional local provisions in the LEP.	Ongoing
	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Ongoing
	Protect the natural and physical features which contribute to the 'tourism experience' including the natural environment, heritage elements, landscape features and cultural activities.	Ongoing
Promote the Walgett Shire to business and industry and increase recognition of the area's strategic advantages	Advocate for greater connectivity via Councils road network, mobile and internet to ensure connectivity is no longer a barrier to attract new industry.	Ongoing
	Identify and resolve freight and road pressure points to support the growth of industry and agriculture.	Ongoing
	Encourage co-location of related advanced and value-added manufacturing industries to maximize efficiency and infrastructure use, decrease supply chain costs, minimise land use conflict, increase economies of scale and attract further investment.	Ongoing
Support community initiatives that encourage collaboration and cooperation within the industry; enabling to maximise infrastructure, decrease supply chain costs, increase economy of scale and foster knowledge exchange.	Locate freight and logistics facilities to maximise existing infrastructure, support future industrial development and capitalise on inter-regional connections and external markets.	Ongoing
	Support and grow existing and potential freight and logistics facilities by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying and protecting key infrastructure corridors that assist current and future development as well as capitalise on inter-regional connections and external markets; protecting network opportunities and distribution from incompatible land uses or land fragmentation; liaise with Far North West Joint Regional Organisation of Council's to ensure that strategic infrastructure is included in regional freight and transport infrastructure plans, including plans for high productivity vehicles; 	Ongoing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> working with stakeholders to update transport network capacity as demand changes. 	
Support sustainable development in existing land use strategies	Review and update existing land use strategies	Ongoing

Employment Lands

The main settlements of Walgett and Lightning Ridge have reserved land for economic development, including a commercial core and industrial zoned land for activities which typically require larger sites and separation from other development due to noise, dust, traffic or other amenity impacts.



Given the low employment growth in recent years it is anticipated that there is sufficient land available to cater to existing business and prospective business. However, it is important that council investigates the long-term capacity of employment land to ensure that it can meet any increase in demand that might arise in the future.

Planning Priority 4	Promote preferred locations for industrial growth and development.
Far West Regional Plan Alignment	
Direction 8	Enhance access to telecommunications.
Direction 12	Enhance the productivity of employment lands.
Direction 24	Enhance access to education and training.

Strategy	Action	Timeframe
Retain a population base and workforce levels which are critical to economic development.	Promote and facilitate educational programmes, such as Walgett TAFE and community college enabling families and workforce retention.	Ongoing
	Investigate management strategies for declining population.	Ongoing
	Support community-led organisations and partnerships.	Ongoing
	Provide land use planning that facilitates employment creation.	Ongoing
Ensure provision of essential services and recreation facilities help to attract and retain youth and skilled workers.	Promote infrastructure and services that support healthy, active lifestyles.	Ongoing
	Work with relevant stakeholders to ensure the timely delivery of enabling infrastructure and services.	Ongoing
Support the development of renewable energy in appropriate areas.	Facilitate small-scale renewable energy projects using bioenergy, wind, small-scale hydro, geothermal or other innovative storage technologies through working with providers and ensure use is permissible in the LEP.	Ongoing
	Advocate for long term planning for energy security to support the economy.	Ongoing
	Review the DCP to implement best practice approaches to support efficient energy, water and waste systems in new development.	Ongoing
Support sustainable development in existing land use strategies	Review and update existing land use strategies	Ongoing
All new development should support the Movement and Place Framework.	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Short Term

Economic Opportunities for Aboriginal People

Walgett Shire Council is within the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly. The Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (MPRA) is the peak Aboriginal governance body for the Murdi Paaki Region representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout western NSW.

The MPRA has produced a regional plan includes a range of actions and strategies to support and grow economic opportunities for Aboriginal people in the Shire including, but not limited to the productive use of community assets and establishing an environment for development and acquisition of Aboriginal-owned businesses and strengthening the skills base of the community and fostering entrepreneurial skills.

Implementation of the Murdi Paaki Regional plan requires support from a range of participants, including the Walgett Gamilaraay Aboriginal, and Lightning Ridge Community Working Parties. Council supports the realisation of the MPRA's aspirations for economic development and has endeavoured to align the strategies and actions in this LSPS.

Planning Priority 5	Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in employment or education, with an emphasis on workforce participation and opportunities.	
Far West Regional Plan Alignment		
Direction 8	Enhance access to telecommunications.	
Direction 10	Enhance the economic self-determination of Aboriginal communities.	
Direction 12	Enhance the productivity of employment lands.	
Direction 21	Strengthen communities of interest and cross-regional relationships.	
Direction 22	Collaborate and partner with Aboriginal communities.	
Direction 24	Enhance access to education and training.	
Strategy	Action	Timeframe
Provide land use planning that facilitates employment creation.	Encourage opportunities to identify culturally appropriate Aboriginal tourism opportunities.	Ongoing
	Identify and facilitate local workplace employment opportunities and promote through networks specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.	Ongoing
Promote local Indigenous cultural opportunities.	Offer a range of activities to support foundation and advance skills development that are practical, innovative and accessible.	Medium Term
Support career aspirations and invest in career development.	Survey Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People around capability, skills and career aspirations to help match employees to the career aspirations they desire.	Short Term



Walgett Community College – Image Courtesy smh.com.au

Tourism



character that is not found anywhere else.

The Shire's unique attributes and a global trend toward unique experiential tourism presents Walgett with an opportunity to diversify its economy and enhance the economic wellbeing of its residents.

Famous for black opals, artesian springs, rare dinosaur fossils and rural hospitality, Walgett Shire is located on the edge of the New South Wales outback, steeped in Aboriginal cultural with a frontier prospecting

Walgett is located at the junction of several renowned outback touring routes, including the Kamilaroi Highway, the Darling River Run and the Great Inland Way as well as forming part of the Great Artesian Drive which links seven hot artesian spas across north west New South Wales.

As identified earlier, areas around, adjacent to, and within Lightning Ridge have a unique and special character and is a growing destination for both international visitors such as Chinese tourists in search of rare opals, as well as the growing domestic markets seeking authentic outback experiences.

Car door tours, the Club in the Scrub at Grawin and local festivals already contribute to the unique character of the opal fields which will soon be supported by the significant \$34 million investment in the Glenn Murcutt designed Australian Opal Centre at Lightning Ridge.



Australia's Indigenous culture is also a key point of differentiation in today's highly competitive international tourism market. Recent data shows that more people than ever are choosing to experience the beauty and splendour of the world's oldest continuous culture.



The first Australians are known to have lived in this area for many thousands of years before European settlement. This rich cultural history and the Indigenous connection to, and knowledge of the land is something which is intrinsically valued by the community. Supporting the first inhabitants of Walgett Shire to protect and share this rich history can help to strengthen the economic self-determination of Aboriginal people and drive tourist visitation, ultimately helping to support the whole community by diversifying the Shire's economic base.



Image Courtesy - alsnswact.org.au



Planning Priority 6	Promote tourism as a significant component of the Shire’s economy.	
Far West Regional Plan Alignment		
Direction 5	Promote tourism opportunities.	
Direction 7	Improve regional air connections.	
Strategy	Action	Timeframe
Facilitate quality tourist uses and development which are related to the productive base of the Shire, including Opal mining, the agricultural economy and tradition, the natural environment and conservation of natural features.	Review and application of appropriate zones and additional local provisions in the LEP.	Ongoing
	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Ongoing
	Promote and facilitate the use of Council owned land for community, public events and/or festivals.	Ongoing
	Build relationships and support Local Aboriginal Land Council to develop new events and cultural activities.	Short Term
	Actively promote tourism as a significant component of the Shire’s economy.	Ongoing
	Facilitate the provision of information to rural landholders on establishing and managing rural tourism operations.	Short – Medium Term
	Encourage well-designed tourist use and development which do not impact on the environment nor detract from character of the Shire’s settlements	Ongoing
Continuously identify and facilitate emerging and potential tourism opportunities, whilst consolidating existing tourism strengths.	Invest in the promotion of tourist experiences within the Walgett Shire, with a strong focus on the Walgett Show festival to draw in tourists of all ages.	Medium - Long Term
	Prepare a destination management plan or other tourism- focused strategies that align with Country and Outback NSW Destination Management Plan prepared by Destination NSW.	Medium Term
	Work with neighbouring regional councils/Far North West Joint Regional Organisation of Council’s to develop a tourism Strategy.	Medium Term
	Work with National Parks to expand operations into the tourism sector.	Medium Term
	Ensure new development maintains, celebrates and enhances the unique character of Lightning Ridge and the surrounding area.	Ongoing

Ensure that tourism in the Walgett Shire is supported by appropriate transport infrastructure, creating efficient routes to deliver tourists from out of region areas as well as connecting the settlements.	Invest in the promotion of tourist experiences within the Walgett Shire, with a strong focus on the Walgett Show festival to draw in tourists of all ages.	Medium Term
	Facilitate tourism and visitor accommodation and supporting land uses where appropriate through local plans and strategies.	Ongoing
	Ensure linkage to Future Transport 2056 and Transport for NSW Tourism and Transport Strategy aims and objectives for all strategic documents.	Short – Medium Term
	Ensure all new development support the Movement and Place Framework by reviewing the controls within the DCP.	Ongoing
Utilising the regions endowments to increase tourism into the area, by hosting educational experiences in the form of Aboriginal cultural heritage sessions and agricultural classes.	Promote local Indigenous cultural opportunities in tourism, including river walks, art workshops and a cultural centre.	Medium - Long Term
Encourage a range of suitable tourism and visitor accommodation to meet the needs of a range of visitors seeking varying experiences.	Review and application of appropriate zones and additional local provisions in the LEP.	Ongoing
	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Ongoing
	Identify partnerships and innovative funding approaches to provide for new and upgraded infrastructure for event hosting and tourism expansion.	Short Term



Image Courtesy - Australia Unwrapped

Caring for the Environment – SUSTAINABLE LIVING



Walgett Community Strategic Plan Alignment

SL 4.1	Operate an urban waste management system that meets the community needs and environmental standards.
SL 4.2	Provide potable and raw water supply systems that ensures enhanced water security and meets health standards.
SL 4.3	A sustainable environment that recognises our rivers, natural environment, ecological systems and biodiversity.
SL 4.4	Maintain a healthy balance between development and the environment.

Sustainable Land Management and Productivity

Agriculture is the Shire's biggest industry both in terms of output and employment. To ensure its continued viability it will need to be protected and supported. However, future use of the land for agriculture will increasingly need to be managed appropriately to reflect the fragile nature of the Shire's natural environment.

There is a wide range of goods produced, across the region, including grains, wool, meat and cotton. While industries do not strictly conform to locating in certain areas, certain agricultural land use patterns are prevalent. Intensive agriculture and irrigated plants (primarily cotton) are generally located in the north east and south west of the Shire along the open flat floodplains, where there is access to water and rivers. The remaining agricultural land is devoted to dryland cropping and grazing and require large land holdings.

A large proportion of products are exported from the Shire in base commodity form, often for processing elsewhere within NSW or overseas. The opportunity exists to capitalise on this by attracting industries to the Shire to produce value-added products, such as food and beverage manufacturing.

The observed effects of past droughts and the ongoing impact of the current record-breaking drought on the Murray-Darling Basin communities has been significant. The resulting population loss makes it difficult to sustain the provision of services required to support the remaining population.



The best available data suggests that time spent in drought is likely to increase into the future. In order to avoid the worst impacts of drought, on both agricultural productivity and the sustainability of our communities it will be important to encourage and support more efficient and innovative land management

practices and use of water resources that strike a balance between productivity and the health of the environmental system.

Planning Priority 7	Encourage sustainable management of the Shire's natural assets and environmental features.
Far West Regional Plan Alignment	
Direction 1	Grow the agribusiness sector value-added manufacturing opportunities and supply chains.
Direction 2	Protect productive agricultural land and plan for greater land use compatibility.
Direction 3	Sustainably manage mineral resources.
Direction 4	Diversity energy supply through renewable energy generation.
Direction 9	Sustainably manage water resources for economic opportunities.
Direction 11	Support new planning and land management arrangements.
Direction 12	Protect and Manage environmental assets.
Direction 13	Protect and manage environmental assets.
Direction 14	Manage and conserve water resources for the environment.
Direction 15	Manage land uses along key river corridors.
Direction 16	Increase resilience to climate change.
Direction 17	Manage natural hazard risks.

Strategy	Action	Timeframe
Protect productive agricultural lands and supply chain across the LGA from land uses that may lead to land use conflict or fragmentation of property.	Ensure that land use standards for minimum subdivision sizes in the LEP enable a productive agricultural sector.	Ongoing
	Review and application of appropriate zones and additional local provisions in the LEP.	Ongoing
	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Ongoing
	Promoting investment in sustainable agriculture, the agricultural supply chain and niche market crops.	Ongoing
	Map important agricultural land and develop guidelines to support the implementation of the important agricultural land through local plans.	Medium Term
	Review rural land use provisions in the LEP and DCP to ensure protection of biophysical strategic agricultural land and intensive agricultural clusters to avoid land use conflicts, particularly with rural residential expansion, in alignment with the Right to Farm Policy.	Medium Term
	Implement appropriate rural land use provisions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> protect biophysical strategic agricultural land identified by NSW Department of Primary Industries – Agriculture; restrict the encroachment of incompatible land uses; ensure that land use standards for minimum subdivision sizes in the LEP reflect trends and enable a productive agricultural sector. 	Short – Medium Term
Encourage agricultural diversity, developments and existing industry which is ecologically sustainable.	Promoting investment in sustainable agriculture, the agricultural supply chain and niche market crops.	Ongoing
	Support growth that fosters resilience and diversification by ensuring planning provisions accommodate the changing needs of agriculture.	Ongoing
	Encourage the restoration of natural mechanisms and cycles that support soil and water health.	Ongoing
Assist in the development of value adding enterprises based on local agricultural production.	Support growth that fosters resilience and diversification by ensuring planning provisions accommodate the changing needs of agriculture.	Ongoing
	Promote the expansion of agribusiness and associated value-adding activities through local plans and policies.	Ongoing

<p>Encourage farm management practices and land use activities which have the capacity to be sustained and reflect the optimal use of land: best practices of cropping, opportunities for diversification, sustainable alternatives and soil health.</p>	<p>Support growth that fosters resilience and diversification by ensuring planning provisions accommodate the changing needs of agriculture.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>Review rural land use provisions in the LEP and DCP to ensure protection of biophysical strategic agricultural land and intensive agricultural clusters to avoid land use conflicts, particularly with rural residential expansion, in alignment with the Right to Farm Policy.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Our Natural Environment

The dominant landform of Walgett Shire consists of flat alluvial plains and ridge country, with seven major rivers flowing through it including the Barwon, Namoi, Macquarie, Castlereagh, Gwydir, Narran and Moonie.

All land within Walgett Shire is within the various catchments of the Shire's waterways. The impacts of development on, and the sustainability and maintenance of waterways (rivers, creeks and drainage lines) within the Walgett Shire is paramount in ensuring the ongoing environmental functioning of the Barwon and Namoi Rivers, protecting water quality and protecting the Shire's leading industries, as well as important aboriginal cultural heritage.

The Shire is also located over the Great Artesian Basin, this provides a valuable groundwater resource. Groundwater is also part of the wider ecosystem and any changes to it will impact upon other aspects of the environment.

The native vegetation of the Shire is also an important resource that is essential to conservation, biodiversity and land management as well as contributing to the visual landscape of the Shire and attracting visitors as part of an outback experience.

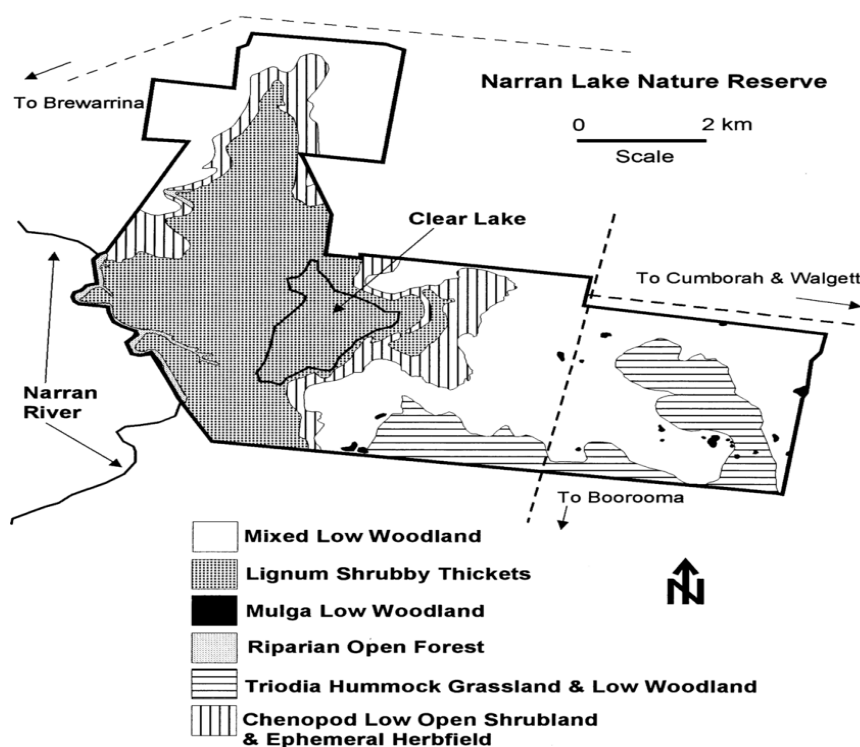
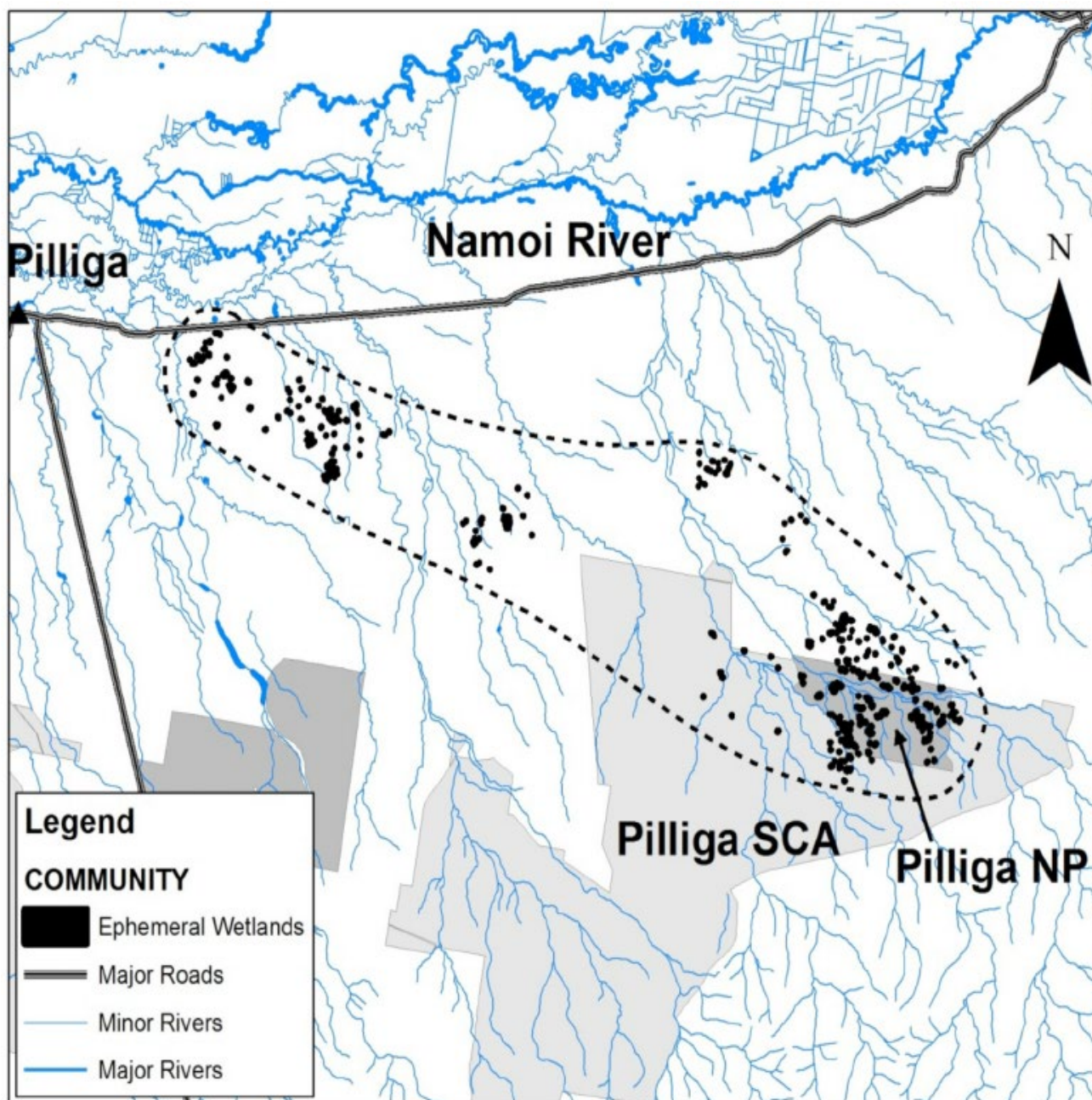


Figure 9: Map of Vegetation Communities for Narran Lake Nature Reserve - Image via Google.

The Narran Lake Nature Reserve located west of Cumborah is listed under the Ramsar Convention as being of international significance, as are two others that boarder the LGA (Macquarie Marshes and the Gwydir Wetlands). The Pilliga West State Conservation Area also borders the Shire in the South West and protects five threatened ecological communities including the Pilliga Outwash Ephemeral Wetlands, 19 threatened plant species and 31 threatened animal species.



Ephemeral Wetlands of the Pilliga Outwash, Northwest NSW - Image via Google.

Walgett Shire's unique geographic character and natural environment are rich assets to the LGA and is increasingly susceptible to the impacts of climate change. Regional temperatures are expected to rise throughout the Far West 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 Walgett Shire. The impact on agricultural production, such as those felt during the Millennial Drought and today, 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.

*The Barwon River at Walgett - Image courtesy
abc.net.au*



After years of drought, Walgett's water accesses have dried up and the Council has now secured \$2.2M in emergency water supply funding. A new water supply is under construction to relieve short term emergency. However, investment in small-scale water efficiency projects that reduce losses in

the system will reduce costs and uncertainty.

Stakeholders engaged in consultation identify the effects of prolonged periods of drought, as well as water policies of successive governments, as reasons for declines in population and activity in agriculture.

*Walgett Images – Courtesy
abc.net.au*



A significant amount of land within the Shire (about 85%) consists of a flood plain landform and is potentially flood prone. While no flood study has been prepared for the whole of the Walgett LGA, generally, flood prone land in Walgett Shire Council can be linked to soil type. Black soils tend to be flood prone while red soils tend to be flood free.

*Flooding at Walgett - Image courtesy
abc.net.au*





Planning Priority 8	Protect and enhance the natural environment and improve biodiversity.	
Far West Regional Plan Alignment		
Direction 3	Sustainability manage mineral resources.	
Direction 12	Protect and manage environmental assets.	
Direction 13	Protect and manage environmental assets.	
Direction 14	Manage and conserve water resources for the environment.	
Direction 15	Manage land uses along key river corridors.	
Direction 16	Increase resilience to climate change.	
Direction 17	Manage natural hazard risks.	
Strategy	Action	Timeframe
Ensure that land use planning and development support catchment strategies and sustainable natural resource management practices, along the Barwon and Namoi river corridors, as a part of the Murray Darling Basin.	Ensure the LEP manages riparian areas, water catchment areas and groundwater sources to avoid potential development impacts.	Ongoing
	Ensure that acceptable water quality standards and the natural condition of watercourses are considered in the assessment of land use proposals.	Ongoing
	Identify opportunities to collaborate with local and regional environmentally focused organisations.	Short Term
	Protect and maintain healthy catchments and waterways.	Ongoing
Focus development to areas of least biodiversity sensitivity.	Review Council owned land to identify offset requirements for future development and any opportunities to use council land for Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements.	Ongoing
	Review LEP controls to protect biodiversity.	Ongoing
	Implement the avoid, minimise, offset hierarchy to biodiversity and areas of High Environmental Value.	Ongoing
	Promote and raise community awareness of environmental and biodiversity issues.	Ongoing
Protect the artesian groundwaters of the Great Artesian basin from developments at risk of contamination; apply the risk mitigation framework: avoid, reduce, transfer and accept.	Ensure the LEP manages riparian areas, water catchment areas and groundwater sources to avoid potential development impacts.	Ongoing
	Identify opportunities to collaborate with local and regional environmentally focused organisations.	Short Term



Increase resilience to climate change and natural hazard risks.	Incorporate the findings of the Far West Enabling Regional Adaptation project to inform land use and planning decisions.	Medium Term
	New development or the intensification of uses in areas potentially affected by flooding or bushfire is avoided, other than where development can be designed or sited to minimise risk to people, property and the environment.	Ongoing
	Review and application of appropriate zones and additional local provisions in the LEP.	Short – Medium Term
	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Ongoing
	Incorporate the best available hazard information in local plans consistent with current flood studies, flood planning levels, modelling and floodplain risk management plans.	Ongoing
	Encourage development by ensuring development controls within the DCP considers the potential for extreme weather events and wherever possible is located and designed to suit the local climate, particularly by reducing reliance on non-renewable energy and water consumption, especially during times of drought.	Short – Medium Term
	Ensure that the importance of the value of shade for UV radiation protection and other co-benefits are within the DCP as a development control.	Short Term
	Council consider where it may be able to place or upgrade existing infrastructure to ensure there is sufficient UV radiation protection.	Medium Term
	Identify opportunities to collaborate with local and regional environmentally focused organisations.	Ongoing
	Assess and manage the of climate change (such as drought, bushfires and storms) on Council's assets and services to enable communities and individual to be better prepared and more resilient.	Medium Term
	Consider and implement the range of urban design and land use planning strategies to minimise the effects of	Short – Medium Term



	heat described in <i>Minimising the Impacts of Extreme Heat: A guide for Local Government</i> .	
	Incorporate measures to improve water efficiency in urban and rural settings, including water sensitive urban design for new developments, into local planning policies.	Short – Medium Term
	Collate best available flood information and progress studies and develop flood risk management plans to improve knowledge of flood risk including impacts of climate change to inform decision making.	Medium Term
	Ensure best available information (including flood mapping) is updated as new information is available including changes in flood behaviour due to management actions to support LEPs and DCPs.	Ongoing
	Ensure LEPs and DCPs are updated where necessary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to limit the impacts of development on flood risk and emergency management risks to the broader community. ensure LEPs and DCPs are updated where necessary in consideration of flood and emergency management related constraints to manage development so that it is compatible with flood behaviour, hazard and flood emergency management. 	Ongoing
	Ensure linkage to Future Transport 2056 and Regional NSW Service and Infrastructure plan aims and objectives for all strategic documents.	Short – Medium Term
	Upgrade existing transport system to be resilient to significant weather events, including floods, fog and bush fires.	Ongoing
Development maintains habitat connectivity and significant ecological corridors.	Review and application of appropriate zones and additional local provisions in the LEP.	Ongoing
	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Ongoing
	Develop and implement a biodiversity strategy to identify biodiversity corridors and land with high	Long Term

	environmental values that would be suitable to be rezoned for conservation purposes, as an Environmental Protection Zone as per the standard instrument.	
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Heritage

Walgett Shire completed an Aboriginal Heritage Study in 2011. The Aboriginal Heritage Information System (AHIMS) database identifies 667 reported sites within the Walgett Shire LGA. Previously recorded sites generally occur in the vicinity of watercourses, in elevated areas, and in areas with suitable geology or mature vegetation. In addition, based on an understanding of the area and its archaeology, areas that AMBS believes may contain Aboriginal archaeological sites are indicated. It should be noted that many of the areas of archaeological sensitivity, such as waterways, springs and waterholes, are also associated with animal and bird habitats. Such places, and areas of remnant native vegetation also have Aboriginal cultural value.



Collymongle Carved Trees, Collarenebri - Image via Google

Walgett Shire Council also have a community-based heritage study that was completed in 2008. Much of the physical evidence of the Shire's early history has been lost. Fragile early buildings, such as slab huts, were never intended to last. More permanent timber buildings have been lost to fire.



The reactive soils on which agriculture relies provide poor foundations, especially for brick buildings, many of which have been lost to structural damage. Mechanisation, modern transport and the general drift of population from isolated properties to villages, and thence to the towns and major cities, have left farm buildings, homesteads, shops, houses and churches, and entire villages without an ongoing economic use. Lack of use leads inevitably to a lack of maintenance, and ultimately the loss of the item. Where there is a continuing use building are frequently altered. These losses make the Shire's remaining heritage all the more precious, and the Study has revealed a surprising variety of valuable items in the towns, villages and rural areas across the whole Shire. Some are so old that they cannot be dated.

Carved Trees - Image Courtesy - anbg.gov.au



Walgett Court House - Image Courtesy walgett.nsw.gov.au

As is the case across rural Australia, homesteads and outbuildings reveal early life on the land, while churches, houses, shops, hotels and halls reflect the growth of towns and villages. Other items are particularly characteristic of the region and Walgett Shire in particular: tanks (reservoirs), bore baths, and levee banks show how water has been manipulated, while miners' huts, mine sites and the entire landscape of the Preserved Fields continue to tell the story of opal mining. Reviewing the Heritage Studies and ensuring all of the items identified are listed in Schedule 5 Environmental Heritage, of the Local Environmental Plan will ensure the continual protection of these items. Several items were recommended for further investigations which will be considered by Council as part of the implementation of this Strategy.



Burren Junction Bore Baths – Image via Google

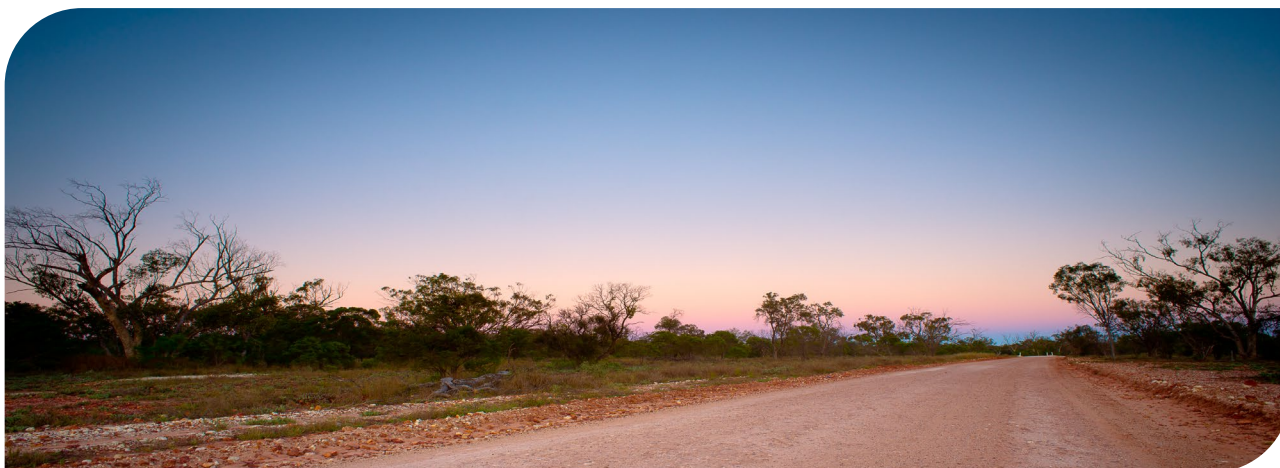
Planning Priority 9		Protect items, places, and areas of natural and cultural heritage.
Far West Regional Plan Alignment		
Direction 18	Respect and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage assets.	
Direction 19	Conserve and adaptively re-use European heritage assets.	
Strategy	Action	Timeframe
Ensure development does not impact on areas and items of cultural heritage significance within the natural environment and rural landscape.	Apply appropriate provisions to protect and conserve environmental and heritage assets across the LGA, while permitting a range of land uses to assist in the preservation of the region's assets.	Ongoing
	Utilise the Walgett Heritage Study 2011 in conjunction with the NSW Heritage Branch to identify and protect heritage items, and include appropriate local planning controls.	Ongoing
	Review and application of appropriate zones and additional local provisions in the LEP.	Ongoing
	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Ongoing
Protect, manage and respect Aboriginal objects and places in accordance with legislative requirements.	Support local heritage studies in consultation with the local Aboriginal community and adopt appropriate measures in planning strategies and local plans to protect and celebrate Aboriginal heritage.	Ongoing
	Protect, manage and respect Aboriginal objects and places in accordance with legislative requirements.	Ongoing
	Support the culturally appropriate Aboriginal tourism and the work of the Dharriwaa Elders Group.	Ongoing
	Include local provisions within the LEP which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rezone areas of important Aboriginal cultural heritage value to E2 Environmental Conservation or E3 Environmental Management. Include additional local provisions with associated map overlays for areas of important Aboriginal cultural heritage value. 	Medium - Long Term

Ensure the protection, maintenance and enhancement of heritage areas and features in private and public ownership.	Enhance and protect natural and heritage areas and features through their identification, recording of significance, and implementation control in consultation with the community.	Ongoing
	Investigate opportunities to redevelop and enhance streetscapes and entrances to all towns and adaptive re-use of European heritage assets.	Ongoing
Respect the heritage of the region and highlight and enhance our unique characteristics.	Review Schedule 5 of the LEP to support the appropriate labelling and protection of heritage sites.	Ongoing
	Prepare, review and update heritage studies in consultation with the community to recognise and conserve heritage assets and items and include appropriate local planning controls.	Ongoing
	Acknowledge that many transport networks developed in NSW since European settlement have been guided by Aboriginal peoples' patterns of movement.	Medium Term



Goddess of 1967 Church, Lightning Ridge - Image Courtesy Betoota Advocate

Management and Provision of Infrastructure



Walgett Community Strategic Plan Alignment

I 5.1	Provide and maintain an effective road network that meets the community needs and expectations.
I 5.2	A Regional and State Road network that is appropriately supported and resourced by Government.
I 5.3	Maintain and improve Council's property assets to an optimal level.
I 5.4	Provision of facilities and communication services.

Transport and Connectivity

An integrated and sustainable transport system is important to provide safe access to social and economic opportunities for the communities. However, Walgett Shire's distance from major capital cities and regional centres present challenges in terms of achieving transport and connectivity objectives.

Although the district centres of Lightning Ridge and Walgett are relatively well connected by rural highways, rail and more recently air, the majority of the Shire's smaller settlements are only accessible via unsealed roads which are liable to flood.

The maintenance and improvement of existing transport and connectivity infrastructure are considered a vital requirement in order to grow and diversify agriculture, manufacturing and tourism in the Shire as it provides access to markets, certainty, and safety for businesses and visitors in the area.



There is a heavy reliance on road freight for many of the Shire's agricultural products. Connections south to Dubbo along the Castlereagh Highway and north-east to Moree along the Gwydir Highway provide access to the National Land Transport Network, Key Freight Routes and important supply chains.

Council is responsible for the maintenance of both sealed and unsealed Regional and Local Roads in the Shire. Upgrading and maintaining the regionally significant road corridors which provide connections to the Shire's most populated settlements and significant freight routes will continue to be a priority for Council. Council will also advocate for improvements to key transport networks managed by the State Government.

Where transport corridors pass through district centres, towns and villages, a movement and place framework will be implemented. This seeks to ensure a balance between the objectives of providing fast and efficient connections with the need to provide a safe and attractive environment which encourages residents and visitors to spend time in our main streets.

Rail also plays a critical role in the agricultural supply chain. The construction of additional storage and rail sidings can reduce shunting, allow for faster freight loading and make significant savings in freight costs between the Shire's producers and ports. For example, after major upgrades in 2016, loading times at the Burren Junction silo have been reduced by as much as 70 per cent, reducing freight costs by \$6 a tonne.



*Burren Junction Grain Loading
Image Courtesy theland.com.au*

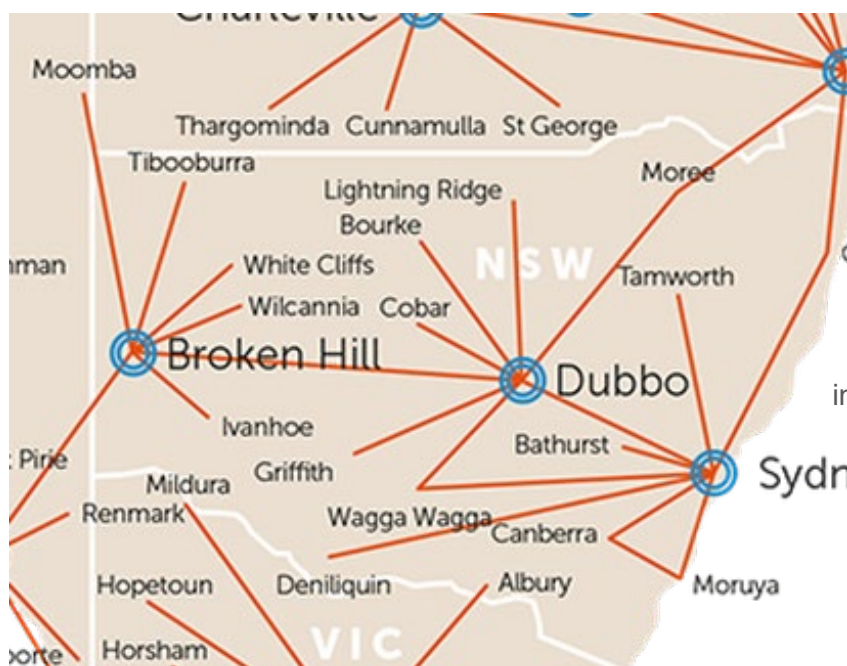
Air passenger transport has recently resumed in the Shire with regional flights now linking Walgett and Lightning Ridge to Dubbo, where passengers can connect through to Sydney. Increased air services to the Shire will increase access to labour markets, especially skilled and semi-skilled workers, as well as international and domestic visitor numbers. Council will undertake airport masterplan investigations for Lightning Ridge, followed by Walgett, to ensure these air routes remain sustainable and attractive.

Major transport corridors and infrastructure, including the airports, Walgett rail siding, highways and major roads, are to be protected from encroachment by development which would detract from their safety or operational efficiency.



Dubbo Regional Airport – Image via Google

Enabling infrastructure for improved communications, such as the National Broadband Network (NBN) and 4G connectivity, is essential for all major industries and residents. It allows agribusinesses to adapt, specialise, and integrate new technology into their businesses as well as letting tourists make forward plans with less certainty and more flexibility. Reliable internet services will also help to attract and retain new residents to the Shire who are able to work remotely.



The Royal Flying Doctor Service works to reduce the disparity of health services. They bring emergency medical and primary health services to Walgett Shire, making it possible for people to live, work and travel. The Lightning Ridge and Walgett airport are considered to be essential infrastructure to maintain this service.

Royal Flying Doctor Service routes in NSW – flyingdoctor.org.au

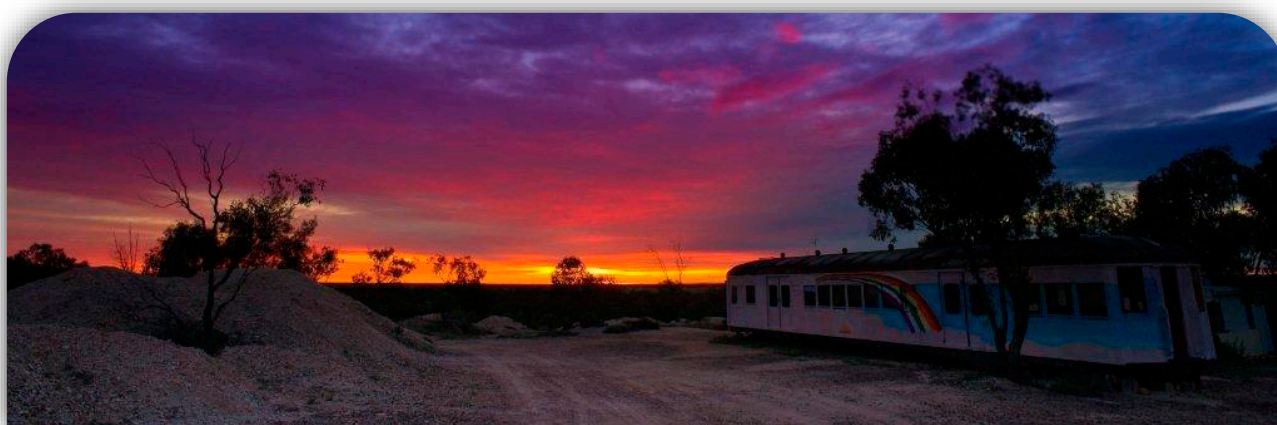
Planning Priority 10	Ensure that future urban development is supported by adequate infrastructure and access to a range of social and community facilities sufficient to support the future population base of the community.	
Far West Regional Plan Alignment		
Direction 7	Improve regional air connections.	
Direction 8	Enhance access to telecommunications.	
Direction 11	Support new planning and land management arrangements.	
Direction 21	Strengthen communities of interest and cross-regional relationships.	
Strategy	Action	Timeframe
Maintain and improve freight network efficiency by protecting the state regional road and rail network and connections to Dubbo and Moree along the Castlereagh and Gwydir Highways.	Continue to advocate for improved transport services between Walgett and other major centres including Moree, Narrabri and Dubbo.	Ongoing
	Support and grow existing and potential freight and logistics facilities by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">identifying and protecting key infrastructure corridors that assist current and future development as well as capitalise on inter-regional connections and external markets;protecting network opportunities and distribution from incompatible land uses or land fragmentation;liaise with Far North West Joint Regional Organisation of Council’s to ensure that strategic infrastructure is included in regional freight and transport infrastructure plans, including plans for high productivity vehicles;working with stakeholders to update transport network capacity as demand changes.	Ongoing
	Work with TfNSW and Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads to consider the need and location of additional heavy vehicle rest areas along major freight corridors.	Short – Medium Term
Create accessible public transport opportunities for locals and tourists.	Work with Transport for NSW to identify unique opportunities for public transport throughout the town of Walgett to aid in the prevention of social isolation.	Short Term
	Work with Transport for NSW to identify unique opportunities for event transport.	Medium to Long Term

Locate new uses industrial and or development of agribusiness land near existing or proposed transport routes to increase efficiency within the agricultural sector.	Manage the road network to respond to community needs, growth in the Shire, improving road safety and improving transport choices.	Ongoing
	Locate freight and logistics facilities to maximise existing infrastructure, support future industrial development and capitalise on inter-regional connections and external markets.	Ongoing
	Review and application of appropriate zones and additional local provisions in the LEP.	Ongoing
	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Ongoing
	Identify and map the regional freight network (including key national, State, regional and local roads and railways), industrial areas and major freight generators such as grain receiver sites at Burren Junction, Cryon, Merrywinebone and Walgett.	Short – Medium Term
Enhance access to telecommunications, internet services, including public access to services at community centres and schools.	Advocate to utility and communication providers regarding the capacity and reliability of infrastructure across the Shire	Ongoing
	Represent the community with regard to external services including energy, communication, water, waste management and resource recovery.	Ongoing
	Advocate for greater connectivity via our road network, mobile and internet to ensure connectivity is no longer a barrier to attract new industry.	Ongoing
Locate new uses industrial and or development of agribusiness land near existing or proposed routes to increase efficiency within the agricultural sector.	Undertake network mapping for existing freight and logistic networks.	Short – Medium Term
Plan for active transport connectivity by all members of the community and tourists to such spaces will offer health and environmental benefits to the community.	Map and review all transport connectivity within the Shire to identify main users.	Short – Medium Term
	Identify areas where and ways to educate on how vehicle emissions can be reduced.	Medium – Long Term
Protect of industrial land from encroachment by incompatible land uses.	Review local strategies to limit urban and rural housing development in agricultural, extractive resource areas, industrial areas and transport corridors.	Ongoing

Maintain satisfactory access to villages and rural localities.	Ensure that where necessary, adequate upgrading of local roads occurs in association with development	Ongoing
	Review and application of other development controls in the DCP.	Ongoing
Promote air transport opportunities at Lightning Ridge and Walgett to support local sectors, improve connectivity to regional centres and generate new economic and employment opportunities.	Work with relevant stakeholders to ensure the timely delivery of enabling infrastructure and services.	Ongoing
	Advocate for long term planning.	Ongoing
Support the NSW Freight and Ports Plan 2018-2023 and the NSW Heavy Vehicle Access Policy Framework.	Align all strategic documents to ensure aims and objectives from each the NSW Freight and Ports Plan 2018-2023 and the NSW Heavy Vehicle Access Policy Framework are acknowledged and supported.	Short – Medium Term
	Use the NSW Freight and Ports Plan 2018-2023 and the NSW Heavy Vehicle Access Policy Framework where possible to support housing opportunities outcomes, enhance transport outcomes and contribute to the economic development and employment.	Ongoing

Monitoring and Review

Council will monitor, review and report on the LSPS to ensure that its planning priorities are being achieved, using the existing Integrated Planning & Reporting framework (IP&R) in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*. The Walgett Shire LSPS will be reviewed at least every seven years pursuant to section 3.9 (1) of the EP&A Act.



References

- Walgett Gamilaraay Aboriginal Community Working Party – Community Action Plan 2019
- Walgett Shire Heritage Study 2011
- Walgett Local Environmental Plan 2013
- Walgett Development Control Plan 2016
- Far West Regional Plan 2016
- Walgett Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027

Images

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