

**WINGECARRIBEE OUR FUTURE**

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

**PART 2**

**OVERVIEW**

**Statement**

(Incorporating Scope and Purpose of the Plan)

**&**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**October 2002**

## **DISCLAIMER**

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# ***Table of Contents***

|     |   |           |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 1.  | <i>Vision and Council’s Corporate Goals .....</i>   | <i>4</i>  |
| 2.  | <i>Scope and Purpose of the Strategic Plan .....</i>  | <i>5</i>  |
| 3.  | <i>Background, History and Community Consultation.....</i>                                      | <i>6</i>  |
| 4.  | <i>Council’s Planning Role .....</i>  | <i>9</i>  |
| 5.  | <i>Review of Planning Outcomes.....</i>   | <i>10</i> |
| 6.  | <i>Driving Forces for the Future .....</i>  | <i>11</i> |
| 7.  | <i>Future Strategic Challenges .....</i>  | <i>13</i> |
| 8.  | <i>Key Strategic Directions and Outcomes for Future Planning .....</i>                          | <i>15</i> |
| 9.  | <i>Planning Objectives, Strategies and Actions. ....</i>  | <i>16</i> |
| 10. | <i>A Commitment to Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) and Place Based Planning.....</i> | <i>22</i> |
| 11. | <i>A ‘Balanced’ Strategic Plan.....</i>   | <i>25</i> |
| 12. | <i>Recommendation to Amend the Statutory Shire Plan.....</i>                                    | <i>26</i> |
| 13. | <i>Other Recommendations .....</i>  | <i>26</i> |

## 1. Vision and Council's Corporate Goals

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### *(i) Council's Vision*

*Council's Management Plan outlines its Vision for the future of the Shire, which is to:*

***Make the Shire a better place in which to live, and in doing so, ensure that the unique character of the Shire is retained.***

*The Council's Management Plan also expresses a range of goals that are relevant to the Strategic Plan:*

- *Maintain the richness, diversity and viability of the Shire's existing natural, historical and built environment to improve the lifestyle it affords its residents and visitors.*
- *The Shire to be recognised as a 'breathing space between the major urban areas of Sydney, Wollongong and Canberra,.*
- *Facilitate economic and employment development opportunities in 'clean' industries such as tourism.*
- *Maintain the current balance of agricultural and rural industries and preserve prime agricultural land wherever practicable.*
- *Influence and control the appropriate development of extractive Industries.*
- *Ensure well planned commercial development with specific regard to traffic and community amenity.*
- *Adopt an innovative approach to the provision of basic infrastructure.*
- *Meet expanding housing and development needs by facilitating varying styles/costs/density which maximise environmental compatibility and energy efficiency.*
- *Improve transport services particularly to outlying areas.*
- *Extend participation in local government using well defined and open consultative processes.*
- *Rationalise and upgrade existing community facilities, ensuring the continuing availability of basic infrastructure to meet community needs.*
- *Encourage ecologically sustainable development.*
- *Promote and encourage cultural activity.*

## 2. Scope and Purpose of the Strategic Plan

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### (i) Scope

*The Wingecarribee Our Future Strategic Plan has been prepared in order to provide a policy basis for a review of the Council's planning regulations (the Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan, 1989 and associated development control plans).*

### (ii) An Integrated Planning Approach

*Wingecarribee Shire Council resolved to prepare the 'Wingecarribee Our Future Strategic Plan' in response to community feedback to a draft housing strategy that was prepared in the late 1990s.*

*The community informed Council that decisions about planning for future housing should not be made in isolation. Planning for housing needed to be **integrated** with other policy directions of Council, and higher levels of government. These included policies for other important issues such as infrastructure capacity; employment and economic development; environmental conservation; agricultural land resource protection; natural resource management; social well being; transport; and the retention of the Shire's unique built and landscape character.*

*Council agreed with the community and decided to prepare a 'plan' to reflect an integrated planning approach for future land use and development, across all relevant issue areas identified as being important for the whole of the Shire.*

*The Council, wanted the 'plan' to recognise the Shire's regional positioning and acknowledged that significant authority existed at higher levels of government to influence future land use outcomes.*

*Wingecarribee Shire is part of wider 'catchments' (eg. water and ecological) and recognition will need to be paid by the 'plan' to the potential impacts of land use decision making 'beyond' the Shire's boundaries.*

### (iii) Planning Principles

*The Strategic Plan is a multi-faceted plan that appreciates the complex interrelationship between different values that influence physical, environmental and social outcomes.*

***Most importantly, the Council has demanded that the 'plan' be balanced and reflective (as much as is practicable) of community aspirations and values for the future. It acknowledges that the extent and ways in which land is to be used and developed, will have profound impacts on people's lifestyle, access and equity, amenity, income security and cultural identity.***

*The Council also understood that decisions over future land use had the capacity to either preserve or diminish important natural assets such as the Shire's biodiversity and landscape character. The 'plan' had to pay proper respect to these inherent natural features.*

The 'plan' will inform future Councils, the local community and other stakeholders, over how this 'generation of community interests' wanted the Shire to 'look and function like' in the future.

The plan will demonstrate to **future generations** how the Council and local community interests of today, recognised the importance of maintaining the Shire's land, natural resources and heritage, **for their benefit**.

**(iv) Purpose**

**The specific purpose of the 'plan' is to provide a framework for Council decision making, for the future use and development of land within the Shire, over the next ten (10) years.**

**The Plan concerns itself both with Council's overall planning directions and outcomes, but goes further to specify recommended alterations to the Shire's current planning laws and regulations.**

**Further, the Plan is structured to reflect an intent to express the Council's land use and development planning policies, as they apply to the Shire as a whole, and on a more discrete and local 'place' basis.**

Whilst the 'Strategic Plan has a ten (10) year time frame, it is recognised from the outset that it should be reviewed by 2005/6, to take account of:

- emerging and changing circumstances, and
- the outcomes of the Strategic Plan actions implemented by Council.

### **3. Background, History and Community Consultation**

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Council commenced the Strategic Plan process in 2000 when it conducted a number of focus group meetings with peak local community organisations and government agencies, to identify what people believed to be the most important issues likely to affect the future of the Shire. The Institute for Sustainable Futures conducted the focus group meetings on Council's behalf.

From these workshops Council staff prepared preliminary material that summarised the main issues that appeared to concern the broader community, supplemented with information that described the character, function and community profile of the whole Shire, as well as individual towns, villages and rural localities.

This information was then taken to the broader community through a 6 week public exhibition process supported by a series of 'Travelling Exhibition Road-Show Sessions' where staff and Councillors made themselves available for community members to discuss future planning issues and outcomes. Sessions were held at eight (8) separate venues across the Shire.

*In response to the consultation, Council developed a series of more detailed 'ideas' of what the Shire might look like in the future and how development and land use might best be managed. This was called the Wingecarribee Strategic Plan 'Draft Policy Options' document.*

*Central to this package of policy options was a 'sustainable low growth development scenario'. The scenario depended significantly upon the take up of existing subdivision and multi-unit housing potential provided for by the current statutory Shire Plan, supplemented by the addition of approximately 800 new zoned housing opportunities over a 10 year period.*

*The Draft Policy Options also focused attention on environmental conservation, economic well being, tourism development and other issues.*

*The Draft Policy Options document became the focus of a second series of focus group meetings to assist Council to 'test' its ideas for future strategic land use planning. The options were reviewed and then placed on public exhibition during February and March 2001. Again, a series of 'Travelling Exhibition Road-Show Sessions' was conducted across the Shire and the community and government agencies were asked to discuss their reactions to the Draft Policy Options document.*

*The consultation stimulated vigorous public debate, and it was clear that there was a range of mixed reactions to the proposals that had been tabled, and in particular the 'Sustainable Low Growth Development Scenario'. As it turned out, the Draft Policy Options document had a significant shortcoming. It did not adequately explain the extent of housing opportunities that remain under the existing statutory Shire Plan, and there appeared to be significant confusion amongst the community over the extent of new housing opportunities that was generally being contemplated by Council.*

*More than 600 submissions from the public and government agencies, were received over the Draft Policy Options document. Support was mixed, and there were criticisms levelled at the absence of:*

- *'balance' in terms of providing for future growth and development versus seeking to conserve environmental quality,*
- *detail presented on how the options were to be achieved,*
- *any attempt to define how the policy options would impact 'spatially',*
- *any real justification for the low growth development scenario and other policy options, and*
- *any assessment of the social and economic impact assessment of the low growth development scenario and some of the environmental conservation options.*

*The Council subsequently decided to undertake a detailed revision of the Draft Policy Options document and undertake further research and analysis. It consulted with the then NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and decided to:*

- *prepare a restructured 'plan'*

- *adopt a Sustainable Housing Policy that quantified the extent and make up of future housing opportunities, to be incorporated as part of the final Strategic Plan, (including those opportunities that exist under the current statutory Shire Plan), and*
- *engage a specialist consultancy to undertake an economic and social impact analysis of the revised plan, and in particular the Sustainable Housing Policy.*

*A series of detailed and researched Issue (based) Sub-Plans were subsequently prepared, including a Population and Housing Sub Plan that incorporated the Council's Sustainable Housing Policy. This was 'backed up' by spatially validated data that quantified the extent and general location of future additional housing opportunities within the capability of the existing statutory Shire Plan.*

*The Sustainable Housing Policy also identified further potential for additional housing opportunities that could arise from a review of existing planning regulations within and at the boundary of existing zoned urban areas. The aim was for the Strategic Plan to quantify the number of new housing opportunities that were to be made available to 2011. Importantly, the Sustainable Housing Policy also committed the Council to seriously consider the potential for a new small town to accommodate housing growth beyond 2011.*

*In accordance with its resolution, the Council sought expressions of interest to undertake a social and economic impact assessment, however, resource requirements to undertake this project appeared to be in excess of the funds that Council could make available. Notwithstanding, the Council did engage consultants to test the infrastructure (NSW State and Council) requirements of its Sustainable Housing Policy, which revealed that the Council's housing proposals would appear to have minimal impact on State infrastructure planning. Most agencies indicated that their specific facilities and services would generally be able to accommodate demands generated by the additional housing proposed by Council.*

*On the other hand, an examination of Council infrastructure responsibilities, revealed that there are issues over the Council's capacity to source funds to meet its current, as well as future infrastructure requirements.*

*The incapacity of developer contributions funds (from future development) to wholly address backlog as well as future infrastructure need is acknowledged by the Council. The relatively low level of Council's land rates, coupled with rate pegging legislation, is seen to exacerbate the problem of raising sufficient revenue to meet infrastructure and maintenance requirements.*

*The Council has given a public commitment for the Strategic Plan to incorporate the principles of ecologically sustainable development and also to pursue 'place based' planning. It has consistently and clearly stated that the strategic plan was to be used to underpin a review of the current statutory Shire Plan.*

*This Plan achieves these goals.*

## 4. Council's Planning Role

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*Council wants to deliberately and positively intervene into the processes and systems that shape our community, environment and economy, through **planning** for the future use and development of land or 'places' in the Shire.*

*It holds authority to undertake this role primarily as a 'controller of land use and development' under the auspice of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and the Local Government Act. The Council is bound to involve its local community in undertaking this planning responsibility.*

*Although it has a duty of care to act as the primary land use 'planning agency' at a local level, it also has capability to have (by its actions and other authorities) profound influence over the extent and way in which land is used, through planning and investment in infrastructure (like roads, drainage, water supply, sewerage, and community facilities).*

*At the same time, a local Council has a responsibility to plan for:*

- *social equity and access for its community,*
- *recognition and enhancement of the Shire's community cultural identity, and*
- *the conservation of the Shire's ecological resources like its biodiversity.*

*Many of the outcomes of Council's social and environmental policies have implications in 'physical space', sometimes intentionally and other times inadvertently. Conversely, the way in which land is used can have significant social, economic and environmental effects.*

*The importance of planning for and managing the use of land, cannot therefore, be underestimated.*

*Underpinning all of these responsibilities, is the statutory requirement for all Councils to operate in ways that are at the least, consistent with the principles of ecological sustainability. Ecological sustainability is the concept of maintaining the opportunities for living, afforded by today's environmental and ecological resources, for future generations.*

*Ordinarily, a Council implements its powers of controlling development and land use, through a statutory Town or Shire Plan. (These have the force of law and are called local environmental plans, sometimes supported by other plans like 'development control plans').*

*The Wingecarribee statutory Shire Plan (Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan- LEP) came into effect in 1990 and was a consolidation of three (3) older and separate statutory plans. (One each respectively for the former Bowral, Mittagong and Wingecarribee local government areas.)*

*This 'consolidated' statutory plan did not specifically reflect any particular planning policy direction or outcomes for the then recently formed Wingecarribee Shire Council (1981).*

*It was simply a 'coming together' of the previous three separate statutory plans, in a single instrument. This plan remains in force today, although it has undergone a significant number of amendments, usually in response to significant planning issues, as they have arisen.*

## **5. Review of Planning Outcomes**

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*The current statutory Shire Plan has been amended on 110 occasions since its gazettal in 1990. Whilst most of these amendments relate to specific sites, the Council has also tried to ensure that the Plan remains responsive to some of the emerging pressures for change, arising from a general community based aspiration to:*

- *conserve the Shire's significant historic cultural rural landscapes (through the introduction of an Environmental Protection 7(b) Zone),*
- *prevent the further fragmentation of the Shire's rural land resource (by removal of concessional allotment subdivision potential),*
- *protect the character and primary residential function of two of the Shire's villages (the introduction of new Residential 2(a2) Zones at Robertson and Exeter),*
- *conserve the heritage significance of Mittagong business centre,*
- *accommodate significant new employment development opportunities consistent with maintaining the overall character of the Shire, including:*
  - *exhibition and recreation gardens open for public inspection,*
  - *value adding to locally distinctive agricultural produce (through wineries, cellar door sales and associated restaurants),*
  - *the extension of bed and breakfast development opportunities across the Shire, and*
  - *an international scale commercial garden proposal at Burradoo.*

*The 1990 statutory Shire Plan has also delivered the following key outcomes:*

- *substantial growth in local housing opportunities across the Shire. This has been achieved by subdivision and subsequent housing construction in the East Bowral residential release area and in other towns and villages, as well as significant infill development through villa homes, townhouses and cluster housing.*

*In 1991 there were a total of 13,200 private dwellings located across the Shire. In 2001 that number had increased to almost 17,400. (i.e. **an increase of 4200 dwellings or about 32% over 10 years**) Over the same period population increased by approximately 23%;*

- *expansion in local industrial development, with notable activity in Braemar, Mittagong, Bowral and Moss Vale, including the Moss Vale/Berrima Future Industrial Corridor;*
- *extensive development and some redevelopment in the Shire's business centres including a new supermarket and car parking at Bowral; new office development on the northern and southern fringes of Bowral; redevelopment and extension of a hardware store complex at Mittagong as well as new retail premises on Main Street; a new supermarket at Moss Vale and development around the Clarence Street convenience retail core; and*
- *a new private hospital and redevelopment /upgrade of the Bowral district public hospital facility.*

*As a follow on from this extensive take up of development opportunities over the last 10 years, the community now faces unprecedented demands for upgraded and new infrastructure (car parking, traffic management facilities, sewerage and drainage), in order to maintain community amenity and to protect local environmental quality. There is some issue over the Council's capacity to satisfy these demands within existing revenue capabilities and in light of continuing growth in local development (both in terms of housing and other enterprises like commerce and industry).*

*Whilst the statutory Shire Plan has delivered opportunities for growth and development, it now needs to address concerns that have developed for the:*

- *conservation of the Shire's ecological resources like natural bushland, flora and fauna (some significant land clearing has occurred),*
- *the health and condition of local water catchments,*
- *a mismatch between specific housing needs and the make-up of housing supply,*
- *the relative affordability of local housing,*
- *the protection of the scale, character and function of urban settlements (towns and villages),*
- *potential development risks like bushfire,*
- *propensity for underground mining and extractive industries, and*
- *diversity of tourism accommodation and recreation opportunities.*

## **6. Driving Forces for the Future**

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### **(i) Retention of the Shire's 'sense of place'**

*There is overwhelming community support for the Council to retain the Shire's aesthetic character. This character is determined by:*

- *a prevalence of scenically attractive and distinctive historic cultural rural landscapes,*

- a diversity of highly valued natural landscapes including wetlands, temperate rainforests, heathland, and a range of woodland vegetation groups, some of which are classified as endangered ecological communities,
- the Shire's settlement pattern of separate small towns and villages scattered across a rural and bushland landscape,
- a wide range of heritage places including villages, township neighbourhoods, individual buildings, gardens and streetscapes, and special items like industrial buildings (breweries and shale oil refinery remnants) and engineering structures like stone bridges, tunnels and roads,

These are features of the Shire's 'place' that are highly valued by the Shire community as well as visitors. This 'sense of place' appears (from consultations that the Council has undertaken) to be the most important factor considered by the community, needed to be taken into account in planning for the future. Council, through its future planning, must work to ensure that this 'place character' is retained.

### **(ii) Continued Residential Development and Population Growth**

Despite the Wingecarribee **not** being listed as part of the NSW Metropolitan Urban Development Program, Council foresees that **the Shire will continue to attract significant population resettlement from outside**, and in particular, the Sydney metropolitan area.

This has been, and is likely to continue to be the major 'push factor' that has influenced the extent of residential development in the Shire over the past 10 years. Wingecarribee continues to enjoy a number of locational advantages that would contribute to decisions for metropolitan households to relocate here including:

- access to existing and future employment opportunities in the Sydney metropolitan area via the Hume Highway and the City Rail train service,
- freeway access to the Sydney CBD and airport,
- housing affordability relative to the metropolitan area,
- high level environmental quality including a semi rural/bushland & non-suburban settlement pattern, and
- proximity to recreation and cultural development opportunities both within and near to the Shire (South Coast, Canberra and Alpine regions).

### **(iii) Demand for land to accommodate investment and employment growth**

Continued residential growth will assure additional investment and employment in local retail and tertiary service enterprises. The trend towards an expanding 'senior' population will also give rise to demands for different types of accommodation and supporting services for older people.

At the same time, the Shire's strategic positioning within the Sydney-Canberra Corridor on the Hume Highway Inter-City link could encourage future investment in:

- tourism accommodation,
- eco-recreation and cultural tourism,
- industrial, warehouse and transport enterprises, and

- *information technology and research/development facilities.*

*There are now in excess of 40 vineyards operating in the Shire and the area has recently been formally recognised as a separate 'wine region'. There is a strong local commitment to producing high quality 'boutique' cool climate grape and wine varieties with local distinctiveness, and opportunities are now being actively sought to integrate this emerging enterprise base with tourism.*

*There is clear support within the community that the Council must relate the extent of future residential growth (that it is to provide for), with a commensurate increase in employment.*

*The Council, whilst recognising a strong potential for many residents to be employed outside of the Shire, **does not formally support the Shire taking on the role of a 'dormitory' suburb** of the greater Sydney metropolitan area. The Council will promote the retention of the Shire's relatively high level of employment self-containment of around 70%. This is seen to be a more socially as well as an ecologically sustainable approach to managing future growth. Opportunities for employment growth must be provided.*

#### ***(iv) Ecological Sustainability and Protecting the Environment.***

*There is forecast to be an increasing level of understanding held by the public, over the significance of planning for ecological sustainability. The community and higher levels of government will support means to protect environmental quality and preserve important ecological resources like endangered ecological communities, threatened species, and fauna habitat of high value.*

*The importance of clean water, not only for drinking and agriculture, but for recreation and ecological support, will come to be perhaps the most significant natural resource management issue to confront the Shire.*

*Land degradation through erosion, salinity and contamination has the capacity to diminish the potential for agricultural production.*

*The price of energy is set to increase and combined with concerns over greenhouse gas emissions, public attention will focus on integrating land use planning with:*

- *transport planning, and*
- *designing and constructing the built environment so as to minimise energy (fossil fuel base) consumption.*

*This means greater support for walking, cycling, public transport, and energy efficiency being incorporated into subdivision and housing design and construction.*

## ***7. Future Strategic Challenges***

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*Land use and place planning by a Council should not just be "responsive" to internally and externally generated forces for change, but seek to proactively achieve **a set of***

**preferred outcomes for the future.** *As much as is practicable, these outcomes should enjoy some degree of consensus support throughout the community.*

*The Council shares the strongly held values of its community that demands the retention and enhancement of high quality natural, rural and built environments. At the same time it acknowledges its responsibilities to provide opportunities for future growth, investment and prosperity for the people it serves now, and for future stakeholders.*

**The creation of such opportunities must take account of the community's capacity to 'pay' for growth and development.**

*The Shire already suffers from a significant 'backlog' of basic infrastructure, including roads, sewerage, drainage and business centre facilities like off-street car parking and traffic relief routes.*

**The capacity, as well as quality, of some existing infrastructure systems like sewerage and drainage will constrain future development at particular locations, and call up the need for reconstruction in the face of additional demands generated by new development.**

*Given issues of 'apportionment' and cost sharing enshrined in legislation, the Council, and the existing community will not be able to rely on 'new development' alone to meet completely, the capital costs associated with future growth. In addition, the implications for revenue (which is 'capped' by Government) to satisfy extra ongoing infrastructure maintenance costs, cannot be taken lightly, especially given the comparatively low scale of property rates charged at Wingecarribee Shire.*

*A very low revenue base, small population, and a highly dispersed settlement pattern across a large geographic land area, all restrain the Council's capacity to deliver on infrastructure effectively.*

**The Council also recognises that the Shire is part of a wider region, that will give rise to external demands** *on its natural resources like drinking water, minerals and extractive resources, as well as a range of tourism and recreation opportunities afforded by natural environments such as native bushland and cultural places like rural landscapes, towns and villages.*

*Many of the Council's policy intentions will have implications "in space", that will translate into actions and interventions, not just by the Council itself, but by the community, government, development, and business sectors.*

*The long term strategic challenge for the Council, in partnership with other stakeholder groups, is to ensure that future decisions taken about the ways and extent to which land and "places" are used and developed, at the least, maintain, but preferably enhance the Shire's:*

- *unique sense of place,*
- *self dependence, and*
- *natural resources and opportunities for an enriched quality of life.*

*The Council wants to work towards assuring future generations access to opportunities for life enrichment, which have similarly been afforded to the Shire's past and present communities. To achieve this end, the **Council has embraced an overall theme of "sustainability and balance" for the Wingecarribee Our Future Strategic Plan.***

***The Strategic Plan must be affordable.** Future growth must be assured of being properly serviced, so as not to significantly compromise existing levels of amenity enjoyed by the current community, and to protect environmental quality.*

***The Shire's environmental assets (both ecological and aesthetic) must be protected.***

*The complete and detailed set of strategic challenges (based on issue areas like environment, employment and economic development etc.) can be found in Part 3 of the Wingecarribee Our Future Strategic Plan (Issue Sub Plans).*

## **8. Key Strategic Directions and Outcomes for Future Planning**

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*The Wingecarribee Strategic Plan embraces a set of critical or key strategic directions, that will be incorporated into a new statutory Shire Plan. They can be summarised as:*

- *Retain the Shire's environmental and cultural place character and settlement pattern.*
- *Provide for and manage a sustainable (economic, social and ecological) level of future population growth through a mix of new housing opportunities.*
- *Protect the Shire's key ecological resources like natural bushland, fauna habitat, and water resources.*
- *Pursue diversity in housing choice and affordability.*
- *Provide for a range of opportunities for employment development and wealth generation, that match with 'environmental, cultural and place fit'.*
- *Strengthen the viability of the Shire's four (4) business centres as central places for investment, employment and cultural activity, and encourage a majority of future housing opportunities to be located in relative close proximity to these centres.*
- *Ensure that the creation of new housing opportunities minimises the consumption of up front and recurrent 'energy resources', both in terms of building and on-going occupant living.*
- *As much as is practicable, locate new local employment opportunities at identified employment 'hubs' like business centres, and identified enterprise zones, that can be better accessed with public and private transport.*

- *Maintain the Shire's level of amenity and minimise potential conflicts between incompatible land uses.*
- *Protect the Shire's productive agricultural land resource and agricultural enterprise asset base.*
- *Recognise and plan for environmental constraints and risks to future development including bushfire risks and physical land and water capability.*
- *Support and encourage a culturally rich environment across the Shire.*
- *Plan in anticipation of a diverse community (including an increasing aged persons component) structure and strengthening demands for widened housing choice and access to employment, support facilities and services.*

## **9. Planning Objectives, Strategies and Actions.**

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*To pro-actively go about achieving these and other strategic directions, the Strategic Plan puts forward a number of important planning objectives and strategies. These are expressed for a range of 'issue areas' including:*

- *Population and Housing*
- *Environment*
- *Agriculture and Rural Lands*
- *Employment and Economic Development*
- *Business Centres*
- *Tourism*
- *Villages*
- *Industrial Development*
- *Mining and Extractive Industries*

*The detailed set of planning objectives and strategies are identified in Part 3 of the Wingecarribee Our Future Strategic Plan (Issue Sub Plans), in respect of each of the nine (9) issue areas.*

*A detailed range of planning actions is also included in Part 3 (Issue Sub Plans). These actions are generally divided into:*

- **statutory actions** (ie. those actions requiring a change to the current statutory Shire Plan), and
- **other actions.**

**The actions have a definite focus and purpose.**

*Below is a summary of some of the most important actions contained in the Issue Sub Plans (Part 3 of the Strategic Plan). They are listed here to help illustrate the relationship between themselves and the Council's Key Strategic Directions (above).*

**ISSUE: Population and Housing**

- *Provide for a change to the statutory Shire Plan to provide for potential new residential release areas (new housing neighbourhoods) to accommodate approximately 1500 new residential allotments over the next 10 years at:*
  - *East Mittagong (Renwick) – 400 allotments,*
  - *Gibbergunyah (West Mittagong) – 200 allotments*
  - *South East Moss Vale – 400 allotments*
  - *New Berrima - 90 allotments and*
  - *East Colo Vale (Wensleydale) – 400 allotments (post 2006).*

*Also provide for minor zoning changes at Colo Vale and Willow Vale to accommodate approximately an additional 100 allotments.*

*These will be subject to the findings of detailed site-specific local environmental studies.*

*N.B. These provisions are in addition to the capacity for additional new housing that exists under the current statutory Shire Plan, of approximately 3000 allotments and residential flats/villa homes.*

*The Strategic Plan also commits Council to commence planning and identification of a site for a new small town, to address housing needs post 2011.*

- *Provide new opportunities for mixed apartment housing and retail/commercial development within business centres.*
- *Provide new opportunities for apartment style accommodation in close proximity to existing business centres.*
- *Provide for the creation of a new residential apartment zone in certain areas located within close proximity to business centres.*
- *Provide for the integrated development and subdivision of dual occupancy on ‘corner allotments only’ on land zoned Residential 2(a) in the four (4) townships, and on ‘corner allotments’ only on land zoned proposed Village Residential Zone in the seweraged villages, under certain conditions, (estimated potential approximately 200 allotments).*
- *Removal of medium density housing opportunities in locations remote from centres, facilities and transport and which to date have not demonstrated any significant take up.*
- *Provide new opportunities for integrated small lot subdivision in areas set aside for medium density housing.*

- *Provide new development opportunities for courtyard housing on properties owned by the NSW Department of Housing.*
- *Ensure a significant proportion of all newly created multiple unit housing such as cluster homes, villa homes, town houses, corner lot dual occupancy etc are constructed as 'adaptable' units to meet the needs of older and disabled occupants.*
- *Retain existing dwellings and vegetation with streetscape value, as part of medium density developments.*

**ISSUE: Environment**

- *Prohibit broad scale land clearing opportunities in natural bushland areas with high ecological significance. (This would include a prohibition on agriculture - other than activities that would not result in any significant land clearing).*
- *Restructure the statutory Shire Plan to ensure that broad land use zonings and planning controls reflect the land's ecological setting. (ie a classification of land that reflects its ecological value in light of the extent of modification of natural ecosystems).*
- *Ensure compliance of all future development and land use activities with Ecologically Sustainable Development criteria (up front and on-going).*
- *Prohibit any activities associated with genetically modified cropping or agricultural activity.*

**ISSUE: Agriculture and Rural Lands**

- *Maintain the existing 40 hectare minimum allotment standard for subdivision in rural and natural bushland areas.*
- *Prevent intensive livestock industries from being developed on rural land with scenic or historic cultural rural landscape significance, and also from natural bushland that has high ecological value.*
- *Ensure intensive livestock industries, intensive horticulture, irrigated agriculture, rural industries and the like, comply with stringent environmental performance criteria, addressing matters including but not limited to odour control, noise control, spray drift, effluent disposal, setbacks, buffers, vehicle access, landscape screening and the like.*
- *Provide new opportunities for 'farm stay' accommodation and on-farm recreation activities in certain circumstances.*

### **ISSUE: Employment and Economic Development**

- *Create a new Eco-Enterprise zone located between New Berrima and Moss Vale focussing on new opportunities for advanced technology enterprises (this is subject to the findings of a local environmental study - incorporating economic feasibility).*
- *Investigate the feasibility of a potential site specific tourism enterprise zone/corridor that could include:*
  - *a recreation theme village/establishment featuring amusements, displays and activities, that celebrate the Shire's agricultural, garden, landscape and cultural heritage,*
  - *accommodation, and*
  - *other tourist facilities.*
- *Widen opportunities for tourism accommodation and recreation, including guest houses, farm stay, eco-cabins and cultural tourism.*
- *Create additional opportunities for improved integration of local produce and dining by permitting small cafes to be conducted in association with local rural industries (where on-site processing takes place).*
- *Nomination of a site in Moss Vale business centre for the development of a department store (including discount department store) and bulky goods retailing.*

### **ISSUE: Business Centres**

- *Give formal recognition to Bowral as the Shire's sub-regional centre.*
- *Ensure that future planning for each business centre includes detailed precinct based controls that:*
  - *identify key potential development and redevelopment sites and nominate design, siting, building envelope, floor space ratio etc controls for those sites,*
  - *restrict the height of new development in the business centres to 3 storeys generally (3<sup>rd</sup> storey to be within the roof space), excepting sites that front the main street and other community focus points where development should be restricted to 2 storeys, and*
  - *achieve sensitive infill development that respects each centre's urban form, scale, streetscape value, amenity and road/pedestrian access.*
- *As a matter of policy, generally not support the extension/creation of commercial areas that would have frontage to major roads.*

- *Provide opportunities for bulky goods retailing in business centres where satisfactory loading access is available.*
- *Support a small extension to the commercial zoned area of the Bowral sub-regional centre for mixed retail/commercial/residential apartment development (Walker Street precinct).*
- *Restrict development in the existing commercial zoned area in Victoria Street, Bowral, generally to commercial offices only.*
- *Replace the potential for further retail/commercial development on land fronting Lackey Road between Argyle Street and the Industrial 4(a) Zone in the vicinity of Garrett Street, with new opportunities for residential apartment housing.*
- *Nominate a site in the Moss Vale business centre for the development of a department store (including discount department store) and bulky goods retailing.*
- *Support a small extension to the commercial zoned area at Mittagong in the vicinity of Winifred West Park, Regent Street, Fitzroy Street and Regent Lane, given compliance with certain conditions.*

#### **ISSUE: Tourism**

- *Provide opportunities for a range of tourism and recreation developments and activities in appropriate locations (matching the desired tourism experience with 'environmental fit') including eco-recreation; agri-tourism; country fairs and festivals; gardens for public inspection; cultural instruction activities like cooking and art/sculpture classes; passive water based recreation; and equestrian based recreation etc.*
- *Extend opportunities for guest houses to be established across most urban, rural and natural bushland areas, subject to stringent environmental performance.*
- *Provide opportunities for rural properties to qualify for consideration to establish a 'self contained tourist cabin' thereon, in certain circumstances where Council can be guaranteed of a significant environmental improvement to the land over the long term.*
- *Prohibit motels, hotels and backpacker accommodation in residential areas.*

#### **ISSUE: Villages**

- *Except as otherwise provided by the Strategic Plan, generally prevent the expansion of the villages beyond their existing zoned limits.*

- *Include provisions in the statutory Shire Plan to accommodate small “village business zones” in larger villages that would permit a range of business and community development opportunities commensurate with the scale, character and function of those villages.*
- *Identify areas within the larger villages where the ‘village business zone’ is appropriate and support an amendment to the statutory Shire Plan accordingly.*
- *Restrict the extent of opportunity for new development and land use activities that are generally incompatible with the primary residential character of the Shire’s existing villages.*

#### **ISSUE: Industrial Development**

- *Ensure that future industrial developments and activities satisfy defined criteria for cleaner production processes, cleaner products and cleaner services.*
- *Seek to establish an effective ‘buffer’ between existing and potential industrial activities and residential development at New Berrima.*
- *Extend existing provisions for ‘home enterprise’ activities to apply to all village areas.*
- *Prepare detailed precinct based environmental and amenity performance criteria to be observed by new industrial development in each of the Shire’s industrial areas.*
- *Create a new Eco-Enterprise zone located between New Berrima and Moss Vale focussing on new opportunities for advanced technology enterprises, (this is subject to the findings of a local environmental study - incorporating economic feasibility).*

#### **ISSUE: Mining and Extractive Industries**

- *Prevent future mines and extractive industries in any urban area.*
- *Prevent future surface mines and extractive industries in any area of natural bushland with high ecological significance.*
- *Avoid the transport of extractive and mined materials by road through urban areas.*

*It is important to note that there are actions contained as part of some of the Issue-Sub-Plans, that apply to specific parcels of land. These have been sourced from Council’s*

own investigations, and its consideration of more than 110 separate applications made by the public seeking rezoning of land or other changes to statutory planning provisions.

## 10. A Commitment to Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) and Place Based Planning

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### (i) Planning for Ecologically Sustainable Development

Council is committed to ensuring that its strategic land use planning is underpinned by the philosophy of **Ecologically Sustainable Development**. This is driven by a value that seeks to assure the **maintenance** of existing 'living' opportunities, afforded by the Shire's environment and biodiversity, for future generations to benefit from.

One of the best ways to achieve this outcome, is to ensure that the ways that land is used and developed is mindful of its 'ecological' capability.

#### Ecological Settings

The Environment Issue Sub-Plan recommended that consideration be given to a review of the statutory Shire Plan to align land use zonings, development opportunities and planning controls with the '**ecological setting**' classification of land.

The concept of 'ecological settings' is new and one that is endorsed by the Local Government and Shire's Associations and the NSW Government. It is consistent with Council's statutory responsibilities as far as they relate to ecologically sustainable development, as prescribed under the Local Government Act.

There are three (3) ecological settings. They are the:

- urban ecological setting,
- rural ecological setting and
- natural bushland ecological setting.

All land within the Shire has been classified into one of these ecological settings. A series of maps depicting the ecological setting classification of land is included in Part 4 (ecological setting overplans) of the Strategic Plan. Existing land use and physical characteristics have been taken to be the primary determinants for classifying land into its respective ecological setting. Potential land use, (under the provisions of the existing statutory Shire Plan), have also been taken into account in mapping these ecological settings.

#### a. Urban Ecological Setting

Land classified as being part of the urban ecological setting is generally characterised by high levels of human activity where natural ecological processes have been highly disturbed. Typical land uses include residential commercial and industrial development in towns, villages and hamlets

*For these areas (urban ecological setting) Council aims to facilitate appropriate development of land, taking into account the principles of ecologically sustainable development. However, it is accepted that although significant ecological resources should be conserved where practicable (subject to legal obligations), human activity will generally remain predominant over natural ecosystems on these lands.*

*b. Rural Ecological Setting*

*Land classified as being part of the rural ecological setting is generally characterised by non-native plants and animals dominating over natural ecosystems. Generally, natural ecological processes have also been highly disturbed in the rural ecological setting. Typical land uses would include agriculture and grazing, cropping, rural residential development, mining and extractive industries and rural tourism facilities. Again, natural ecological processes are secondary to rural and agricultural systems.*

*The primary outcomes for the rural ecological setting are to conserve local biodiversity and facilitate appropriate development and the ongoing management of land and water resources, taking into account the principles of ecologically sustainable development. Existing vegetation shall be maintained where identified as critical and/or core fauna habitat. The productive agricultural land resource should not be compromised by non-ecologically compatible activities/development.*

*c. Natural Bushland Ecological Setting*

*Land classified as being part of the natural bushland ecological setting demonstrates high ecological value, where natural ecological processes are self sustaining and have high integrity. There would characteristically be a high representation of native flora and fauna species. Levels of physical disturbance would ordinarily be ranked as low to moderate. Land uses would typically include bushland in private ownership, National Parks, State Recreation Areas, Inner Drinking Water Catchment Areas, creeks and streams and adjoining riparian areas.*

*The primary aim for these lands is to protect and preserve native bushland as the major contribution to the achievement of ecologically sustainable development within the Shire.*

*Ecological Setting Overplans*

*Planning strategies and actions have been listed for each ecological setting classification and comprise an 'ecological setting overplan'. These strategies and actions address the outcomes listed above for land in each ecological setting, and have been sourced from:*

- an audit of the Issue Sub-Plans*
- a review of the NSW Biodiversity Planning Guide and*
- an assessment of land use compatibility of different land use types with the three (3) different ecological setting classifications.*

*The ecological setting overplans include proposals that are relevant to the future statutory Shire Plan, such as recommendations on a proposed new zoning regime and ESD based performance criteria for new development and land use.*

### *Significant Ecological Resources*

*It is also important to remember that potential significant ecological resources can be located within each of the ecological settings. The value assigned to these resources depends on their ecological setting context.*

*For instance, within the urban ecological setting the following ecological resources are deemed to be significant:*

- *endangered ecological communities (as defined by the NSW Scientific Committee),*
- *regional and local primary fauna movement corridors,*
- *threatened species, and*
- *riparian land.*

*In the rural ecological setting significant ecological resources can be taken to include:*

- *endangered ecological communities,*
- *riparian land,*
- *certain core habitat,*
- *threatened species, and*
- *primary habitat corridors.*

*In the natural bushland ecological setting, it is reasonable to expect that all ecological resources can be taken to be significant.*

*The ecological setting maps shown in Part 4 of the Strategic Plan also contain a reference to the location of most of these potential significant ecological resources, as informed by the Council's Biodiversity Study (prepared by Eco Logical Australia Pty Ltd.).*

*The maps will be further amended to include the location of potential significant riparian lands and wetlands, when that information becomes available from the Strategic Land and Water Capability Assessments (Sydney Catchment Authority) that are yet to be finalised, and when Council's Wetland Study has been completed.*

*These significant ecological resources will deserve special consideration in the development assessment process. It is proposed that detailed flora and fauna impact assessments will be required to be submitted to Council (in conjunction with a land use application) in the case of land use and development proposals, in respect of land occupied by, or in close proximity to, other land occupied by significant ecological resources.*

### **(ii) 'Place Based' Planning**

*The Council is also committed to ensuring that its future planning regulations address specific 'place based' planning outcomes. The statutory Shire Plan should include place*

based planning objectives for each town, village and rural locality that respect and generally protect the spatial character, scale, function or purpose, and cultural expression of these different 'places' as well as achieve a high standard of architectural, cultural and landscape quality.

'Place based' planning should complement planning for the different ecological settings.

### Place Character Statements

Earlier phases of the preparation of the Strategic Plan included a series of locality profiles for all towns, villages and rural precincts across the Shire. These precincts were generally structured around geographic units according to land use and Census (collector district) precinct boundaries. Character statements were prepared for both the Shire as a whole and for each one of these localities, and then subject to public scrutiny as part of an extensive community consultation process.

These statements seek to describe the following types of characteristics for each 'place':

- physical layout,
- subdivision/road pattern and access,
- landscape setting,
- prominent physical features,
- heritage associations,
- the age and appearance of buildings, and
- the primary role or purpose of the place.

More work needs to be undertaken with individual communities to help identify and express the 'cultural' identity of these localities, as well as their cultural needs. This, by nature, would be an extensive process involving significant resourcing. Grant funding should be sought to assist with this process.

Part 5 of the Strategic Plan presents a set of 33 precinct plans that embrace the place character statements and list actions (sourced from the Issue Sub Plans) proposing changes to the statutory Shire Plan, relevant to each precinct. The precinct plans also note the relevant ecological settings of land within the precinct, and direct readers to refer to the respective ecological setting overplans that also are applicable to land within the precinct.

## 11. A 'Balanced' Strategic Plan

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The Wingecarribee Our Future Strategic Plan seeks to strike a **balance** in creating opportunities for future living, and maintaining the value of those elements that contribute to the lifestyle opportunities and quality of 'place' that Wingecarribee Shire offers.

There is little doubt that the Shire is under increasing pressure, from both outside, and from within. Pressure to provide for additional population growth and pressure to retain the Shire's exceptional environmental (ecological) and cultural richness.

*The balance must also be struck in light of the Council's commitment to the principles of social equity and access. The significance of social well-being cannot be underestimated, as cannot the influence to 'well being' made by employment, income security, housing and the level of residential amenity.*

***A 'managed' and precautionary approach to the creation of future development opportunities, has been embraced by the Council.***

*The Council and the community cannot ignore the place that Wingecarribee Shire holds in a greater regional and state wide strategic planning context. By virtue of the proximity of the Shire to the Sydney metropolitan area; the Shire's prolific and significant natural resources such as water, agricultural land, and extractive and mining resources; together with the opportunities it provides to people from outside the Shire for recreation; Wingecarribee has an added significance to communities and stakeholders from outside of the Shire.*

*Respect for that 'positioning' must be acknowledged in future planning decision making, but that is not to say that the value of the Shire to external stakeholders has greater significance than do the values and aspirations of the local community. These will remain as the primary 'drivers'.*

## ***12. Recommendation to Amend the Statutory Shire Plan.***

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*The Council is satisfied that the current statutory Shire Plan has delivered significant and successful planning outcomes since its inception in 1990. However, the Council is committed to improving the Plan to better reflect outcomes that are now deemed essential by the community, and to incorporate current 'best practice' principles.*

*Accordingly, the Wingecarribee Our Future Strategic Plan recommends that the Council prepare an amendment to the current statutory Shire Plan (Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan 1989), that incorporates the actions generally as specified in Part 4 (ecological setting overplans) and Part 5 (precinct plans) of this Plan.*

*The Wingecarribee Our Future Strategic Plan also recommends that in the event of the Council deciding to prepare an amendment to the statutory Shire Plan (in pursuance of this Plan), that Council seek the approval of Planning NSW to utilise the Wingecarribee Our Future Strategic Plan as the primary local environmental study supporting that amendment.*

## ***13. Other Recommendations***

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*The Wingecarribee Our Future Strategic Plan also recommends that:*

- a. *Council invite formal applications to rezone land or make other amendments to the statutory Shire Plan (incorporating relevant reviews of environmental factors where identified) in accordance with Part 5 (precinct plans) of this Plan (other than in respect to the potential new residential release areas),*

- b. *Council invite formal applications to rezone land to accommodate potential new residential release areas at:*
- *East Mittagong (Renwick),*
  - *West Mittagong (Gibbergunyah),*
  - *South East Moss Vale and*
  - *West New Berrima.*
- c. *Subject to receiving such formal application and formal agreement from respective landowners to meet the cost (pro-rata) of a local environmental study, Council prepare a detailed local environmental study in respect of those potential residential release area sites.*
- d. *Council prepare a local environmental study in respect of the proposed Eco-Enterprise zone located between New Berrima and Moss Vale. (Such study should include an assessment of the economic feasibility of the proposed zone).*
- e. *Council grant consideration to resourcing and programming actions as specified in Part 6 (Summary of Non-Statutory Policies and Actions) of this Plan, as a matter of priority.*