Wingecarribee Shire Council

Community Advisory
&
Section 355 Committee
Review

FINAL
November 2021
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Contents

1.0   Executive Summary

Wingecarribee Shire Council, like all Councils across NSW has evolved an Advisory Committee / Reference Group / Working Group structure that engages local residents in strategy setting and decision making. The Committee structure is reviewed at the commencement of each newly elected Council. Since the last review in 2016, considerable change has occurred. Several groups established in 2016 have not met for several months if not years and others have an operational focus. A new Local Planning Panel has recently been established and a recent review of the Audit Review and Improvement Committee has moved it to a different level in the committee structure. The majority of the groups established in 2016 have not met since the Council was suspended in March 2021. In particular, concerns have been expressed around the operation of the volunteer 'Section 355' Committees that manage many of the local community halls across the area.

As a result, the Interim Administrator has called for a review of the current structure with a view to recommending a more contemporary means of enabling residents to contribute to Council's strategic decision making.

Whilst staff and participants on the committees acknowledge the outcomes that have been achieved by the Advisory Groups over the years, there is also level of agreement that current model is somewhat outdated and needs refreshing. Many residents expressed some frustration with Councillor involvement on the committees and there was a recurrent theme that the groups were being told what was happening, rather than being engaged in strategy development and making a real difference in the local community.

At the same time the Office of Local Government has recently refreshed its Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines placing an increased emphasis on high level 'Informing Strategies' that provide a key link between the Community Strategic Plan and the 4 - Year Delivery Program.

Together these factors provide an opportunity for Council to craft a new structure that aims to involve the community in the development of the Informing Strategies and engage Councillors in setting key strategic directions through the proposed creation 5 Strategic Reference Groups.   The review recommends that achieving the goals set by the Strategic Reference Groups should be resourced through staff, community and business led Action or Working Groups that may be focussed on time limited projects or a specific specialist subject matter.

Volunteer Community Management Committees (Section 355 Committees) have been utilised by Councils across NSW to oversee the operation of community infrastructure for decades. In recent years, partly due to some tragic accidents and some concerns about financial management, many Councils have decided to dissolve these committees and directly manage of all aspects of facility use, maintenance and renewal. This is an inevitable consequence of the need for Council's to be seen to be safely and effectively managing all aspects of risk.

The majority of the Section 355 Committees across Wingecarribee have and continue to provide a level of service that is as good as and in some instances exceeds the level of service that could be provided by a Council. However, the level of responsibility that Council places on volunteers performing this function is not sustainable.

As such, the review recommends that the move to a centralised booking system be given defined target dates and that, subsequent to this system being put in place, the staged dissolution of the Section 355 Committees commence.

1.1   Recommendations – Community Advisory Committees

It is recommended that:

1. It is recommended that the following Committees be endorsed, and participation sustained as currently constituted:
- Audit Risk and Improvement Committee
- Local Traffic Committee
- Southern Regional Planning Panel
- Local Planning Panel
- Local Emergency Management Committee
- Wingecarribee Floodplain Risk Management Committee
- Wingecarribee Community Safety Committee (re-classify as external committee)

2. It is recommended that the following groups be dissolved:
- Southern Regional Livestock Exchange (SRLX)
- Water and Sewer Advisory Committee
- Civic Centre Working Group
- Joadja Conservation Management Committee

3. The Tulip Time Festival Reference Group and Community Assistance Scheme Advisory Committee be dissolved and reconstituted as time limited working groups each year

4. An Informing Strategy be developed for the groups falling under the Community area of Council's operations

5. The following refreshed structure for Council's formalised engagement with the community be implemented:

Table 1 – The New Model

1. Community Reference Panels - Informing Strategies	
Purpose	Broad Community Involvement in shaping the key direction of Council and core business activities. Consider: • Environment • Infrastructure • Community • Sport • Economy
Structure and Membership	• 5 x Panels of between 9 - 12 community representatives • Max 2 Councillor representatives (1 to Chair) • Formal quarterly meetings • Supported and minuted by Council staff
Role	• Review existing Strategy / Develop new Strategy for each area above • Recommend how outcomes drawn from the Strategic Plan will be achieved • Review existing services, need for new services. enhancement in service levels (or decreases), projects and activities • Review resource allocation and costings • Review achievements of the strategy • Monitor performance measures

	• Establish review cycle • Recommend creation and appointment of time limited / ongoing Action / Working Groups
IAP2 Level	• Involve
Selection	Members should be selected through an expression of interest process (EOI) which is widely promoted throughout the community. Members of existing advisory bodies should be encouraged to apply and invited to submit an EOI

2. Special Purpose Panels	
Purpose	Specialist panels providing advice and input on areas required by legislation or of ongoing strategic and operational importance: • Audit Risk and Improvement Committee • Local Traffic Committee • Southern Regional Planning Panel • Local Planning Panel • Local Emergency Management Committee • Wingecarribee Floodplain Risk Management Committee • Wingecarribee Community Safety Committee •
Role	Refer to legislative requirements / state government guidelines
Structure and Membership	Refer to legislative requirements / state government guidelines

3. Action / Working Groups	
Purpose	To provide ongoing or time limited advice to Council in specialist areas (for example Disability Access and Heritage are likely to be ongoing, whereas others will be established with a focus on achieving a specific goal)
Structure and Membership	• Meeting quarterly, or as need arises • Made up of knowledge experts (academic and / or life / industry experience) drawn from local community • Chaired by community member, supported by relevant staff members • Community members should be genuinely interested in making an impact • Are action-oriented "doers" who commit to attending meetings, reviewing information / data and preparing for meetings • Have the authority and trust to represent and influence their organisations, agencies, peers, and/or neighbourhoods • Councillor involvement as an observer • Engagement may be by formal meeting or electronic means as needs demand

Role	• Action / Working Groups are responsible for the work that will drive the outcomes flowing from the Informing Strategies
	• They will aim to make a tangible / measurable difference in the community
	• They will report back on the outcomes achieved
	• Be willing and able to assist with some tasks
	    o Minute taking
	    o Planning agendas
	    o Research

IAP2 Level	Collaborate

Selection	- Consider drawing one – member from the relevant Community Reference Panel - Members should be selected through an expression of interest process (EOI) which is widely promoted throughout the community. Members of existing advisory bodies should be encouraged to apply and invited to submit an EOI

Recommendations - Section 355 Volunteer Management Committees

6. A staged plan be established to the ensure that all aspects of public hall facility management and their use by the community is a core responsibility of Council

7. Volunteer Section 355 Committees be engaged early in the transition process from volunteer to centralised council management and in understanding the need for the change

8. The past achievements of the Section 355 Committees be acknowledged and celebrated

9. The new model of facility management should seek to facilitate ongoing engagement with local volunteers and involvement in caring for facilities

10. A program be developed, with target dates, to complete the shell structures in *Bookable,* the electronic facility booking system

11. Following completion of each shell structure within *Bookable,* testing and roll of the system be commenced in 3 stages:
    a. Council reserves
    b. Council managed facilities
    c. Section 355 Committee managed facilities

12. The staged dissolution of the Section 355 Committees commences following implementation of centralised booking in each stage

13. Unspent funds in Section 355 Committee Bank Accounts be targeted at improving / upgrading the facilities where the funds were raised

2.0 Introduction

Wingecarribee Shire is located 75 kilometres from the south western fringe of Sydney and 110 kilometres from Sydney central business district. The Shire lies within the Sydney –Canberra – Melbourne transport corridor on the Southern rail line and Hume Highway. The M5 motorway provides rapid access to Campbelltown, Liverpool and other key metropolitan centres within Sydney. Wingecarribee is also referred to as the Southern Highlands due to its position on a spur of the Great Dividing Range.

Wingecarribee Shire is predominantly rural in character with agricultural lands separating towns and villages characterised by unique landscape and aesthetic appeal. Development pressures are significant and include subdivision for residential and lifestyle purposes, for infrastructure, industry and agriculture.

The Southern Highlands forms part of Gundungurra tribal lands and preservation of Aboriginal heritage is significant. European settlement dates back to the early 1800s with first contact between Aboriginal people and Europeans occurring in 1798. Settlement followed in 1821 at Bong Bong.

The Shire is rich in biodiversity with large areas of high conservation value including part of the World Heritage Greater Blue Mountains area and two declared wilderness areas.

2.1 Project Brief

In preparation for a new Council in December 2021, it is recommended that a review of Council's Committees is undertaken. The review should document and analyse Council's Committee structure and recommend a contemporary means of enabling residents to contribute to Council's strategic decision making.

This brief is requesting the following:
- Review Council's Committee structure and Committee Manual
- Review of a sample of committee agendas and minutes
- Consult with both current and past members of the Committees together with other key stakeholders to obtain their views
- Consult with internal stakeholders including technical officers and support staff to obtain their views
- Preparing a Report for consideration by the General Manager and Council.

The following committees should be considered:
- Standing Committees of Council
- S355 Committees
- Other committees supported by Council such as the Local Planning Panel and Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.

2.2 Review Process

The process for undertaking the review has included:

- Review of legislation, plans and policy
- Analysis of committee structures in other council areas
- Review of documentation relating to the adopted Advisory Committee Structure 2016 - 2021, Committee Manual, S355 Volunteer Committee Management Manual and Terms of Reference (TORs) and various reports reviews undertaken to date
- Telephone / Teams interviews with 12 key staff members supporting the committee structure
- Telephone interviews with 14 committee members drawn from a cross section of committees
- Telephone interviews with 2 Section 355 Committee Members
- Telephone / Teams interviews / meetings with 7 members of Council's executive team

2.3 Strategic Context - Legal Framework and Guidelines

Section 8A of the Local Government Act 1 1993 sets out the following guiding principles for Councils:

(2) Decision-making - The following principles apply to decision-making by councils (subject to any other applicable law)--
(a) Councils should recognise diverse local community needs and interests.
(b) Councils should consider social justice principles.
(c) Councils should consider the long term and cumulative effects of actions on future generations.
(d) Councils should consider the principles of ecologically sustainable development.
(e) Council decision-making should be transparent and decision-makers are to be accountable for decisions and omissions.
(3) Community participation, Councils should actively engage with their local communities, through the use of the integrated planning and reporting framework and other measures.

Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP & R)

The recently revised (September 2021) Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook for Local Councils in NSW outlines the role of local government and the community in planning for, and delivering services to the community:

Role of local government

IP&R allows councils to bring plans and strategies together in a way that supports a clear vision for the future and provides an agreed roadmap for delivering community priorities and aspirations. While councils lead the IP&R process, it is a journey that they undertake in close consultation with communities and elected representatives.

Once strategic objectives have been set, it is each council's responsibility to deliver and report against these objectives, undertake resource planning, and ensure the community's big picture ambitions become operational realities.
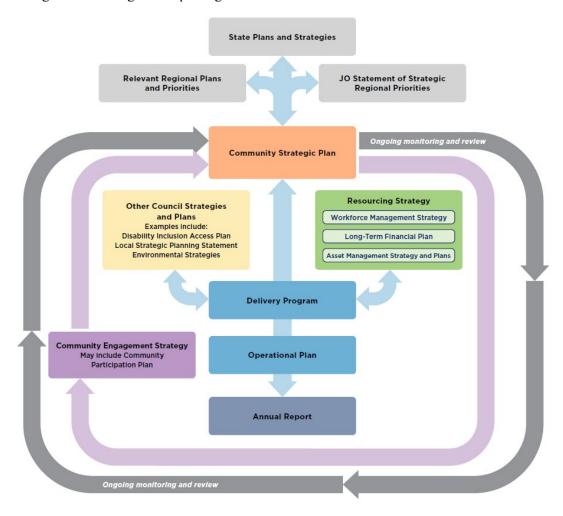
Role of Community

The community is at the heart of the IP&R framework. Engagement with the community is critical to understand the community's vision for the future and priorities to feed into key elements of the framework.

Effective community engagement results from a strong partnership between councils and their communities. The community is involved in each stage of the IP&R process, including in the development of alternative strategies, identification of preferred solutions, and prioritisation of activities.

In this way, decision making is informed through an evidence base and the representative views of the community, rather than specific interests or assumptions.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting framework is illustrated below:

The activities of Council's committees should be guided by, and align with the range of strategies, policies and plans adopted by Council. Indeed, the strategies included in the Delivery Program should seek to plan for and operationalise the broad goals of the Community Strategic Plan in tandem with the Workforce Management Strategy and Long Term Financial Plan, as illustrated above.

Appendix A2 of the IP & R handbook provides the following guidance on plans and strategies:

A2 IP&R FACT SHEET: OTHER IP&R PLANS AND STRATEGIES

The IP&R framework provides for supporting strategies and plans as a way of providing more specific and detailed guidance on strategic direction and, in some cases, actions.

Plans or strategies of this type are referred to collectively as 'informing strategies' and sit between the Community Strategic Plan and the Delivery Program under the IP&R framework. Examples include:
- Mandatory plans and strategies required under other legislations, such as:

- Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Local Environmental Plan
- Local Strategic Planning Statement – Community Participation Plan
- Community Safety Plan
- Coastal Management Plan.
- Best practice plans and strategies developed by council, such as:
  - Information Communication Technology (ICT) Plan or Strategy
  - Recreation Strategy
  - Tourism Strategy
  - Economic Development Strategy
  - Arts and Culture Plan.

Generally, supporting plans and strategies are issue or area specific and fall into one of two types:

1. Higher level guiding strategies which articulate aspirations and strategic intent.
2. More detailed plans that contain specific priorities about new or enhanced service levels, projects or activities.

Either way, they should show how they link to the Community Strategic Plan, including as relevant the identified priorities.

If they contain specific priorities regarding new or enhanced services, projects or activities then the plan is to be fed into the next Strategic review. It is important to avoid creating issue or area specific plans or strategies with unfunded commitments.

New expenditure should be incorporated into the delivery program, resourcing strategy and operational plan to determine where the line gets drawn in the list of priorities, relative to business as usual.

Commitments made to services, projects and activities that are part of regional or state strategies which require council time, staff or money, e.g. a regional conservation plan, also need to be considered as part of the process and included in the documents.

In order to feed into the corporate planning cycle, it is useful to schedule council's issue and area specific plans in the delivery program so they are timed to fit in to the 4-year review cycle.

2.4   Why Engage?

Community engagement is a fundamental component of the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework.

Advisory Committees historically have been a key component of almost all Councils' operations across NSW. However, the structure, number and type of Committees convened or attended by council staff and Councillors varies widely across the industry, each area implementing structures that reflect the needs and aspirations of their communities.

The Community Strategic Plan

The importance of the Community Strategic Plan and Community Engagement is highlighted in Section 402 of the Local Government Act 1993 which states (in part):
Section 402 - Community Strategic Plan
(1) Each local government area must have a community strategic plan that has been developed and endorsed by the council. A community strategic plan is a plan that identifies the main priorities and aspirations for the future of the local government area covering a period of at least 10 years from when the plan is endorsed.
(3) The council must ensure that the community strategic plan--

(a)   addresses civic leadership, social, environmental and economic issues in an integrated manner, and

(b)   is based on social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights,   and

(c)   is adequately informed by relevant information relating to civic leadership, social, environmental and economic issues, and

*(4)   The council must establish and implement a strategy (its **"community engagement strategy"**), based on social justice principles, for engagement with the local community when developing the community strategic plan.*

Committee structures in large Metropolitan Councils frequently include a number of standing committees, often based around the professional disciplines (Finance, Engineering, Planning and Community), usually comprising 2 – 3 Councillors. These Standing Committees would receive reports by Council staff and minutes and recommendations from an array of Advisory Committees. The Advisory Committees would meet on a regular basis and would usually be chaired by a councillor and possibly also include 1 -2 additional Councillors. Each committee would be supported by Governance staff taking minutes and the relevant professional staff.

Many smaller metropolitan and regional councils frequently implement a model where Advisory Committees report directly to Council without the need for formal standing committees. Wingecarribee Shire Council does not utilise a Standing Committee approach with all recommendations from the Advisory Committees being considered directly by Council

Over the years, the number of Wingecarribee Shire Council's Advisory Committees has increased, resulting in some concerns about the organisation's capacity to resource them. There has also been some concern that the focus of some Committees' and the agendas could be more clearly linked to achieving the goals highlighted in the Community Strategic Plan. The Office of Local Government has recently updated its Integrated and Planning Reporting guidelines (September 2021 – see above) to strengthen the link between engagement activities and achieving the goals of the Community Strategic Plan.

As a result of the above concerns, several Councils have sought to restructure their committees.

2.5   New / Alternative Committee Models

Cumberland Council

Following amalgamation in 2016 Cumberland Council engaged Elton Consulting to undertake a review its Committees and Interagency Networks. Key findings from this study were:
- A consistent approach to community engagement is needed across council
- New models and tools are needed to increase diversity in the people engaged
- Alignment with strategic planning needs to be improved
- The existing committee and network model is not sustainable in the medium to long term
- Management and maintenance of parks and facilities needs to be undertaken by Council staff and contractors
- Pecuniary conflicts of interest need to be declared by committee members
- There was a lack of oversight of Section 355 Committees
- There were significant concerns with governance and financial management of Section 355 Committees

The recommended new structure for the engagement was as follows:
- 4 Grouping established
  - Community Strategic Panels
  - Specialist Committees and Panels

- Project Reference Groups
- Community and Interagency Networks

Subsequent to the report's adoption all Section 355 Committees were dissolved. Cumberland Council now has a centralised online booking system for venues and facilities.

Northern Beaches Council

The Northern Beaches Council has established six Strategic Reference Groups. Strategic Reference Groups help shape future directions and support the Community Strategic Plan's goals:

- Community and Belonging
- Economic & Smart Communities
- Environment
- Partnership and Participation
- Places for People
- Transport and Travel

The council maintains 11 Advisory Committees including several statutory committees.

Council has a centralised community centre / facility booking system and does not utilise volunteer committees (Section 355 Committees) to undertake this function.

Ku-ring-gai Council

Ku-ring-gai Council maintains 2 'Reference Committees' in addition to its statutory committees:
- Ku-ring-gai Traffic Committee
- Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.
- Flood Risk Management Committee.
- Heritage Reference Committee
- Marian Street Theatre Community Reference Committee.

Ku-Ring-Gai Council defines the objectives of its Reference Committees as follows:

Advisory / reference committees are established by Ku-ring-gai Council to:
- Harness the views and expertise of the wider community
- Assist council in its understanding of, and approach to, specific or localised issues, initiatives or community assets
- Provide a structured approach to the ongoing involvement of community members in council affairs and the democratic process

Council has a centralised community centre / facility booking system and does not utilise volunteer committees (Section 355 Committees) to undertake this function.

Armidale Regional Council

Armidale Regional Council undertook a review of its committees in 2020. The recommended revised structure was as follows

Table 2 Armidale Regional Council – Proposed Committee Structure

1. Community Strategic Panels	
Purpose	Broad Community Involvement in shaping the social cultural and economic life of the Armidale Region

Structure and Membership	2 X Panels of approximately 20 people meeting immediately after the next election, open to residents from Armidale, Guyra and the villages, together with business / community / cultural / recreation groups
	Members should be selected through an expression of interest process (EOI) which is widely promoted throughout the community. Members of existing community panels and previous advisory committees should be encouraged to apply and invited to submit an EOI
2. Partnership Panels	
Purpose	Panels providing advice and input on areas required by legislation or of ongoing strategic and operational importance
Structure and Membership	Partnership Panels covering region: • Partnership Panel – Economic Development & Tourism • Partnership Panel – Environment • Partnership Panel – Sports • Partnership Panel – Arts, Culture & Heritage • Specialist Partnership Panel – Aboriginal Community • Specialist Partnership Panel – Access and Inclusion • Specialist Partnership Panel – Youth The roles, membership and meeting structure of each panel should be clearly set out in a charter adopted by ARC at the beginning of each Council term, and published on ARC's Website. On formation, the Panels should identify 3 agreed SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) priorities to focus the wok of the group in the first 12 months. 9 X Local Village Advisory Panels Membership should be drawn from the local villages. The charter and membership of the panels should be published on ARC's website

Armidale Regional Council maintained only one Section 355 Committee, the Sport Council, which levied a fee on behalf of Council.

Whilst acknowledging the significant issues experienced with the current Advisory Committee system at Armidale, the structure proposed above was not adopted by the Council following its return from suspension.

2.6   Surrounding / Comparatively Sized Councils

For broad comparison purposes, the following table provides an indication of the number of committees convened by similar sized and / or nearby Councils.

Table 3: Comparative Council Committee Structures

Council	Popl'n	Standing	Statutory	Advisory	Section 355	Other*
Wingecarribee	51,760	1	4	12	18	10
Goulburn-Mulwaree	31,554	0	1	5	N/A	10

Queanbeyan-Palerang	62,239	1	7	14	20	37
Wollondilly	54,005	1	4	13	4	1
Wagga Wagga	65,770	0	4	15	N/A	14
Cessnock	61,256	0	3	6	N/A	N/A

*Other – Comprises: External Groups, Reference Groups, Organisational Committees and User/Working Groups

It is clear from this table that there is little consistency in how differing Councils define and record their committee / engagement structures. Overall Wingecarribee is broadly comparable (mid table) with other Councils in the region in terms of the number of groups convened / attended.

3. Committees - The Wingecarribee Experience

3.1 Community Engagement Strategy

Council's engagement activities are broadly aligned with the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) framework shown below. The IAP2 framework provides for a 5-step ladder of engagement:

Table 4: Ladder of Participation – IAP2

	1. Inform	2. Consult	3. Involve	4. Collaborate	5. Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Source: International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)

Many Councils use this framework and it is referred to in the recently released Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook published by the Office of Local Government.

Selecting the tools used in any community engagement process is linked to level of engagement sought. The NSW Office of Local Government suggests that Council should aim to achieve Level 3 (Involve) in new Community Strategic Planning processes, and level 4 (Collaborate) with structures established for ongoing engagement.

Wingecarribee Shire Council's Community Engagement Strategy highlights numerous techniques that may be used by Council to engage with residents. Committees and working groups are listed as just one of 17 engagement tools that may be used depending on a range factors. In order to build relationships with key audiences and improve the consistency of communication the Strategy proposes that Council pursues four objectives. These are:

- Manage a proactive program of community engagement, ensuring all sectors of the community are included
- Ensure engagement at an appropriate level is built into all key projects and decisions
- Ensure Council staff have the tools they need for effective communication
- Strengthen Council's partnership with the community through effective engagement

3.2   Adopted Committee Structure 2016 – 2021

The following table outlines Wingecarribee Shire Council's adopted 2016 – 2021 Committee Structure:

Table 5: 2016 – 2021 Adopted Committee Structure

Name	Purpose
Advisory Committees	
Arts and Culture	Oversees the implementation of Council's Arts and Culture Strategic Plan
Community Assistance Scheme	Oversee the allocation of Council grants and donations under the Community Assistance Scheme
Community Development	Facilitate communication and support the implementation of sector strategies.
Demographics and Housing	Assist and advise on accommodating demand for housing in the Shire over the next 20 years
Economic Development and Tourism (no longer active)	Serve as a conduit between Council and the community in relation to information and initiatives related to Tourism and Economic Development
Environment and Sustainability	To consider and advise on environmental and sustainability issues as they relate to the Shire with a major focus on the Environment Levy Program
General Manager's Performance Review Committee (not functioning until a General Manager is appointed)	To review the General Manager's performance on a six (6) monthly basis (interim) and 12 monthly basis (final) and report back and provide advice to Council following the review, with an independent facilitator
Heritage Advisory Committee	To promote and raise the community's awareness of heritage. To provide advice to Council as required on the management of heritage within the Shire. To support the development, promotion and implementation of heritage activities and events
Local Emergency Management	The Local Emergency Management Committee is responsible for the preparation and review of plans in relation to the prevention of, preparation for, response to and recovery from emergencies in the local government area for which it is constituted
Local Traffic Committee	Enable Council to meet its responsibilities to the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) as part of the powers delegated to Councils by the RMS under the Transport Administration Act 1988 and in accordance with the "Guide to the delegation to councils for the regulation of traffic".
Audit, Risk and Improvement	To provide independent assurance and assistance to Council on risk management, control, governance, performance and external accountability responsibilities
Southern Regional Livestock Exchange (no longer active)	Review and advise on policy, strategy and performance of Council's Southern Regional Livestock Exchange
Sport and Recreation Committee	To advise the direction and strategies Council pursues for the use of sporting and recreational facilities.
Water and Sewer	Provide a forum for collaboration with external agencies on strategic water and sewer planning and delivery
Wingecarribee Floodplain Risk Management	Oversee the implementation of floodplain management activities in the Shire

	Preparation and review of Floodplain Risk Management Plans for the Shire Implementation of Risk Management Plans in relation to Floodplain Management.
Community Reference Groups	
Access	Oversee the development and implementation of Council's Disability Inclusion Access Plan – reports to Community Development Committee
Joadja Conservation Management (Not met for 2 years)	To assist the owner or proprietor of 1760 Joadja Road, Joadja (Lot 11 DP 858859), also referred to as the Joadja Heritage Site, in conserving the heritage items on the site- reports to Heritage Committee
Seniors	To oversee the implementation of Council's Positive Ageing Strategy- reports to Community Development Committee
Tulip Time Festival	To plan and promote a successful Tulip Time Festival that engages the community, increases visitation and showcases the region- reports to the Economic Development and Tourism Committee
Sunset Working Groups	
Civic Centre Refurbishment (internal workgroup) (no longer active)	Internal working group to oversee the refurbishment of Council's Civic Centre.
Youth Strategy and Action Plan (Not currently meeting)	Project specific working group - reports to Community Development Committee
External Committees	
Illawarra Academy of Sport Board of Directors	The Illawarra Academy of Sport is a not- for-profit sporting organisation that exists to provide localised training and education opportunities for talented young athletes, coaches and administrators across the Illawarra region
Southern Joint Regional Planning Panel	Joint regional planning panels provide independent, merit-based decision making on regionally significant development. Applications for regionally significant development are notified and assessed by a local council professional staff and then determined by the relevant regional panel
Southern Highlands Community Transport	Maintain a partnership between Wingecarribee Shire Council and Southern Highlands Community Transport Inc
Wingecarribee Community Safety	Maintain a partnership between Wingecarribee Shire Council, Hume Local Area Command and community members in addressing local crime prevention, community safety and well-being issues. To monitor and create Community Safety initiatives for the Wingecarribee Community. To identify real and potential community safety problems.

3.3 Committee Alignment with the Community Strategic Plan

A clear goal of the Integrated Planning and Reporting is that all Council's operations align with and work toward achieving the community's long-term vision outlined in the Community Strategic Plan. This goal is facilitated through the adoption of a number of *Informing Strategies* and / or various high-level plans and policies.

Our Community Vision in 2031 we will be…..
A healthy and productive community living in harmony, proud of our heritage and nurturing our environment

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is divided in to 5 key themes each with their own goals: Leadership. People, Places, Environment and Economy

The following table allocates the existing Committees to the key theme areas of the Community Strategic Plan on a 'best fit' basis. Several committees incorporate themes across the key theme areas – The Community Safety, Arts and Culture Committees and Planning Panels matters from across this framework.

Table 6: Strategic Alignment of Committees to the Community Strategic Plan

Leadership	People	Places	Environment	Economy
Finance	Arts and Culture	Demographics and Housing	Environment and Sustainability	Economic Development and Tourism
Audit Risk and Improvement Committee	Community Assistance Scheme	Heritage Advisory Committee	Water and Sewer	Southern Regional Livestock Exchange
Emergency Management Committee	Community Development	Joadja Conservation Management	Southern Regional Planning Panel	Tulip Time
	Sport and Recreation	Local Traffic Committee	Local Planning Panel Local	
	Access		Wingecarribee Floodplain Risk Management Committee	
	Seniors			
	Youth Strategy and Action Plan			
	Illawarra Academy of Sport Board of Directors			
	Southern Highlands Community Transport			
	Wingecarribee Community Safety			

The above table illustrates a strong committee focus on the People area of the Community Strategic Plan.

3.4   Wingecarribee 2040 Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)

The Wingecarribee Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) sets out the 20-year land use vision for the Shire.   It then provides a long-term planning framework to meet the economic, housing, social and environmental needs of the community.

The LSPS builds on the community priorities outlined in the Community Strategic Plan and Local Planning Strategy to outline how the Shire will continue to evolve in a way that protects local character, natural areas and rural landscapes in accordance with community expectations. It identifies the special characteristics that contribute to Wingecarribee's local identity and recognises the shared community values to be maintained and enhanced.

The LSPS outlines six (6) key land use themes including the environment and sustainability, rural lands, economy, housing, infrastructure and place. Each land use theme includes a set of planning priorities and actions aimed at achieving the community vision for Wingecarribee.

The LSPS takes into account the State and Regional planning framework and will also inform future infrastructure planning and investment decisions by Council, State Government agencies and service providers.

The LSPS contains some 144 Actions divided between the land use themes:

Table 7: LSPS – Land Use Themes and Actions

Land Use Theme	Actions	Land Use Theme	Actions
Environment	50	Rural Lands	12
Economy	14	Housing	32
Infrastructure	13	Places	23

In addition to the above actions, the LSPS identifies a range of opportunities in each of the villages within the Shire:
- Bowral
- Moss Vale
- Berrima
- Bundanoon and the Southern Village
- Colo Vale and the Northern Villages
- Robertson and the Eastern Villages

4.0 Feedback from Engagement with Staff and Committee Members

The Review specifications required:

- Consult with both current and past members of the Committees together with other key stakeholders to obtain their views
- Consult with internal stakeholders including technical officers and support staff to obtain their views

A number of common themes emerged in *Teams* and telephone interviews:

What worked well:

- Many groups did bring diverse people together
- Networking aspect of the groups was very useful
- Sport and Recreation groups was able to assist in assist in asset planning
- Brought diverse sporting groups / associations together to understand differing priorities
- Enabled some input into Community Strategic Plan
- Assisted in delivering state government priorities
- The Statutory / State Government groups on the whole had a very clear understanding of their purpose
- Arts Committee is quite successful – set up an independent stakeholder group working on key priorities
- Local presence enables quick response (S355 Committees)
- Facilitated access to regional contacts, which was very useful
- Could always express an opinion and input was valued. Nothing pre-decided (sport)

What didn't work:

- The Advisory Committees were very structured and conducted more like a formal Council meeting (Standing Committee) – 'we were informed what Council was doing, rather than engaged in a conversation and giving advice', 'lots of presentations but not much engagement'
- 'Need to move to consultative groups not groups being told'
- Limited commitment from Senior staff – never saw GM
- Need to rename and rebrand the Advisory Committees as Action Committees to get them achieving things
- The capacity to be actively involved in advising strategic direction was limited
- Several committee members thought that the groups had lost direction in recent years
- Little or no feedback when minutes of meetings were presented to Council – Minutes appeared to be placed at the end of the Council agenda with no clear indication that they were read
- Some Committees had not met for several months or even years (Joadja Conservation Management, Economic Development and Tourism)
- Committee didn't have a clear purpose and focus
- Terms of Reference essentially set out the structure of the Committee rather than its scope and direction
- Committee lost its way and started focussing on very specific issue (eg an individual parking space - Access)
- Committee became bogged down (individual DAs – Heritage)
- Need some budget provision so we can do things
- 'Just a rubber stamp'
- Quarterly meetings are too spaced to deal with pressing issues – need better / alternative and more innovative ways to respond to issues rather than scheduled quarterly meetings

- No real projects and nothing seemed to progress
- Ideas were presented but the executive's role seemed to be to quash them

Councillor Involvement

- The quality of the chairing of the committees by Councillors was very variable. Some Councillors were very efficient, but gave little space for feedback, others dominated the meetings, sometimes with their own agendas
- 3 Councillors attending committees was too much (although in the majority of cases only the chair would attend
- Councillors were not thought to add much value to the meetings overall
- Councillors only there to beat their chest
- Councillors should not be chairs

Links to Community Strategic Plan and Strategies

- Mixed recognition of links to Community Strategic Plan
- Overall strategy that is supposed to provide the direction to the committee is very vague and not linked to outcomes (eg Disability Inclusion Action Plan)
- Themes are included in the CSP but this does not seem to translate to the DP and OP (Heritage)

Opportunities & New Ideas

- Committees should be future focussed and provide ideas on suggesting solutions to key challenges, prioritising them and recommending the resourcing of key strategies
- Look at new models of engagement – short term deliberative panels informed by experts, use of social media to expedite communication, and reach out to new participants
- We need to empower people with the commitment to be on committees / working groups to also be the people to communicate messages more broadly through their own networks and bring back even more ideas to these groups
- Need new and better ways of reporting back and providing information to groups – use new technology, eg Share Portals
- Climate Panel used One Note to share ideas quickly
- Need to 'sell outcomes' to broader community
- Improve reporting on, and recognition of achievements – develop easy to read dashboards

Executive Team Feedback

- Need to be mindful of staff resources tied up preparing for committees and attending numerous meetings
- Volunteers on S355 committees are essentially Council staff and need to comply with the same requirements – code of conduct, financial management, declaring pecuniary interests etc. Not doing so could expose the volunteers, staff and users of facilities to considerable risk
- Reduce the capacity for groups to be reactive and maintain focus from achieving strategic directions
- Groups should not work in isolation – cross fertilisation of ideas, empower groups to feel they are part of, and contributing to a broader network
- Framework must be aligned to Integrated Planning and Reporting
- Aim to align ongoing committees with relevant steps on IAP2 framework
- Look at new models of engagement other councils are utilising – Briefing sessions, use of experts and specialists to analyse longitudinal data to make informed decision based on science
- Link decisions to budget allocations and responses
- Need to increase diversity of people engaged

- Beyond statutory groups, create a small number of manageable (comprising around 9 members) reference groups with a focus on high level strategies
- Resource reference groups with time limited panels with a focus on prioritising and operationalising strategies
- Create Action Teams / Working Groups
- Bring industry representation on to groups
- 1 – 2 Councillors on panels as a maximum
- Must have action orientation – engage people with resources who can have carriage of recommendations

5.   Mandated Committees

Statutory / Committees Covered by NSW Government Guidelines

Council convenes and participates in a number of Committees that are required by legislation; whist others are constituted under guidelines issued by various government departments. These committees tend to be mandated due to the differing roles and responsibilities of the layers of government, response agencies and other stakeholders. In addition, these groups can provide access to significant funding streams which may only made available for projects subject to these groups recommending their approval. Many of these groups are made up of technical experts who are directly involved in the planning and delivery of the services and infrastructure. Some, but not all, also involve local community representation.

Legislation or government guidelines specifically prescribe many of the roles and responsibilities of committee members and their membership.

These committees are described below:

Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee

Section 428A of the Local Government Act requires councils to establish an Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee to continuously review and provide independent advice to the general manager and the governing body of council about:

- whether the council is complying with all necessary legislation
- the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's risk management framework, fraud and corruption prevention activities, financial management processes, and the council's financial position and performance
- the council's governance arrangements
- the achievement of the goals set out in the council's community strategic plan, delivery program, operational plan and other strategies
- how the council delivers local services and how to improve the council's performance of its functions more generally
- the collection of performance measurement data by the council, and
- any other matters prescribed by the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* (i.e. internal audit).

In September 2019 the NSW Office of Local Government issued a *'Snapshot Guide to A New Risk Management and Internal Audit Framework for local councils in NSW.'* The guide provides a 'snapshot' of the mandatory internal audit and risk management framework that is being proposed for NSW councils.

In May 2021 a review of Wingecarribee Shire Council's Governance, Human Resources and Statutory Reporting was undertaken by an external expert. This review considered the operation of the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee and made the following findings:

At its meeting held on 21 April, 2021 Council resolved to dissolve the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) in place as at that date. An updated ARIC Charter was adopted at the same meeting and Council also resolved to call for suitably qualified individuals to nominate as independent external committee members for the ARIC moving forward.

The steps taken by Council are a positive step to refreshing and modernising this important oversight committee. A review of the adopted ARIC Terms of Reference (TOR) show that they are largely in line

with the expected arrangements from the soon to be released requirements from the OLG in relation to Risk Management and Internal Audit Frameworks. However, it should be noted that the recently adopted TORs will need to be reconsidered by Council when the OLG releases the Model Terms of Reference for Audit Risk and Improvement Committees in the near future.

Local Traffic Committee

The LTC is established to assist council implement functions that have been delegated to council under the *Transport Administration Act 1998*. The role of the LTC is to advise council on the use of its delegated powers under the *Roads Act 1993*. However, the LTC is not a committee within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1993. The membership and the roles and responsibilities of members are prescribed by *A Guide to the Delegation to Councils for the Regulation of Traffic (including the operation of Traffic Committees)* issued by the Roads and traffic Authority.

The guide states: The role of the LTC is to consider the technical aspects of any proposal and make a recommendation to the Council. The merits of any scheme, from a public perspective, is the responsibility of the Council and thus residents' views should be taken into account by the Council rather than the LTC.

However, there is nothing preventing the LTC members from agreeing to allow residents, or other interested stakeholders, to address the committee, if it so chooses. The LTC members may agree to limit the number of public presenters on any particular item and/or place time limits on them. Any such constraints are to be conveyed to the presenters at the time they are notified of the LTC's agreement for them to address the committee.

No further consideration of this Committee is made in this review.

Southern Region Planning Panel – SRPP (Originally known as the Southern Joint Regional Planning Panel)

Membership of Regional Planning Panels is prescribed in the Sydney District and Regional Planning Panels operational procedures document (August 2020) issued by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE).

https://shared-drupal-s3fs.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/master-test/fapub_pdf/000/00/Sydney%2BDistrict%2Band%2BRegional%2BPlanning%2BPanels%2BOperational%2BProcedures%2BAugust%2B2020.pdf

Two council members are appointed by each council. At least one council member must have expertise in one or more of the following areas: planning, architecture, heritage, the environment, urban design, land economics, traffic and transport, law, engineering or tourism.

The SRPP brings together a group of experts appointed by the State Government and Council to determine regionally significant Development Applications (DAs) or provide advice about planning proposals.

The SRPP makes decisions about DAs in an open forum without political or other interference.

Local Planning Panel

The establishment of the Local Planning Panel was the subject of a report to Council on 24 March 2021. Local Planning Panels are convened in accordance with the framework established under Part 2,

Division 2.5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 and administered through the Department of Planning Industry and Environment.

Local Planning Panels (LPP), formerly known as Independent Hearing and Assessment Panels or IHAPS, are panels of independent experts that determine development applications on behalf of Council and provide advice on other planning matters, including planning proposals.

Under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, Local Planning Panels are currently mandatory for all Sydney councils, Wollongong City Council and Central Coast Council. Other NSW Regional and Rural Councils such as Wingecarribee Shire Council are not mandated through legislation to have a LPP in place. Notwithstanding, Councils which are not mandated may seek to constitute a Local Planning Panel in its Local Government Area under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

Panels are put in place so the process of assessment and determination of development applications (DAs) with a high corruption risk, sensitivity or strategic importance is transparent and accountable and to provide an independent forum for stakeholders (applicants, the community and objectors) to present and discuss issues relating to development applications, planning proposals and other planning related matters such as development control plans.

The Panel has met on several occasions since its establishment in March and is reported to be functioning well and fulfilling its objectives.

Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC)

The LEMC is a committee required by the State Emergency & Rescue Management (SERM) Act 1989. Section 28 of the Act states:

28   Local Emergency Management Committees
(1)   There is established by this Act a Local Emergency Management Committee for each local government area.
(2)   Each such Committee is to consist of:
> *(a)   the General Manager of the council of the relevant local government area, who is to be the Chairperson of the Committee, and*
> *(b)   a senior representative of each emergency services organisation operating in the relevant local government area, and*
> *(c)   a representative of each organisation that:*
>> *(i)   provides services in a functional area or areas in the relevant local government area, and*
>> *(ii)   the council of that area determines from time to time is to be represented on the Committee, and*
> *(d)   the Local Emergency Operations Controller for the relevant local government area.*

Section 29 of the Act specifies the functions of Local Emergency Management Committees.

Section 32 of the Act requires:

32   Councils to provide executive support for the Local Emergency Management Committee and its Operations Controller
> *(1)   A council is to provide executive support facilities for the Local Emergency Management Committee and the Local Emergency Operations Controller in its area.*

The LEMC should not be classified as an advisory committee of Council. Whilst it is chaired by the GM (or his / her delegate), it does not involve Councillor participation. Council is, however, a key stakeholder and response agency in emergency management protocols.

Floodplain Risk Management Committee

The Floodplain Risk Management Committee meets as required to consider, review and endorse draft catchment study reports which are then presented to Council. These studies then come together to form the Floodplain Risk Management Plan.

Floodplain Risk Management Committees are not mandated. However, it would be unlikely that submissions for project funding related to the implementation of recommendations from floodplain management studies would be successful without this group endorsing and recommending them. These projects are frequently substantial in size and scale and grants from the NSW State Government are usually awarded based on $2 to every $1 contributed by Council.

The committee is constituted under guidelines contained in a manual issued by the State Government https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Water/Floodplains/floodplain-development-manual.pdf

Appendix D of this document prescribes the role of the committee, its membership and the role of each of its members, including Councillors, Council staff, Environmental Groups, the SES, the DIPNR representative, Industry bodies and local community representatives.

Wingecarribee Community Safety Committee

The Community Safety Committee should be re-classified as an external committee as it is convened by the Local Area Police Command. The Mayor is one of the key stakeholders identified in guidelines outlining the roles and responsibilities of participants. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a key strategy used to reduce opportunities for crime by, for example, designing public spaces with a view to increasing public perceptions of surveillance and reducing opportunities for concealment. The placement and design of key infrastructure such as transport interchanges and taxi ranks can all have a significant impact on the level of crime in an area.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the following Committees be endorsed and participation sustained as currently constituted:
- Audit Risk and Improvement Committee
- Local Traffic Committee
- Southern Regional Planning Panel
- Local Planning Panel
- Local Emergency Management Committee
- Wingecarribee Floodplain Risk Management Committee
- Wingecarribee Community Safety Committee (re-classify as external committee)

6. Committees not meeting for over 12 months

A small number of committees / reference groups have not met for many months, even years and it is recommended that these groups not be re-constituted:

Southern Regional Livestock Exchange (SRLX)

The SRLX (Saleyards) is a business arm of Wingecarribee Shire Council. In 2019 the Advisory Committee (Chaired by the Deputy General Manger) voted to disband itself feeling it was no longer needed. Likewise, the Saleyard Community Consultative Committee was also dissolved due to a lack of interest from the community (only one member attending). The Agents' meetings were also disbanded, although meetings continue to be held occasionally with the agents, as required.

Water and Sewer Advisory Committee
This is a forum for professional staff from council and external agencies to coordinate strategic water and sewer planning delivery. Strategic projects are presented to Council when they arise, however, it is considered that there is no need for Councillor or community involvement in the regular quarterly meetings of professional staff from differing levels of government.

Civic Centre Working Group

This group has not met for several years and is considered no longer necessary.

Joadja Conservation Management Committee

This Committee has not met in two years. It is a committee of 5 people, two being the owners of site. Its purpose is to advise the owners on heritage issues and allocate funds held by Council through the imposition of the caveats under the terms of the Joadja Heritage Site Deed. In essence this is simply a working group of the broader Heritage Committee. It is understood that Council still holds some funds that need to be directed at works in the Joadja Conservation Area. Given that this committee has not met in two years investigations should be undertaken with a view to sunsetting this group.

An additional two groups have not met for a number of years. These groups will likely require further consideration subject to the proposed new advisory committee structure outlined below being established. These are:

- Youth Strategy and Action Plan
- Economic Development and Tourism

The 2016 – 2021 Committee Structure has numerous groups providing advice on social 'target' or 'sector' based matters (seniors, people with disabilities, arts and culture, sport). There is a need to develop an 'Informing Strategy' for this area to guide the need for which Working / Action groups will drive outcomes.

A revised Economic Development and Tourism Strategy has recently been adopted and it is likely that Working / Action group involving business and tourism operators will be essential partners in driving its outcomes.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the following groups be dissolved:

- Southern Regional Livestock Exchange (SRLX)
- Water and Sewer Advisory Committee
- Civic Centre Working Group
- Joadja Conservation Management Committee

7.   Operational Committees

There are 2 Advisory Committees in the 2016 -2021 Structure that come together once each year for a specific purpose:
- Tulip Time Festival
- Community Assistance Program

These are essentially short-term working groups with a specific focus – organising the Tulip Time Festival and recommending the allocation of funds under the Community Assistance Scheme. These are operational matters (organising a long-established event and making grant recommendations in accordance with adopted guidelines). Neither require Councillor involvement.

In other levels of government, grant allocations have become extremely controversial in recent years, and it is in the best interest of Councillors that any amendments to recommended grant allocations be made in an open Council meeting.

It is recommended that:

- The Tulip Time Festival Reference Group and Community Assistance Scheme Advisory Committee be dissolved and reconstituted as time limited working groups each year

8. External Committees

The 2016 – 2021 Committee structure provides for participation on 2 external committees (the Southern Joint Regional Planning Panel and the Community Safety Committee are classified in other area listed above):

- Southern Highlands Community Transport
- Illawarra Academy of Sport Board of Directors

Council involvement on / with regional initiatives is desirable and both the above committees do deal with matters of direct relevance to the Wingecarribee Community. The ageing of the community is the biggest single demographic change impacting the region and hence transport for frail aged residents is critical to them maintaining social connections and remaining heathy and able to continue to reside at home. Sporting infrastructure is also a big factor in Council's operations.

However, participation on these groups is not critical and should be assessed only after key commitments to a new structure are finalised.

The remaining 11 Committees can be categorised as follows:

Table 8: Committees Aligned to Strategic Plan

Leadership	People	Places	Environment	Economy
Finance	Arts and Culture	Demographics and Housing	Environment and Sustainability	Economic Development and Tourism (Not met for some time)
	Community Development	Heritage Advisory Committee		
	Sport and Recreation			
	Access			
	Seniors			
	Youth Strategy and Action Plan (not met for some time)			

Over half of these Committees fall under the people area of the Community Strategic Plan. There is currently no overarching strategy directing Council in the Community / People area. This needs to be addressed.

It is recommended that:

4. An Informing Strategy be developed for the groups falling under the Community area of Council's operations

9.0 A New Approach – Strategies, Actions & Outcomes

The need for change in the current Advisory Committee structure is illustrated by the general agreement across community representatives, staff members supporting the committees and the Senior Executive at Council that the current structure of Advisory Committees is not working to its full potential.

Reference was also made by several interviewees for the need to embrace new technology and new techniques that would increase outreach to a broader audience and accelerate the speed of feedback on key issues.

The Office of Local Government in its Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook clearly sees the need for Councils as a whole to take new approaches to engagement on high level strategies. The Integrated and Reporting Handbook has formalised a new level to its framework stating that:

'Informing strategies' sit between the Community Strategic Plan and the Delivery Program under the IP&R framework and that preparation of these plans and strategies often involves considerable stakeholder and community input.

The Handbook provides best practice examples of engagement, and a self-assessment check list asks the following questions with reference to the Informing Strategies and issue specific strategies and plan:

- Did the engagement attempt to obtain broader, more representative input or just involve the usual voices?
- Can the community clearly see what they can and cannot influence and how their input will inform decision making?
- Is there capacity for ongoing, collaborative engagement methods such as establishing consultative committees or a special community taskforce?
- Are your engagement techniques effective and appropriate for the topic and audience?
- Is your engagement genuine or tokenistic?
- Do the demographics of engagement participants reflect that of the broader community?

9.1 A Proposed New Framework

The following proposed framework endeavours to address the following principles:
- Framework must be aligned to Integrated Planning and Reporting
- Aim to align ongoing committees with relevant steps on IAP2 framework
- Focus Councillor involvement at the strategic level
- Create a small number of manageable (around 9 members) Reference Groups with a focus high level strategy
- Link decisions to budget allocations and responses
- Resource the reference groups with time limited panels that focus on prioritising and operationalising strategies
- Encourage diversity in people engaged
- Create Action Teams / Working Groups of stakeholders with a time limited focus on specific outcomes
- Look at new models of engagement – Briefing sessions, use of experts and specialists to analyse longitudinal data to enable informed decisions based on science
- Explore greater use of the existing Your Say platform for engagement on strategic objectives
- Explore greater use of alternative social media platforms for engagement

It is recommended that:

- The following new model of structured engagement be introduced:

Table 9 – The New Model

1 Community Reference Panels - Informing Strategies	
Purpose	Broad Community Involvement in shaping the key direction of Council and core business activities. Consider: • Environment • Infrastructure • Community • Sport • Economy
Structure and Membership	• 5 x Panels of between 9 - 12 community representatives • Max 2 Councillor representatives (1 to Chair) • Formal quarterly meetings • Supported and minuted by Council staff
Role	• Review existing strategy / Develop new strategy for each area above • Recommend how outcomes drawn from the Strategic Plan will be achieved • Review existing services, need for new services. enhancement in service levels (or decreases), projects and activities • Review resource allocation and costings • Review achievements of the strategy o Monitor performance measures • Establish review cycle • Recommend creation and appointment of time limited / ongoing Action / Working Groups
IAP2 Level	• Involve
Selection	Members should be selected through an expression of interest process (EOI) which is widely promoted throughout the community. Members of existing advisory bodies should be encouraged to apply and invited to submit an EOI
2 Special Purpose Panels	
Purpose	Specialist panels providing advice and input on areas required by legislation or of ongoing strategic and operational importance: • Audit Risk and Improvement Committee • Local Traffic Committee • Southern Regional Planning Panel • Local Planning Panel • Local Emergency Management Committee • Wingecarribee Floodplain Risk Management Committee • Wingecarribee Community Safety Committee
Role	Refer to legislative requirements / state government guidelines
Structure and Membership	Refer to legislative requirements / state government guidelines
3 Action / Working Groups	
Purpose	To provide ongoing or time limited advice to Council in specialist areas (for example Disability /Access and Heritage are likely to be ongoing, whereas others will be established with a focus on achieving a specific goal)

Structure and Membership	• Meeting quarterly or as need arises • Made up of knowledge experts (academic and / or life / industry experience) drawn from local community • Chaired by community member, supported by relevant staff member • Members should be genuinely interested in making an impact • Are action-oriented "doers" who commit to attending meetings, reviewing information / data and preparing for meetings • Have the authority and trust to represent and influence their organisations, agencies, peers, and/or neighbourhoods • Councillor involvement as an observer • Engagement may be by formal meeting or electronic means as needs demand

Role	• Action / Working Groups are responsible for the work that will drive the outcomes flowing from the Informing Strategies
	• They will aim to make a tangible / measurable difference in the community
	• They will report back on the outcomes achieved
	• Be willing and able to assist with some tasks
	    o Minute taking
	    o Planning agendas
	    o Research

IAP2 Level	Collaborate
Selection	• Consider drawing one – member from the relevant Community Reference Panel • Members should be selected through an expression of interest process (EOI) which is widely promoted throughout the community. Members of existing advisory bodies should be encouraged to apply and invited to submit an EOI

The Role of the Chair

Whilst the role of the chair is to contribute to the development of the agenda and content of the meeting together with ensuring its smooth running. The key role of an effective leader is to:

- Actively facilitate discussions and decision making by bringing diverse views in meetings together. The chair should move conversations on if they get stuck and actively encourage multiple participants with alternative perspectives to contribute
- Nurture relationships among the team and support and value each member's unique contributions
- Serve as a bridge for the Reference Group's work to the local community when attending community events and meetings, and update residents on projects and progress

Membership

Council should encourage membership by people who represent organisations and groups with a clear investment in a Panel's / Group's area of focus and in its success. This will support alternate delegates from the groups selected to attend meetings if necessary, and provide links back to the broader community that they represent. A small number of places could be made available to individuals with a detailed knowledge of and / or lived experience and personal commitment to the subject area.

Leadership & Training

A recurring theme through the engagement process was what that several councillors had limited skills in chairing meetings or used the Advisory Committees to set their own agendas and failed in the task of providing leadership

Undertaking the task of effectively leading and chairing an orderly, focussed meeting, bringing competing ideas together requires skill and diplomacy. The chair should also be cognisant of the resourcing boundaries that Council must consider if it is to ensure that recommendations made by the Panels / Working Action Groups raise expectations that Council cannot meet.

Training should be offered to chairs of the Reference Panels who should be encouraged to attend.

Setting Goals

Several advisory committee members expressed concern about their lack of achievement. The Action / Working Group concept should address this issue. Once formed they should be clear about their objectives and identify a small number of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound) priorities to focus the work of the groups in the first twelve months.

Celebrate Success and Provide Feedback

Concern was identified by Advisory Committee members in the engagement process relating to the lack feedback on progress with initiatives and lack of achievement overall. The lack of recognition of the hard work undertaken was raised several times.

Recognising success and celebrating it is a powerful motivator for individuals and teams. It reinforces the meaning behind why volunteers are involved and engaged in their communities and shows appreciation for the hard work undertaken. In turn, this builds a team's self-esteem and motivates the group to take the next steps in achieving subsequent goals.

Council should take every opportunity to celebrate successes, recognise it and provide feedback not simply to volunteers who make up the Panels / Working / Action Groups, but to the broader community they represent. The aim should be to develop pride in being engaged in a partnership with WSC, with accomplishments driving further achievement.

Resourcing the Proposed Structure

The five (5) Community Reference Panels should be supported by trained governance staff enabling consistency in the approach to scheduling, agenda preparation, minute taking and distribution, and standardised procedures within the meetings.

Similarly, the above approach should also apply to the Special Purpose Panels.

The resourcing of the numerous Advisory Committees in the past has been raised as an area of concern by the Executive of Council. As such, the need for Council supported Action / Working groups will need to be prioritised on the basis of their links to the Community Strategic Plan, the Informing Strategies overseen by the Community Reference Panels and the resources available to Council.

Informing Strategies overseen by the Community Reference Panels may include, for example:

- Recreation Strategy
- Climate / Environmental Sustainability Strategy
- Economic Development / Tourism Strategy
- Community Infrastructure Strategy
- Arts and Culture Plan

- Aboriginal Reconciliation Action Plan

Further information on nature and role of Informing Strategies can be found at Appendix A2 of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook:

https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/IPR-Handbook-2021-20102021.pdf

Several groups have demonstrated an ability to work independently of Council (in the Community Arts area for example) whilst still working on priorities drawn from the Community Strategic Plan. Indeed, this approach clearly demonstrates the power of a well-constructed CSP to bring the community together to work on, and progress common goals without the need for ongoing administrative support being provided by Council. Endeavours such as these should be encouraged.

Resources

How to lead collective impact working groups (FSG, Reimagining Social Change):

http://www.psnpaloalto.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/How-to-Lead-Collective-Impact-Working-Groups-1.pdf

10.0 Section 355 Committees

10.1 What is a Section 355 Committee?

Council may use the authority conferred to it under the Section 355 of the Local Government Act 1993 to appoint and delegate functions to groups of local volunteers. These groups are often referred to as 'Section 355 Committees'. Section 355 Committees have, over many years, played an important role in managing access to facilities, performing a booking role, purchasing equipment, undertaking minor upgrade works, and generally caring for Council facilities.

Due to ever increasing concerns about risk, particularly in relation to safety and financial management, many councils have dissolved these volunteer groups and brought the managerial functions 'in house'.

Table 10: Facilities managed by Section 355 Management Committees and halls managed by Council's Facilities staff.

Committee	Comments	Bank account
Halls Managed by Section 355 Management Committees		
Canyonleigh Community Centre M/C		Yes
East Bowral Community Centre M/C		Yes
Exeter Park M/C		Yes
Hill Top Community Centre M/C (HTCCC)	The Hill Top Community Centre Co-ordinator manages the bookings and performs the secretarial work for the Committee. HTCCC is also managing the bookings for Renwick Community Centre, a newly opened facility and is now working from the Renwick Community Centre as Council wanted a staff member on site	Yes
Loseby Park Youth Centre M/C		Yes
Mittagong Memorial Hall M/C (MMH)	The Playhouse is currently under repair. The rooms within the School of Arts are currently booked through the HTCCC. This Committee also manages the Welby Hall enabling access to additional rehearsal space when needed.	Yes
Moss Vale Senior Citizens & Community Centre M/C		Yes
Penrose Hall M/C		Yes
Welby Community Centre - managed by Mittagong Memorial Hall M/C	See MMH for Management details	Yes
Wingello Mechanics Institute M/C		Yes
Yerrinbool Community Facilities M/C		Yes
Halls Managed by Council's Facilities Team		
Bowral Memorial Hall	Currently closed for renovations	Council
Mittagong Senior Citizens & Community Centre		Council
New Berrima Community Centre		Council

Renwick Community Centre	Bookings managed by HTCCC (Coordinator now based at Renwick)	Council
Robertson Community Centre	Currently closed due to mould and damp issues.	Council
Sutton Forest Hall	Hall is under lease to a Puppet Group The meeting room is for community hire	Council
Theatrette Moss Vale Civic Centre	This space was hired out to the community pre the upgrade to the Moss Vale Civic Centre To be confirmed if this space will be hired out to the community once it reopens	Council
Recreation Open Space Managed by 355 Management Committees		
Bong Bong Common M/C	Archaeological Site of first European Settlement for the Wingecarribee Shire	Yes
Bundanoon Oval & Ferndale Reserve Management Committee		Yes
Burrawang Park Management Committee		Yes
Hampden Park Management Committee		Yes
Jurd Park Management Committee		Yes
Tourist Rd Oval Management Committee		Yes

Information correct as at 6 September 2021

10.2   Wingecarribee Shire Council, Customer Service Review - 2015

A comprehensive review of Customer Service practices was undertaken by Council in 2015. A small component of this review focussed on community facilities. Comments and recommendations made at that time stated:

"......considerable work had been undertaken and completed to allow halls and other facilities available for hire to be placed on the Web Site. To date this has not happened.

The current booking system is entirely manual and utilises Microsoft Calendar. I was advised the bookings are out of date and with the impending switch from summer to winter sports there may be difficulties with ensuring Council is business ready to support intending and existing users.

There are no policies or procedures to support how Section 355 Committees operate with many of the Committees operating facilities with unwritten agreements. In some cases third party user agreements are operating without the consent of Council.

Recommendations

1. That a facilities booking system be purchased to replace the current calendar system of bookings
2. That the work already undertaken to advertise halls and facilities be exported to the Web
3. That the bookings of halls and facilities form part of the ecommerce considerations
4. That consideration is given to developing and adopting a Policy to manage the affairs of Section 355 Committees

10.3   Concerns about the operation of S355 Committees – Office of Local Government - 2016

On 15 August 2016, the Office of Local Government (OLG) issued a circular (16-24) highlighting the need for Councils to review the operations of S355 committees, stating that:

"There have been several recent cases of section 355 committees failing to meet basic governance and accounting standards. This creates significant and ongoing risks for Councils.

Where Councils delegate functions to section 355 committees, including the expenditure of Council funds, it is important that the activities of these committees remain transparent and subject to critical oversight."

Centium, a company that specialise in managing business risks and protecting reputation within local government offers training in managing Section 355 Committees and states:

Section 355 Management Committees operate under the banner of the Council to provide assistance in carrying out some of Council's functions. This may also include aspects of financial management of such facilities they operate on behalf of Council.

Although Section 355 Committee members are community volunteers, they are covered by Council's Code of Conduct and other policies (including adhering to Council's risk management and good governance principles).

This requires Councils to ensure such community members undertake appropriate Code of Conduct training for consistent compliance as community volunteers with Council's conduct requirements and policies.

Areas that may need particular focus include General Conduct Obligations in *personal interactions* between Committee members, *managing conflicts of interest*, and *personal benefits*, as well as other specified areas of Council's Code of Conduct.

10.4   Further Concerns about Section 355 Committees - 2021

Across Australia some tragic accidents on sporting fields and within public halls have resulted in recommendations from coroners' courts requiring Councils to have greater oversight and control of the use of Council facilities. One such incident did occur on a sporting field within the Wingecarribee Shire Local Government area.

At the Extraordinary Council meeting of 30 August 2021 the Interim Administrator raised concerns about the complexity of gaining access to community halls due to the requirements to complete risk assessments, provide public liability insurance cover and other agreements.

The need for risk assessments and public liability insurance have largely been driven by the need to effectively manage health and safety risks. This has resulted in volunteers being trained in, and cognisant of the potential risks to themselves and Council of failing to ensure completion of the risk assessments and sighting public liability certificates of currency.

10.5   Local Government Best Practice

Following the direction by the Office of Local Government in 2016 many Councils have now introduced centralised approaches to managing public halls and ovals that enable:

- All bookings being made in one visit to a website or a single call made directly to Council
- Council staff can direct hirers to alternate facilities should their first preference not be available

- Council collects and records the details of hirers, the proposed activity taking place and the numbers of participants involved
- The direct banking of hire fees, reducing any opportunities for theft or corruption
- The introduction a structured, quality process involving direct oversight of the completion of:
    - Thorough risk assessments
    - Covid safe plans and
    - Bushfire contingency plans

Centralised facility booking systems are now common practice in the majority of metropolitan LGAs with Councils employing dedicated staff based in customer service or property units to manage the function. By and large, centralisation provides for enhanced customer service and greater efficiency in the booking process, greater consistency in the level of customer service provided and the implementation of standard procedures that effectively manage risk and enhance the safety of all.

However, in large rural Council areas that may span thousands of square kilometres with isolated communities, the Section 355 Committees remain relatively common. In such instances providing effective oversight of a facility that may be many kilometres away from Council's administration building remains problematic. Frequently there are no alternative facilities available for hire and a local S355 Committee provides an effective alternative to the centralised system.

10.6   The Value of Volunteering - Links to Strategic Documents

In many instances it is the local community hall that has been the central meeting place for the rural villages, some being heritage buildings, providing a built link to the past. The buildings provide a venue not only for meetings, but for local families to celebrate significant events in their own lives and also in lives of communities. These range from birthdays and weddings to seasonal and recreational activities that bring people together, enabling them celebrate life's milestones, to learn new skills and give back to the community. Many of the Section 355 Committee volunteers are older people who have lived in the villages for many years and are committed to caring for these facilities. These are all key ingredients in a community's overall wellbeing and fundamental to the concept of 'place'.

Strategy 2.2.1 of the *Community Strategic Plan – Wingecarribee 2031* highlights the need to: Actively foster a spirit of participation and volunteering by addressing key barriers

The Wingecarribee Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040 has a key theme area focussed on Place and states:

Our region is recognised and celebrated for its heritage, which provides a strong connection to our history and contributes to the character of our towns and villages.

Planning Priority 6.3 states:

Enhance the liveability of our towns and villages, with facilities and services to support a healthy, culturally rich and socially connected Wingecarribee community (High Priority)

The halls and the volunteers who have managed these facilities for many years undoubtedly contribute to the achievement of the above goals.

10.7   Section 355 Committee Structures and Responsibilities – Wingecarribee

Council has developed a comprehensive Section 355 Committee Manual extending to 74 pages excluding appendices. The manual covers the key issues of work health and safety, managing risk, financial management and booking procedures.

The manual requires that S355 Committees must be made up of between 4 – 12 people and must meet a minimum of 4 times per year. The S355 Committees overseeing the busier facilities meet more regularly – bi-monthly or even monthly at times.

Unfortunately, the Covid pandemic has resulted in many of the facilities being closed or operating at reduced levels over the last 18 months. Likewise face to face committee meetings have become more difficult and have largely now moved on-line.

10.8 Centralised Administration and Section 355 Committees in Wingecarribee

WSC utilises of a hybrid mix of centralised administration and providing delegations to volunteer S355 Committees. These structures can be summarised as follows:

- Eight (8) of the eleven (11) public halls on WSC website are administered by S355 Committees of Council. Each of these halls maintain their own Booking Diary, and hire fees are deposited to S355 bank accounts;

- Three (3) centres (Mittagong Memorial Hall Hill Top Community Centre, Mittagong Memorial Hall & the Welby Community Centre) are booked by a Council staff member based at Renwick Community Centre. However these facilities are overseen by a S355 Committees and hire fees for these facilities are deposited in to the S355 Committee bank accounts; and

- Six (6) S355 Recreation Open Space Committees oversee reserves and any facilities on these on these reserves, however, they are booked by Council, and fees are deposited directly to Council's bank account.

Section 355 Hall Committees are required to maintain a Booking Diary. Council is supplied with the details of bookings made. Committees are required to submit this information to Council prior to the date of the booking. However, the data is not available to Council in real time.

All public halls for hire are listed on Council's website with the contact details of booking officers provided. Council's website also has links to a standardised booking form and a risk analysis procedure that must also be completed by all hirers.

10.9 Centralised Booking

The Community Service Review in 2015 recommended the purchase of a facility booking System. *Bookable*, an electronic facilities booking system was purchased by Council approximately 12 months ago, however, the system requires the building of numerous 'shells' and is not yet live.

It is planned that the system will go live in 3 stages:
1. Halls Booked by Council
2. Sports Fields
3. Section 355 Halls

As a result, the sporting fields are still booked using the Outlook calendar system. The Section 355 Hall Committees still maintain Booking Diaries.

All public halls for hire are listed on Council's website with the contact details of booking officers provided. Council's website also has links to a standardised booking forms and the risk analysis procedure that must also be completed by all hirers.

The process of booking a public hall administered by Council or one administered by a S355 committee are identical. All hirers of facilities can download and complete the standard forms from Council's website.

However, in terms of determining the availability of a facility managed by a S355 Committee and confirming a booking, it is necessary for hirers to contact the individual S355 Committee's Hall booking officer rather than submitting the forms to Council. The payment for the hire of the hall is also made through the individual booking officers.

All S355 Committee hold their own bank accounts. Funds accrued by S355 Committees are largely used for the payment of outgoings (bills and cleaning for example) and various projects such as purchasing equipment to increase the useability of the facilities (technology and large screen TVs facilitating the facilities' use for Teams and Zoom meetings for example). Ongoing maintenance and major upgrade projects are the responsibility of Council.

All hall bookings (Council or S355 Committees) require the following before a reservation can be confirmed:

- Completion of a Comprehensive Risk Assessment
- Public Liability Insurance cover of $20m – Certificate of Currency

Individual hirers can purchase public liability insurance as part of the hall hire fee.

Larger scale and / or outdoor activities may also require:
- A site plan
- Details of any contractors to be engaged and their insurance details

10.10   Use of Halls and Revenue Generated

The halls are used for a wide variety of regular meetings, recreational activities and special occasions depending on their size, facilities available and their location.

The East Bowral Community is the most popular with approximately 600 – 700 people using the facility each week, 7 days a week. This facility generates a significant income (outside the Covid period) and holds finds in excess of $50,000 in its accounts (including refundable bonds).

Council resumed booking the Mittagong Memorial Hall due to its use for theatre productions. Hirers were, at times, constructing sets on site, utilising power tools and setting up sophisticated lighting equipment. This raised major risk concerns and as a result a council staff member now oversees this aspect of the hall's operation (although this hall is currently closed for maintenance).

Two halls (located at Canyonleigh and Exeter) are set in natural areas and attract bookings for special events such as weddings. These bookings attract a price premium (approximately $1,000 over a weekend). Hirers of facilities for such occasions can be very demanding. The proximity of the Section 355 Committee members to these facilities enables a level of customer service to be provided that a centralised administration could not.

Basic halls with fewer facilities in more isolated locations are less used. Some hold financial reserves of around only $100.

Section 355 Committees are required to undertake a review of their income against the bookings made on an annual basis and supply this review to Council, together with booking diaries. It is understood that no formal auditing of any of the S355 Committee accounts have been undertaken by a qualified accountant for several years.

10.11 Funding for Minor Upgrades

S355 committees are able to apply to Council for funds not exceeding $5,000 ($55,000 total budget allocation) each year to undertake minor projects. These funds ae paid directly to the S355 Management Committees who manage the expenditure. The Management Committees are an extension of Council and funds are, in effect, transferred between council's own operations. Committees utilise Council's ABN and provide monthly GST returns to Council for inclusion in Council's accounts.

The S355 Committees may also apply to Council's Community Assistance program for project funding (however these grants cannot be used to undertake any maintenance, for permanent fixtures or upgrades to a Council facility).

The above examples illustrate Council's hybrid and somewhat inconsistent approach to the S355 Committees. On the one hand they are a part of Council's operations, trading as a part of Council. On the other, they are perceived to be community organisations competing for grants in the Community Assistance Program and relying on Council's ABN in both processes.

10.12 Training for Section 355 Committees

Council provides regular and ongoing support to the Committees addressing issues raised by the office of Local Government in its 2016 Circular. Council has developed a comprehensive Section 355 Manual as identified in the Customer Service Review of 2015. The Manual identifies a range of training that S355 Committees are required to undertake.

This includes:

- Specially customised corporate Induction
- Code of Conduct
- Corporate WHS and Risk Management Induction
- Site Specific Induction
- Specific Training in Work Procedures based on Safe System of Work Documents (eg Safe Work Method Statements, Standard Operating Procedures)
- Other training as identified in risk assessments

10.13 Hybrid Approach

Almost all the Sydney Councils and many across regional NSW have made the decision to move away from delegating functions to volunteer based Section 355 Committees due to a range of concerns regarding health and safety, financial management and compliance with codes of conduct. Clearly many councils have made the decision that the need for greater control of these variables outweighs the not insignificant value of local volunteer committee involvement in managing local facilities. Centralised booking systems hosted by Councils are now commonplace and provide a more seamless and efficient service to customers.

In response to the 2015 recommendation of the Customer Service Review, Council is now in the process of moving to a centralised booking system, although progress has been slow due to the limited resources allocated to move the project forward. Council has purchased the on-line system, *Bookable*, for this purpose. It is taking some time to build the shells required for this system to go live. Council currently continues to manage reserve bookings through the Outlook Calendar system and the Section 355 Hall Management Committees still maintain a diary system. As a result, finalisation of the recommendation in the 2015 Customer Service Review in this regard remains outstanding.

Council has evolved a hybrid and quite complex system of managing reserves and facilities. These range from Council taking responsibility for all aspects of facility management thorough to S355 Committees taking responsibility for booking facilities, banking hire fees in Committee accounts and generally overseeing the use of facilities by the public. Between these two extremes, Council may manage bookings and directly deposit fees to Council, but retains Section 355 Committee on some reserves, or employ a council staff member to make bookings but deposit hire fees to Section 355 Bank Accounts.

These variations in approach have evolved due to Council identifying and taking responsibility for the higher risk functions (managing the use of reserves and construction work on theatre sets for example). In many instances this hybrid system works well. Indeed, in some instances the S355 Committees provide an exceptional level of customer service, providing smooth and efficient processing of bookings and responding to requests for support with technology well beyond the traditional hours of Council's operation. Some S355 Committees are highly innovative, are focussed on customer needs and are cognisant of the need to upgrade resources in a rapidly changing environment, purchasing large screen TVs and technology to facilitate *Zoom* and *Teams* meetings between groups and individuals who may be unable to travel due to Covid lockdowns, for example.

Section 355 Committees are aware of the need to follow standard processes that ensure the safe use of facilities and that users are fully insured should an accident occur. Indeed, Committees should be congratulated in ensuring that these procedures are followed in sometimes difficult circumstances and that can at times lead to complaints being made to Council.

10.14   Looking to the Future

The complexity of the model that has evolved around the volunteer Section 355 Committees undoubtedly introduces a degree of risk to Council. As risk management and the safety of all must be the paramount consideration for Council it is doubtful that the model of delegating these functions to volunteers can be sustained in the medium to long term.

Notwithstanding the above, Section 355 Committees have provided an outstanding service to their local communities for several decades and this should be celebrated. Indeed, continuing to maintain a link between motivated and caring local volunteers who reside in villages would be highly desirable. Such a role may in fact be more attractive as volunteers no longer have to assume the onerous and potentially confronting responsibilities for some of the tasks they are currently required to undertake. Crafting a new model for volunteer involvement should be pursued.

Moving forward will require a planned approach as different aspects of the current model are phased out and replaced with a centralised system. It is likely that Council will need to plan to increase resourcing in the facility management area and examine where the centralised function sits within the organisational structure.

Volunteers from the Section 355 Committees need to be engaged early in the transition process and informed of the reasons why change needs to occur. Their contribution over many decades needs to be celebrated. Opportunities for the ongoing involvement of volunteers in caring for facilities should also be explored in the new model.

In the short term, a professional audit confirming the financial status of each of the S355 Committees should be undertaken. This is an oversight in a process that should have been occurring on a regular basis.

The move to the online booking system needs to be finalised with clear target dates set for completion of the shell structures and implementation of its three stages. In line with these stages, the closure of S355 bank accounts will need to occur. Utilising funds in individual accounts to upgrade the local

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facilities from where these funds were raised would send a positive message that the changed management structure is not simply a means of taking money away from local communities.

As a final stage, bringing the larger and well utilised facilities back to Council management will need careful planning and resourcing if the seamless transfer of responsibility for halls that attract in excess of 600 people a week is to be achieved.

A communication strategy will need to be developed clearly outlining the phased roll out of this project and the benefits to all of its implementation.

10.15   Recommendations

It is recommended that:

4. A staged plan be established to the ensure that all aspects of public hall facility management and their use by the community is a core responsibility of Council

5. Volunteer Section 355 Committees be engaged early in the transition process from volunteer to centralised council management and in understanding the need for the change

6. The past achievements of the Section 355 Committees be acknowledged and celebrated

7. The new model of facility management should seek to facilitate ongoing engagement with local volunteers and involvement in caring for facilities

8. A program be developed, with target dates, to complete the shell structures in *Bookable,* the electronic facility booking system

9. Following completion of each shell structure within *Bookable,* testing and roll of the system be commenced in 3 stages:
    - Council reserves
    - Council managed facilities
    - Section 355 Committee managed facilities

12. The staged dissolution of the Section 355 Committees should commence following implementation of centralised booking in each stage

13. Unspent funds in Section 355 Committee Bank Accounts be targeted at improving / upgrading the facilities where the funds were raised