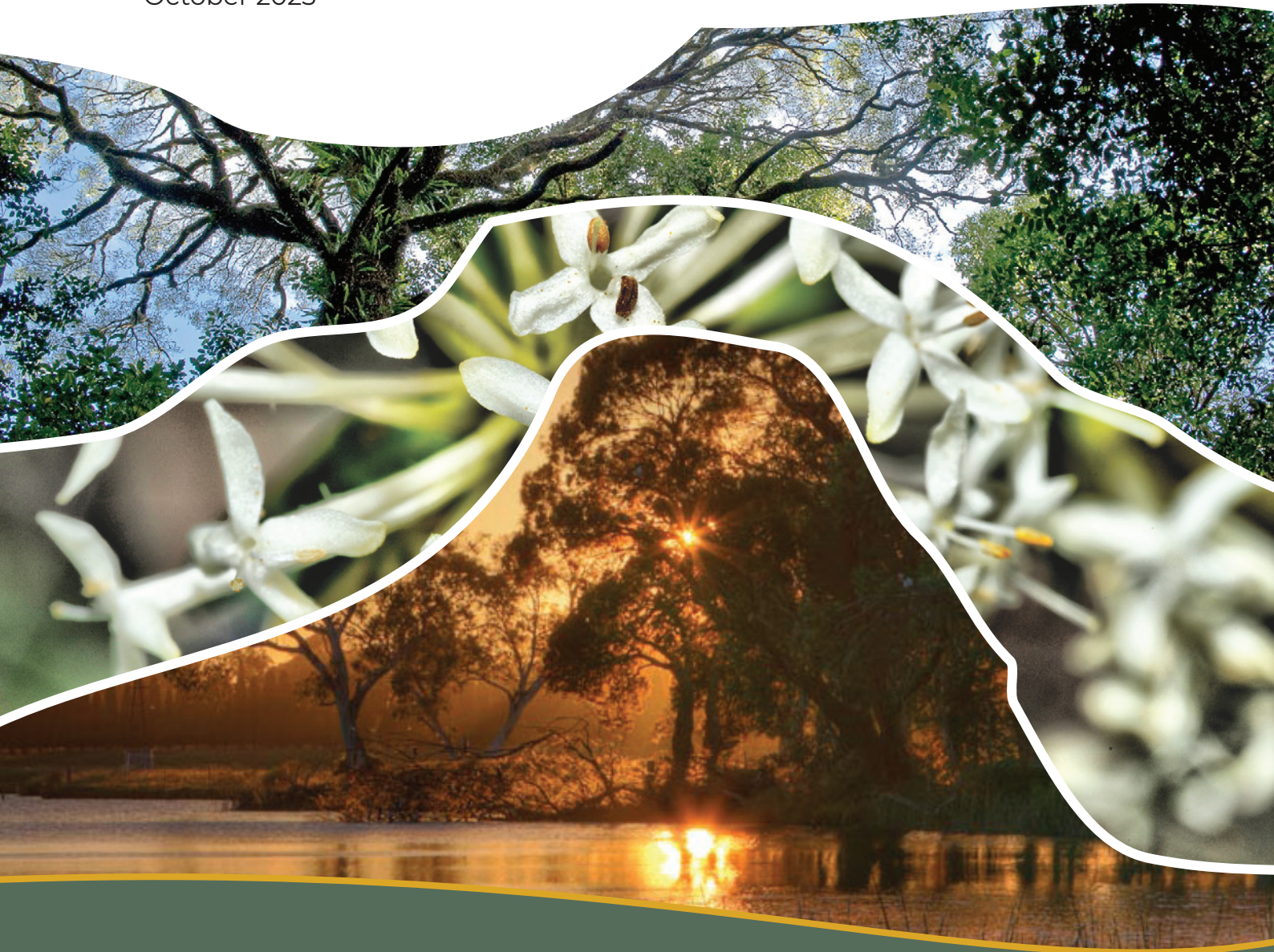




# Environment & Climate Change Strategy

Draft 3  
October 2023







# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The development of this Environment and Climate Change Strategy for the Wingecarribee Shire acknowledges more than 60,000 years of continuous Aboriginal connection to the land in this shire.

Aboriginal knowledge and management of the land are based on deep spiritual connections with Country. Country takes in everything within the physical, cultural and spiritual landscape – landforms, water, air, trees, rocks, plants, animals, foods, medicines, minerals, stories and special places. It includes cultural practice, kinship, knowledge, songs, stories and art, as well as spiritual beings and people: past, present and future.

As part of the world's oldest living culture, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Australian continent and adjacent islands share a unique bond to Country – a bond forged through thousands of years of travelling across lands and waterways for ceremony, religion, trading and seasonal migration.

Wingecarribee Shire Council acknowledges and respects past, present and emerging Traditional Custodians and Elders, across all lands to which this strategy applies. Council recognises and respects the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

We are pleased to present Wingecarribee Shire Council's Environment and Climate Change Strategy (the strategy), prepared in direct response to a Declaration of a Climate Emergency by Council in 2020.

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This strategy has been developed in consultation with the community, shaped by the predicted challenges of the future and informed by the valuable lessons learned from past successes and outcomes. This strategy provides the framework for the development of priority action plans, through multiple funding sources including the Environment Levy, general revenue and grants over the next ten years.

The strategy includes key principles to guide decision making. The strategy will help the community and Council to protect, conserve and enhance our landscapes and nature, bushland, biodiversity, catchments, and waterways. It will help our community and businesses adapt to the growing challenges of climate change. It will guide investment in clean energy and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions within our community and businesses. It provides a roadmap on how we can live more sustainably and how we can reduce the impact of Council operations on the environment.

We are deeply committed to addressing the loss of biodiversity and the ongoing impacts of climate change, including the increasingly frequent and extreme weather events.

We value the unique landscapes and biodiversity of the Shire and want to see these protected into the future. We want future generations to see Koalas, Glossy Black-Cockatoos, and Platypus in the wild. Goals within the strategy aim to improve the resilience of our ecosystems in the face of climate change. We will reduce the impact of our decisions and activities on the environment. We will support our residents, communities, and businesses to help prepare for and overcome extreme weather events and other climate-related challenges.

Council values its key partnerships with many stakeholders and partners including the Aboriginal community, Bushcare, Rivercare and Landcare volunteers, wildlife carers, sustainable living advocates and leaders, local and regional business and industry, residents, visitors, as well as state and federal agencies. These collaborations are integral to our collective efforts to meet the objectives of the strategy and make the most of opportunities as they arise.

We are optimistic that with a collective commitment to the strategy we can achieve the objectives and goals outlined. Together, we can ensure our precious biodiversity, environment and communities can thrive for future generations to come.



# SUMMARY

The Wingecarribee Shire is located within the Sydney – Canberra – Melbourne transport corridor on the Southern railway line and Hume Highway.

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We are one of the most diverse regions in Australia with over 7,200km of waterways and more than 103,000 hectares of land comprising of either National Parks and nature reserves. Our bushland and water catchment areas are critical to the environmental health of our Shire and importantly, our community wellbeing.

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Our natural environment is highly valued by the community, and we have an obligation, as custodians, to protect and conserve this very special place.

We are committed to working with our community, partners and volunteers to protect and conserve our rich biodiversity, landscapes and waterways. We will use the best available science to optimise outcomes for wildlife, rare plants and animals and precious ecosystems.

As a Council we're committed to reducing our energy use and greenhouse gas emissions and along with many jurisdictions around the world, are committed to action against the impacts of climate change.

Our community is also leading the charge, with numerous events, programs and organisations working tirelessly across the Shire to improve our natural and built environments.

In recognising these efforts, this Strategy includes focus areas for the whole community to work together to focus our efforts, keep us on track and measure progress.



## A JOINT VISION

The Environment and Climate Change Strategy is our vision for protecting and conserving our natural environment and creating sustainable and resilient communities.

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The Strategy is divided into two priorities that include commitments to ensure that as a Shire we continue to protect our natural environment and thrive while responding to Climate Change.

The Environment and Climate Change Strategy will build on previous work by Council and further seek to realise the Community Strategic Plan 2031+ vision for our Shire:

In 2031 we will be...

'a healthy and productive community, learning and living in harmony, proud of our heritage and nurturing our environment'

Our unique natural environment is valued, protected and enriched. The health of local waterways and air quality is enhanced and our flora and fauna are protected.

We are leaders in sustainable living and our Shire has a strong 'sense of place' where people feel connected and belong within the network of unique towns and villages separated by rich natural areas and rural landscapes.

Our Shire acts on climate change to achieve net zero emissions and build resilience in our communities, infrastructure and natural areas.



# OUR PRINCIPLES

The principles that guide this Strategy are:

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## CARE & RESPECT FOR COUNTRY

Country is living, constantly changing, and evolving. Many ecosystems exist across different realms of Country including both living and non-living elements. Integration and empowerment of Indigenous knowledge systems and cultural values is vital for understanding, respecting and caring for Country.

## INNOVATION & INTEGRATION

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Building and improving on what we already have while bringing in new ways of doing things in the pursuit of sustainable outcomes. By embracing innovative approaches and technological best practice we will ensure we are improving our current approach and responding in the best way possible. We acknowledge this may require greater upfront investment to deliver long term financial and environmental benefit.

## COLLABORATION & TRANSPARENCY

Working with the community and developing partnerships with organisations, councils, agencies and community groups to accelerate change. Recognising that Council alone cannot do it all, and that other organisations and groups are often leaders in areas that Council has less influence. By working together and sharing knowledge we can achieve greater reach and impact through combined resources. Council acknowledges its role as an advocate on issues that sit outside of Council's legislative realm.



## DATA DRIVEN & EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING

We endeavour to make decisions and deliver programs that align with the best available data and evidence. We will acknowledge where our existing data base isn't sufficient and establish foundational programs that will amplify effective and efficient action in the future. This data will serve as a baseline for on-going review of progress, and to establish staged milestones in achieving long term goals.

## AN INTEGRATED RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

To futureproof our Shire and enable community and infrastructure resilience we will embed both mitigation and adaptation considerations into all aspects of Council operations and our collaborations with the community. Council will need to identify and acknowledge the need for increased resourcing and upfront capital investment to implement sustainable solutions.

# OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

The Strategy is built around two priority areas:

## PRIORITY AREA 1 LANDSCAPES, CATCHMENTS & NATURE

We will protect and enhance our natural environment

### FOCUS AREAS

- » Landscape and Cultural Values
- » Catchments and Waterways
- » Bushland and Biodiversity

## PRIORITY AREA 2 COMMUNITY & PLACE

We will plan, develop and manage sustainable and resilient villages, neighbourhoods and townships

### FOCUS AREAS

- » Green and Liveable Places
- » Environmentally Sustainable Communities
- » Environmentally Sustainable Business Practices
- » Resilient Communities and Places

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# STRATEGIC APPROACH

The Environment and Climate Change Strategy will deliver on the Community Strategic Plan, what we heard through consultation that helped inform the preparation of this Strategy and challenges identified through additional research. It also considers the strategic direction at a global, national, state and local level.

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The Strategy outlines the goals and underpinning commitments for two strategic priority areas. The Strategy is not a statutory document, however by adopting the content of this document, Council will agree to implement the commitments contained within it. These will be put into effect by relevant Council staff and the community groups guided by Council, government policy, plans of management, action plans and other Natural Resource Management (NRM) agencies.

The Strategy is part of the overall planning framework and does not attempt to provide detailed action plans for individual areas of responsibility and projects.



# STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

## GLOBAL



2015 Paris Agreement  
Sustainable Development Goals

## NATIONAL



Net Zero by 2050 commitment  
Renewable Energy Target – 23.5% electricity from renewable sources in 2020  
Australia's 2030 climate change target – 26-28% emissions reduction by 2030 on 2005 levels  
National Strategy for Disaster Resilience



## STATE



Net zero emissions by 2050

Premier's Priorities

NSW Koala Strategy

Natural Resource Management Framework 2021-2026  
(Local Land Services)

## REGIONAL



South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036 2041

Resilient Sydney

Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW

Canberra Regional Joint Organisation (CRJO) Statement of Strategic  
Regional Priorities.

South East Catchment Action Plan

South East Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2023-2027

South East Regional Strategic Pest Animal Plan 2021-2023



# OUR STRATEGY

This Strategy provides a 10-year vision for the management of focus areas that pertain to the environment and climate change within Wingecarribee Shire.

This Strategy aims to address the environmental goals as outlined in the Community Strategic Plan: Wingecarribee 2041 Our Future Our Choice.

It is intended that the Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2041 is used as one of Council's key strategic documents within the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework. It is important that the Strategy be revisited and appropriately updated at the same frequency as the Community Strategic Plan documents as each of these are interdependent with respect to goals, priorities and resources.

As a strategic direction for working towards a more sustainable future, this document will align with broader Council direction, and inform future action plans that detail how Council can take efficient and effective action to achieving the commitment in this document. We recognise that Council has several roles to play in making the visions of this strategy a reality.

The commitments outlined in this document align with the six broad roles, that we see Council taking, as we help create a more liveable, sustainable future for Wingecarribee. These roles include, to:

**LEAD** in providing direction through policy and practices.

**PROVIDE** physical infrastructure, programs and essential services.

**REGULATE** development, community health and safety and environmental guidelines that deliver better outcomes.

**ADVOCATE** for policy change and resource investment in areas outside of Council's legislative jurisdiction.

**PARTNER** with community, private and government organisations.

**SUPPORT** community-led action that may be amplified through greater collaboration or resource sharing in the region.

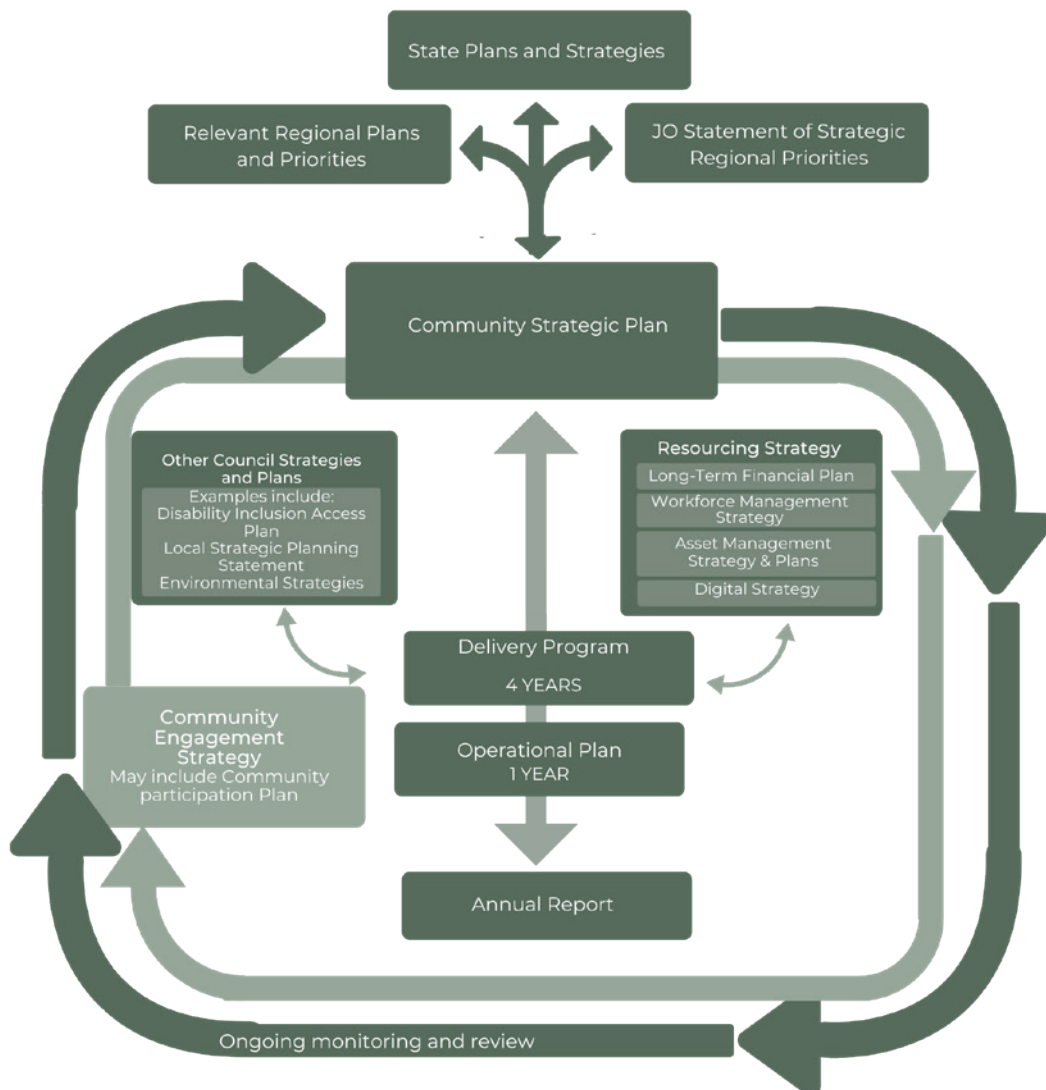
The Environment and Climate Strategy sits within Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. Council's framework is shown below.

The framework recognises that Council plans and policies should not exist in isolation and are strategically linked to the aspirations of the community.

The framework ensures that Council, in partnership with the community, articulates the aspirations of the

community within a Community Strategic Plan (CSP) which provides, at a minimum, a 10-year outlook.

The NSW Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IP&R) requires that all councils develop long, medium and short term plans which detail how the community's vision, aspirations and priorities will be delivered via projects and services.



# OUR UNIQUE SHIRE

Our environment is central to who we are and what we do as a community. The core identity of our Shire and the values that we hear from our community are inseparable from the beauty and accessibility of our natural landscapes. This strategy not only looks to ensure we can enjoy this natural beauty well into the future, but also preserve and enhance those elements of our identity that are fundamental to the Southern Highlands.

## OUR INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

Aboriginal heritage includes items that are both physical (places, sites and artefacts) and intangible (values, cultural practices, beliefs, spirituality, laws, traditions and knowledge). This heritage links generations of Aboriginal people over time.

The country in its entirety is the basis for Aboriginal people's spirituality, customary law and ways of living, including identity and the ethic for custodianship – caring for and protecting their country. Landscapes, sites, plants, animals and artefacts are all inherently linked to Aboriginal people and as such, all aspects of the natural

environment may be important to Aboriginal people as part of their heritage.

Aboriginal heritage is unique, and an irreplaceable part of Australia's national cultural heritage. Protecting and conserving Aboriginal heritage values and places is an important part of the whole community's 'sense of place' and cultural identity.

This applies to every current and future generation of Australians, and those who identify themselves as Aboriginal.

– *Rural Living Handbook*





## OUR NATURE

The Wingecarribee Shire exhibits a wealth of biodiversity values. This is largely due to intact bushland and the variations in climatic and geographic characteristics across the Shire, from the warm temperate rainforest on the edge of the Illawarra Escarpment to the tall forests and woodlands of the Southern Highlands and the spectacular sandstone gorge country of the Nattai Plateau.

These diverse landscapes and ecosystems are home to iconic species (koalas, platypus, glossy-black cockatoo) and unique ecological communities.

Pressures from development and threats from climate change pose significant challenges. Consequently, the Shire is home to plants, animals and ecological communities that are declining, that are under threat of extinction, that are restricted in distribution or are at the limit of their known range.



## OUR VILLAGES



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The Shire is predominantly rural in character with agricultural land and natural landscapes separating our towns and villages. The Southern Highlands has a rich history which began with the traditional owners of the land and later European settlers who first explored the area in 1798. The region is today recognised for its impressive 19th and 20th century buildings and streetscapes as well as for its natural and farming landscapes, and the green in-between of our four main towns (Bowral, Mittagong, Moss Vale and Bundanoon) and the 18 villages, each with their own unique history and proud locals.



## OUR COMMUNITY'S VOICE



The engagement undertaken to help inform this Strategy, with more than 500 people, highlighted the groundswell of local action from passionate residents, businesses and organisations that are already acting on the community's desire to see a more sustainable way of living in Wingecarribee Shire.

Across all engagement methods, participants provided nuanced and balanced discussions on how the residents and Council need to re-shape the current social and political conversation, to prioritise the protection of the natural environment and urgently respond to climate change. This collective community voice has been the driving force for embarking on developing this Strategy and future actions that set a clear direction for achieving the community's vision for the future Shire.

## OUR COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The world has changed dramatically since the development of the first Environment Strategy at Council and the effects of climate change are now being felt in a very real way by the Wingecarribee community, as they are across the world. The drought, the 2019/20 Black Summer bushfires, the 2022 floods and other extreme weather events are having a profound effect on the local community.

By 2070 our region we will experience more hot days and less cold nights, maximum temperatures will increase by 2.1 degrees and there will be an additional 5-10 days per year where temperatures reach above 35 degrees celcius.

On February 13th, 2020, Wingecarribee Shire Council declared a Climate Emergency and joined many jurisdictions around the world in committing to take action to reduce Council and the community's contribution to climate change. A significant role of local government will be to plan for the necessary resources to drive adaptation to the changing climate.

# OUR STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES

## Our Connection to Country & Nature

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From the connected culture of the traditional Gundungurra and Dharawal peoples, to the newest tree-changer to join our villages – Wingecarribee is a place defined by natural beauty and caring for this land is a core value of our community.

## Our Passionate Volunteers & Organisations

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We are fortunate to have some of the brightest minds leading the way locally on progressive and innovative approaches to environmental and sustainability focused work.

With the Bushcare/ Rivercare program, an active Landcare network, and numerous sustainability organisations in the Shire, we have many minds and hands contributing to some of the complex problems we are facing.

## Our Access to Global Markets & Innovation

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We are a rural community with strong ties to the global opportunities and innovation that filter through Sydney's education, business, and industry sectors.

We can adopt world class innovations, access the leaders in circular economy, research, and consider sustainable industries that will drive the future of our Shire.

## Our Committed Council & Community

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Wingecarribee Shire Council acknowledges that the climate emergency is upon us and requires significant and immediate action to ensure our way of life is preserved for generations to come. This Strategy, alongside our committed Council will outline a clear direction for acting on the Climate Change Emergency Declaration we made in 2020.

## Our Resource Recovery

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Our Resource Recovery Centre is a unique asset not held by many councils across Australia. By setting clear goals and identifying commercial opportunities for this piece of valuable infrastructure we not only take control of how we reduce our waste, but also work towards becoming a significant force in resource recovery and circular economy opportunities in the state of NSW.

# OUR COMMUNITY'S VOICE

Alongside preliminary technical studies and best practice research, what we have heard from our community is a foundation on which this strategy has been developed. This strategy presents a vision that not only challenges Council to rethink how we do business internally, but also foster greater collaboration with businesses, industry, partners and households to create a collective response to the community priorities we captured during our early engagement.

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## WHO WE HEARD FROM

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**550+ COMMUNITY MEMBERS HELPED TO SHAPE THE STRATEGY SO FAR**

**411 ONLINE SURVEY RESPONSES**

- » 15-75 years of age
  - » 28 villages represented
- 

**100+ POP-UP ATTENDEES, AT 6 LOCATIONS**

- » Bundanoon
  - » Bowral
  - » Berrima
  - » Hill Top
  - » Mittagong
  - » Moss Vale
- 

**57 WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS**

- » A Statement from the Youth
- » Wingecarribee Key Environmental Stakeholders
- » General Community

## WHAT WE HEARD

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### 100%

of respondents are taking some conscious action to protect the environment.

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### CO\$T

was the number one barrier preventing people from living more sustainably.

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### PROTECTING FLORA & FAUNA

was the number 1 area for action.

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### GREATER THAN 70%

acknowledged that they were concerned about every single one of the 7 major impacts of Climate Change.

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## IDENTIFIED COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

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### PRIORITY 1: Protecting the Environment

- 1 Protecting native flora and fauna (biodiversity).
  - 2 Minimise vegetation clearing.
  - 3 Secure water quality of our creeks and rivers.
- 

### PRIORITY 2: Responding to Climate Change

- 1 Set key Council climate change targets to drive local and regional change.
- 2 Promote building practices and types of developments that improve resource efficiency.
- 3 Invest and/or facilitate investment in solar renewable energy for the community.

# Priority Area 1

## Landscapes, Catchments & Nature

Nature is deeply valued by the people living in Wingecarribee Shire. Our connection to the landscapes, waterways, bushland and iconic species that live here is a foundational value that binds our community. For many it is the reason we live here and is a place to gather, relax and explore. We will all work to protect and conserve cultural values, ecosystems and species into the future.

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Our natural environment is experiencing compounding stresses more than ever before. The impacts of pollution, development, agriculture and invasive species are visible across our Shire, and reshaping our natural systems at a rate that is too fast for them to adapt. The certainty that climate change will exponentially accelerate the stress placed upon our ecosystems demands a need for urgent action and a new approach that keeps pace with the increased rate of change.

Council is committed to being a leader in protecting our natural assets, through on-going monitoring, education and upskilling programs, and direct plans of management. As our growing community places increased pressure upon our terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, we will amplify the importance of using planning controls to protect these valuable ecosystems.

Protecting our wonderful, interconnected nature will require action in three focus areas:

**Focus Area 1:  
Landscape and Cultural Values**

**Focus area 2:  
Catchments and Waterways**

**Focus area 3:  
Bushland and Biodiversity**





## FOCUS AREA 1: LANDSCAPE AND CULTURAL VALUES

### CURRENT STATE

For Gundungurra and Dharawal people, Ngurra (Country) means everything, its physical, cultural and spiritual, its belonging.

A Dreamtime creation story, Gurangatch and Mirragan, speaks about how this whole countryside came into being. The story describes an almighty struggle between two ancestral creator spirits, one a giant eel-like creature, Gurangatch, an incarnation of the ancestral rainbow serpent, and the other, a large native cat or quoll, Mirragan.

There is one declared sacred Aboriginal Place in Wingecarribee Shire, called Nungunngungulla (Jubilee Rocks). This Aboriginal cultural heritage site was declared by the State Government as the 100th Aboriginal Place in NSW. It is a teaching place for educating children about Dreamtime creation stories, Aboriginal culture and its associated values and practices, such as cultural burns.

As our community continues to diversify, it is important to listen and learn from Indigenous Australians. Their connection to the land and its ability to inform our identity and educate our people remains fundamental to the area.

Several key natural assets are fundamental to what we love about the Wingecarribee Shire. Priority corridors such as the Great Western Wildlife Corridor and the Illawarra Escarpment Corridor act as vital pathways for local biodiversity to cross the landscape as well as conserve large intact expanses of native vegetation. Waterways meander through the landscape, providing important corridor linkages across the shire, habitat for aquatic species and access to water for their terrestrial counterparts. These assets and the health of the flora and fauna within them demand an approach that ignores geographical boundaries and creates a collaborative approach in line with the natural systems within the landscape.

Council is committed to working closely with our traditional owners, private property owners and community organisations to ensure we are adopting innovative and efficient approaches that will limit the impact of these sectors upon our environment, whilst reducing the challenges that threaten the proliferation of these ways of life well into the future.

**'We are in a unique area... that values the green space between our villages and towns. We are in the middle of a wonderful national park, we have amazing waterfalls and some fantastic places to visit'**

Survey Participant

# Priority Area 1

## Landscapes, Catchments & Nature

### KEY FIGURES

- » One sacred Aboriginal Place.
- » 400+ Aboriginal sites within the Shire.
- » An Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) area includes Gundungurra Country extending from Blue Mountains to the northern part of Wingecarribee LGA.

### WHAT WE'RE CURRENTLY DOING

- » Supporting the local Aboriginal community to deliver cultural and ecological events and activities.
- » Collaborating and partnering with Indigenous groups to deliver biodiversity conservation and natural resource management outcomes.
- » Developing an Indigenous Cultural Burning Strategy for Council owned or managed bushland reserves.
- » Partnering with land management agencies to improve conservation outcomes.
- » Developing a Local Strategic Weed Management Plan.
- » Supporting rural landholders through Council's Rural Partner Program.
- » Undertaking biosecurity (weeds) inspections and providing advice and education to rural landholders.
- » Delivering the Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Project.
- » Encouraging private land conservation through our award-winning Land for Wildlife Program.

### OUR GOALS

- » Embrace and embed land management practices of Gundungurra and Dharawal peoples into natural resource management.
- » Maintain and enhance wildlife corridor connectivity across the Southern Highlands.

### WE WILL ...

**SUPPORT**, encourage and provide programs that embed indigenous cultural knowledge and practices in natural resource management and environmental research.

**CONSERVE** and enhance wildlife corridors and connectivity across the shire and protect High Environmental Value Land.

**EMPOWER** rural property owners to conserve and protect environmental values.

**IMPROVE** the communities' connection to the natural environment.

**PROTECT** landscape, cultural and heritage values that are unique to the identity of the Wingecarribee Shire.

**PROVIDE** comprehensive land mapping and monitoring to inform land use planning and land management.



## FOCUS AREA 2: CATCHMENTS & WATERWAYS

### CURRENT STATE

Wingecarribee Shire inherited its name from its most prominent and important river; the Wingecarribee River. This river is one of the two dominant systems in the southern region of the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Area (HNCMA).

Our reservoir, our mighty river, our flood lands, the network of natural creek lines and waterfalls, and bodies of water dotting our landscape hold more biodiversity than any other ecosystem across the Wingecarribee Shire. They provide habitat and breeding grounds for many aquatic flora and fauna and are an essential part of larger ecosystems, as well as being an important part of the scenic landscape and identity of our region.

In many cases, the riparian corridors that transect our urban and agricultural lands have a prolonged history of degradation, that impacts their environmental qualities, aesthetical values and water security.

Our waterway systems, including the constructed storm water network and all the associated structures used to be seen as just a way to take away nuisance water, the faster the better. However, over time we have come to understand that rethinking our approach can deliver greater wellbeing to our natural environment and residents alike.

Council is committed to restoring our waterways and embracing Water Sensitive Urban Design principles to improve the ability of urban environments to capture, treat and reuse storm water.

### KEY FIGURES

- » Major waterways include: Wingecarribee, Wollondilly, Paddys, Nattai and Upper Nepean Rivers.
- » These waterways deliver an estimated 5,000-6,000 mega litres of raw water per year which is then treated and delivered to our residents.

### WHAT WE'RE CURRENTLY DOING

- » Providing development guidelines that will ensure urban development projects have neutral or beneficial impacts for our waterways and catchment areas.
- » Managing waterways and riparian land within Council owned and managed bushland reserves.
- » Mitigating flood impacts in urban areas through flood modelling, studies and infrastructure.
- » Supporting Rivercare and Landcare groups and private landholders to improve habitat values along waterways.
- » Monitoring water quality and macroinvertebrates in urban streams.
- » Partnering with other agencies such as WaterNSW and not-for-profit organisations to deliver community education.
- » Delivering the Southern Highlands Platypus Conservation Project.

# Priority Area 1

## Landscapes, Catchments & Nature

- » Supporting scientists to undertake research on freshwater aquatic organisms including the Eastern Long-necked Turtle.
- » Partnering with WaterNSW to undertake a stormwater audit project.
- » Maintaining wetlands and drainage reserves for stormwater management and, where practicable, ecosystem services.
- » Implementing drying processes in our waste management services to minimise the impact of water run off from landfill into our waterways.

### OUR GOALS

- » Catchments and waterways are managed for water quality, supply, aquatic ecology and biodiversity.
- » Water sensitive urban design principles will be applied where practical to do so.

### WE WILL ...

**PROTECT** our drinking water quality and quantity, by minimising the risk of contaminants and adopting water management practices to adapt to our changing climate.

**ADOPT** best practice contaminated water run-off management at our waste facilities.

**ENCOURAGE** the retention of vegetation and soil to optimise water absorption, groundwater recharge, water supply and quality.

**ADVOCATE** for the protection and sustainable management of water resources and groundwater dependent ecosystems.

**PROVIDE** programs to protect and improve the condition of waterways, groundwater dependent ecosystems and riparian vegetation.

**ADVOCATE** to state agencies for the adoption of strong regulatory controls to minimise water pollution.

**PROVIDE** opportunities for our community to learn and participate in initiatives that support our waterways and catchment areas.

## FOCUS AREA 3: BUSHLAND & BIODIVERSITY

### CURRENT STATE

Natural areas cover nearly 60% of the Shire and are integral to the identity of place and the community pride. The diverse range of flora and fauna and microbes that live in our bushlands, forests, waterways and aquatic areas, make up the interconnected and complex biodiversity of the shire.

More than half the Shire is bushland protected in national parks such as the Nattai and Morton National Parks, where often the native vegetation communities that are found in the national parks, Council's bushland reserves and with WaterNSW 'special areas' are well protected. However, the impacts of climate change, increased extreme weather events and the growth of our urban environments, and unauthorised usage pressures, demand a new approach to ensuring we protect the health of our reserves and ensure the preservation of our high value corridors.

To protect our biodiversity, we need to acknowledge the threats that are impacting the macro and the micro-ecosystems, from the quality of our soils to the runoff into our waterways, and the impact of invasive and non-native flora and fauna in our reserves.

Conserving biodiversity and supporting an increasing number of threatened species and their habitats requires considered action in both the natural and the built environment.

Biodiversity conservation is a long-term goal. Land under the care, control and management of Council will be a key focus for this strategy, as well as programs that address management of natural areas spanning other land tenures.

### KEY FIGURES

- » 3,457 hectares of Council managed bushland reserves.
- » 14,718 hectares of state forests.
- » 84,019 hectares of national park and water catchment land.
- » 39% of the Shire made up of natural ecosystems and bushland.
- » Threatened Ecological Communities are estimated to cover nearly 11,000 ha of the shire.

### WHAT WE'RE CURRENTLY DOING

- » Developing Plans of Management for Council-owned and managed bushland reserves.
- » Securing reserve boundaries to reduce the impact of illegal activities on biodiversity and natural resources.
- » Partnering with the state government and the community to restore koala habitat on private and public land.
- » Supporting private landholders and community groups to actively participate in biodiversity conservation.
- » Managing key threatening processes on >3000 hectares of Crown and Council community land through Bushcare and vertebrate pest management programs.

# Priority Area 1

## Landscapes, Catchments & Nature

- » Building capacity of volunteers and citizen scientists in natural area restoration and biodiversity monitoring.
- » Supporting the implementation of the South East Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan.
- » Managing high priority weeds along roadsides and other high-risk pathways and sites based on a risk management approach.
- » Supporting biodiversity monitoring initiatives and citizen science opportunities.
- » Managing our bushland reserves to reduce the risk of wildfire on life and property.
- » Implementing hazard reduction whilst minimising the impacts of these activities on threatened species and ecological communities.
- » Minimising or mitigating impacts of Council projects on biodiversity and habitat values.

### OUR GOAL

- » Protect and conserve our ecosystems to ensure they are thriving and remain fundamental to the identity of the Shire.

### WE WILL ...

**PROTECT** and conserve our bushland reserves in alignment with our Plans of Management.

**PARTNER** with the community and land management agencies to manage priority weeds and vertebrate pests.

**PROVIDE** opportunities for our community to learn and participate in initiatives that support our local environment.

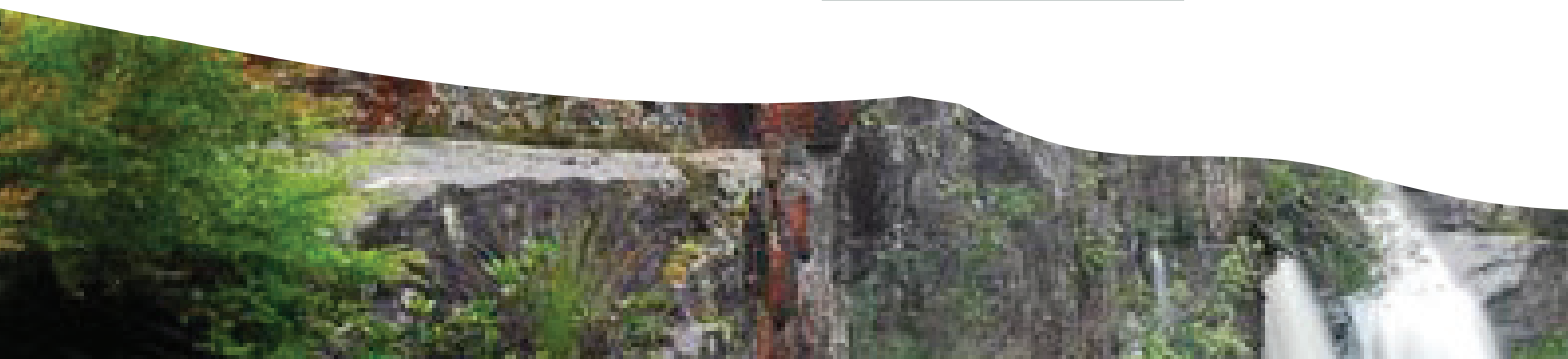
**AVOID**, minimise and as a last resort, offset, losses to biodiversity through Council's own development, operations and property management.

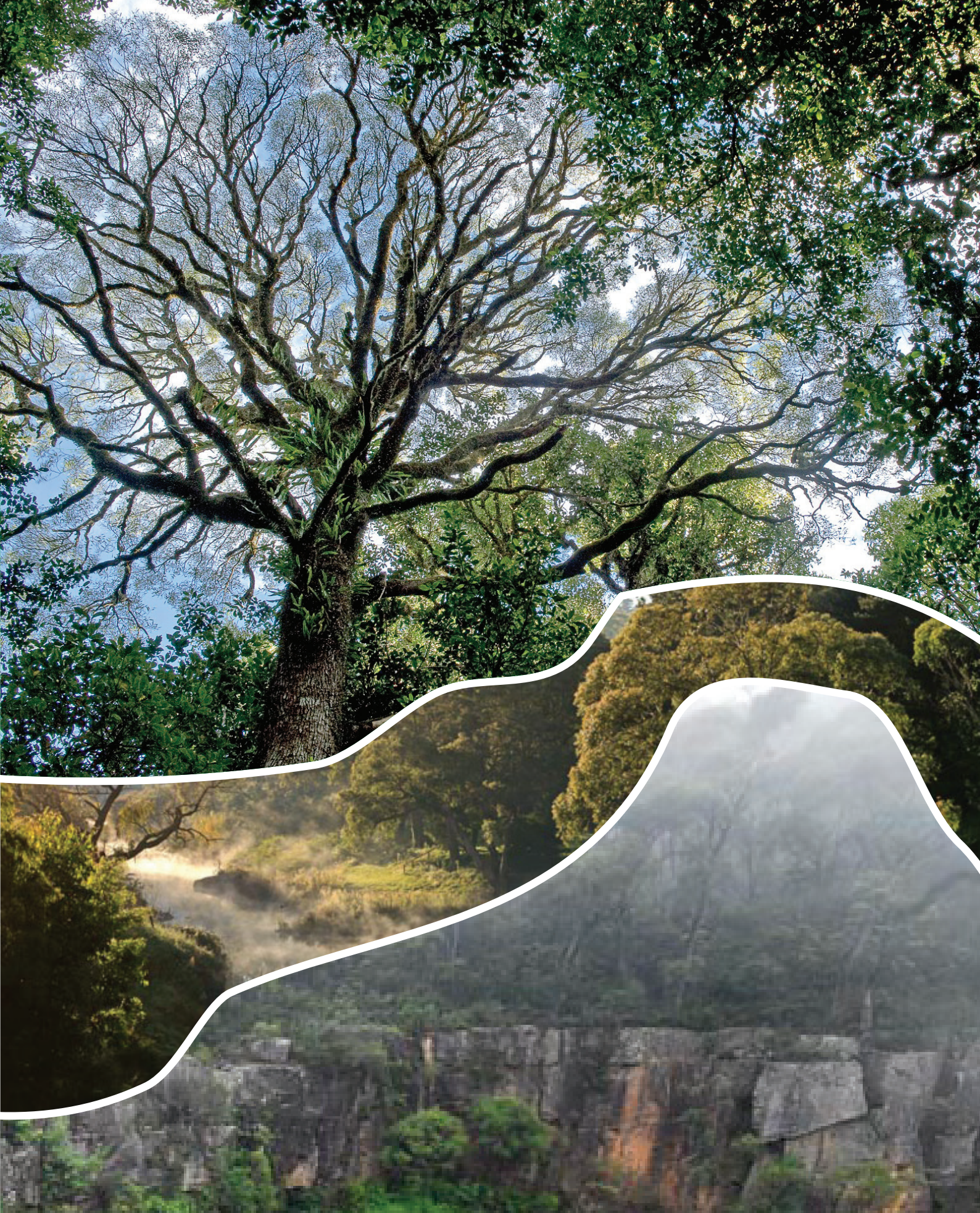
**PROVIDE** programs that enhance our understanding of biodiversity to strengthen our ability to make decisions that reduce the impacts of current and future threats.

**PROVIDE** programs that embed long term practices for conserving our local koala population.

**PARTNER** with agencies to ensure bushfire management practices balance bushland and biodiversity protection with responsible hazard reduction.

**USE** and access the latest research to enable adaptive management to accommodate climate change forecasts.





# Priority Area 2

## Community and Place

Our villages and towns have the greatest influence on the health of our natural landscape. Embracing an ethos to live within the landscape, rather than upon it, will ensure we protect our natural assets, build greater resilience for our community and deliver economic, social and wellbeing benefits for households, businesses and industries in the Shire.

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Australia's climate is already changing<sup>1</sup>.

The impacts of climate change are increasingly unavoidable for all Australians, and for the community of Wingecarribee these impacts are increasingly hitting closer to home with extended heat waves and droughts, our neighbouring bushlands posing bushfire risks to our homes, and the bursting banks of the Wingecarribee River resulting in the closure of our critical roads. For the community of Wingecarribee, the call for action has been urgent, and Council are leading the way in reducing and mitigating the causes of climate change.

Our region will continue to see higher temperatures and less cold nights. We will also see more frequent and prolonged heatwaves and spend more time in drought. There will be an increased risk of bushfire and the bushfire season will last longer. There will also be seasonal changes in rainfall<sup>2</sup>. These changes are already affecting our community, our places and our economy.

The importance of acting is evident in the challenges facing our households

and Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency is a response to community voice and sentiment. Together we are all committed to taking action that ensures our way of life, and the natural beauty of our Shire, is here for future generations to enjoy.

To minimise further changes to our climate both Council and Community must work on reducing greenhouse gases. Council will commit to Net Zero emissions from Council operations by 2030 and will help facilitate the community's journey towards Net Zero by 2050, a target set by the NSW Government.

Council will lead the way in embracing sustainable built forms and adopting practices that reduce the impact we have on the environment for our Council-owned assets.

To make meaningful change Council will work closely with the community, other levels of government and key stakeholders so that we are all working towards the same goals.



<sup>1</sup> State of the Environment 2018, Commonwealth Scientific & Industrial Research Organisation and Bureau of Meteorology

<sup>2</sup> South East and Tablelands Climate Change Snapshot, 2014, Office of Environment and Heritage



Furthermore, we will advocate for, promote and facilitate the adoption of sustainable solutions to our 52,000 residents in the Shire, across four focus areas:

**Focus area 4:  
Green and liveable places**

**Focus area 5:  
Environmentally  
sustainable communities**

**Focus area 6:  
Environmentally sustainable  
business practices**

**Focus area 7:  
Resilient Communities  
and places.**

### **CHANGE INSPIRED BY COMMUNITY VALUES**

Our community told us that their number one environmental concern was natural hazards (including bushfires and floods), with 87% of survey respondents indicating that they were 'concerned' or 'very concerned'.

Similarly, the threat of decreased water security and increased drought, and the impact this may have on the region's agricultural services was a concern expressed throughout our community engagement.

Our community want to minimise the impact of our urban and built environment, upon the natural beauty of our Shire. The community have told us that the impact of urban sprawl is a growing threat to the environment and way of life in Wingecarribee. With over 90% of engagement participants currently taking household action to reduce their impact on the environment, we are a community ready and willing to act, and residents felt Council were well placed to help remove the major barriers to taking more impactful actions.

Furthermore, we heard that you wanted to see Council projects lead the way on adopting sustainable solutions in the built environment, and our ways of working to favour sustainable and circular economy principles that delivered on the quadruple bottom line.

**'Unless we can significantly adapt our lifestyle to a warmer climate and more extreme weather, we will not be able to survive long enough to experience any effects of emission reductions in the near future'**

Survey Participant



## FOCUS AREA 4:

### GREEN AND LIVEABLE PLACES

#### CURRENT STATE

Creating green, liveable, healthy communities is not a compromise, but a win-win for our environment and residents.

A green neighbourhood is made up of a network of green spaces, urban waterways, natural systems and semi-natural systems including parks, creeks, native bushland, wetlands, private gardens and tree lined streets that connect communities to the natural landscape.

As our community continues to grow and we face the challenges of providing diversified housing options to accommodate the needs of our residents, we will aim to prioritise the continued access to green open spaces and do so in a way that minimises the impact to our natural environment.

By engaging residents through programs such as Habitat for Wildlife we can continue to educate the community about the importance of native, resilient, drought tolerant gardens and land.

Acknowledging the increased challenges and stresses that climate change is having on our community and households, Council has developed a Climate Change Adaptation Plan (2019) which clearly identifies five key areas for action, these being:

- » Community
- » Land Use Planning
- » Emergency Management
- » Environmental Protection
- » Assets and Infrastructure

This plan addresses how we ensure the wellbeing of our community, even in the face of increasing climate challenges. The natural environment that is so ingrained in our local identity is simultaneously our greatest asset in building healthier more liveable places, whilst also being the most at-risk asset we have. As we all take serious action to halt and reverse the impacts of climate change, Council recognises the importance of ensuring our assets, community members, and environment can adapt in the face of increasing pressures.

'Trees are necessary for our physical and mental health, and essential for the health of the environment. They are our most valuable asset in the Wingecarribee'

Survey Participant

**CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION** is about reducing or avoiding greenhouse gas emissions to minimise the rate and magnitude of climate change. Together, we will work towards reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and amplify the efforts of every household, business and organisation to reduce the risks that are facing our community.

### KEY FIGURES

- » Every 10% increase in tree canopy can reduce land surface temperatures by over 1°C (Resilient Sydney, 2018).

### WHAT WE'RE CURRENTLY DOING

- » Delivering programs to actively upskill our community on the importance of vegetation in our backyards and on our land, through the Habitat for Wildlife, Land for Wildlife and Sustainable Us programs.
- » Implementing the Street Tree Masterplan and reviewing the plan to consider climate-ready vegetation.
- » Implementing the Roadside Management Plan, which is about managing the impact on the environment while Council works within the road corridor.

### OUR GOALS

- » Deliver and enhance an existing built environment that is liveable, resilient, and sustainable.
- » Our places are liveable, resilient, and sustainable that minimise impacts on our natural environment.

### WE WILL ...

**PROVIDE** relevant policies and frameworks that accommodate climate forecasts and align with current sustainability best practices.

**PROVIDE** relevant tree plans and strategies, including finalising and implementing an urban tree canopy target and strategy.

**ENCOURAGE** green and blue infrastructure development, through our planning instruments and regulations.

**ENCOURAGE** the adoption of ecologically sustainable design and resilience principles in all new council assets.

## FOCUS AREA 5:

### ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

#### CURRENT STATE

Our modern lifestyle means that we make very few choices in our day that don't result in us consuming energy and water and producing waste.

As the Wingecarribee Shire becomes home to more people we need to balance the pressures that comes with this by managing our consumption and making our everyday choices sustainable ones.

Our existing buildings and homes can be renovated and retrofitted to reduce our environmental footprint, while designing and building our neighbourhoods, homes and workplaces correctly will improve our overall community resilience. We will be better prepared to live with the climate change impacts of increased heat stress, storms, bushfires and floods.

Building and developing sustainable, low carbon neighbourhoods requires that we step back and explore new approaches that will reduce the impact of simple day to day actions. This will be done by making walking and cycling more attractive options; by bringing more renewable energy powered transport onto our roads, minimising the waste we send to landfill, and supporting a stronger circular economy,

as a community. By increasing the density in our towns and village centres we will be able to develop better walking and cycling options.

Along with our energy consumption, the volume of waste generated by our community are two of the biggest impacts we have on our natural environment. New approaches mean making a behaviour change so that Council, major industry, residents and businesses are conscious of what they consume and are mindful where they can refuse, reduce, reuse and recycle. Education focus areas include contamination reduction, waste minimisation, energy efficiency, and waste avoidance.

Fortunately, our Shire and Council are well positioned to take control of our waste and water consumption, by adapting our Council run Resource Recovery Centre and water treatment facilities. These key assets enable Council to develop resource services that directly respond to the needs and ambitions of our community.

**'Sustainable urban areas are increasingly important as the population of the Highlands grows. We need to be planning for growth with adaptation and future conditions in mind'**

Survey Participant

## KEY FIGURES

- » Australians have one of the world's largest ecological footprints per capita (Global Footprint Network, 2019).
- » Australia's Overshoot Day for resource consumption is currently 23rd March
- » Cost & Information have been identified as the two greatest barriers to creating more sustainable households.

## WHAT WE'RE CURRENTLY DOING

- » Leading the Sustainable Us program to enable every household in the Local Government Area to reduce waste, and achieve greater energy and water efficiency, by providing reliable, easy to understand, easier to implement information and resources.
- » Sustainable Us is a Council run community-based initiative that was created in 2022 in response to the ever-growing concern of climate change and lack of clear environmentally sustainable living information.
- » Providing private land holders and community organisations with information and resources that can create best practice green, sustainable and regenerative urban areas, through Land for Wildlife and Habitat for Wildlife programs, and the Sustainable Us community sustainable living initiative.
- » Providing the community with greater access to recycling opportunities by using mobile recycling trailers and increased curb side pick-up of bulky goods.

## OUR GOAL

- » Our communities and neighbourhoods are built to minimise our impact on the environment and atmosphere, and increase our capacity to respond to natural hazards and changing climate.

## WE WILL ...

**ENCOURAGE** renovations, retrofits and refurbishments to lower energy and water consumption in our community through education and planning mechanisms.

**PROVIDE** tools and frameworks to reduce carbon emissions across all sectors within our community.

**PROVIDE** best practice waste diversion, through planned review of waste management strategies, policies, and required assets.

**SUPPORT** and encourage waste reduction through targeted education and demonstration of innovative solutions for extending the value of resources.

**PROVIDE** community education and engagement to promote low carbon and sustainable living.

**ADVOCATE** to local, state and federal agencies in relation to policies, regulations and opportunities to enable our community to transition to living more sustainably.

### WE WILL ... continued

**ADVOCATE** to state and federal agencies for continuous improvements to regulatory tools and policies to ensure residential and non-residential buildings and infrastructure respond to the need for greater environmental resilience and sustainability.

**EXPLORE** opportunities for improved Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) and those ongoing costs relating to monitoring and maintenance is considered at the planning proposal stage.

**PARTNER** with and support community groups to provide best practice sustainable living initiatives.

## FOCUS AREA 6: ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

### CURRENT STATE

Sustainability has become an opportunity rather than a compromise. The state of global economies is changing, as organisations of all sizes recognise that minimising waste of resources is a key lever for creating a mutually beneficial quadruple bottom line.

Council, industry and the local business sector must lead the low carbon transition with increased regulations around emissions and environmental compliance. Council is committed to ensuring that businesses in our Shire have easy and equitable access to innovative solutions that will enable them to do business more sustainably. Furthermore, innovation with our Resource Recovery Centre will enable us to provide all residents with a cost-effective solution to minimise their waste to landfill and transform waste products into commercial opportunities and products.

Currently, Wingecarribee Shire's economy is heavily dominated by manufacturing (14%) and construction (12%). Both industries are considered some of the most wasteful commercial sectors and facing considerable headwinds as global investment and consumer behaviour begins to demand that sustainability be an inherent quality to any good product.

Council's Resource Recovery Centre is a foundational piece of infrastructure that enables the Shire to take control of our waste and circular economy opportunities and minimises the barrier of having to utilise a costly contractor to achieve our ambitious goals. Furthermore, our access to the global markets of Sydney and our growing resident base of skilled and technical workers, means we are well placed to establish, facilitate, and attract green economy to our region, which aligns with the values expressed by the community in the CSP and consultation process.

The Shire's agricultural industries hold a unique opportunity to take huge strides in removing the legacy greenhouse gas emissions that are already causing global temperatures to rise. By helping our industries to adopt regenerative farming practices, we can not only create a carbon sink within our Shire, but also increase the yield and commercial viability of our agricultural lands. 10% of the total municipal emissions are from the Shire's agricultural industries.

Aiming to lead the way, Council is committed to establishing detailed guidelines to ensure that all projects at Council have a reduced environmental risk and consider the protection and/or enhancement of our natural resources. Our commitment to achieving Net Zero by 2030 is well underway as we convert all Council assets, including our water treatment facilities, to renewable resources, through purchasing 100% renewable electricity and installing solar photovoltaic systems on Council facilities.

# Priority Area 2

## Community & Place

### KEY FIGURES

- » Green economy jobs are the fastest growing sector.
- » 70% of the Shire's electricity emissions are from commercial/ industrial activities.

### WHAT WE'RE CURRENTLY DOING

- » Adapting our operational plans to the already changing climate and continuing to reduce emissions from Council operations and services.
- » Council has signed onto a renewable electricity power purchasing agreement from which 90% of current operational usage will be from renewable sources by 2023 with the remaining 10% to roll in by 2026.
- » Leading the monitoring and reduction of emissions from our operations since 2013. Some of the key actions achieved to date include establishing a Revolving Energy Fund, 377kW of solar installed on Council buildings and the development of an organisation wide Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

- » Developing and delivering the Emissions Reduction Plan which outlines the pathway for Council to achieve Net Zero by 2030. The plan is part of a suite of documents which outline Council's strategic approach to climate change adaptation, mitigation and supporting the community.
- » Council proactively pursues opportunities to reduce emissions during the upgrades of Council assets as well as continuing our program of installing solar photovoltaic on Council facilities.
- » Proudly sponsoring the Business Sustainability Award in the Southern Highlands Local Business Awards, through the environmental levy.
- » Delivering a 7% reduction in fuel consumption across Council's fleet in 2021-22.





## OUR GOAL

- » A local economy that is resilient and responsive to the impacts of climate change.
- » Attract innovative green industries to the region.
- » Council operations will be net zero by 2030 and commits to best practice resource efficiency.

## WE WILL ...

**LEAD** the renewable energy transition by committing that Council's electricity supply be 100% renewable by 2030.

**REDUCE** Council's operational greenhouse gas emissions by actively identifying energy efficiency opportunities in the areas of water and sewer, facilities and transportation.

**INTEGRATE** environmental considerations into Council operations to reduce the impacts from Council activities on the environment.

**SUPPORT** the local business community to enable them to gain a baseline understanding of their emissions and environmental impact and encourage continual improvement.

**SUPPORT** innovative solutions to reduce waste, minimise waste transport and support a circular economy.

**ENCOURAGE** the adoption of clean technologies and industry into our economy.

**ADVOCATE** to state and federal agencies for minimum performance standards and caps on emissions from industry.

**ENCOURAGE** the adoption of sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices.



## FOCUS AREA 7:

### RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

#### CURRENT STATE

Our entire community are facing compounding shocks and stresses at a scale and rate previously unseen.

While we employ a range of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures to secure the future of our Shire, we must also acknowledge the increased risks facing our community in the immediate future and coordinate a unified response between Federal and State Government, Council, Industry, Businesses and Community to minimise the impacts of these shocks and increase our ability to respond and rebound from these events.

In 2020 Wingecarribee Shire Council declared a Climate Emergency; acknowledging not only the challenges that faced our precious environmental assets, but also the scientifically documented increased risks faced by our residents, businesses and households across the Shire.

In the 24 months prior to developing this strategy, our community has experienced; the worst fire season ever (placing more homes under Immediate Evacuation orders than any other natural disaster in our history); record monthly, weekly, and daily rainfall twice in a single season; record population growth; and the challenges of the

COVID-19 pandemic. No resident is immune to the increased shocks and stresses that are impacting our households, and successful planning is about acknowledging the vulnerabilities and limitations that are placing our community at risk and taking immediate action to prepare us for the future.

By declaring climate change an emergency, Council is committed to undertaking a diligent and systematic assessment of our assets and support networks to understand the greatest risks facing our community, and utilising best practice approaches and verified scientific and engineering solutions to ensure we can prevent, prepare, respond and recover.

This Strategy aims to identify how we leverage the natural response mechanisms of our landscape to ensure we are reducing the risk to both people and natural ecosystems as we face these challenges into the future. Creating an effective response demands that we embrace the latest data and developing contemporary responses, that are flexible and able to be adapted in response to this unprecedented rate of change in our weather systems.

#### KEY FIGURES

By 2070 our region will experience....

- » More hot days and less cold nights.
- » Maximum temperatures will increase by 2.1 degrees.
- » There will be another 5 to 10 days above 35 degrees each year.

- » Rainfall will decrease over winter and spring and increase over summer and autumn.
- » Average fire weather and severe fire days will increase in spring and summer.

### WHAT WE'RE CURRENTLY DOING

- » Partnering to deliver the Resilience Blueprint project that facilitates councils and communities across the region to better prevent, prepare, respond and recover from future disasters and challenges.
- » Delivering a Climate Change Adaptation Plan that identifies ways that Council can support and deliver actions for resilience across all aspects of our community.
- » Supporting our community to plan and prepare for emergencies.
- » Partnering with the RFS to deliver best practices in bushfire risk management.
- » Actively managing and maintaining key bushfire management assets including fire trails, asset protection and strategic fire advantage zones.
- » Providing a direct point of contact for our community to access information and develop capacity to be more prepared and able to respond to growing challenges.
- » Working with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation to develop and roll out the Resilience Blueprint Toolkit.
- » Partnering with the NSW Reconstruction Authority to develop a disaster adaptation plan.
- » Partnering with the Rural Fire Service to map and deliver water storage tanks in locations with no or minimal mains water supply.

### OUR GOAL

- » Improve preparedness and resilience within the Shire for adapting and responding to the impacts of climate change.

### WE WILL ...

**SUPPORT** the development of, and access to, natural hazard mapping and modelling.

**PARTNER** with agencies to deliver a Bushfire Risk Management Plan.

**MAINTAIN** and regularly review the existing emergency response frameworks and collaborate with emergency services and relevant agencies to ensure we employ an appropriate response.

**SUPPORT** our community to live with the impacts of climate anxiety, risks to assets and services and to build resilience in the face of climate change.

**SUPPORT** community connectedness and access to information to empower them to make appropriate decisions during natural disasters.

**SUPPORT** interagency processes to make decisions on natural disaster preparedness and response activation.

**ADVOCATE** for funding opportunities to assist with community recovery and resilience.

# THE VISION

The Environment and Climate Change Strategy is our vision for protecting and conserving our natural environment and creating sustainable and resilient communities. This strategy identifies key focus areas under two Priority Areas. Each focus area has a goal/s and the relating commitments to action which will support work that must be done to ensure that as a Shire we continue to protect our natural environment and thrive while responding to Climate Change

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Wingecarribee  
SHIRE COUNCIL

# PRIORITY AREA 1: LANDSCAPES, CATCHMENTS & NATURE

## FOCUS AREA 1: LANDSCAPES & CULTURAL VALUES

### STRATEGY COMMITMENT

- 1.1 Support, encourage and provide programs that embed indigenous cultural knowledge and practices in natural resource management and environmental research.
- 1.2 Conserve and enhance wildlife corridors and connectivity across the shire and protect High Environmental Value Land.
- 1.3 Empower rural property owners to conserve and protect environmental values.
- 1.4 Improve the communities' connection to the natural environment.
- 1.5 Protect landscape, cultural and heritage values that are unique to the identity of the Wingecarribee Shire.
- 1.6 Provide comprehensive land mapping and monitoring to inform land use planning and land management.

## FOCUS AREA 2: CATCHMENTS & WATERWAYS

### STRATEGY COMMITMENT

- 2.1 Protect our drinking water quality and quantity, by minimising the risk of contaminants and adopting water management practices to adapt to our changing climate.
- 2.2 Adopt best practice contaminated water run-off management at our waste facilities.
- 2.3 Encourage the retention of vegetation and soil to optimise water absorption, groundwater recharge, water supply and quality.
- 2.4 Advocate for the protection and sustainable management of water resources and groundwater dependent ecosystems.
- 2.5 Provide programs to protect and improve the condition of waterways, groundwater dependent ecosystems and riparian vegetation.
- 2.6 Advocate to state agencies for the adoption of strong regulatory controls to minimise water pollution.
- 2.7 Provide opportunities for our community to learn and participate in initiatives that support our waterways and catchment areas.

## PRIORITY AREA 1: LANDSCAPES, CATCHMENTS & NATURE/

Continued

### FOCUS AREA 3: BUSHLAND & BIODIVERSITY

#### STRATEGY COMMITMENT

- 3.1 Protect and enhance our bushland reserves in alignment with our Plans of Management.
- 3.2 Partner with the community and land management agencies to manage priority weeds and vertebrate pests.
- 3.3 Provide opportunities for our community to learn and participate in initiatives that support our local environment.
- 3.4 Avoid, minimise and as a last resort, offset, losses to biodiversity through Council's own development, operations and property management.
- 3.5 Provide programs that enhance our understanding of biodiversity to strengthen our ability to make decisions that reduce the impacts of current and future threats.
- 3.6 Provide programs that embed long term practices for conserving our local koala population.
- 3.7 Partner with agencies to ensure bushfire management practices balance bushland and biodiversity protection with responsible hazard reduction.
- 3.8 Use and access the latest research to enable adaptive management to accommodate climate change forecasts.

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## PRIORITY AREA 2: COMMUNITY & PLACE

### FOCUS AREA 4: GREEN & LIVEABLE PLACES

#### STRATEGY COMMITMENT

- 4.1 Provide relevant policies and frameworks that accommodate climate forecasts and align with current sustainability best practices.
- 4.2 Provide relevant tree plans and strategies, including finalising and implementing an urban tree canopy target and strategy.
- 4.3 Encourage green and blue infrastructure development, through our planning instruments and regulations.
- 4.4 Encourage the adoption of ecologically sustainable design and resilience principles in all new Council assets.

## FOCUS AREA 5: ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

### STRATEGY COMMITMENT

- 5.1 Encourage renovations, retrofits and refurbishments to lower energy and water consumption in our community through education & planning mechanisms.
- 5.2 Provide tools and frameworks to reduce carbon emissions across all sectors within our community.
- 5.3 Provide best practice waste diversion, through planned review of waste management strategies, policies, and required assets.
- 5.4 Support and encourage waste reduction through targeted education and demonstration of innovative solutions for extending the value of resources.
- 5.5 Provide community education and engagement to promote low carbon and sustainable living.
- 5.6 Advocate to local, state and federal agencies in relation to policies, regulations and opportunities to enable our community to transition to living more sustainably.
- 5.7 Advocate to state and federal agencies for continuous improvements to regulatory tools and policies to ensure residential and non-residential buildings and infrastructure respond to the need for greater environmental resilience and sustainability.
- 5.8 Explore opportunities for improved Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) and those ongoing costs relating to monitoring and maintenance are considered at the planning proposal stage.
- 5.9 Partner with and support community groups to provide best practice sustainable living initiatives.

## FOCUS AREA 6: ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

### STRATEGY COMMITMENT

- 6.1 Lead the renewable energy transition by committing that Council's electricity supply be 100% renewable by 2030.
- 6.2 Reduce Council's operational greenhouse gas emissions by actively identifying energy efficiency opportunities in the areas of water and sewer, facilities and transportation.
- 6.3 Integrate environmental considerations into Council operations to reduce the impacts from Council activities on the environment.
- 6.4 Support the local business community to enable them to gain a baseline understanding of their emissions and environmental impact and encourage continual improvement.

## PRIORITY AREA 2: COMMUNITY & PLACE/Continued

- 6.5 Support innovative solutions to reduce waste, minimise waste transport and support a circular economy.
- 6.6 Encourage the adoption of clean technologies and industry into our economy.
- 6.7 Advocate state and federal agencies for minimum performance standards and caps on emissions from industry.
- 6.8 Encourage the adoption of sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices.

### FOCUS AREA 7: RESILIENT COMMUNITIES & PLACES

#### STRATEGY COMMITMENT

- 7.1 Support the development of, and access to, natural hazard mapping and modelling.
- 7.2 Partner with agencies to deliver a Bushfire Risk Management Plan.
- 7.3 Maintain and regularly review the existing emergency response frameworks and collaborate with emergency services and relevant agencies to ensure we employ an appropriate response.
- 7.4 Support our community to live with the impacts of climate anxiety, risks to assets and services and to build resilience in the face of climate change.
- 7.5 Support community connectedness and access to information to empower them to make appropriate decisions during natural disasters.
- 7.6 Support interagency processes to make decisions on natural disaster preparedness and response activation.
- 7.7 Advocate for funding opportunities to assist with community recovery and resilience.



## MOVING FORWARD

We will work closely with our community and stakeholders to deliver the priorities and initiatives outlined in this Strategy. Importantly we will track our progress and report this to the community on a regular basis.

Together, we will tackle the challenges of climate change, population growth, globalisation, technological advancement, and funding head on to meet our goals, commitments, and aspirations.

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# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## Blue Infrastructure

Relates to urban water infrastructure such as lakes, streams and stormwater provision.

## Carbon Emissions

Carbon dioxide emissions or CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are emissions stemming from the burning of fossil fuels and the manufacture of cement; they include carbon dioxide produced during consumption of solid, liquid, and gas fuels as well as gas flaring.

## Carbon Neutral

Carbon neutrality is a state of net-zero carbon dioxide emissions. This can be achieved by balancing emissions of carbon dioxide with its removal (often through carbon offsetting) or by eliminating emissions from society (the transition to the 'post-carbon economy').

## Circular Economy

A circular economy is a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible.

## Citizen Scientist

A community member who collects and/or analyses data as part of a collaborative project with research bodies or government agencies. In the Wingecarribee Shire this focuses on citizen science programs that collect biodiversity data.

## Climate Adaptation

Climate change adaptations are those actions that acknowledge the certainty of increasing climate change and major weather events and take steps to ensure we are prepared to respond and minimise the impact upon our community.

## Climate Positive

Climate positive means that an activity goes beyond achieving net zero carbon emissions to create an environmental benefit by removing additional carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

## Climate Mitigation

Climate Change Mitigation is about acting against the root cause of the issue and reducing or avoiding greenhouse gas emissions to minimise the rate and magnitude of climate change. Together, we will work towards reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and amplify the efforts of every household, business and organisation to reduce the risks that are facing our community.

## Community Strategic Plan

Is a key component of the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. The Plan is supported by:

- » A 10 year Resourcing Strategy.
- » A Delivery Program.
- » An annual Operational Plan and Budget.

Working together, these plans help us to progress achievement of the vision and goals in our Community Strategic Plan: Wingecarribee 2041.

## Ecological Footprint

The impact an individual or a community has on the environment. This is expressed as the land size required to sustain their use of natural resources.

## Fauna

The animals of a particular region, habitat or geological period.

**Flora**

The plants of a particular region, habitat, or geological period.

**Great Western Wildlife Corridor**

Is a key wildlife corridor in the Great Eastern Ranges located between Bullio and Bungonia, linking the southern Blue Mountains with Morton National Park. The regional biodiversity corridor mapped in the Natural Resources Sensitivity Maps attached to Wingecarribee Local Environment Plan (WLEP2010) forms part of this corridor.

**Green Infrastructure**

Is a network of green spaces, natural systems and semi-natural systems including parks, rivers, bushland, private gardens, and street trees.

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHGs)**

Is the emission into the earth's atmosphere of any of various gases, including carbon dioxide and methane, that contribute to the greenhouse effect.

**Greenhouse Effect**

The greenhouse effect on earth works in almost the same way as an actual greenhouse works. Except that the glass is replaced by our ozone layer. Gases emitted, such as carbon dioxide and methane rise from earth into our atmosphere and get trapped within the ozone layer causing the earth's atmosphere to warm.

**Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems**

Ecosystems that need access to groundwater to meet all or some of their water requirements to maintain their communities of plants and animals, ecological processes and ecosystem services.

**Habitat for Wildlife**

Is a voluntary program designed to promote the importance of our backyards in conserving wildlife and creating safe havens for animals.

**High Environmental Value Land**

High Environmental Value Land (HEV) includes land:

- » That is protected for conservation (e.g. National Parks).
- » Native vegetation of high conservation value (e.g. Threatened Ecological Communities, old growth forests and key habitat for threatened species).
- » Wetlands, rivers, estuaries & coastal features of high environmental value (e.g. nationally important wetlands).
- » Areas of geological significance (e.g. karst landscapes, Sites of geological significance included in State Heritage Register or Heritage Inventory).

**Land for Wildlife**

Is a free, voluntary program which aims to encourage private landholders to provide habitats for wildlife on their property, even if the property may be managed primarily for other purposes. This applies to properties that have over half a hectare of intact bushland.

**Low Carbon Neighbourhoods**

Are neighbourhoods that have been designed or retrofitted through community participation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save resources.

**Low Carbon Transition**

The process from using both high carbon energy and low carbon energy to just using low carbon energy.

### Nature-based Solutions

This term refers to the sustainable management and use of natural features and processes to tackle socioenvironmental challenges. These challenges include issues such as climate change, water security, water pollution, food security, human health, biodiversity loss, and disaster risk management.

### Net Zero

Net zero refers to the balance between the amount of greenhouse gas produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere. We reach net zero when the amount we add is no more than the amount taken away.

### Plans of Management

Are public documents that sets out how community land is to be used, improved, managed and maintained.

Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) Is a long-term electricity agreement to purchase clean energy from a specific asset at a predetermined price between a renewable developer and a consumer.

### Riparian Zones

A riparian zone or riparian area is the interface between land and a river or stream.

### Riparian Vegetation

Are the plants that can be found on the edge of a water body, such as a creek or lake. This area is often known as a riparian zone.

### Solar Photovoltaics

Also sometimes referred to as Solar panels, or just PV. Photovoltaic cells or solar cells is a non-mechanical panel that converts sunlight into electricity.

### Sustainable Living

Lifestyle practices that minimise greenhouse emissions, the use and waste of natural resources and that support equitable socio-economic development.

### Sustainable Us

Sustainable Us is a Council-run community-based initiative that provides information to the Wingecarribee community through a series of monthly workshops, events, videos, and other initiatives.

### Transportation

Transportation includes the use of electric and fuel-based vehicles, including the transition towards more electric vehicles used in our fleet.

### Water-sensitive Urban Design

Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) is the design of buildings, subdivisions and works to minimise the impact of development on the surrounding environment and waterways. WSUD involves treating and reducing stormwater flows, increasing water infiltration, soil moisture, urban greening and providing an alternative water source.

### Wildlife Corridor

Wildlife corridors are important areas of habitat that create connections across a landscape. They can vary in size and shape and play a vital role in supporting natural processes while providing habitat for wildlife.

## CONTACT

Wingecarribee Shire Council  
68 Elizabeth Street  
Moss Vale NSW 2577

PO Box 141 Moss Vale NSW  
2577

Tel: 02 4868 0888

Email: [mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au)

For further information specific to Priority Area 1: [NaturalResources@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NaturalResources@wsc.nsw.gov.au)

For further information specific to Priority Area 2: [SustainabilityServices@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SustainabilityServices@wsc.nsw.gov.au)

