## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. LEADERSHIP</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. PEOPLE</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. PLACES</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ENVIRONMENT</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ECONOMY</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Integrated Planning and Reporting frameworks of the Local Government Act 1993, Wingecarribee Shire Council (Council) is required to compile an End of Term Report. This report provides an overview of Council’s progress and achievements in implementing the Community Strategic Plan (Wingecarribee 2031+) over the term of Council (2012-2016).

The report looks at the actions Council has undertaken in that timeframe and the results delivered for the community.

Wingecarribee 2031+ was developed in 2010 following extensive consultation with the community to understand and capture its wishes for the Shire’s future and develop a 20-year plan to help deliver that vision.

Community engagement involved information sessions in various towns and villages, a community survey, community workshops, project groups, feedback forums, collation of a ‘big scrapbook’ and an extensive online and traditional media presence.

The End of Term Report is aligned to the outcomes of Wingecarribee 2031+ and provides results and commentary based on progress in achieving objectives, rather than making statements around whether the objectives of the Wingecarribee 2031+ have been fully achieved.

The End of Term Report is presented to the outgoing Council at its final meeting prior to the Local Government election in September 2016. This report will inform the review of the Community Strategic Plan, Wingecarribee 2031+, which will be completed by June 2017, following the election of a new Council. It will also be included in Council’s Annual Report 2015/16.

COUNCIL COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY

Council commissioned a Community Satisfaction Survey in 2010, 2012 and 2015 in order to quantify the community’s satisfaction levels and opinions about living within the Wingecarribee Shire area. These surveys focus on a range of lifestyle aspects in the Shire and also have a strong focus on the performance indicators listed in Wingecarribee 2031+. In reporting on progress towards the identified targets, Council has used the results from the 2015 Community Satisfaction Survey to compare results with previous years and maintain the integrity of the data. This enables comparisons over time to see whether Council has improved in key areas.
The key driver behind Wingecarribee W2031+ is the vision statement:
- In 2031 we will be...
‘a healthy and productive community, learning and living in harmony, proud of our heritage and nurturing our environment’.
There are five themes within Wingecarribee 2031+, 23 goals and a number of objectives and indicators of progress towards the vision statement. The themes are an extract from the current Community Strategic Plan and as follows:

1. LEADERSHIP:

There are many stakeholders in the leadership of the Shire. Leadership can be found in elected leaders, community representatives, business and industry, as well as among Council staff.

There is a change in the nature of participation at the local level in New South Wales as we move towards a more participatory governance and decision-making model.

Planning the future of the Shire is a shared responsibility, which can be achieved through focused partnerships and relationships that enable the outcomes identified by our community. Leadership is needed not only by Council and other levels of government, but also other organisations, groups and individuals within Wingecarribee.

2. PEOPLE:

When people, organisations and government pull together across environmental, social, cultural and economic spheres, a community develops sustainable qualities such as being healthy and safe, inclusive and vibrant, enterprising and strategic. All residents – the young, old, people with a disability, families, individuals, migrants, Indigenous Australians – need to be able to play a full role in all aspects of life. To be socially inclusive, all residents must be given the opportunity to:

- secure a job
- access services
- connect with family, friends, work, personal interests and local community
- deal with personal crisis
- have their voices heard.
3. PLACES:

Communities need places that are safe, maintained, accessible, support needs and are sympathetic to the environment.

The types of infrastructure and facilities that are maintained and created have a major effect on the Shire’s community now and into the future. Infrastructure includes things such as recreation and cultural facilities, roads, transport, emergency services, education facilities and health care facilities.

Connecting people to places of interest such as shops, parks and entertainment in an efficient, effective and safe way increases the standard of living for the community.

4. ENVIRONMENT:

The Shire’s environment comprises bushland, national parks, waterways and a diverse range of flora and fauna in many habitats.

Because of the importance of the wellbeing of the environment to the Shire and community, and for its own sake, we must ensure that the natural environment is maintained and enhanced. Modern life generates air pollution and greenhouse gases which are contributors to climate change.

Ongoing drought, increasing population and changing lifestyles mean we are looking at conserving resources as well as creating alternative sources of supply.

5. ECONOMY:

The Shire’s economic base is dispersed across a relatively wide range of market sectors. This has a positive outcome, in that the local workforce is characterised by having a range of skills appropriate to different types of industry employment needs. This strength helps to establish a buffer to structural change in the local economy where there is no specific sensitivity to the viability of one or two market sectors.

The Wingecarribee Shire, with its proximity to Sydney, Canberra and Wollongong, has a strong base of economic development. The main contributors to employment currently include tourism, manufacturing, rural activities, education, health, retail, construction and business. Existing education opportunities in the form of the University of Wollongong Outreach Centre, Innovation Campus, TAFE and a strong secondary sector can provide further opportunity for lifelong learning, contributing to the economic base of the Shire.
1. LEADERSHIP

Council has demonstrated it is ‘fit for the future’ and will remain a standalone council.

Over a million website page views in 2015/16.
Goal 1.1: Our leadership is based on mutual trust to foster and embody values of respect, responsibility, integrity and ethical governance.

Goal 1.2: Wingecarribee leadership is visionary through creative thinking and practical planning

Goal 1.3: The Wingecarribee community has strong networks that supports collaboration, partnerships and empowerment

Goal 1.4: We act in an inclusive manner with open information, communication, views and participation

Goal 1.5: We all work together in a flexible and responsive way, using community values to achieve our vision for Wingecarribee 2031+

41,684 people reached via Facebook during June 2016 floods.
Establishing strong governance frameworks

Throughout the term, Council has made significant progress in establishing strong governance frameworks. There has been a focus on Council’s internal audit functions to improve internal controls and support its risk management culture. The combination of an effective Risk and Audit Committee and internal audit function provide a formal means by which Councillors and the community can obtain assurance that risk management is working effectively.

A range of audits were undertaken during this term including the areas of:

- accounts payable
- commercial property and leases
- emergency preparedness
- enterprise risk management
- inventory and stores management
- IT environment controls
- IT governance
- payroll
- strategic asset management
- water connections and billing
- work health and safety.

All recommendations coming out of these audits have been actioned or are planned to be actioned within agreed timeframes.

Substantial progress has been made in the policy review program to ensure all of Council’s policies are fit for purpose and in line with current legislation. During the term, the number of policies has been consolidated from more than 200 to 171 and work continues to ensure policies are streamlined and relevant to Council business and community interests.

Council’s service complaint handling framework has been a focus area during this term. Data collected indicates an increase in the number of complaints received during the 2015/16 financial year; however this is the result of a focus on improving the capture of complaints. Monitoring controls such as regular reporting has helped identify areas requiring attention, and improvements have been implemented to ensure complaints are handled effectively and efficiently.

Response time for complaints is improving across Council with 84 per cent of complaints responded to within the allotted 28 day timeframe in June 2016, compared to 62 per cent in September 2015.

Statutory reporting such as Pecuniary Interest Returns, Government Information Public Access Act (GIPA) and Public Interest Disclosures (PID) is consistently completed on time and in accordance with relevant Acts.

Ethical governance of public land and Council property

Council continues to maintain and keep updated its Public Land Register. This ensures compliance with legislative requirements (Section 53 Local Government Act 1993).

Policies were developed and subsequently adopted by Council in respect of lease and licence agreements for Council property (for both not-for-profit and commercial organisations). The adoption of these policies provides the framework to manage and administer lease and licence agreements over Council property, ensuring that:

- leasing and licensing of Council property is consistent, transparent, fair and impartial

Sound commercial management of Council property delivers the best outcomes for the community. This is achieved by securing a market return from the commercial use of Council-owned property where practical. For example, sales of surplus properties raised $1.625 million in the current term and this money will be used to reduce the loan for the Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre.

84% of service complaints are responded to on time
Goal 1.2: Wingecarribee leadership is visionary through creative thinking and practical planning

Responsible financial management

Council has made significant improvements in the areas of financial management during the course of the current term with the update of Council’s Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP). The LTFP focuses on Council’s goal of financial sustainability and delivering quality services to the community. The plan addresses the areas that impact Council’s ability to fund services and capital works, while ensuring Council operates within its means to enable financial sustainability. The LTFP update has resulted in a more robust plan that secures Council’s long term financial sustainability.

In December 2015, Council introduced the Procurement Improvement Group, which involved key members of Council staff and management. The Procurement Improvement Group was tasked with reviewing Council’s procurement function to ensure the organisation met its Fit for the Future targets as per Council’s Improvement Proposal. This process will involve reviewing the Procurement Policy and Guidelines and updating them to reflect contemporary industry best practice.

During this term, Council has focused on productivity improvement and cost containment strategies in order to achieve the State Government’s Fit for the Future benchmarks. In particular, Council has committed to a comprehensive service review program to ensure it is delivering the services the community values and examines ways to improve the processes in which to deliver these services. At its meeting on 10 February 2016, Council endorsed commencement of its comprehensive Service Review Program to ensure the organisation is efficient, effective, meets the needs of the community and avoids any duplication of services with other service providers. An annual minimum saving of $234,000, or $2.689 million over 10 years, has been factored into Council’s LTFP.

Savings of $1.8 million through improved workers compensation and return to work functions

Council has improved its rigorous budget review processes via the introduction of the Budget System in 2014. This system provides budgeting, enquiry, reporting, modelling and analysis tools for council and improves budget data.

Other improvements to responsible financial management implemented during the term include:

- referral of all finance related reports to the Finance Committee prior to going to Council for adoption
- establishment of a range of internal reserves such as the Risk Management Reserve, Election Reserve and Bowral Memorial Hall Reserve
- maintaining a balanced budget position at quarterly reviews and in developing the 2016-20 Budget.

Council achieved savings of approximately $1.2 million in interest repayments by applying for low interest loan subsidies (Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme). This enabled Council to undertake significant capital works projects of benefit to the community, such as the refurbishment of Mittagong Pool and Road Resealing Program.

An organisation that is ‘Fit for the Future’

Council has demonstrated it is ‘fit’ and will remain a standalone council as it will meet the seven benchmarks set by the State Government’s Fit for the Future reforms, within the required timeframes.

On 24 June 2015, Council endorsed its Fit for the Future Improvement Proposal. This resulted from detailed assets condition assessments and long-term financial modelling that demonstrated Council had met only two of the seven benchmarks and needed to invest an additional $8.5 million per year in infrastructure maintenance and renewal.

Council’s Fit for the Future Improvement Proposal demonstrated that it will meet the seven financial benchmarks by 2021/22.
The Improvement Proposal identified a number of improvement strategies including:

- submitting an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a Special Rate Variation to fund the asset maintenance and renewal gap
- introducing work health safety initiatives to reduce workers compensation premiums
- continuing to refine asset management data
- undertaking a review of Council assets to determine usage rates
- completing community levels of service engagement for all asset classes and using outcomes to review and prioritise backlog and works program
- reviewing fees and charges for high priority items
- introducing a revised Workforce Management Plan that includes an Organisational Development Strategy to ensure flexible workforce structure and practices
- continuing to participate in regional collaborative approaches and partnerships
- implementation business improvement strategies as part of Council’s Internal Audit Program
- revising and enhancing procurement practices to ensure best value is achieved.

On 20 October 2015, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal released its assessment of all of Council’s Fit for the Future proposals. It assessed Council as ‘fit’, on the basis that it meets the scale and capacity criterion and will meet all financial benchmarks once it implements the strategies in its Improvement Proposal.

In response to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal recommendations, on 18 December 2015, the New South Wales Government announced its proposal to reduce the number of councils through a boundary review. As part of this announcement, Wingecarribee Shire Council will remain a standalone council and has commenced implementation of its Fit for the Future Improvement Proposal.

Investing in our future

Central to Council’s Improvement Proposal and its capacity to meet the State Government’s Fit for the Future benchmarks, was an application for a Special Rate Variation. Additional income from the Special Rate Variation will be used for the purposes of improving financial sustainability and reducing infrastructure backlogs.

At its meeting on 26 August 2015, Council endorsed a community engagement process for a Special Rate Variation, commencing in 2016/17 and consistent with its Fit for the Future Improvement Proposal. The multi-phased community engagement program put forward three scenarios: deteriorate, maintain or improve.

At the conclusion of community consultation, Council, at its meeting on 10 February 2016, voted to submit the ‘Improve’ Special Rate Variation scenario to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for determination. It was announced on 17 May 2016 that the Tribunal approved Council’s application for a cumulative rate increase of 45.3% from 2016 to 2020 and the continuation of the Environment Levy in perpetuity.

The approved Special Rate Variation will generate $98.4 million over 10 years and enable Council to reduce infrastructure backlogs, undertake work to fill essential asset gaps and achieve sustainability benchmarks set in the State Government’s Fit for the Future reform.

Specifically over 10 years, it will allow an additional spend of:

- $51.6 million on roads, road drainage, footpaths and shared pathways
- $26.9 million on stormwater drainage
- $15.8 million on buildings
- $4.1 million parks and open spaces.
Continuous improvement in Council’s work health and safety culture and behaviour

During 2014, Council partnered with its insurers Statewide to undertake a comprehensive review of Council’s Work Health Safety Program. At the end of this review, Statewide provided 104 recommendations to improve systems and processes to create an organisation with a greater emphasis on workplace safety culture.

Of the 104 recommendations, 21 were rated as a high priority. At June 2016, 17 of these high priority recommendations have been completed, with four in progress and to be completed in the near future.

The completed recommendations from Statewide’s review have resulted in tangible benefits for Council and the community by improving the workplace safety culture of the organisation and greatly enhancing management of the Work Health Safety Program.

The majority of workplace policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with legislation and organisational needs. In addition, considerable improvements have been made in performance management practices, as well as in the case management and return to work processes. Council has recently undertaken a comprehensive review of workers compensation and return to work functions and implemented methods to improve workplace systems and process. This has reduced the severity and duration of injuries. It has also resulted in a substantial reduction in Council’s workers compensation insurance premium, with savings of approximately $1.8 million.

Customer service review

In November 2014, Council commenced a broad review of customer service delivery across Council. This review was undertaken in order to improve service quality and productivity by integrating and centralising customer service functions to better meet the needs of the community.

While recommendations from the review are still being implemented, changes in service delivery at the front counter and contact centre have reduced customer wait times and processing time for customer requests.

This term also saw the transition from a traditional switch phone system to a Contact Centre.

The Contact Centre now serves as a ‘one stop shop’ for information and generally resolves customer enquiries in the first instance.

The contact centre has demonstrated significant improvements in service levels, with decreases in the average wait time and abandonment rates and an increase in the first call resolution.

Average wait time

![Average wait time graph]

Average wait time has dropped from a peak of over seven minutes in June and October 2015, and above four minutes in January 2016, to an average of less than a minute for the February to May 2016 period. May 2016 had an average wait time of just 35 seconds.

Abandonment rate

![Abandonment rate graph]

Abandonment rate indicates the number of calls accepted by the Contact Centre that are not answered by a Contact Centre officer. With a high of 14 per cent of all calls abandoned in June 2015, Council have reduced this to an average abandonment rate of 4.5 per cent for March - May 2016.

First call resolution

![First call resolution graph]

First call resolution indicates the number of calls that are answered within the Contact Centre without needing to be redirected or transferred. Significant improvement has been achieved as a result of Council’s focus on continuous improvement and specialist training. This is demonstrated by an increase from 18.5 per cent of calls resolved within the Contact Centre in July 2015 to 40 per cent by April 2016.
Goal 1.3: The Wingecarribee community has strong networks that supports collaboration, partnerships and empowerment

Partnership in community decision-making

Council has provided more opportunities for the community to be involved in decision-making by developing advisory committees. Advisory committees provide input on various topics such as heritage, with appointed members from the community and in accordance with the Community Engagement Strategy.

Council’s advisory committees include:
- Access Committee
- Arts and Culture Committee
- Business Units Committee
- Community Development Committee
- Council Facilities Committee
- Economic Development and Tourism Committee
- Environment and Sustainability Committee
- Heritage Committee
- Local Traffic Committee
- Risk and Audit Committee
- Sport and Recreation Committee
- Wingecarribee Floodplain Risk Management Committee.

Council advisory committees regularly help make decisions on issues of interest to the community. For example:
- The Arts and Culture Committee provided input on the continuation of the Bowral Memorial Hall refurbishment project.
- The Local Traffic Committee provided advice on implementing regulatory signs (for example the installation of stop signs and rumble strips in Wingello).
- The Heritage Committee forms the assessment panel for the heritage awards and annual heritage grants as well as advising on general heritage matters.

Building strong regional partnerships

Council has a strong history of regional collaboration with neighbouring councils Wollondilly, Camden and Campbelltown and has a number of established partnerships including:
- Sector Connect Incorporated with Camden, Campbelltown and Wollondilly
- PCYC (Police-Citizens Youth Club) with Wollondilly
- participation in the Sydney Peri Urban Network.

Council has a strong relationship with the State and Federal Government, and has been awarded several significant grants during the Council term. These grants have enabled Council to complete specific projects of benefit to the community and are integral to investing in the Shire’s future. Council actively pursued external funding for key infrastructure projects during this term. Among the many successfully secured grants were the following:
- $7.5 million from the State Government for the Station Street Upgrade in Bowral as part of the Restart New South Wales Illawarra Infrastructure Fund
- $4.6 million from the Federal Government for the Berrima Road overpass as part of the National Stronger Regions Fund
- $2.04 million from the Federal Government under the Black Spot Program for eight roads improvement projects
- $774,000 from the Federal Government under the Bridge Renewal Program to renew Kirkland Road bridge, Caalong Road bridge and Belanglo culvert
- $566,700 from the government for Council’s Floodplain Management Program
- $375,000 from the State Government under the Fixing Country Roads program for condition assessments of Council’s bridges
- $196,000 grant from the Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants Scheme (CPTIGS) to upgrade 11 of the Shire’s busiest bus stops at Robertson, New Berrima, Exeter, Colo Vale, Hill Top, Berrima and Mittagong
- $50,000 from the State Government, which has enabled Council to purchase a polystyrene recycling machine
- 3% interest subsidy from the State Government under the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme (LIRS) program for a $4 million loan for resurfacing roads
- 3% interest subsidy from the State Government under the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme (LIRS) program for a $2.5 million loan for the refurbishment of Mittagong Pool.
LEADERSHIP

Goal 1.4: We act in an inclusive manner with open information, communication, views and participation

An engaged community

According to Council’s Community Satisfaction Survey, in 2015, 91 per cent of the population thought that opportunities to participate in Council decision-making was important and 61 per cent were satisfied with opportunities to participate in Council decision-making.

Council adopted a Community Engagement Strategy and Policy in November 2014. These documents outline the types of communication the community can expect to receive from Council, and also inform the community about how they can contribute to the decision-making process.

The Community Engagement Strategy and Policy were developed in conjunction with the Communications Strategy, which aims to improve community access to public information by providing information through a diverse range of communication channels. The development of the online Media Centre was a key achievement in helping create an engaged community because it allows instant access to Council-related news. An increase in the presence of formalised social media platforms (for example Facebook and Twitter) has enabled the community to engage in Council matters in an informal manner.

An audience of 41,684 was reached through Council’s Facebook posts during the June 2016 floods.

Community interest in communication and engagement tools has steadily grown during the term of Council. The first e-newsletter was issued in January 2013 to 183 subscribers and subscription numbers have risen to 4,149 in June 2016.

Council e-newsletters are now published on a variety of topics including:

- ArtsInfo – 1,761 subscribers
- Construction Projects – 84 subscribers
- Environment & Sustainability Update – 990 subscribers
- Wingecarribee Shire Connect – 1,314 subscribers.

There have been 52 online consultations hosted at www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au in the current term. In September 2012, this site had 341 registered members, which has since increased to more than 2,200 in 2016.

People who are satisfied with opportunities to participate in Council decision-making

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<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>66%</td>
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(Source: Community Satisfaction Survey 2015)

Commitment to open access to information

A comprehensive review of the Government Information Public Access Act (GIPA) process was undertaken with the objective of improving community access to public information. Improvements were implemented and training sessions held for relevant staff to ensure as much information (that is able to be released in accordance with the GIPA Act) is proactively made available to the public. Prior to the GIPA review, an average of 70 informal GIPA applications were processed each month. This has reduced to an average of six informal applications a month. The variation between the averages indicates information is increasingly being provided proactively.

During the course of its term, Council has upgraded its online services and taken initial steps to move towards an online customer service model. The website is regularly edited in order to ensure information is relevant and provides the community with an opportunity to find information without needing to contact Council.

Website page views increased by 43.5 per cent between 2012/13 and 2015/16, with more than a million page views in 2015/16.

Council introduced additional free public access wi-fi services at the Civic Centre, Corbett Gardens and the Welcome Centre in order to improve customer service standards and to enable the community greater access to information. This is in addition to free wi-fi available at local libraries. As a result, an average of approximately 400 users now access the service each month.

Over 4,000 subscribers to Council’s e-newsletters
Goal 1.5 We all work together in a flexible and responsive way, using community values to achieve our vision for Wingecarribee 2031+

Council builds on the values of the community when planning for the future

The Integrated Planning and Reporting framework plays a vital role in ensuring the needs and desires of the community are considered as part of Council’s future planning. The Community Strategic Plan, Wingecarribee 2031+ was developed in consultation with the community and provides a blueprint for the future of the Shire.

The entire suite of Integrated Planning and Reporting documents, such as the Delivery Program and Operational Plan, link back to Wingecarribee 2031+ and, along with the Budget, Revenue Policy, Fees and Charges and Capital Works program, are reported against and evaluated on a regular basis.

All new Council strategies and plans are required to link to Wingecarribee 2031+ to ensure the values of the community and its vision and goals for the future of the shire are taken into account from the initial stages of development. It also helps ensure Council continues to deliver on the aspects of the plan that are its responsibility.

Some of the strategies and plans that have been developed during this term include:

- Street Tree Master Plan
- Positive Ageing Strategy
- Workers Compensation Management Strategy
- Local Planning Strategy
- Draft Parks Strategy
- Customer Service Strategy
- Bicycle Strategy
- Arts and Culture Strategy
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Media and Communications Strategy
- Bowral Parking, Traffic and Transport Strategy
- Community Safety Plan
- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

Improving community satisfaction

Although overall satisfaction with Council for 2015 remains consistent with levels recorded in the 2012 Community Satisfaction Survey, Council has achieved marked improvements in community satisfaction in relation to specific indicators during this term. Satisfaction ratings have increased significantly in 22 of the 39 service/facility areas measured by the survey in the following themes:

LEADERSHIP AND ECONOMY:

Satisfaction in two of the four service areas has significantly increased compared to 2012 survey results, including:

- support for local business and employment (71 per cent in 2012 to 83 per cent 2015)
- support for tourism (88 per cent in 2012 to 91 per cent 2015).

PEOPLE:

Satisfaction in five of the seven service areas has significantly increased compared to 2012 survey results, including:

- community safety/crime prevention (86 per cent to 91 per cent)
- support for people with a disability (82 per cent to 87 per cent)
- support for aged persons (87 per cent to 92 per cent)
- support for youth (59 per cent to 75 per cent)
- festivals and events (85 per cent to 90 per cent).
PLACES:

Satisfaction in seven out of 15 service areas has significantly increased compared to 2012 survey results, including:

- condition of local roads (31 per cent to 40 per cent)
- availability of car parking in the town and village centres (52 per cent to 62 per cent)
- provision and quality of footpaths (58 per cent to 64 per cent)
- provision and maintenance of sporting facilities (83 per cent to 89 per cent)
- cleanliness and functionality of public toilets (76 per cent to 84 per cent)
- provision and maintenance of swimming pools (68 per cent to 89 per cent)
- provision and maintenance of community halls/facilities (90 per cent to 92 per cent).

ENVIRONMENT:

Satisfaction in eight of the 13 service areas has increased since 2012 survey results, including:

- litter control and rubbish dumping (74 per cent to 81 per cent)
- encouraging recycling (84 per cent to 92 per cent)
- encouraging waste reduction initiatives (76 per cent to 86 per cent)
- managing development and growth (64 per cent to 69 per cent)
- healthy, natural urban streams and creeks but not rivers (79 per cent to 85 per cent)
- the Resource Recovery Centre (76 per cent to 91 per cent)
- restoration of natural bushland (85 per cent to 89 per cent)
- green waste collection (37 per cent to 95 per cent).

The results indicate that further improvement in the following areas will help increase overall satisfaction:

- encouraging recycling
- litter control and rubbish dumping
- support for community environmental initiatives
- condition of local roads
- managing development and growth.
2. PEOPLE

22 events held as part of the Senior’s Festival in 2016

Council has awarded approximately $453,000 through the Community Assistance Scheme during the term
Goal 2.1: Wingecarribee community has access to a variety of cultural, recreational and sporting opportunities

Goal 2.2: Wingecarribee people have a healthy lifestyle and inclusive community

Goal 2.3: Services and facilities are provided locally to meet the needs of our community

Goal 2.4: Wingecarribee fosters a diverse, creative and vibrant community

Attendance at Council’s library programs has increased by 26%.

Wingecarribee Bushcare volunteers contributed 3,099 hours of bush regeneration work worth $108,448 in 2015/16.
Goal 2.1 Wingecarribee community has access to a variety of cultural, recreational and sporting opportunities

Recognised high profile arts and culture community

The 2015 Community Satisfaction Survey indicated 90 per cent satisfaction with the statement ‘opportunities to participate in arts and related activities’. Council has continued to promote the region as a recognised high profile art and culture community via the development and adoption of the Arts and Culture Strategy Southern Highlands Inspired! in 2015. This strategy represents the vision, aspirations, goals, priorities and challenges for the community in regard to arts and culture.

During this term, Council unveiled the Remembrance Day Commemorative Mural at the Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre. The piece entitled, ‘We Remember Them’ is the work of artist Thomas Bucich and was officially unveiled on Remembrance Day, 11 November 2015. The piece serves as a permanent reminder to the patrons of the Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre of the importance of the sacrifices of the region’s men and women who served in World War I.

Another achievement from the term is the success of negotiations with the Australian Puppet Centre and its subsequent relocation to the Sutton Forest Hall. Establishing a Centre for Puppetry in the Highlands will have a number of social, cultural and tourism benefits, providing the community with access to a new and accessible cultural experience. The Centre for Puppetry is a beneficial addition to the portfolio of significant visitor experiences for the Shire as it fills an identified gap in products with family appeal, especially for small children.

The community is consistently given the opportunity to showcase its arts and culture profile via activities such as the monthly Civic Centre Foyer gallery, regular publication and circulation of the ArtsInfo Newsletter and the annual Arts Trail, both of which have grown in size and popularity over the years. In 2012, there were approximately 600 ArtsInfo subscribers, and this has risen to 1,761 subscribers in 2016.

The number of studios involved in the Arts Trail has increased from 24 in 2012 to 36 in 2016. The number of visitors has also increased by approximately 300 visitors between 2012 (615 visitors) and 2016 (914 visitors).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities to participate in arts and related activities</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage agreement with statement</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
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(Source: Community satisfaction survey 2015.)

A range of recreational and sporting facilities available to the community

Council regularly maintains its parks and open spaces, which comprise a total of 3,036 hectares of land divided into the categories of sports parks, community parks, linear parks, premier parks and bushland reserves. Each of these spaces offers opportunities for active and passive recreation and contributes to the thriving sports and recreational culture in the region. This is reflected in the Community Satisfaction Survey, with 96 per cent of participants agreeing with the statement ‘opportunities to participate in recreational and sporting activities’.

Significant achievements over the Council term include the construction of the Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre, which officially opened November 2013. This fully accessible facility offers year-round admission to aquatic recreational activities as well as gym equipment and fitness classes.

Since its official opening in 2013, attendance at the Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre has steadily increased. During 2015/16 there were 164,584 visits to the Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre, this is an increase of approximately 20,000 visits when compared to 2014/15.

In 2014, the Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre was recognised for its design and construction at the New South Wales Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) Excellence Awards. Open to all councils in New South Wales, the aquatic centre received a Highly Commended Award in the major Publics Works category of Design and Construction of a Local Government/Public Works Project.
Opportunities to participate in recreational and sporting activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage agreement with statement</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>96%</td>
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</table>

(Source: Community satisfaction survey 2015.)

_Foster a strong spirit of volunteering_

While volunteer rates are decreasing nationally, they remain steady or are increasing in the Wingecarribee community. Council often relies on volunteers to help provide services and facilities for the community. Council offers a variety of volunteering opportunities, including Bushcare groups, Animal Shelter support, and Section 355 Management Committees.

Under Section 355 of the Local Government Act, Council has delegated authority for volunteer committees (Section 355 Management Committees) to manage a number of its halls and sporting fields, including Canyonleigh Community Hall, Penrose Hall, Bundanoon Oval, Hampden Park at Robertson and Tourist Road Oval, Glenquarry.

On National Tree Day on Saturday 17 October 2015, 60 volunteers planted 2,000 native plants. This participation rate has increased from 48 volunteers planting 1,000 trees in 2014.

Volunteer Bush Regenerators play an essential role in Council’s management of bushland, including regeneration of degraded bushland areas and increasing the health of bushland within the Shire.

During the 2015/16 financial year, Wingecarribee Bushcare volunteers worked 181 sessions, contributing a total of 3,099 hours of bush regeneration work worth $108,448.

The Community Nursery volunteers continued to propagate local provenance native trees, shrubs and groundcovers, with 13,641 being planted out on public lands in the Shire.

The Animal Shelter currently has more than 100 registered volunteers, with an average of seven volunteers attending each day to help with the cats and dogs at the shelter.

Number of residents who volunteer to help in the community is increasing

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<tr>
<th>Percentage agreement with statement</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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(Source: Community satisfaction survey 2015.)

NAIDOC Week celebrations
Goal 2.2 Wingecarribee people have a healthy lifestyle and inclusive community

A community with health and wellbeing

Although Council does not take a direct role in facilitating health services in the Shire, it does provide information to the community on a range of health services such as child immunisation programs, and healthy older people, and enforces public health regulations such as smoke free outdoor areas. Council also undertakes routine inspection of premises that conduct food preparation or skin penetration activities in order to ensure compliance with the Public Health Act 2010 and Public Health Regulation 2012.

Council partners with State Government and nonprofit sectors to deliver health and wellbeing programs targeted at groups such as young people, Indigenous people and seniors and in the community. In 2016, Council joined the South Western Sydney Wellbeing Collaboration. This group provides a focus for a coordinated strategic action to promote wellbeing across South Western Sydney and is anticipated to enhance health and wellbeing within the community.

MindBlank mental health awareness and education programs for young people have been delivered at a number of schools during the term. This program aims to educate young people on positive mental health and decision-making.

The 2016 Senior’s Festival featured a healthy ageing presentation by health professionals. The presentation educated participants on topics such as managing general health, nutrition, exercise, mobility and the prevention of falls. It also offered attendees the opportunity to have their blood pressure, blood sugar levels and weight checked.

Council further demonstrated its support for health and wellbeing within the community by installing accessible gym equipment available for public use along Cherry Tree walk in Bowral and at Renwick. This project was delivered in partnership with the Sydney South West Area Health Service and the Heart Foundation. Funding has been allocated in the four-year budget for further installations at Lake Alexandra and the Bong Bong Common. These facilities benefit the community by providing equipment for improving general health and fitness to a diverse range of users of varying age and ability.

Council has provided skate parks at Bundanoon, Robertson, Moss Vale and Bowral, which are regularly used by young people in the community and help encourage exercise on a regular basis.

People who can get help from support networks when needed

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<tr>
<th>Percentage agreement with statement</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>92%</td>
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(Source: Community satisfaction survey 2015.)

Hospitalisations attributable to high body mass per 100,000 people

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hospitalisations attributable to high body mass per 100,000 people</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>466</td>
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(Source: New South Wales Chief Health Officer’s Report.)

Smoking attributable hospitalisations per 100,000 people

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smoking attributable hospitalisations per 100,000 people</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>473</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: New South Wales Chief Health Officer’s Report.)
Goal 2.3 Services and facilities are provided locally to meet the needs of our community

Council investment in renewal and maintenance of community facilities

A number of key renewal projects have been completed this Council term, including:

- refurbishment of Leighton Gardens
- upgrade of Loseby Park in the lead up to its 100 year anniversary celebration
- upgrade of Sutton Forest Hall
- installation of new roofing at Wingello Hall
- installation of new seating at the Welby hockey fields
- replacement of synthetic turf cricket wickets at several locations including Wingello, Tourist Road, Centennial Park and Lackey Park cricket ovals
- Rural Fire Service shed extensions in Penrose, Woodlands and Alpine
- upgrade of the amenities buildings at Mittagong Oval and Eridge Park
- Commencement of the Exeter Hall extension
- Upgrade of the Loseby Park Hall and Highlands Youth Hub.

Significant progress has been made in planning for future renewal and maintenance of Council assets, with the development of the Draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy as well as the development of the Corbett Gardens Redevelopment Plan.

These documents aim to improve efficiencies within Council by aligning Council standards with national benchmarks to ensure there is sufficient provision and service of parks within the Shire.

Provision of relevant services and facilities to the community

Council offers a variety of services and facilities to the community, including libraries, and children and youth services.

The local libraries have introduced e-books and e-magazines and offer a range of services to the community such as children’s story time and baby rhyme-time, school study sessions, author readings and school holiday events and reading programs such as Paws ‘n’ Tales.

These programs have been popular, with overall attendance increasing by 26 per cent during the Council term.

Council also operates a mobile library and offers a delivery service that enables house-bound community members to access library resources.

Council continues to offer children’s services to the community and celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Family Day Care Service in 2015. The Family Day Care Service consistently has minimal vacancies and is working at capacity. Due to a need identified within the community, Council commenced a 12 month trial of Before School Care in 2015.

Young people had increased access to facilities with the construction of the Highlands Youth Hub, which officially opened in November 2013. This project was delivered in partnership with Highlands Community Centres and with additional funding from the New South Wales Family and Community Services Community Builders Fund.

The Youth Hub receives funding from Council to offer targeted programs for youth services such as the We All Matter (WAM) Program, which focuses on young people at risk of disengaging with school. The facility also provides young people with access to youth workers who offer discreet professional advice, guidance and assistance.

92% of people agree they can get help from support networks when needed.
Goal 2.4 Wingecarribee fosters a diverse, creative and vibrant community

Community harmony and celebration of diversity

The 2015 Community Satisfaction Survey indicated 96 per cent agreement to the statement ‘I feel there are benefits to living in a community with people of diverse ages, backgrounds, and cultures’. Each year Council hosts various events and festivals to celebrate different groups and cultures within the community. Examples include Youth Week, NAIDOC Week, Australia Day, Harmony Day, International Women’s Day, World Environment Day and the Seniors Festival.

The Seniors Festival (formerly Seniors Week) is a series of events that encourages seniors to be active, social and healthy. The festival has grown in size and popularity over the years with the number of events held increasing from 13 to 22 between 2012 and 2016. The continued growth in the popularity of Seniors Week has resulted in the event being extended from a week to 10 days and renamed the Seniors Festival.

Council hosts regular citizenship ceremonies to help celebrate new Australian citizens within the Shire. The Australia Day ceremony in Berrima is consistently well attended, with an average of 450 people attending to watch the citizenship ceremony at Berrima each year.

Council has also supported a variety of events over the Council term that help celebrate diversity within the community. Examples include Bush Week, Relay for Life, Kangaroo March, Centenary re-enactment, Brigadoon and the Carp-a-thon.

In 2015, Council hosted two Aboriginal cultural training sessions, which were attended by 57 people and provided participants with an opportunity to learn more about Aboriginal culture.

The sessions educated people on the history of Indigenous people and the issues they face, as well as providing advice on how to develop sensitivity in regard to cultural differences. The success of these sessions has led to plans for similar training to be offered on an annual basis in the future.

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<tr>
<th>Percentage agreement with statement</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tr>
<td>I feel there are benefits to living in a community with people of diverse ages, backgrounds, and cultures</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>96%</td>
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</table>

(Source: Community satisfaction survey 2015.)

90% of people agree there are opportunities to participate in arts and related activities.
Opportunities to connect throughout the community at all stages of life

The 2015 Community Satisfaction Survey indicates that agreement with the statement ‘Sense of community in Wingecarribee that is steady or increasing’ has risen to 90 per cent. Council has continued to improve connectedness within the community through all stages of life by developing various community development strategies and plans. These strategies and plans aim to ensure the needs of diverse groups in the community are addressed and that support is provided where necessary.

During the term, Council has adopted a Positive Ageing Strategy, Disability Inclusion Action Plan, Arts and Culture Strategic Plan and commenced work on a Youth Strategy. Work has commenced in implementing actions from some of these plans and strategies, such as the distribution of the Council publication Missed Business to businesses in Bowral. This publication addresses actions in both the Positive Ageing Strategy and Disability Inclusion Plan. It aims to educate businesses on methods to improve accessibility and the benefits of engaging people with disabilities in work.

Council has continued to run the Wingecarribee Community Assistance Scheme and, during the term, awarded approximately $453,000 in grants.

The Wingecarribee Community Assistance Scheme aims to build capacity and encourage participation. It supports initiatives that promote partnerships and working together to maintain both the community and its assets. It achieves this by encouraging the development of community initiatives in line with Council’s Community Strategic Plan – Wingecarribee 2031+.

Some of the projects awarded funding through the 2015/16 Community Assistance Scheme include domestic violence alert training, promotion of men’s health and an outdoor learning centre for KU Children’s Services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of community in Wingecarribee that is steady or increasing</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2015</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage agreement with statement</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

(Source: Community satisfaction survey 2015.)
3. PLACES

Plans of Management completed for Bundanoon, Lake Alexandra and Alexandra Square

More than 500 year 11 students attend the ‘U Turn the Wheel’ driver safety program each year
Goal 3.1: Wingecarribee is linked by an integrated and efficient transport network

Goal 3.2: Wingecarribee has maintained a distinct character of separate towns and villages

Goal 3.3: Urban design in Wingecarribee creates inspiring places where people want to be

Goal 3.4: Wingecarribee housing options are diverse

Goal 3.5: Wingecarribee is recognised as a place of significant heritage conservation

The Shire currently has 328 heritage items, 16 heritage conservation areas and eight archaeological sites

Sesquicentenary celebrations held for Bowral and Moss Vale townships
Goal 3.1 Wingecarribee is linked by an integrated and efficient transport network

People can move throughout the local government area

A number of key projects have been completed during the Council term to improve the ability of people to move throughout the local government area, such as the Merrigang Street Reconstruction Program. This project involved constructing new kerb and guttering, installing stormwater drainage, re-directing gas services, installing new water mains and reconstructing existing driveways. The result has been smoother and safer road conditions.

Other notable road/footpath improvement works completed during the Council term include:

- reconstruction of May and Caalong Streets, Robertson
- reconstruction of sections of Wombeyan Caves Road, Wombeyan Caves
- Woodlands Road bridge and approaches, Woodlands
- Caalong Street bridge and Caalong Street road works, Robertson
- footpath construction – Mack Street in Moss Vale, Bowral Street in Bowral and outside the Mittagong Playhouse (Bowral Road and Old Hume Highway) in Mittagong.

Over the course of the term, Council has secured funding for projects that will improve the existing transport network. The State Government provided $7.5 million funding towards the Station Street Upgrade in Bowral under its Restart NSW Illawarra Infrastructure Fund.

Council was also successful in securing $4.6 million through the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development’s National Stronger Regions Funds (NSRF). This funding will go towards realigning Berrima Road as well as replacing the existing rail level crossing with a rail overbridge. Design development for both major projects has commenced.

As a result of the successful application for a Special Rate Variation, Council will have secured an additional $51.6 million at the end of the next 10 years towards maintenance and construction of new roads, road drainage, and footpath and shared pathway assets. This will improve the integration and efficiency of the region’s transport network.

Availability of and access to public transport

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<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>55%</td>
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(Source: Community satisfaction survey 2015.)
A focus on transport safety

Council strives to improve the safety conditions of the local road network and transport infrastructure, and increase the safety awareness of all road users by highlighting the important role community members play in helping to keep the roads safe.

Council regularly coordinates and conducts road safety programs such as the U Turn the Wheel program for young people, which is provided in partnership with Moss Vale Rotary Club.

This program has been delivered on an annual basis for the last 20 years and on average is attended by more than 500 Year 11 students.

This program provides valuable information to students and, in 2015, three schools made attendance compulsory.

Another road safety program conducted by Council is the ‘65 Plus’ senior driver information sessions. These sessions have seen more than 70 seniors attend the one-day information session each year during the Council term. The program endeavours to increase awareness of the importance of adopting safe road use behaviours and the changes in driving experienced as a result of ageing.

The speed management initiative, Speed Busters, continues to make progress in improving driver behaviour. This program uses portable variable-speed display signs placed at identified speeding locations, school zones and high pedestrian areas.

Over the term, there has been an average reduction in vehicle speed of 9.5 kilometres per hour at speed signs locations.

Additional initiatives aimed at improving road user behaviour include the LOOK pedestrian safety program, which targets pedestrian crossing behaviours. Currently, 47 intersections have been stamped with 178 LOOK messages, which serve as a visible reminder for all pedestrians to take an extra moment of care before crossing the road.

The New South Wales Bike Week Community Bike Ride is an annual celebration of cycling, encouraging people from all walks of life to ride a bike. In 2012, 102 riders participated in the week. Participation for the 2015 event decreased to 78 riders, however this was a direct result of severe rain in the lead up to and day of the event.

Council has secured Black Spot grants in excess of $2 million over the Council term.

Notable sites listed for improvement through this funding include:

• Berrima Road, north of Douglas Road, Moss Vale
• Yarrawa Road / Nowra Road, Moss Vale
• Wilson Drive south from Telopea Road, Hill Top
• Old Hume Highway, Lyell Street and Owen Street, Mittagong, intersection (roundabout to be installed).
Goal 3.2 Wingecarribee has maintained a distinct character of separate towns and villages

Sense of unique identity for towns and villages in the Shire

Council acknowledges the importance of maintaining the distinct characters of towns and villages and celebrates their unique identities. In 2013, Council held sesquicentenary (150th anniversary) celebrations for Bowral and Moss Vale.

The celebrations incorporated many events throughout the year highlighting the special qualities of each town. Events included unveiling the refurbished Leighton Gardens in Moss Vale, planting a time capsule and hosting a kite flying day at Eridge Park in Bowral, unveiling the Winds of Change public art work, Bush Week, and the release of a cookbook, Tastes of Two Towns, to celebrate local restaurants, cafes and their chefs.

At its meeting on 9 April 2014, Council adopted Town Centre Master Plans for Bowral, Mittagong and Moss Vale. These documents detail the strategic vision and direction for future development and assist with the delivery of civic works within these towns.

The primary objectives of the master plans are to respect, protect and build on the area’s heritage links and rural character, as well as ensure the enhancement of the vitality, economic robustness and amenity of the centres.

During this term, Council assisted the villages of Balmoral, Hill Top, Robertson and Wingello by conducting the Our Village, Our Future program. This program empowered the local community to get involved and to work together to set achievable goals and a vision for the future of their village.

Significant engagement was undertaken in conjunction with the community to develop the Robertson Village Community Action Plan. A community survey was conducted and two workshops held before its completion in 2016.

Similar engagement processes were followed for the Balmoral, Hill Top and Wingello Our Village, Our Future programs. Work is still under way to finalise the Draft Hill Top Village Community Action Plan.

Revitalisation/beautification of town and village centres and surrounding areas

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<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>75%</td>
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</table>

(Source: Community satisfaction survey 2015.)
PLACES

Goal 3.3 Urban design in Wingecarribee creates inspiring places where people want to be

Wingecarribee has inspiring places that the community enjoys

Council understands the value of creating inspiring places for the community and this in turn influences the development of site-specific plans of management.

During this Council term, several site-specific plans of management have been completed for significant open space areas, including Bundanoon, Lake Alexandra and Alexandra Square.

Plans of management ensure Council meets its statutory requirements to manage community land while also ensuring that an endorsed framework governs the land’s use and future development.

Council facilitates a drafting process that is embedded in community engagement and consultation. This ensures that the plans of management reflects the community values and vision for the precinct and aims to meet the future needs and expectations of the broader community.

The Wingecarribee Street Tree Master Plan was adopted in 2016 and provides a sustainable and strategic framework for Council. The Street Tree Master Plan was developed to ensure that the ongoing management of the Shire’s street trees occurs in a manner that reflects the needs of local residents. It also enables appropriate street tree planning, maintenance, enhancement and reinforcement of Council’s ongoing commitment to plant and protect street trees.
Goal 3.4 Wingecarribee housing options are diverse

A wide range of housing options are available for the whole community

Council has continued to support the provision of diverse housing options to the community. It has achieved this by adopting the Local Planning Strategy at its meeting of 23 March 2016. This strategy contains several recommendations that aim to improve the accessibility and diversity of local housing options and involves working in conjunction with affordable housing providers to facilitate appropriate development.

A key recommendation from the Local Planning Strategy is the re-establishment of the Demographic and Housing Working Group. This group will comprise representatives from Council, housing and service providers, industry representatives and various population age groups within the community. The Demographic and Housing Working Group will investigate ways to increase demand for different forms of housing and how to meet that demand, with particular reference to multi-dwelling housing and affordable housing.

As required under the Sydney Canberra Corridor Regional Strategy, Council has developed a Land and Housing Monitor to measure the supply of and demand for residential land.

The Housing Monitor records the rate at which vacant residential land is built on for housing. Information is recorded by individual town and village as well as in the rural areas and provides valuable data to ensure diverse housing supply is available.

Housing Monitor data demonstrates that there has been an increase of 33.5 per cent in new dwelling lot creations in the Shire during the course of the Council term, with 173 new lots created in 2015 compared with 115 in 2012.
Goal 3.5 Wingecarribee is recognised as a place of significant heritage conservation

A community that values its heritage

Council works to continually promote and maintain the heritage aspects of the towns and villages within the Shire by providing funding through the annual Heritage Assistance Grants Scheme.

This scheme is open to owners of recognised heritage properties and helps fund minor repairs and maintenance work. This funding source is of benefit to owners of heritage properties and applicants can apply for funding between $500 and $5,000. In the 2015/16 financial year, Council awarded $16,115 to four applicants.

Council has identified approximately 90 new heritage items proposed for inclusion in the Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan (LEP).

Number of heritage sites and listings

- The Shire currently has 328 heritage items, 16 heritage conservation areas and eight archaeological sites.
- There are 39 items listed on the State Heritage Register in the Shire.
- There is one Aboriginal Place in Wingecarribee Shire, called Nungunngungulla (Jubilee Rocks). This is a culturally sensitive site and the exact location is not public information.

Logos designed and created by Margaret J Mapperson
4. ENVIRONMENT

Since opening in December 2015, the Community Recycling Centre has accepted more than 141 tonnes of household items.

Garden Organics service introduced in July 2014
Goal 4.1: Wingecarribee’s distinct and diverse natural environment is protected and enhanced

Goal 4.2: Wingecarribee communities live sustainably by choice

Goal 4.3: Wingecarribee achieves continuous reduction in waste generation and disposal to landfill

Goal 4.4: Wingecarribee community has a carbon neutral economy

The Resource Recovery Centre consistently exceeds the EPA’s target diversion rate of waste from landfill

Council’s REFund projects will decrease greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 243 tonnes per year
Effective use of the Environment Levy

The Environment Levy was introduced in 2000 in consultation with the community, to help address the challenges in managing natural resources in the Southern Highlands. As a result of Council’s application for a Special Rate Variation in February 2016, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) approved the continuation of the Environment Levy permanently. This will enable Council to continue to effectively manage the region’s natural resources.

During the Council term, Environment Levy funds have been used to deliver a variety of important environmental and sustainable related projects. These fall under the four focused program areas: Protect and Grow, Community Support, Streams and Rivers and Sustainable Living.

Examples of Environment Levy-funded projects/events that fall under the focused program areas include:

- a Bushcare program that carries out restoration works on approximately 1000 hectares of bushland per year, including weed control and revegetation works
- the Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Project, which involves satellite collaring of 20 koalas in the local area to indicate where koalas live and breed, and will direct the long term conservation of koalas
- Recovering Local Creeks projects such as the Mittagong Creek Rehabilitation Project, which involves restoration of public water ways via weed removal, bank stabilisation and water monitoring
- facilitating community response by supporting events such as Schools Environment Day, World Environment Week, National Tree Day, Household Chemical CleanOut, Clean-Up Australia Day, Threatened Species Day displays and Sustainable Housing Forums
- continued support for 17 community Bushcare groups and community partnerships such as Habitat for Wildlife, Land for Wildlife and voluntary conservation agreements.

To encourage sustainable initiatives in local businesses, Council uses Environment Levy funds to sponsor the Business Sustainability Award as part of the Southern Highlands Local Business Awards. This award recognises and encourages local businesses that are showing initiative in the area of sustainability.

Water quality is maintained and sewerage treatment is effective

Council continues to conduct regular and consistent monitoring of the health of key urban waterways in Bowral (Mittagong Creek), Mittagong (Lake Alexandra) and Moss Vale (Whites Creek) via its Waterwatch program. Testing conducted through the program includes temperature, pH acidity, salinity, turbidity and dissolved oxygen. Over time, baseline information is collected to form long-term trends and indicate anomalies that may require further investigation.

In 2013, Council introduced the ice-pigging program and was one of the first councils in New South Wales to use the technology. Ice-pigging has proven to be a successful addition in supporting key water quality parameters such as chlorine residual and turbidity, and has led to the removal of deposits within the Shire’s water supply. This helps ensure the region’s water supply continues to meet Australian standards and the needs of the community.

During the Council term, ice-pigging has cleaned water pipes in the following locations:

- 2013/2014: Bundanoon, Exeter and Sally’s Corner
- 2014/2015: Sally’s Corner, Sutton Forest and Moss Vale

The $33.5 million Robertson Sewer Scheme and Treatment Plant was officially opened in September 2013 and has improved the management of sewerage disposal and reduced the potential environmental impacts of on-site sewer management systems.

Council also installed sewerage infiltration reduction devices with the assistance of an $825,000 grant from WaterNSW in 2014. This has improved the ability of sanitary sewer systems and treatment facilities to transport and treat domestic and industrial wastewater, reducing the risk of wastewater being discharged into the environment.
Goal 4.2 Wingecarribee communities live sustainably by choice

Reduce Council’s environmental footprint

Council has continued to implement sustainable improvements to its buildings with the aim of reducing its environmental footprint. During the term, more than 100 kilowatts of solar electricity systems have been installed on Council and community infrastructure. This includes the Resource Recovery Centre, Bowral Library, the Welcome Centre and Mittagong Rural Fire Service shed. The solar projects installed to date will save Council approximately $20,000 per year on an ongoing basis.

In January 2016, Council’s Moss Vale Civic Centre underwent a major lighting upgrade to replace less energy-efficient fluorescent lights with more efficient LED fittings. This project followed on from a similar project conducted at the Bowral and Mittagong libraries in 2012, which now saves $2,250 a year.

It is anticipated the Moss Vale Civic Centre lighting upgrade will result in savings of 149,000 kilowatts a year, which translates into a savings of around $25,000 a year.

The majority of these projects were funded as part of Council’s Revolving Energy Fund (REFund) and Renew program. They will help reduce Council’s environmental footprint by decreasing Council’s greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 243 tonnes a year on an ongoing basis. Council’s (REFund) program was recognised as a finalist in the Blue Star sustainability awards in the category of Sustainable Systems in 2015.

Climate change adaptation

In 2012, Council conducted a climate change risk assessment workshop across all Council areas. Following the risk assessment, a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy was developed in 2014. The strategy identified 39 key risks and the adaptation actions required across Council’s functions to address these risks.

Council is currently in the process of implementing adaptation actions from this Strategy, such as incorporating climate adaptation actions in water and sewer operations, assessing Council assets in bushfire-prone areas, identifying biodiversity corridors, undertaking flood risk assessments and the inclusion of climate adaptation actions in the Street Tree Master Plan.

Council support of community gardens

Council has continued its commitment to support community gardens in the Shire. These gardens provide inclusive spaces connecting people with food and food cultures as well as providing opportunities for social networking. Council aims to encourage and support communities and residents to create a self-provisioning economy by growing their own food. Council has developed educational documents on how to establish and run a community garden and offers financial support via the Community Assistance Scheme – Environmental Grants for Community Garden projects such as fencing construction.
Goal 4.3 Wingecarribee achieves continuous reduction in waste generation and disposal to landfill

Appropriate waste management options

The waste management options available to the community have increased during the Council term, with one of the most significant improvements being the introduction of the garden organics (green waste) service. This service was introduced to approximately 16,500 residences in July 2014 and has resulted in an increase in green waste collected, bringing the average to just less than 10,000 tonnes annually. The green waste is reused to produce Australian-standard mulch and made available for sale to the public.

Reduction in waste to landfill

The Community Satisfaction Survey identifies that satisfaction with Council encouraging waste reduction initiatives has increased to 86 per cent in 2015. Several education programs aimed at reducing waste to landfill have been implemented during the term. These include composting and worm farm workshops, Love Food, Hate Waste cooking classes and school/community group educational talks on recycling and waste management.

The Resource Recovery Centre has consistently exceeded the target diversion rate of waste from landfill set by the Environmental Protection Authority, achieving 83.2 per cent diversion rates. The Environmental Protection Authority recently introduced its Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014-2021, which has increased the waste diversion target from 66 per cent to 75 per cent, and Council is on track to continue to exceed targets.

Council officially opened the Community Recycling Centre in December 2015. This project was funded by grants from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) - $180,000 from the EPA Environment Trust and $90,000 from the Waste Less, Recycle More grant. The Community Recycling Centre accepts household items that are not recyclable via the general household waste service, such as gas bottles, paint, oil and smoke detectors and has helped further reduce the amount of waste to landfill.

Since opening in December 2015, the Community Recycling Centre has accepted more than 141.5 tonnes of household items.

Encouraging waste reduction initiatives

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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Community satisfaction survey 2015.)
Goal 4.4 Wingecarribee community has a carbon neutral economy

Move towards a low carbon economy

Council has continued to identify and implement opportunities to move towards a low carbon economy. Actions undertaken to reduce the impact of Council’s operations include installation of solar panels on six Council buildings, and upgrading lighting to energy-efficient lights at the Civic Centre and at several outdoor facilities.

In addition, Council has put substantial effort into improving the accuracy, completeness and accessibility of its energy consumption data and billing information. This allows Council to prioritise options to reduce energy consumption.

Council has also supported the community to move towards a low carbon economy by installing an electric vehicle recharge station and purchasing electric bikes in 2015.

Both of these activities are designed to promote sustainable tourism in the area and are based at the Welcome Centre. The electric vehicle charge station is available for use by residents and visitors to the region. Council has supported the community to switch to solar energy by facilitating several presentations for the community and supporting Climate Action Now Wingecarribee (CANWin) activities.

### Encouraging recycling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Community satisfaction survey 2015.)
Council entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the University of Wollongong.

Council’s Destination Southern Highlands awarded Gold in the category of Destination Marketing NSW and Bronze nationally in 2013 and 2014.
Goal 5.1: Wingecarribee is a centre for learning

Goal 5.2: The Southern Highlands is a recognised tourist destination throughout Australia

Goal 5.3: Wingecarribee has agribusiness suited to our distinct climate and geography

Goal 5.4: Sustainable business and industry thrive in Wingecarribee

Goal 5.5: Wingecarribee’s diverse economy drives a wide range of job and career opportunities

Council’s Tulip Time Festival awarded ‘Tulip Festival of the Year’ at the World Tulip Awards in 2015

68,432 head of cattle were turned over at the Southern Regional Livestock Exchange in 2015/16.
Goal 5.1 Wingecarribee is a centre for learning

The community has access to lifelong learning

Council has been identified in Wingecarribee 2031+ as an advocate and facilitator in developing Wingecarribee as a centre for lifelong learning and improving the region’s education, learning and training industries.

A need has been identified for an innovation centre/learning hub to support lifelong learning. To address this, Council has commenced discussions with local educational institutes such as the University of Wollongong and TAFE NSW to explore potential solutions.

Opportunities for lifelong learning are provided by Council through various education programs and workshops, such as environmental education in schools, traffic safety programs, cultural awareness training, youth mental health workshops and traditional indigenous games training.

In July 2016, Council entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the University of Wollongong.

The MoU is intended to foster a relationship of collaboration and cooperation between Council and the university. It will benefit the region by increasing economic stimulus and has potential to attract other students from across the country and abroad.

Goal 5.2 The Southern Highlands is a recognised tourist destination throughout Australia

Strong recognition of the Southern Highlands brand

Council continues to successfully promote the Southern Highlands region as a destination for visitors and businesses. Council’s Destination Southern Highlands was awarded Gold in the category of Destination Marketing in New South Wales consecutively in 2013 and 2014. In the same years, Destination Southern Highlands received Bronze in the national awards.

September 2015 saw the upgrade and relaunch of the Welcome Centre (formally the Visitor Information Centre) to improve service delivery and facilities.

The upgrade included the introduction of a ‘concierge’ service for residents and visitors, and installation of digital information tools including touchscreens, video walls and interactive window map. Other services include a free wi-fi, smart phone and tablet recharge station, as well as a meeting room and hot desk facilities available for hire by business groups.

Council continues to attract visitors to the region through targeted marketing campaigns such as the very successful Fall in Love Again in the Southern Highlands Winter 2015.

The region is also well promoted via the annual development and distribution of the region’s interactive official visitor guide Southern Highlands Destination Planner. During the Council term, the number of visitors to the Welcome Centre has increased by more than 3,000 people.

Continued growth of festivals in the region

The Tulip Time Festival has continued to grow in size and popularity over the years and received record visitation numbers in both 2014 and 2015 with 35,369 and 38,010 visitors respectively.

In 2015, Council celebrated the 55th year of the event and was awarded the title of Tulip Festival of the Year as part of the World Tulip Summit Society at the inaugural World Tulip Awards.

Council played a significant role in developing and repositioning the Southern Highlands Food and Wine Festival in 2014 and 2015, and provided support for the initiation and development of the inaugural Southern Highlands Wedding Festival in 2015. Both of these events have received high attendance and become ongoing, annual events.

Support for tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Community satisfaction survey 2015.)
Goal 5.3 Wingecarribee has agribusiness suited to our distinct climate and geography

Council supports local farmers and agriculture businesses

Council continues to offer support to local agribusiness through the Southern Regional Livestock Exchange (SRLX). The SRLX is run as a business unit of Council and at no cost to ratepayers.

The SRLX is currently ranked 10 out of the saleyards in New South Wales for number of throughput of cattle (Meat & Livestock Australia, 2016).

At the end of the 2015/16 financial year, the SRLX had turned over 68,432 head of cattle and saw an annual gross turnover of $70.2 million.

Goal 5.4 Sustainable business and industry thrive in Wingecarribee

Encourage local businesses to grow and thrive in a sustainable manner

Council is identified in Wingecarribee 2031+ as an advocate and facilitator in encouraging sustainable business and industry to thrive within the Wingecarribee Shire.

Council has worked with members of the community to form cluster groups (under the banner of the Southern Highlands Development Framework) specialised in the areas of water, food, shelter, energy, transport, technology, the arts, recreation, business and learning. These groups are currently working on projects that will help mitigate potential job losses in the future and generate a sustainable economy via sustainable jobs.

Support for local business and employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Community satisfaction survey 2015.)

83% satisfaction with the support for local business and employment
Goal 5.5 Wingecarribee’s diverse economy drives a wide range of job and career opportunities

Focus on economic development opportunities

Council continues to help foster economic development opportunities. The inaugural Economic Summit was held on 16 June 2015 and provided an opportunity for the community to start conversations on potential projects and form cluster groups in the key economic sector areas of water, food, shelter, energy, transport, technology, the arts, recreation, business and learning.

The inaugural Investment Summit followed on from the Economic Summit and was held on 29 October 2015. The main purpose of the summit was to start essential conversations around funding for the cluster groups’ elected projects.

On 21 June 2016, an economic workshop was held and continued to promote new ideas and communication across different cluster groups, as well as increasing the focus on branding and promotion of the region as a destination for businesses. Participation for the summits and workshops continue to increase, with a 50 per cent increase in numbers since the first summit.

Currently, there are more than 300 participants across the cluster groups.