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## Appendices

### Appendix A - Wyong Shire Community Plan 2002

The Wyong Shire Community Plan 2002 encompassed key social issues focusing on people's quality of life in the community. The plan built on comprehensive consultations held locally and regionally to identify these issues. The Plan set the context for each issue area, outlined Council's response and role and the key strategies and action required to be pursued.

The Community Plan proved to be a valuable resource document for services providers and the community.

The plan identified over 200 action areas under key themes. Upon review, the Plan was very ambitious and whilst progress was made against many action areas, other actions were not completed due to changing priorities, the large number of actions and limited resources. A key lesson in developing the new Community Plan was to have fewer actions and clearer priorities for each year of implementation to enable improved integration with Council's Management Plan.

Key Achievements of the Community Plan 2002 include:

#### Community Support

- Construction of multi-purpose community centres at Kanwal, Mardi, Wadalba, Berkeley Vale and Blue Haven.
- Acquisition of the Old Infants School Site and The Entrance and completion of the planning and development for The Entrance Community Centre.
- Construction of "Gravity" multi-purpose Youth Centre at Lake Haven.
- Establishment of a Community Cultural Centre in Wyong.
- Planning and feasibility studies for a Performing Arts Centre in Wyong.





- Advocacy for the continued funding of the Warnervale Family and Community Centre.
- Implementation of the Community Support and Human Services Plan for Warnervale/Wadalba and planning for community facilities within Warnervale Town Centre.
- Support for the establishment of a Police Citizens and Youth Club (PCYC) at EDSACC Bateau Bay.
- Partnership to support and stage the Central Coast Community Congress.
- Success in advocating for the Benevolent Society to receive \$3.5 million Federal Government funding for the 2261 Communities for Children's Project.
- Facilitation of collaborative planning processes between Council, State and Federal Government agencies, the non-government sector and the community.
- Support for the expansion of early intervention and prevention (parenting and family support) programmes.
- Provision of high quality affordable children's services.
- Establishment of a Youth Advisory Committee.
- Funding of the Birth to Kindergarten early intervention literacy programme and introduction of the mother goose pre-literacy programme at Lake Haven Library.
- Financial support for the Family Violence Prevention project.
- Secured Families First and Regional Partnerships Funding for the North Wyong Integrated Child and Family Centre Project (2 years).
- Success in obtaining Area Assistance Scheme Funding for an Aboriginal Youth Outreach Worker based at Gravity Youth Centre.
- Production of the Central Coast: Regional Profile and Social Atlas in collaboration with Gosford City Council, Central Coast Health and the University of Newcastle.





- Development of on-line population and household forecasts for the Shire and sub-areas.
- Upgrading of the Central Coast Community Directory and establishment of a families website [www.centralcoastfamilies.com.au](http://www.centralcoastfamilies.com.au).
- Development of a framework to measure and monitor Quality of Life.

### Community Development

- Adoption and ongoing promotion of a strengths-based approach to community development.
- Facilitation of successful asset based community development projects across the Shire.
- Implementation of the Watanobbi Welcome Programme in partnership with Landcom.
- Appointment of a Cultural Planner.
- Development and implementation of A Cultural Plan for Wyong Shire.
- Development and implementation of a Community Benefits Grants Programme and a Cultural Grants Programme.
- Support for cultural diversity and encouragement of residents to participate in cultural activities and events.
- Implementation of Community Art projects.
- Development of a Public Arts Policy and framework to implement public and community art projects.

### Education

- Funding of education scholarships for students who were financially disadvantaged.
- Introduction of homework help at Tuggerah Library.





- Successful in advocating for the Central Coast to be considered as an education sub-region.
- Implementation of community education programmes on the environment and road safety.
- Enhanced training and employment opportunities within Council through Trainee Programme.
- Co-operative planning with the Department of Education and Training to identify school sites in Warnervale.
- Co-operative planning with the Department of Education and Training to allow for the expansion of Blue Haven School and the shared use of community and recreation facilities.
- Completed a Community Use of Schools project to provide community use of school facilities out of school hours.

## Employment

- Rezoning for the Wyong Employment Zone (WEZ).
- Planning for Warnervale Town Centre.
- Improved processing times for major employment generating developments.
- Town Centre upgrades – Wyong.
- Development of a Central Coast logo.
- Establishment of a Manager Business Development position.

## Health

- Partner in the establishment of the Links to Health Medical Centre at Warnervale.
- Provision of space within Gravity Youth Centre for a youth health service.
- Promotion of healthy lifestyle programmes, e.g. Wyong Workfit.





- Support for the development of a strategy to improve the delivery of primary health care.
- Continued advocacy for improved access to GPS for residents.

## Housing

- Secured partnership funding under the Department of Housing Local Government Housing Initiatives Programme to prepare an Affordable Housing Strategy.
- Development of the *"Promoting Choice: A Local Housing Strategy for Wyong Shire"*.
- Provision of funding for emergency accommodation services in Wyong Shire.

## Community Safety

- Secured funding from the Community Solutions and Crime Prevention Strategy for a Youth Place Space Co-ordinator at Lake Haven.
- Engagement of young people in public space planning in Lake Haven.
- Development of a crime risk assessment protocol to identify types of development that require a crime risk assessment as part of the DA process.
- Application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles.
- Support for Community Drug Action Teams (CDATs) at San Remo.
- Development of targeted programmes to improve road user behaviour.
- Establishment of CARES facility at Ourimbah.

## Public Transport

- Support for the implementation of the Central Coast Transport Action Plan.
- Continued advocacy for an improved public transport system.





## Leisure, Recreation and Open Space

- Completion and implementation of a Local Parks Strategy.
- Completion of a major upgrade of Toowoon Bay Surf Club.
- Completion of Jubilee Park redevelopment.
- Completion of Stage 2 of the Regional Hockey Complex at Pollock Avenue.
- Construction of an Extreme Sports Park at San Remo.
- Completion of a review and update of the Bicycle Plan.
- Upgrade of Lake Haven Recreation Centre.
- Provision of new Skate parks at Lake Haven, Blue Haven and Berkeley Vale.
- Extension of the cycleway, shared pathway networks.
- Commencement of planning for the Warnervale Aquatic Centre.
- Continued support of Landcare groups
- Upgrades to existing sportsgrounds.





## Appendix B - Known participants in the Community Plan Consultations

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## Appendix C - Consultation Responses relating to each Question Asked

### Where Do You Live?

#### *Toukley Social Planning District*

Toukley	Noraville	Norah Head	Canton Beach
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#### *San Remo/Budgewoi Social Planning District*

Blue Haven	Budgewoi	Buff Point	San Remo
Doyalson	Halekulani		

#### *Gorokan Social Planning District*

Gorokan	Lake Haven	Kanwal	Wyongah
Charmhaven			

#### *The Entrance Social Planning District*

Bateau Bay	Long Jetty	Blue Bay	Shelly Beach
Toowoan Bay	The Entrance	North Entrance	

#### *Ourimbah/Rural South Social Planning District*

Fountaindale	Kangy Angy	Ourimbah	Rural South
Palmdale			

#### *Warnervale/Wadalba Social Planning District*

Hamlyn Terrace	Woongarra	Warnervale	Wadalba
Wallarah			

#### *Wyong Social Planning District*

Wyong	Tuggerah	Mardi	Watanobbi
Tuggerawong	Tacoma	Tacoma South	Rocky Point
Chittaway Point			





***Southern Lakes Social Planning District***

Berkeley Vale

Chittaway Bay

Tumbi Umbi

Glenning Valley

Killarney Vale

Tumbi Rural

***Rural West Social Planning District***

Cedar Brush

Yarramalong

Dooralong

Wyong Creek

Jiliby

Kulnura

Lemon Tree

Ravensdale

***Northern Lakes Social Planning District***

Chain Valley Bay

Elizabeth Bay

Lake Munmorah

Mannering Park

Gwandalan

Summerland Point





## How Long have you Lived in this Community?

There was a broad representation of long term residents, medium term residents and residents who had just moved to the area.

Time spent in the Shire ranged from just a few months to people who had lived in the Shire all their lives. This allowed differing views to emerge about what it's like to live in the Shire.

Interestingly, as an example, people who have lived in the Shire for a fairly significant period of time (e.g. 15+ years) remember back to when the Wyong Shire was a much quieter, less busy place that had a limited range of shops, less traffic and less people generally. These people on the whole felt that the area had changed significantly in the time they had lived here – sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse.

On the other hand, people newly arrived to the Shire from other areas felt that Wyong Shire is a peaceful, quiet place with not much traffic or congestion.

Many people who were new arrivals to the Shire indicated that they had a long time familiarity with the area as they had holidayed in the Shire as children and still thought of the area as a tranquil and relaxing area

This is just one example of the diverse range of responses which reflect on the amount of time and perception of change gained from experience of living in the Shire.





## What First Brought You/Your Family Here?

*"A removalist van"* – one of the humorous responses from a member of a focus group held at San Remo.

The most highly reported reasons for moving to the Shire were:

- The lifestyle the area offers;
- Affordability of the area;
- Work purposes;
- To be closer to friends and family; and
- The natural environment the area has to offer.

When people talked about moving to the Shire because of the lifestyle the area offers, they mentioned that they thought Wyong Shire was a better place to bring up kids, that they were already familiar with the area as they had holidayed here as a child, that it is a more quiet, relaxed and laid back area, it is a more community focused area and has a good community feel.

According to residents in the consultations, Wyong Shire is a good or better place than other areas to raise children and bring up a family. Many people commented that they moved to this area specifically to have a family and give their children a better quality of life.

*"I grew up here and then moved to Sydney. We got married and had kids and decided to come back here with our children. We wanted our kids to have a similar growing up experience as we did."*

*"It's a perfect place to raise a family."*

*"We holidayed here as children at Long Jetty and decided to move with the family here permanently."*

The affordability category directly related to the (once) greater availability of 'more attractive and larger' houses and land than had been available in other areas, coupled with the close proximity of the lakes and beaches compared to similar in Sydney.





*"We moved here because we couldn't afford to live in Sydney anymore."*

*"We couldn't afford to live in Sydney and have the same type of house we have here."*

*"It's cheaper to buy a house on the Central Coast than in Sydney."*

Comments received from a significant number of residents did indicate that they would not be able to move into the area if they had to purchase a property now, as house and land prices have increased considerably, making the area much less affordable. Many comments from residents indicated this:

*"Coast prices are more affordable than Sydney – but prices are rising and the gap is closing."*

*"Land was cheaper so we could build. This has changed now."*

*"We moved here because the house was cheap! We couldn't afford to buy here now though."*

Many people stated that they moved to the Shire for work purposes, although a majority of residents expressed disappointment and frustration at the lack of employment range in Wyong Shire and on the Central Coast, therefore forcing people to commute thus impacting on their quality of life in their community. There were mixed feelings about living in the Shire from those who moved here for work purposes.

Some people were very disappointed at living in the area:

*"We transferred here with work. Not by choice."*

While other people who moved here for work purposes, love living in the Shire:

*"We relocated here for my husband's new job. We wanted to get out of Sydney and we absolutely love it here."*





A significant number of residents stated that they moved to the Shire to be closer to friends and family:

*"We moved here to be closer to parents."*

*"We moved here because it's closer to our relatives in Sydney."*

*"We moved to be closer to family."*

The natural environment rated very highly as a reason for moving to the area. People love the natural environment that Wyong Shire offers. Residents regularly commented on their love of the natural aspects of the Shire such as the lakes, beaches, bushland and animals.

The diversity of the Shire was a feature that was highly valued by residents. Most people regularly mentioned the range of natural features, from the mountains and bushland to the hinterland, rural farming areas, lake foreshore, lakes, beaches and ocean.

*"It's a hidden treasure. I love the natural environment – the water, wild birds and the lake edge."*

The attractiveness of the area as a place to live directly related to the preservation of the natural environment. People love the natural features of the Shire, but are becoming increasingly concerned about the degradation of these places. There was a strong view expressed by residents that Council has a key role to play in preserving the natural environment. People felt that to preserve the environment, Council should encourage balanced development rather than unchecked population growth, retain the green spaces and replant appropriate lost trees in the area.

### **What is it Like for You to Live in this Community?**

Overall, most residents indicated that living in Wyong Shire is quite good; however there are both positive and negative aspects of life in the Shire.

On a positive note, residents expressed that the area is generally quiet, peaceful and relaxing, especially when compared to where people had previously lived (Sydney, Gosford City, and Newcastle etc). People reflected on the laid back holiday nature of the area and the freedom people feel living here.





*"Living here seems like being on holidays all the time."*

*"We've never been so happy as we are now - living here."*

*"The area is more crowded, has less trees, is less civilised, less interesting, has less good food – both at restaurants and materials to cook at home. It is much further from my work and work linked social activities, there is a reduced availability of medical services that we need, and our friends are much further away."*

The sense of community of a place plays the most critical role in whether people feel good about living within a community. Most residents described that they had never lived in a friendlier place:

*"It is wonderful to live in Wyong Shire. It is extremely quiet with plenty of room. It is a great place to raise kids as there are great schools. There is a warm feeling in the community and people are quick to establish caring relationships to catch up with others, chat and establish contacts."*

*"The people are very friendly here."*

*"It is an excellent diverse community. Support is there if we need it."*

*"People are friendly and welcoming. We love it here and are very happy living here."*

*"People are so caring here. We are involved with our neighbours and kid's school which is really nice."*

Some residents described a less positive experience – they feel discriminated against, isolated, disconnected and lonely:

*"People who you interact with every day are friendly, but people who don't know you behave with prejudice and fear."*

*"There is not a good sense of community in this area. We feel quite isolated."*

*"There is no trust amongst the neighbours here."*





*"It's getting too much like Sydney. People just don't care. We are losing the village atmosphere."*

People also generally feel very safe living here, especially when compared to where they previously lived:

*"It's great living in the area. At the moment it is very rural, very peaceful and quiet during the day. We have really good neighbours who look out for you. It is a place where you feel safe walking at night. I live in a cul-de-sac street which creates a sense of community and character."*

*"It's safe to walk around day and night."*

There is the increasing fear however, that this is changing:

*"It has changed since we moved here. There's more people and traffic. It is still good though. We like it here. There are social problems – my car was stolen last week, but that's a small price to pay."*

*"People feel that it's not as safe as it used to be."*

*"There are some aspects of social unrest and fear creeping in."*

The environment of the place plays a key role in people having a positive experience of living in the Shire. Most people who have moved to the area initially moved because they were attracted to the natural beauty of the area and the cleaner fresher environment that Wyong Shire offers:

*"The birds and the clean environment are wonderful."*

*"A real sense of peace and visual beauty can be found in the natural environment here."*

*"We love the water and the waterways. We absolutely love the Central Coast."*

People are becoming increasingly concerned however that the physically beautiful, peaceful, friendly and safe nature of the area is rapidly changing. People feel worried that the Wyong Shire they live in today will not be the same in 5 years if it keeps going the way it has been going:

*"Before there weren't too many people in the Shire. Now it is congested and busy."*





*"There is a strong protectiveness to keep the area as it is."*

*"Right now it's very frightening, the future of the area is uncertain and under threat. It's not the way we want it to be."*

*"Friendly but I'm not pleased about the continued level of development."*

*"I think it's a great area, but I think the lack of infrastructure needs to be addressed."*

### **What do You see your Community or Social Network as being?**

Community is not necessarily about connecting with people in a geographic location. Community can be defined in two ways: Communities of place and Communities of interest. Communities of place are defined by geographic characteristics and context. Communities of interest are defined by the mutual identity and interests shared across particular groups of people which can exist within or across communities of place. It is possible for a 'place' to lack a strong sense of community, and conversely, it is possible for there to be a strong sense of community among people who don't share a 'place'.

In the responses to this question, residents demonstrated that very idea. People in our community identified that their community in most cases not just about their geographic suburb, but rather about the people and groups they connect with across the whole of the Shire, the Central Coast and even stretching to other wider areas such as Sydney and Newcastle.

Often, when referring to a 'place' as their community, people were talking about their half of the street, or their cluster of neighbours rather than a group of streets or the entire suburb.

Making connections with people is very important to our community, especially as we have a significant number of new residents moving in to the Shire, who have moved away from their families, friends and support networks.

In responding to this question, residents usually talked about the vast range of communities that they are involved in and also usually allocated a rating to each community for example:

*"My family is my first and foremost community."*





Involvement in community, sporting, cultural, formal and informal groups, social clubs and volunteering was described by people as the key to firstly fitting in and getting to know the ins and outs of that community and finding a place in the community, and secondly making friends and connections:

*"The centre has been an absolute lifeline for me. I came here to try one group and now I am a volunteer involved in so many things."*

*"Being involved at the kid's school has helped me to get to know a lot of different people and families."*

*"It's important to get out and be involved. In this community, if you make an effort, you will be involved in the community."*

For many people who moved to Wyong Shire from other areas, their neighbours have made all the difference in fitting in and feeling at home in their new suburb:

*"Toukley is so friendly. It is just like the country and our neighbours have made us feel so welcome and accepted in the street."*

Others felt that their street was not their point for social connection or interaction:

*"I would love to get to know the neighbours better, but they are very busy and just don't seem to have the time. My community is the church."*

Young people indicated that their communities were centred around both place and interest. Educational institutions such as school, TAFE and University and groups such as dance classes as well as family and friends both in same suburbs and across the wider Wyong Shire were the most important to young people.

### **Do you Feel like You are a Part of your Community?**

Initially, most people responded to this question with an overwhelming yes. This could be attributed the fact that most of the people we spoke with were connected in some form to their community, whether that be through the local school, through their children, through an interest group etc. therefore increasing the positive experience in feeling connected.





After further analysis of the responses to the question, it emerged that the responses were closely linked to how residents defined their communities and social networks in the previous question.

After being asked the previous question “What do you see your community or social network as being?” and responding in a variety of ways, representing both communities of place and communities of interest, people therefore did feel like a part of their community.

For example, many residents responded that their community was not necessarily about the place they live, but it is about the people and groups they connect with, e.g. their family and friends, the craft group, action group, playgroup etc.

Naturally with a range of communities in mind, most people responded that yes they felt connected to their community, in fact many residents felt very connected to, and a part of a range of different communities.

Some people were isolated and did not feel like a part of either their community of place or in terms of communities of interest. For example, some people from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background felt isolated in terms of the place they live and within the wider Central Coast, but felt very connected to the communities of their families, friends and cultural group. People from these groups even felt like a part of the area from which they had come, e.g. particular locations in Sydney where a community of their cultural group lives.

Some people felt like their age excluded them from being accepted in the community where they live, and the wider Shire. Young people are a group who feel sometimes excluded from the wider community, but mostly accepted by their peers.

Some residents also responded that in terms of feeling like a part of the community, it is also the local knowledge and workings of a community that makes you feel like a part of it.

*“It’s about familiarity – things you know intimately about the place you live, for example – where to eat, where not to go on a Saturday night, where the ‘secret’ surf spot is – it’s the nuts and bolts of a community.”*





## What Makes You Feel Happy in your Life?

This question was initially quite hard for people to answer. Most people were quite taken aback and had to think for a few moments before answering.

### *Being Involved in the Community and Helping People*

Keeping in line with the major theme of involvement in community to connect and link people, residents indicated that being involved and active in their community and helping people is a major factor that makes them happy. For many residents, being involved and connected is how they keep busy and feel needed.

*"Giving back to the community makes me feel really happy."*

*"When I can use my skills to see an outcome in the community, e.g. join a community organisation and work on a project and see a result. That makes me happy."*

*"I like to be doing things that help other people, e.g. at the Senior Citizen's Centre."*

*"The satisfaction of helping people."*

### *Friends, Family and Connections with People*

Obviously, most residents responded by saying that their friends and family make them feel happy. This emphasises the importance of social networks, connections and linkages as well as support networks like family.

*"My family of course – my four children."*

*"Family – most of my family live close by."*

*"Family connections first and foremost – my children and grandchildren live close by."*

*"I am a very social person – with people I am in my element."*





### *Enjoying Life and the Lifestyle the Area Offers*

Residents responded that the laid back, carefree and less stressed nature of the area is a factor that makes them feel happy. The 'simple things' in life and the outdoor nature of the area is key to making people feel happy.

*"Having a cup of tea out in the fresh air. It's the simple things that make me happy."*

*"Sitting in a coffee shop by the beach and watching the world go by."*

*"It's a relaxed and friendly atmosphere."*

*"It's an outdoor lifestyle – fresh air, ability to get out and walk or cycle."*

### *The Natural Beauty of the Area*

The good clean environment and the natural beauty of the area makes people feel happy:

*"The beautiful natural environment of the Shire makes me feel happy."*

*"Being able to breathe clean fresh air."*

*"The physical environment and the preservation of all the green spaces, lakes and beaches."*

### *Having Enough Money*

Residents meant that by having enough money, they are able to live in an area they want, in a house they like, with enough money left over (after paying the bills and meeting expenses), to be able to enjoy some leisure pursuits e.g. going out to dinner, going to the movies etc. When people responded to this topic they did not mean lavish homes and leisure pursuits, but just more the simple things in life:

*"We have always had 2 incomes which makes a difference to quality of life in that we have enough money to do the things we want to do."*

*"We are fairly well off (without being wealthy) which contributes to being happy."*





*"We have enough money to be able to live where we wanted. This makes us feel happy."*

### **What are the Best Things/High Points about Living where you Live?**

Residents described the environment, the friendly atmosphere and sense of community, feeling safe, the lifestyle of the area and the development of the area as the best things about living in Wyong Shire.

#### *The Friendly Atmosphere and Sense of Community*

People rated this highly because of the importance for people to feel accepted, included and connected to their community. Residents generally felt that Wyong Shire is particularly friendly and has a great or even better sense of community than where they lived before. The friendly atmosphere and sense of community is one of the best things about living in the Shire:

*"Most people say hello and know each other. It has a real villagey feeling."*

*"I wouldn't move from here at all. I like the feeling. Community people."*

*"In the whole community there is a very friendly atmosphere."*

*"People talk to each other."*

*"People say hello when you're out walking."*

*"We can call on the neighbours if we need help – we have called on them before."*

*"There is a good sense of community on the Central Coast."*

*"There is a real neighbourly connection – someone always says hello."*

*"Nice quiet street, good neighbours are important."*





### *The Environment*

As previously described, the quality of the environment is an important factor in people initially choosing to move to the Shire. People really love the environment the area offers its residents:

*"The clean air."*

*"Sun and sunsets."*

*"The environment, lack of congestion, the beach and the outdoor living."*

*"Wyong Shire has great natural amenities – the beach, lake and bush, all close by."*

*"A rural area surrounded by trees and wildlife – it is lovely."*

*"The oceans and mountains – a diverse environment."*

*"Access to the natural areas and that there is plenty of trees. We need to retain the ridges with trees on them."*

*"It's a beautiful part of the world."*

### *That the Area is Relatively Safe*

People felt that Wyong Shire is a fairly safe place to live and therefore rated this as one of the best things about living here. In particular, residents feel safe whilst walking around in their communities, in some cases also at night:

*"We feel like it's still safe to walk the streets at night."*

*"We feel safe here."*

*"We are safe walking around."*





### *The Lifestyle of the Area*

This theme was rated very highly as one of the best things about living in the Shire. Many people who are relatively new to the area moved here because of the lifestyle it offers – a less stressed, relaxed laid back area, and a great place to raise a family:

*"I like the freedom of the area. We aren't boxed in at all."*

*"It's a great place for families."*

*"It's like a country area, relaxed and slower paced."*

*"People actually say hello when you are out walking."*

*"Less stressed compared to Sydney."*

*"A simple life."*

*"Laid back village lifestyle."*

*"The pace of life is slower. It's not a rat race and not congested with traffic."*

### *The Location/Proximity of the Shire*

One of the best things about living in the Shire according to residents is its close proximity to major cities, freeways and airports combined with the proximity of the lakes, beaches and oceans.

People described the choice between living two hours from Sydney in either Wyong Shire or in Western Sydney, and for the residents who moved to the Shire, their preference was to take advantage of the lifestyle and environment of the area compared to living in Western Sydney (no availability of beaches etc).

People also described the isolated location of suburbs within the Shire as both an advantage and a disadvantage. By this people meant that the quiet, peaceful nature of some of the suburbs is a real positive, but the lack of facilities, distance to get to things and poor infrastructure is a negative.





*"Wyong Shire is very well located. It is close to major cities of Sydney and Newcastle and the F3 freeway, airports, etc."*

*"The isolation of some of the northern suburbs of Wyong Shire is both an advantage and a disadvantage."*

*"The location of Wyong Shire is perfect. Close to lakes and beaches, and only two hours from Sydney. We moved here because we didn't want to move to western Sydney."*

### *Development*

Some of the development on the Central Coast and in Wyong Shire has been considered as positive and progressive, and which has brought many benefits to the Shire. Such developments as described by residents included:

- Ourimbah University.
- The Entrance Outdoor Plaza area.
- Major shopping centres (Westfield Tuggerah, Lake Haven, Bateau Bay).
- F3 Freeway.
- Mingara Leisure Centre.
- Regional athletics facility.

Other residents encouraged balanced development and indicated that some development is good as it brings the appropriate infrastructure.

*"Seeing the Coast develop. We welcomed the development of Tuggerah shops and the extension of the freeway."*

*"Ourimbah campus development has been very beneficial."*

*"The development of The Entrance."*

*"It's good to have balanced development as it brings financial benefits and hopefully better facilities and services."*

*"Balanced development. It shouldn't be too overdeveloped."*





## What are the Most Challenging or Low Points of Living in your Community?

### *Lack of Entertainment*

The lack of entertainment was consistently one of the most commonly mentioned challenges or low points of living in Wyong Shire. By the broad theme of entertainment, residents referred to a lack of both organised and casual opportunities, and both formal and informal facilities for all forms of entertainment to take place.

There was a strong feeling that there is a lack of focus on cultural pursuits versus sporting pursuits, and that significant investigation and funding should also be directed to supporting non sporting focused activities programmes and events.

Residents felt that generally Wyong Shire is lacking in all forms of entertainment such as movie theatres, live music venues and even more so in term of facilities of a specific nature, e.g. Performing Arts Centre, Art Galleries, etc.

Informal and casual opportunities, such as cafés and restaurants for people to meet and gather were also extremely important to residents. Access to affordable and safe entertainment was key.

The lack of entertainment opportunities in the north of the Shire was also of particular concern to residents. The transport issue further emphasises this in terms of making it extremely difficult for people to get to events/programmes/activities in other areas of the Shire.

*“There is not a lot to do if you don't play sport.”*

*“There is a lack of entertainment opportunities in the north of the Shire.”*

*“It would be nice to have a greater variety of choice in terms of cafes, restaurants, etc.”*

### *Development*

Development was seen as a major challenge or low point for people living in the Shire. Increasingly there is a consistent worry that the nature of the area is changing rapidly and generally people felt that this is out of control and unchecked.





The lack of infrastructure combined with the increasing population growth was a key worry for our residents. People feel that already the basic infrastructure and services are non-existent or stretched to the limit.

Residents expressed their fears that the small close-knit communities are being lost with the increased development. For residents living in areas of high seasonal tourist influxes, there was a concern about the lack of a permanent population and the fragmentation of the sense of community that is the result.

Most residents acknowledged the need for a range of different housing types in the area, but were insistent that higher and medium density housing be restricted to certain areas, e.g. Warnervale, around town centres and transport interchanges.

*“The over-development without the infrastructure keeping up. We are constantly playing catch up. People leave the Central Coast and spend time and money elsewhere on the weekends.”*

*“I have frustrations about the lack of infrastructure, e.g. a place for my boys to play to meet and engage with other kids, e.g. a basketball court, a community centre, etc. They need to be out and active in their community, not inside on the computer.”*

*“The continued development is worrying.”*

*“Infrastructure does not support the growing population. We must try to create balance with residents/tourists/infrastructure.”*

*“Empty development, e.g. The Entrance makes for a vacant disconnected community.”*

*“High rise development is a worry.”*

*“Basic infrastructure – roads, kerb and guttering and footpaths – a lot of places don’t even have this.”*





### *Identity of the Region*

Many residents expressed their frustration that the Central Coast is not recognised as a region in its own right:

*“Our identity – are we northern Sydney, Hunter or Newcastle? We are not recognised as our own area.”*

*“The Central Coast should be a separate region.”*

Some residents suggested that Wyong Shire is often not even considered as a part of the Central Coast and therefore Gosford City always seems to benefit more than Wyong Shire.

*“The northern parts of the Shire seem to always be left out.”*

*“I don’t see any connection between Gosford and Wyong and their ability to work together.”*

*“Why does Gosford always get the funds and the facilities?”*

### *Health Services*

Most residents were extremely critical of health and medical services in Wyong Shire and on the Central Coast. Of particular concern to residents is the lack of GPs in Wyong Shire and the associated ramifications of this including closed patient books, long waiting lists, extremely long waiting times to see a doctor (up to 3 weeks in some cases), lack of bulk billing services and lack of after hours services (including chemists).

The lack of medical specialists was also a worry to residents, with many people experiencing extremely long waiting times to see a specialist and/or travel to Sydney.

*“It’s very difficult to get a bulk billing GP.”*

*“There is a lack of adequate medical services and GPs. The GP rate per population is very low. Council needs to advocate for more doctors to address the long waiting periods.”*





*“Medical services are bad, e.g. ten day waiting list at Gwandalan, books closed, and some times waiting more than 10 days, e.g. I rang for an appointment on 10 September 2007 but the only available appointment was 17 October 2007.”*

Residents feel worried about the pollution being emitted from some of the major industries in the Shire and wondered about the long term health impacts of this:

*“I am worried about industry development in the northern parts of the Shire and the impacts on health – coal mines, power stations, desalination plants etc.”*

Wellbeing of residents and their families was also raised as a major challenge to residents. People regularly referred to the increasing obesity problem within Australia, and a culture that is encouraging kids to stay indoors and play rather than being outside. Commuting was seen as a major negative impact on the wellbeing of the commuter, their family and their community. Mental health issues such as depression and suicide are also worrying our residents.

#### *Young People*

Young people were consistently mentioned by residents as a challenge and needing an immediate focus for the Shire to move forward for the future.

Many residents felt that young people are responsible for most of the anti social behaviour, vandalism and graffiti that happens in the Shire. People felt that this behaviour happens because there isn't enough for young people to do:

*“There are many issues with anti social behaviour from young people. It is scary when a group of young people who start drinking in the park and then they come into the streets.”*

*“The wider community is very judgemental of young people.”*

Young people themselves repeatedly identified their negative portrayal in the media as contributing to and reinforcing this idea that all young people are “bad”:

*“The media only portrays negative images and articles of young people.”*





There was a strong feeling from young people that the views of the wider population are not a good or realistic representation of all young people in the Shire, and that it is a minority of all ages that partake in anti social behaviour.

All residents did agree however that there is a lack of services, alternative education, employment opportunities and entertainment opportunities for young people. This is considered as a significant challenge and low point for all residents:

*"There is a lack of everything for young people."*

*"There's not enough work for young people on the Central Coast. Young people have to leave the area to find work."*

### *Environmental Degradation*

The concern of residents regarding the degradation of the natural environment was seen as a consistent low point and challenge for people living in the Shire.

The attractiveness and preservation of the natural environment was very important to residents. People felt that the state of the environment is deteriorating and if something is not done to reverse the damage, it will be lost forever:

*"I do not like the mismanagement of the lakes and water systems. The poor quality of the lake is worrying."*

*"Detriment to the area I live in. It used to be crystal clear and a healthy living environment for species. Now the lake is filled with silt, sludge and weed."*

*"Pollution – there is ash coming from the chimneys/smoke stacks – why is this permitted?"*

*"Any plantings in Wyong Shire should be native to that particular area – no planting or foreign species should be introduced."*

*"Flooding is an issue in many areas of the Shire. This needs to be addressed."*





The water supply was a significant concern to residents. Many residents were worried about the dwindling water supply now and for the future and were enthusiastic about Council effectively managing innovative ways to catch run off water in new developments and estates. People expressed their frustration at the expense of purchasing and installing water tanks and felt that Council could be more proactive in this area.

*“Water issues are a concern. People should conserve more water.”*

The hot issue of the Coal mine was also consistently raised as a worry for residents:

*“The coal mine is a worry – who would want to come and live here?”*

### *Community Safety*

Although residents generally feel quite living in Wyong Shire, many people felt that this is changing and the area is not as safe a place as it once was. Residents expressed their worries in terms of community safety as:

- Feeling that crime is increasing;
- Increasing anti social behaviour;
- Vandalism and graffiti;
- Not enough police presence;
- Lack of social infrastructure and entertainment; and
- Poor driving skills and increasing road accidents and attitudes.

*“Neighbourhood watch is a good community safety initiative, but it needs further support.”*

*“Vandalism and graffiti is a concern. We need to harness talents and turn it from pollution into art.”*

*“There is not enough police presence and when you call the police, they don't respond quickly enough.”*

*“Seniors won't go out at night because they are worried about their safety.”*

*“There is a lot more anti social behaviour and cars hooning and speeding.”*





*"There is an anxiety around now in regards to safety. People don't feel as safe anymore."*

*"During the day it is fine but at night we are frightened to go out because of violence and drug issues."*

*"Parks used to be places for everyone, but now they are just for young people to get drunk in."*

### *Transport and Commuting*

As expected, transport and commuting was the most commonly mentioned challenge or low point for residents of Wyong Shire. Public transport (cost, regularity, routing, accessibility, taxi servicing), private transport (costs of running a car, reliance on cars) and transportation infrastructure (roads, traffic, cycleways and pathways) in Wyong Shire is extremely poor.

*"The roads are terrible and are getting worse."*

*"Public transport is terrible. It's difficult to get around without a private vehicle."*

*"Getting to Sydney can be difficult on public transport."*

*"You have to have your own transport, otherwise you are very isolated."*

*"Physical access to public transport and public transport infrastructure is bad. For example, there should be lifts at all stations."*

*"Commuting is the pits."*

*"The trains are better than buses, but still inadequate. It takes about 1½ hours to get to Central and there is only 1 train every 1½ hours. You can stand up the whole way there. The train service has declined – there are no available seats. You also have to make sure you are on certain trains, otherwise it is really unsafe and scary."*

Residents acknowledged that without significant infrastructure investment, public transport services in the area will not improve.





### *Negative Nature of the Area*

People are very worried that what they love about the area in terms of it being friendly and welcoming, small and close knit, involved and connected, relaxed and carefree is changing and that people are becoming insular and selfish.

*"The lifestyle is not as relaxed or as free as it used to be."*

There was regular mention about the impact of the liability and insurance requirements which have had a significant impact on the community:

*"Rules, regulations, liability and population growth has taken a lot of the old sense of community away."*

People were also worried about the loss of the history of the area and the traditional connection with what and who we were:

*"We have lost the traditional character of the valleys."*

*"The changing nature of the small villages is a worry."*

*"We are so busy moving forward that we have lost the history of the Shire."*

There was a strong feeling from residents that the Shire is not really progressive and welcoming to people from different backgrounds:

*"Racism is still alive in the Shire."*

There was also mention of the negative stigma associated with living in certain parts of the Shire:

*"There is a stigma attached to living in certain areas in the Shire and even the wider Wyong Shire."*

*"We have lived in this area for 16 years and have heard all of the negative things people say, but we love it here."*





### *Escalating Costs of Housing*

While once considered affordable, the area is now financially out of reach for a large number of people who have grown up on the Central Coast. The increasing price of purchasing and renting has pushed people further and further from where they want to live.

A large number of people have moved to the area in the past ten years as it was considered as a more affordable place to live. People stated that this had changed dramatically:

*"The housing prices here are now too high."*

*"Escalating costs of housing is a worry, especially when I am thinking about my family and them trying to purchase or rent in the area. They are being pushed out of areas where they actually want to live."*

### **What are the Most Important Things that Make Up a Good Community?**

Residents were asked to describe the most important elements that make up a good community. Overall, eight elements were described as being important. These elements are:

#### *Community Spirit*

By far, the most important thing that makes up a good community according to residents was Community Spirit. Community Spirit encompassed a wide range of sub-elements as follows:

*"A mix of different people, respect for other people, friendly atmosphere, involvement of the community and willingness to work together, trust and looking out for each other."*





### *Mix of Different People*

By this residents meant all communities need a variety of people – ages, sexes, backgrounds and interests to make it healthy and happy. Residents were very strongly against developing communities of only one population group of people e.g. older people, People from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background etc. They were very keen to highlight that the success and vibrancy of a community is dependant on a great mix of people, all of whom bring different strengths and opportunities.

*“We need all sorts of different people, a different mix of people, cultures and ages.”*

### *Respect*

People generally feel that there is an increasing lack of respect for people and property. It was felt that this is because of an increasing focus on the individual rather than on each other and the wider community. They also thought this shift is reflective of the way children are raised. Residents felt that respect for others is a very important aspect in building a good community.

*“Respect for all people is important.”*

*“Respect for others and their way of living.”*

### *Friendly and Welcoming Atmosphere*

With so many new residents to the Shire, great importance was placed on the need for residents and the general area to be friendly and welcoming. The overall friendly and welcoming atmosphere that currently exists in the Shire has helped people to fit into the place they live.

### *Involvement in the Community*

Many residents explained that being involved in the community, through participating in local activities, programmes and events or being involved through volunteering is the key to feeling connected and developing a range of skills and social networks.

*“Knowing people and being involved in groups and clubs is very important.”*





### *Trust*

Most residents expressed that having some level of trust of the people that you live near is extremely important. Residents felt that being trustworthy and being able to trust others is a very important attribute for residents:

*"We have great neighbours that we trust. Trust is important."*

### *Looking Out for Each Other*

Residents explained that it is very important to look out for others and have someone look out for you. This mainly related to people keeping a friendly eye out for each other and making sure that all is well.

*"My neighbour and I, we check on each other to see if everything is OK. We don't have family nearby so if one of us was in trouble, the other one would help."*

### *Places and Spaces*

Places and spaces described the formal and informal places for people to come together for a range of reasons. These places included spaces and places like community centres, shopping centres, restaurants, cafés BBQ areas in parks, beaches etc. For more specific purposes such as meetings, activities, programmes and events or for more informal purposes such as meeting people, gather, relax and watch the world go by.

"Local" was a word that was used significantly by residents in the consultations. People described "Local" as providing an opportunity for residents to mix with local people who live in the same or a nearby suburb, therefore increasing the chances for people to meet, make connections and linkages. These type of facilities enable people to easily walk to them and get out of the house and participate in the life of their local community.

*"Accessible places for people to walk to and meet in. Kids, young people, adults, older people, families. Places for everyone."*

*"Cafes and restaurants that we can meet friends and socialise."*





*"Multi purpose community centres as the hub of a community."*

### *Local Employment*

Most residents explained that for them, local employment is a key element in making a good community. Most people who participated in the consultations spoke of the impact of commuting on their family life and their community life.

People explained that in creating local employment, consideration needs to be given to the future focus of the Shire:

- In what type of avenues of employment are residents likely to be needed?
- Will the employment base stay the same or will it change?
- Will the skills of local people place a need to increase the scope of employment types?

### *Safety*

Residents rated safety and security as a key element in making a good community.

*"It is most important for residents to feel safe."*

*"Community safety is important and the community need to take part in initiatives that promote community safety, e.g. neighbourhood watch."*

*"A good safe feeling in an area is important."*

People described their feelings that the area is generally quite safe however residents indicated that this is changing, and the Shire isn't as safe as it used to be.

*"It is still fairly safe here compared to other areas, but this is slowly changing."*

People described that they would like to see less graffiti and vandalism, less anti social behaviour and more police presence.





### *Services*

People felt that the provision of a wide range of services to meet the demands of a community is a very important element in making it a good place to live. People described the following services as very important:

- Adequate Health and Medical Services (Local Bulk Billing GPs, after hours GPs more accessible Accident and Emergency, Specialist Services, after hours chemists).
- Education (Extended programmes at Ourimbah Campus and local TAFE's, alternative education programmes for young people, further support for traineeships and apprenticeships).
- Community Services (recurrent funding for community organisations, Youth services, child care services, support services for isolated vulnerable people).
- Basic Services (Post office boxes, phone booths).

### *Transport*

Transport (both public and private) is still a major concern for residents of Wyong Shire. The overall experiences of residents of the public transport system on the Central Coast are very similar, with particular challenges for young people, older people, people with a disability and families with young children.

All residents acknowledged that a good public transport system is another element that makes up a good community and that they would use an improved system however recognised that without significant infrastructure investment, public transport services in the area will not improve.

### *Communication*

Residents described communication as both communication between residents living in a community, as well as communication between Council and residents.

People described a healthy and active community as having great communication between its residents. It was thought generally that small village type communities encourage this sort of communication better than in larger communities.





Some residents expressed that high rise accommodation discourages communication between residents. Also, seasonal populations (e.g. holiday makers) are felt to have an adverse effect on the communication levels between local residents.

Welcome kits were seen as a good innovation to welcome and communicate with new residents.

Intergenerational communication was seen as important for both older and younger residents to have an understanding of each other.

Communication between Council and it's residents was also seen as extremely important. Honest, open and transparent communication was seen as the key for a good partnership between Council and the community, as well as taking the time to really sit down, talk and listen.

People described the need for Council to have a distinct welcome and open presence out in the community rather than just behind the concrete walls of the Council Chambers. Residents felt that it was really important for Council to get out into the community and thought that initiatives such as days in the park would be great to build relationships with the community.

People described the importance of Council meeting regularly with residents and Council officers having ongoing conversations and interactions with residents.

Residents liked the structure of the consultations – many people told us that they were a good start, and that they should be continued across all aspects and functions of Council.

The regularity of contact with the community was also discussed, with people indicating that contact should be regular and routine, not one off or sporadic.

Residents from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) background felt that there was a significant gap in communication from Council to this group. The CaLD community felt generally that Council needs to be more open and user friendly to the steadily increasing population of residents from different backgrounds.

Many residents felt that Council as an organisation was quite bad at listening. They felt that the consultations were great and a great way of valuing what residents have to say.





It was also very important for the community to see their thoughts, opinions and inputs reflected in action:

*"Hearing back from Council regarding the various consultations we are involved in is important."*

### *Environment*

The natural environment was one of the most important elements that residents felt make a good community. Many residents stated that the beauty of, and the proximity to the natural environment was one of the main reasons they had moved to the Shire, and that if this changes significantly, it would greatly impact on their quality of life and positive feelings towards living in the Shire.

Of great importance to local residents is the amenity and beauty of the natural environment as well as the active and outdoor lifestyle that the natural environment of the area offers:

*"This area is so beautiful, fresh and clean. It's fabulous to wake up every morning and look out my window at the wonderful place I live in."*

*"The proximity to the lakes, waterways and beaches are the best thing about living here."*

*"The walking trails through the bushland are great."*

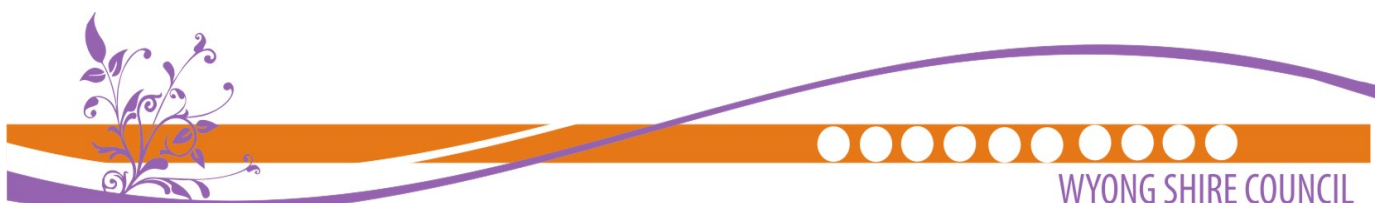
*"There should be more national parks."*

### **What Changes would you Most Like to See in your Community?**

Initially, many people responded by saying that they wouldn't change anything:

*"We wouldn't change anything – we like it the way it is."*

Upon further contemplation they outlined the following as changes they would most like to see in their community:





*Local Government (WSC)*

Many people felt that there is a lack of forward planning and vision at Wyong Council and that Councillors, staff and the community are not working together towards a commonly agreed long term plan.

*"More forward planning by local government. We need a 25 or 30 year plan."*

This was considered as an important change to implement to work together for the future.

Residents felt that there is a lack of respect for the community by Council, and that the community is not involved and does not truly participate in the decisions and directions of Council. People felt that Councillors as elected representatives and Council staff should be more visible and out in the community:

*"There is a lack of respect in Council for the community and therefore the community doesn't respect Council. People in these positions need to earn respect."*

*"We want to be involved, not just token involvement. We want to help make the decisions."*

*"Councillors should be more involved in community activity and there should be more transparency about decisions."*

*"Individual Councillors should take on the responsibility of liaising with older people and younger people. Each one should have a designated responsibility to liaise with that group."*

Residents mentioned their frustrations at the seemingly endless political 'point scoring' and 'game playing' by Councillors as opposed to action and getting things done.

*"I would like to change the political game playing by Council."*





### *Environmental*

As previously outlined, residents expressed their increasing concern at the degradation of the natural environment of the Shire. Preserving the environment was considered as a very important change to be made to enable the beauty and diversity of the natural environment to be around in the future:

*"Keep waterways true to nature."*

*"Don't want to see a coal mine in the area."*

*"Tuggerah Lakes should be revitalised."*

*"We need better and more affordable water harvesting systems."*

*"Keep the green open spaces."*

*"Keep the water restrictions in place. We are used to them now."*

*"We need appropriate plantings in local areas."*

*"Encourage and promote the Wyong Shire Garden Competition, Water Festival and National Tree Day."*

### *Transport and Transport Infrastructure*

Transport and transport infrastructure featured heavily as a challenge to residents that needs to be changed to make life better.

A detailed discussion on the challenges of the public transport system is outlined in the 'On the Move' chapter (page 78). A summary of changes to improve the transport system in Wyong Shire include:

- Public transport (cost, regularity, routing, accessibility, taxi servicing, alternative transport measures);
- Private transport (costs of running a car, reliance on cars); and





- Transportation infrastructure (lifts at stations, road condition, traffic, cycleways and pathways, road lighting).

*"More regular, accessible and affordable public transport is needed."*

*"Bring back the night owl bus."*

*"Better road infrastructure – it is still catering to a small population."*

*"Wider roads and more room for parking on the streets."*

*"Better lighting along roads."*

Investment in alternative and healthier options of moving around was also considered as important. Building on the existing great cycleways and pathways to connect more places together where people want to go was considered as a very important change:

*"Better cycleways and pathways in the area."*

Residents also commented on the RTA plans for an upgrade of the Pacific Highway through or around Wyong:

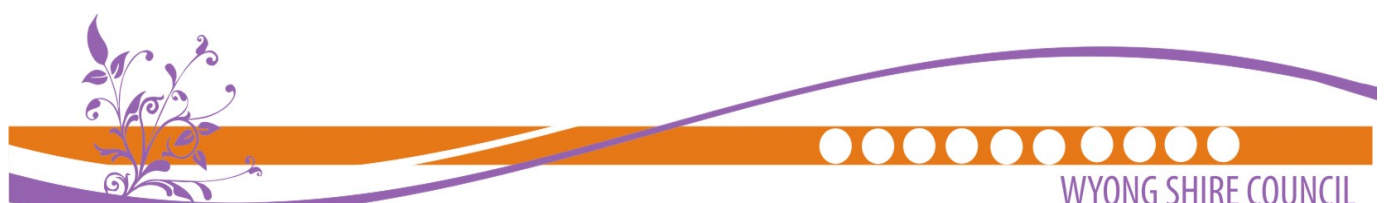
*"The RTA plans for the Pacific Highway to go through Wyong – they should go around Wyong, not through it!"*

There was acknowledgement from residents that because the current transport system is so poor, significant investment is required and residents were extremely doubtful that this will ever happen.

#### *Activities, Services and Programmes*

According to residents, the most significant changes that should be made in terms of activities, services and programmes included:

- Investment in Early Intervention and Prevention programmes (rather than quick fix bandaid solutions):





Many residents indicated that there is significant benefit in supporting and providing funding for early intervention and prevention programmes rather than expending money on quick fix 'bandaid' solutions that offer a short term benefit, but no long term gain.

- A shift in focus from sport to include cultural pursuits:

*"Develop arts and culture more."*

*"Programmes and activities for kids who aren't into sports."*

- A shift to acknowledge the community benefit versus profit making:

*"A monetary value should be placed on the contribution of organisations and services to the community. Council expects a market rent for use of community facilities so the benefit to the community should be attributed a high value."*

*"Council needs to look at the community benefit rather than profit. For example child care centres should be about educating and providing quality care for children, not about profit. Who are we looking after here? Why is it always about profit?"*

- Local activities, programmes and events:

*"There needs to be more outdoor events and activities – festivals, concerts, picnics, BBQ's in the park to bring people together."*

- Casual opportunities to meet and socialise:

*"Encourage more casual opportunities for neighbours to get together."*

- Recurrent funding for services:

*"There needs to be more support for the operations side of community centres. There is the funding to build facilities, but not to operate them."*

*"Before and after school care, vacation care, child care."*





*“Low cost activities for children and families in the school holidays.”*

### *Development*

Infrastructure keeping up with population growth is one of the most important changes that should be made according to residents. Already, people stated that development of infrastructure has not kept up with the population growth and this needs to be addressed immediately:

*“We moved here because of the promised services and facilities – where are they? We should have just stayed where we were – at least there was proper infrastructure there.”*

*“The state government should spend more money on infrastructure in the area, e.g. schools, hospitals and roads.”*

Residents felt that there is too much medium and high density housing in the Shire. People felt that this type of housing should only be allowed in designated areas e.g. town centres and around transport interchanges:

*“We should be careful about the types of development that is allowed in the Shire.”*

*“Medium and higher density housing should be appropriately located.”*

There was also concern that there is a lot of high rise development that is empty and residents suggested that maybe more medium density should be constructed that would be adequately filled:

*“It seems that development is solely based on developer profit instead of what is sensible. For example, instead of constructing more high density housing which is empty, more medium density housing which would fill up easily should be constructed.”*

Many residents commented on the design of new suburbs, suggesting changes such as wider roads, houses with eaves and backyards, etc:

*“The streets should be wider in the new suburbs.”*





Many residents were concerned at the lack of affordable housing on the Central Coast and were particularly concerned about how future generations would be able to afford to live in the places they have grown up in:

*"There needs to be more affordable housing in the Shire. This is a very important issue."*

Many people were supportive of some balanced development but there was a concern that the identity and history of the Shire should be preserved for future generations:

*"We need some development, but we need to ensure that we preserve the good things and the history of the area into the future so that it can be kept for future generations."*

*"Keeping the identity of who we are now and who we were – we still need a link top the past while at the same time moving forward for the future."*

### *Young People*

Residents felt that there needs to be a real focus for change on young people to enable them to make the best of their lives and move forward for the future.

Every participant across every age group and background mentioned that there needs to be a significant change in the attitudes if young people themselves, the attitudes and prejudices of the wider community and in the plans and polices that affect young people.

Most residents felt that there is not much for young people to do socially and this situation need to be addressed:

*"There needs to be something for young people – a youth centre for example. This would help to get young people moving in a different direction."*

*"We need more of everything for young people here in Wyong Shire."*

*"More activities and programmes for mainstream young people."*

*"Places for teenagers to go."*





*“Buses to transport young people to where they want to go.”*

Education, training and employment opportunities for young people are limited, and all residents stressed that this needs to be changed to ensure that we have a vibrant, skilled, educated community in the future:

*“There needs to be more education, training and employment opportunities for young people.”*

### *Community Spirit*

Although people felt that generally Wyong Shire is warm, welcoming and friendly there were many instances where this is not the case and people felt that the lovely nature of the place is slowly being eroded away, people are becoming less involved and more insular and selfish.

Some residents felt that the Central Coast is a backwater mono culture, and people from different cultural backgrounds are not always welcomed openly or accepted and that there is a great opportunity to change this:

*“Encourage and support people from different backgrounds.”*

*“Encouraging culture in all ways – schools genders backgrounds.”*

*“There needs to be a cultural shift – there is still a lingering of old fashioned, racist ways of doing things.”*

*“Better coverage from Council of cross cultural issues and positives, etc.”*

Regularly, residents mentioned the difficulty in attracting new volunteers into groups and organisations:

*“We should encourage more people to be involved in volunteering. The same volunteers are being asked all the time to do the work.”*

Residents felt that from Council’s perspective, community, social and community development should be further promoted rather than just roads, rates, rubbish and water:





*"We need to encourage programmes and activities that connect and link people. Community Development has an important role."*

For residents living in suburbs that attract tourists, it was felt that there should be a real focus on developing and encouraging community spirit within the permanent population, rather than focusing all the time on tourists.

#### *Places for People to Come Together*

Local places and spaces for people to come together encompassed both formal and informal places and spaces such as local community centres, shopping centres, restaurants, cafes, parks, BBQ areas, playgrounds, reserves, walking trails, bike tracks, lakes and beaches.

Residents felt that there needs to be more of these facilities in local areas:

*"Less emphasis on tourists and more emphasis on the permanent residents of the Shire."*

*"More local meeting places."*

*"We are looking forward to the new performing arts centres."*

*"Places where people can experience something different and a bit out of the ordinary, e.g. an art gallery."*

*"We need to create places that attract a range of different people and different interests."*

*"Local community centres in local areas."*

*"Local places and facilities e.g. community centres, parks, open space and recreation areas."*

*"BBQ's, parks and playgrounds are casual spaces where people can run into one another and get to know each other."*

*"Multi purpose community centres."*





### *More Local Employment*

Residents felt that a lot more could be done to change the current situation of residents commuting to Sydney. People felt that Council should encourage a range of industries to be established in the Shire that offer a range of job types with an equitable pay structures:

*“Commuting away from the Central Coast really impacts on family time and the ability to be involved in groups and service clubs. Commuting doesn’t allow for people to make connections with their community or develop a sense of community.”*

*“We need to have more employment locally that offers a range of different job skill types and appropriate wages.”*

### **What Services, Facilities, Activities or Programmes would Assist/Benefit or Make Life Easier for You/Your Family in your Day to Day Life in your Community?**

#### *Greater Availability of Affordable Housing*

Residents felt that a greater availability of both rental and owner/buyer properties would assist and benefit residents and make life easier. Many residents mentioned that although they had purchased their property a number of years ago, they would not be able to do so now, and expressed fear for their family at the lack of available affordable housing in the areas they would like to live:

*“More affordable housing – rental and home ownership.”*

*“What would make our life easier is more accessible housing availability and prices.”*

#### *Better Transport*

Residents indicated that a better public transport system and a more accessible transport infrastructure would make life easier. Many people mentioned that because of the poor public transport system, they are resigned to having to own two cars to get everywhere they want to go. People indicated that if the public transport system was reliable, affordable and accessible then they would use it:





*"As an older person – accessibility to get around e.g. better bus services and public transport in general."*

*"People are isolated. If they don't have a car then it's very hard for people."*

*"More public transport that is frequent, accessible and affordable and covers more routes."*

*"There should be lifts at all train stations."*

*"Bring back the night owl bus."*

*"A community bus that you can ring and it will come and get you and take you to where you want to go."*

### *Local Employment*

For many residents, the need to commute has had a significant impact on their lives, the lives of their family and their community life. Most people who travel out of the area to work do not feel a real connection or link with their community.

Many people who leave the area on a daily basis to travel to work have indicated that there just aren't the professional employment opportunities or pay structures as in other areas like Sydney or Newcastle:

*"We need more local employment here in Wyong Shire."*

*"Provide services and facilities that will attract businesses to the Shire."*

*"There needs to be more jobs in the area – unemployment is an issue."*

*"There are limited local employment opportunities on the Central Coast."*





### *Community Facilities*

Local facilities in local communities are very important to residents. Places where people can walk to such as community centres, parks, playgrounds, BBQ areas etc are key in people meeting others and feeling linked and connected.

Residents felt that the maintenance of these facilities is important and key in making these places attractive, vibrant and well utilised.

'Hubs of facilities' and activities are also very important to residents. They want to see clusters of facilities where there is lots of activity and people are attracted there:

*"Look after facilities so people utilise them and find them attractive and want to use them."*

*"Accessible performing arts centre - affordable fees for use."*

*"Secure exhibition space – ability to exhibit works easily for use by all groups in Wyong Shire with a priority for community use."*

*"More local community centres – they need to be done in a way that involves the community and connects them."*

*"Hub of facilities in a place of activity – not just a facility for young people all on it's own, it should be incorporated into other features such as restaurants and outdoor spaces."*

*"Publicity/advertising of facilities and what's on there."*

*"Local facilities in local communities."*

### *Services, Programmes and Activities*

According to residents, the most significant changes that should be made in terms of activities, services and programmes included:

- Investment in Early Intervention and Prevention programmes (rather than quick fix bandaid solutions);





- A shift in focus from sport to include cultural pursuits;
- Local activities, programmes and events;
- Casual opportunities to meet and socialise; and
- Recurrent funding for services.

*"Programmes, events and activities that aren't just about sport."*

*"Activities and facilities for families."*

*"Enough programmes and activities for elderly people in the future – especially in home services."*

*"Services to address the sense of isolation for many residents."*

*"Wyong Shire has an excellent library service – but a mobile one would be good."*

*"Funding for services to continue services and programmes."*

*"Programmes that link older men into activities to prevent loneliness and suicide – there are hardly any men's groups on the Coast."*

### *Entertainment Opportunities*

More options for entertainment was important to residents. Many people related their experiences in terms of the lack of entertainment opportunities and the difficulty in accessing available options.

A variety and choice of options was another key focus for residents. A number of stories emerged from people during the consultations that they are often travelling out of the Shire to Sydney, Gosford City and Newcastle to go out to dinner, catch a movie and see a live show.

*"Places of entertainment that are affordable e.g. time zone, movie theatres, outdoor cinema at the beach, fete and stalls at Blue Haven Community Centre all year."*

*"Availability of a variety of shops and restaurants."*

*"A cinema in the Northern half of the Shire."*





### *Young People*

Residents felt that there needs to be a real focus for change on young people to enable them to make the best of their lives and move forward for the future.

Every participant across every age group and background mentioned that there needs to be a significant change in the attitudes of young people themselves, the attitudes and prejudices of the wider community and in the plans and policies that affect young people.

Most residents felt that there is not much for young people to do socially and this situation needs to be addressed:

*"There isn't enough for young people to do."*

*"Something casual for young people – like a café is needed."*

*"Develop the cultural skills of young people – not just sports."*

### *Community Safety*

Although residents generally felt that the Shire is fairly safe, people thought that there is a lack of police presence in the Shire and an increased police presence would make their lives easier:

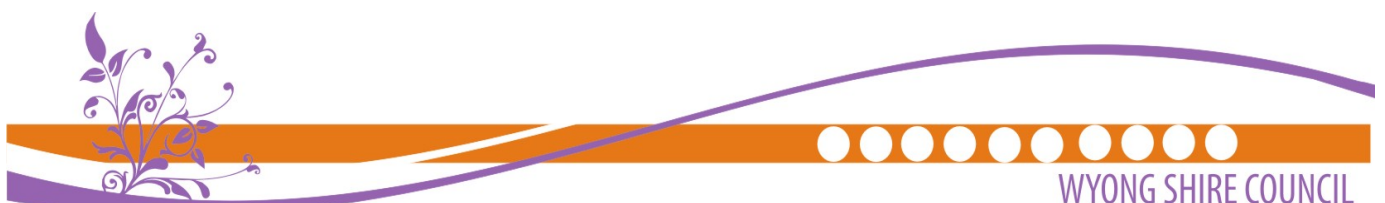
*"Police station in the northern parts of the Shire – it takes the police too long to get up here."*

*"More police presence, foot patrols – visible law enforcement."*

*"Need more police in the area to improve response times."*

### *Medical Services*

All residents thought that the medical services in Wyong Shire are significantly lacking and need much improvement:





*"The medical services in the area are not great – we stay with the doctors in Sydney and go to Sydney to see the doctor."*

*"We have no confidence in the hospital or medical/health system."*

*"It is so hard to get to see a GP in the north of Wyong Shire."*

*"Hospitals need a room for Muslim people to pray."*

*"After hours medical facilities and a chemist would be good."*

### Water

The water supply was a hot issue for residents during the community consultation phase. Most people were extremely concerned about the poor water supply on the Central Coast and the lack of forward planning to address this. Most residents suggested that the water restrictions should stay in place as they are now used to using less water, however, some people highlighted the financial and emotional impacts (particularly on elderly people) at not being able to get out and water their gardens.

The purchasing of tanks was also raised as quite difficult for a majority of residents, and suggestions to alleviate this included a loan scheme etc:

*"We should have better water collecting infrastructure."*

*"We need financial support to be able to get a tank."*

*"Water infrastructure should be improved before there is anymore population growth."*

### Community Information

People emphasised the importance of communication both between residents and between Council and residents:

*"Communication from Council to the community is key."*





*“Communication about what’s happening in the Shire is very important, e.g. What’s happening in the libraries, activities that I can do with my kids, etc.”*

Residents discussed the trend to supply information to the community via electronic mediums e.g. email websites etc. and they highlighted the importance of provision of hard copy material:

*“Internet based information isn’t very helpful.”*

*“Community information in brochure/hard copy form not just on the internet, especially information about seniors activities.”*

**Imagine Wyong Shire as you would Most Like it to be in a Generation from Now, and Taking into Consideration what you would still like to be here in 20 years.**

### **What is the Area Like?**

This was an interesting question to ask residents. It enabled them to think more broadly and wider and for the future, rather than just thinking about living in their community today.

The question got people thinking about life in Wyong Shire in the future for themselves, their children and their grandchildren.

This question asked people about what they would most like to see – a real visioning question. Some people found it hard to answer this question in terms of what they would most like to see and often reverted to how they think it will be – often a very different proposition and often quite negative:

*“It will be too busy, too developed and will have lost all of its positive features.”*

This question related to people’s hopes and dreams for the future which emerged as follows:

*“There will be an even Greater Sense of Community.”*

Most residents were very impressed and positive at the sense of community and levels of community spirit in Wyong Shire. There was some concern however, that this is slowly changing and people are less connected to their communities and are less and less involved in their communities.





For the future, people hoped that there will be an increased sense of community and a real shift (from both government and community) back to a focus on people and community building.

All people will be able to have a positive experience of living in the Shire. New people will initially be welcomed (with welcome kits by friendly open people), they will easily make connections and linkages with people, and through great communication and information provision will know how to become involved in the local community. This will make people want to stay and live in Wyong Shire in the long term.

There will be many more young people involved in community volunteering, and there will be less reliance on the same people to take on everything. Council will be a leader in encouraging and supporting volunteers.

Residents emphasised that in the future people from different backgrounds will be encouraged and welcomed in the Shire. Council will provide bi lingual information, will openly welcome people from different cultures and will recognise the specific strengths of people from a different background.

There will be better intergenerational linkages and understanding between young and older people:

*"There will be a mix of different people - ages, backgrounds, interests living in our community."*

*"The existing strong sense of community will be maintained and built upon."*

*"There will be more diversity and multiculturalism."*

*"People will still look out for each other and care about their neighbours and community."*

*"Young people will be valued as important members of the community."*

*"I would like to maintain the small village type feeling of the community."*

*"There will be festivals, activities and programmes that link and connect people."*

*"There will be recognition and respect between the generations, e.g. older people are not past their used by date and young people are not the terror of the community."*





### *The Area will be Better Planned*

Many people hoped that Wyong Shire would be better planned in the future than it is today. Residents felt that there is a real lack of vision for the Shire and how it will be in twenty plus years:

*"There will be a real, achievable vision for where we're going that is shared by Council and the Community."*

*"Planning for the future won't be hotch potch, it will be well co-ordinated and strategic projects will be fully followed through."*

*"Council will implement big picture planning strategies, will move away from small parochial thinking and will embrace the bigger picture."*

*"Sub divisions will be done better and there will be a lot more public space within communities e.g. parks."*

People indicated that they were worried about the current levels of development, especially in relation to the increased population with no infrastructure to support it. Their hopes for the future are that development is progressed, but at a steady and sustainable rate with infrastructure such as social infrastructure, adequate water supply, sewer and roads:

*"It's OK to see some development, but not too much. We don't have the infrastructure to support the population now, let alone in the future."*

*"Infrastructure will be kept in balance with growth."*

*"Infrastructure will keep up with the population growth, e.g. schools, community facilities, roads, water. This should have happened before the population."*

*"The area in the future should still have elements of the past. The current over developments with a definite lack of infrastructure and other vital facilities have been overlooked. The constant worry about water problems underlines the need for better forward planning. Newcastle has much to offer but I believe this area can be superb if action is taken now."*





People felt that the Shire in the future will have balanced development in that there will be a range of accommodation types (low, medium and high density) in appropriate areas (e.g. higher to medium development around town centres and transport interchanges) to suit and cater to the different stages of life but not more high rise development:

*"We need a range of accommodation that reflects life stages such as medium density housing that is designed well e.g. has light airy spaces, quiet, etc."*

People felt that in the future, they will see the current trend of a lack of parks playgrounds and open spaces will be reversed and we will instead see open spaces, parks playgrounds and bushland retained for the use of the community.

The diverse nature of the area will also be retained. People love the natural scope of the Shire from the mountainous forests to the beaches, encompassing both rural and suburban areas. People feel a great affinity with the natural aspects of the area, and for many people this is the reason they moved to Wyong Shire. Residents emphasised that this needs to be preserved.

Residents described that in the future each community would have a distinct identity and there will be no more bland, mass produced estates. Estates will have individuality and identity, entry statements, wide streets. Houses will be different to each other and will have eaves, backyards and trees:

*"The new estates will have individuality and character. They won't be boring, bland estates with no character. The design of houses will encourage interaction between neighbours."*

*"Planning of communities to give them an identity. Such assets as a central village green do much to provide communities with a central focal point."*

#### *Businesses will be Diverse and Revitalised*

People had observed that currently there are many shops and businesses in the Shire that have closed down, leaving empty and dilapidated shop fronts. Residents stated that in the future they would like to see flourishing town centres where small individual businesses will be supported and there will be more diversity and choice.





People regularly commented on the 'duopoly' of the large shopping centre chains and lack of the more individual niche market shops. People imagined flourishing, bustling, vibrant town centres with lots of people enjoying a mix of diverse restaurants, cafes and shops:

*"There won't be an overkill of the big retail supermarkets. Some individuality and diversity of shopping options would be good."*

*"In twenty years there will be a diversity and larger mix of local shops."*

*"Wyong Council will promote the importance of locally grown produce and link farmers with the community."*

#### *There will be plenty of local Community Facilities*

Currently, people discussed the lack of local community facilities in their local communities.

In the future, people stated that there would be lots of community facilities locally such as: Multi purpose community centres, community theatres, senior citizen's centres, etc.

Local is extremely important to our residents. The nature of the topography of the Shire, combined with the lack of accessible public transport and the number of newer residents means that local facilities are the key in connecting people.

People indicated that in the future, public facilities will be well maintained to a standard that makes them open, inviting, welcoming and able to be used at any time:

*"Each development or new suburb will have it's own community facilities such as a community centre, parks, playgrounds etc. Community facilities will have the supporting infrastructure with them for example, courts, bubblers, toilets, BBQ areas etc."*

*"Community Facilities will have the recurrent funding, operating and programming dollars to ensure that they meet the growing needs of the local community."*

*"In the future there will be local facilities in walking distance of residents."*

*"There will local parks and green open spaces so that kids can play."*





*It will be a more Affordable Area*

Many people mentioned that the Shire is much less affordable than in the past, and it will be much less affordable in the future. People's hopes for the future were that there would be much greater availability of more affordable housing types. This included low, medium and higher density housing located in the appropriate areas, e.g. town centres and transport interchanges.

It was seen that attracting a range of affordable housing in Wyong Shire enables better community mix, community connections and networks:

*"In the future there will be a range of different housing choice that will enable a mix of different people to live here."*

*"My children will be able to have a choice of where they want to live, rather than being forced out of the areas they would like to live because it is too expensive."*

*"There will be a range of choice, e.g. higher and medium density housing in the appropriate areas"*

*There will more Participation and Involvement of the Community in Council*

Currently people involved in the consultations felt that they are not welcome or encouraged to participate in the functions and decisions of Wyong Shire Council.

For the future, residents hoped that there will be a real partnership approach from Council, and residents will be considered as valuable contributors to processes and projects rather than inhibitors:

*"People will be more involved with Council."*

*"Council will communicate better with the local community."*

*"Council will be more accessible and there will be more avenues for community and individuals to be involved with and approach Council."*

*"Council will openly welcome and value input from the local community."*





*There will be more Local Employment and Education Opportunities*

For the future, residents emphasised the importance of local employment which will support the population growth, therefore limiting the need for residents to commute out of the Central Coast for work:

*"There will be a lot more local employment for all people. Young people will be employed here and there will be a range of jobs and appropriate wages so that people don't have to leave the Central Coast for work."*

*"There will be many more opportunities for professional employment."*

*"More professional wages – equivalent to Sydney!!"*

People also emphasised the need for a range of employment types in the future, young people will be able to stay on the coast for both education and employment opportunities:

*"There will be more diverse local tertiary education facilities and Ourimbah University will be bigger and stronger."*

*"Quality and diverse education opportunities at University of Newcastle Ourimbah."*

People stressed that in the future there should be better support for local businesses to employ more local people and support for locally grown produce to be sold in the Shire:

*"More businesses in the area to support the employment of future generations."*

*"The viability of small local village businesses will be improved."*

*"The Shire will have fresh local produce markets."*

*"Wyong Council will employ locally based contractors."*

*"There will be a real balance between work and home life."*





### *We will have a Great Transport System*

This was a key focus for the future as the current public transport system on the Central Coast is inadequate and concerning.

People described a public transport system for the future that:

- Has adequate infrastructure (bus stops and shelters, physically accessible buses, lifts at train stations);
- Is affordable;
- Is regular and reliable;
- Utilises alternative systems in smaller isolated communities;
- Goes to where people want to go; and
- Is safe.

There was some acknowledgement amongst residents that there would need to be significant investment from the State Government if there is any chance of improving the public transport system:

*“Public Transport will be more affordable, accessible and reliable.”*

*“There will be much better transport services.”*

*“There will be good bus services and better access for isolated areas.”*

*“There will be less traffic on the roads, easier flowing traffic and better roads.”*

### *The Environment will be Preserved*

People love the natural environment of Wyong Shire, and want it to be restored and better maintained and preserved for the future:

*“Maintain the natural environment of the area.”*

*“In the future the waterways, lakes and beaches will be pristine.”*





*"There will be balance between urbanisation and green areas."*

*"Fish and prawns in the lakes will be alive and healthy."*

*"The beaches will stay clean and beautiful."*

*"There won't be any more coal mining."*

*"We will be able to hear birds everywhere."*

*"We will have beautiful gardens because we will be able to water them."*

*"There will be lots of Indigenous vegetation and new plantings."*

*"We will have a secure water supply."*

*"Some level of water restriction will stay in place, so that we use less water."*

*"Tuggerah Lakes will be healthy and vibrant."*

*The Infrastructure will keep up with the Population Growth*

*"The infrastructure needs of the current population should be met before we grow any further."*

*"Population increases are OK, as long as there is appropriate infrastructure to support it."*

*There will be an adequate Health and Medical System*

*"There will be improved medical services. They will keep up with the increased population."*

*"There will be more support and understanding for people with a mental illness."*

*"Healthy Harold should still be around."*

*"There will be lots of doctors with no waiting lists."*





*“There will be specialists located on the Central Coast so we don’t have to travel to Sydney all the time to see them.”*

#### *Wyong Council will be Different*

*“There will be a lot more women Councillors on Council. More women than men, or at least a gender balance.”*

*“Councils will be leaders in the community in terms of community development rather than roads rates and rubbish all the time.”*

*“There will be younger Councillors.”*

*“Wyong Council will communicate better with its residents.”*

#### *We will be a Region with a Distinct Identity*

*“The Central Coast will be recognised as a region and therefore the subsequent funding will be allocated to the Coast. We will be separate in terms of Health, Education etc.”*

### **When you think about the Central Coast, what particular Places, People or Images Represent Wyong Shire to you?**

Resident’s responses to this question emerged in seven main ways:

#### *The Natural Environment*

The beautiful beaches.

Lakes.

Norah Head Lighthouse.

The Ocean.

Rural Aspect through the Valleys.

The Pelicans at The Entrance.

The diversity of the environment.

The birds and animals that you can see everywhere.





### *Places and Spaces*

The Entrance.  
Soldier's Beach.  
The Valley's.  
Vera's Water Garden at The Entrance.  
North Shelly Beach.  
Magenta Shores.  
Kooindah Waters.  
The bushland and forests.  
Mingara.  
Regional Sporting Facilities at Mingara.

### *People*

Friendly and welcoming.  
A transient holiday population.  
A commuting population.  
People becoming busier and busier.

### *Lifestyle*

Feels timeless.  
A time warp – it's like stepping back in time.  
Relaxed lifestyle.  
Very welcoming and open and friendly.  
It's like the country but on the water.  
Casual lazy summers.  
Laid back and less busy.  
Less stressed.

### *History of the Area*

Originally, Pioneers were involved in the timber industry followed by farming.  
1960's it was a dairy farm and orchards.  
The Shire is getting further and further away from its history.





### *Location*

Location on the coast is wonderful.

Proximity between Sydney and Newcastle.

Geographically defined.

Centrally located.

### *The Built Environment*

A place where the infrastructure has not kept up with the population growth.

Development.

As an extended suburb of Sydney.

Big shopping centres – representative of a growing area.

## **What's the Best Way for Us and Others to Work Together for the Future?**

Most residents loved being asked this question as it gave them an opportunity to respond in terms of their opinions of the best ways that Council should work with the community for the future.

Every participant acknowledged the importance of communication. People thought that communication between Council (as an organisation) and the community could be better. Some community members indicated that they have a very good relationship with individual Council officers. Residents considered the establishing, and maintaining of relationships between Council and the community is very important and key to working together for the future of the Shire with so that Council is informed about the community and the community is informed about Council.

Residents gave examples of where they thought Council was doing a good job in terms of communicating with Council:

- Wyong Council page in newspaper
- Radio Articles
- New resident's guides

Residents stated that the methods used during the consultations (conversations and focus groups) were a great way to engage with residents to hear from them about what it's like to live in Wyong Shire.





*“Continue with these community conversations.”*

*“Keep talking to residents and seeking their opinions.”*

*“The individual conversations are great – this is a good way of going about it.”*

*“Conversations are a good start – it good to get an understanding of the depth and breadth of what the people think.”*

*“It’s important that Council values what people have to say.”*

And also gave their opinion as to how this could be better improved:

Many residents expressed a belief that Council is exclusionary and does not openly welcome input, opinion or involvement from local residents. Regularly people expressed that active residents are considered not to be valuable to a process, but instead a hindrance.

Residents felt that they have a lot to offer Council, and as local residents they often have the knowledge and solutions to local problems:

*“We want to be involved, not just token involvement.”*

*“We need to fully participate in Council. By participation we don’t just mean attending programmes, activities or events we mean helping to make decisions and informing Council of the positive and negative things happening in our communities.”*

