

6. THE VISION FOR THE DISTRICT

6.1 THE DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

Developing a site that adjoins environmentally sensitive areas and the Main Northern Railway Line is a challenge that developers and government agencies rarely confront.

The Planning Strategy has grasped this challenge and prepared an urban development concept that delivers lasting benefits not only to the environment and communities of Wyong Shire but also to the environment and communities within the wider Central Coast Area.

The ultimate development of the District should generate a lasting legacy. It should provide wide-ranging and long lasting community benefits that are achievable, whilst meeting the Government's requirements. Thus the concept has been prepared with two simple but important philosophies in mind:

- That the people of Wyong Shire and the Warnervale District are not disadvantaged by the development, but rather are able to enjoy and appreciate an exciting and inviting urban area that balances development and natural environment providing long term opportunities to enhance the community's well being, pride and quality of life.
- That the development generates enhanced wealth and well being for the State through an enhanced natural environment, increased employment, new development and commercial expenditure.

The Strategy for development presented in this document is considered to most appropriately meet this challenge in a manner that is characterised by manageable risk incorporating design elements and characteristics intended to engender community support and good urban design outcomes.

6.2 THE VISION

The Vision for the Warnervale District is presented below.

The Warnervale District and Town Centre will be a self-supporting urban area distinguished by an attractive human scale built form. It will respect its host ecology and natural environment and existing, valued surrounding residential areas while offering a diverse choice in housing, employment, community and non residential activities and services presenting a unique high quality lifestyle for the residents of the Central Coast.

It will enjoy a strong community identity where residents not only know their neighbours but also where they exhibit a sense of belonging to, ownership and pride in, the parks, public spaces, environmental areas, shops, commercial activities and community facilities within the District.

It will achieve this by offering a hierarchy of meeting places, recreation facilities and community support services where residents can not only interact, recreate and be entertained but also where they can learn from each other, promoting personal development and well being.

But What Will It Actually Look Like?

Picture yourself in 2021 living in the Warnervale District. You could be part of a family with children or you may well be, based on estimated statistics, living on your own or in a two-person household without children. You may also be close to retirement age.

You may be living within a terrace house, conventional home or apartment located along, or within comfortable walking distance, of a main street that originates from the new Warnervale Railway Station and stretches east across the District. Other homes, terraces or apartments will surround you and you will know your neighbours.

You will look out of your window and be greeted by a verdant green, tree lined streetscape which leads to a parkland/wildlife corridor beyond. On the corner of your road, or at street level of your apartment block, will be a couple of shops.

You can walk to your local shop to get your day to day groceries and newspaper, or walk to your local restaurant for a quiet meal where the restaurant proprietor will greet you by name. A quick cycle ride, bus trip or walk will take you to your place of employment or the Town Centre main street, along which will be more restaurants, shops, entertainment, offices, schools and community facilities that create life and character.

The main street will have wide footpaths containing trees, tables and chairs. Traffic volumes will be low and unobtrusive and you will be able to meander at will, comfortable and safe in a pleasant environment.

You will be able to catch a bus or tram on the main street to the railway station where you will enjoy high-speed train access to Sydney, Newcastle or places and employment in between.

In your spare time you and your family may frequent the cafes and restaurants or you may cycle along a safe dedicated green corridor to large regional parklands that surround the District. Many areas surrounding the District will be wetland or forest conservation areas and you will be able to experience the presence, touch and feel of birds, marsupials and plants and flowers at close hand. You will enjoy the natural smells of forest and wetland, which will permeate your home.

You will not use your car very often. Instead you will walk or cycle to work, shops and other activities or take the train, bus or tram to your place of work. You could even work from home, telecommuting via the Internet and nipping around to the corner grocery store to get your lunch.

The Warnervale District will offer you everything.

6.3 DESIRED QUALITIES AND OBJECTIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT

As described in the Vision above, the Warnervale District Planning Strategy presents a remarkable opportunity to create an environment of high amenity, a strong community identity and distinctive character and sense of place.

It presents the opportunity to challenge and break away from the conventional planning and design policies and practices that typically deliver “place-less” urban environments across Australia which offer little by way of amenity and services to existing adjoining communities and future residents.

Therefore the Strategy recognises the inter-relatedness of key planning, design, natural environment, development and marketing requirements coupled with community and stakeholder aspirations for future development of the site.

While the process acknowledges and accommodates the stakeholders primary objectives, the Strategy results from a commitment by Wyong Shire Council, Planning NSW and Transport NSW to create a community that reflects, and enjoys, an environmentally sensitive approach to planning and design.

This commitment has extended the range of objectives and defined desirable characteristic and qualities, which the Strategy must aim to achieve.

In identifying the desired qualities, and objectives, for development within the District, development is assumed to mean the extent to which some future activity and development in the District can:

- Expand the role and viability of public transport through a more compact urban form.
- Replace single-use zoning with standards and a built form promoting mixed use, walkable neighbourhoods.
- Establish a built form oriented towards the public realm and human scale, rather than the private realm and the private car.
- Foster the creation of a sustainable community through the promotion of environmentally sustainable development (ESD) principles that balance development with the natural environment.
- Enhance and add value to adjacent residential areas and communities through improvement in open spaces and community services.

From the above, five qualities that the Strategy for District must aim to achieve can be identified. They are:

- The integration of urban form and environmental sustainability.
- The creation of quality neighbourhoods and vibrant communities.
- The promotion of economic prosperity.
- An enhanced level of mobility and accessibility.
- Effective infrastructure and community services.

6.4.1 Integrating Urban Form and Environmental Sustainability

The Strategy must:

- Ensure that the natural forms of the elevated land and floodplain define the District's communities.
- Create comfortable, inviting walkable communities anchored by pedestrian oriented public spaces that generate neighbourhood identity and sense of place.
- Provide alternative modes of transport to reduce dependence on the car and enhance urban amenity.
- Allow for diverse neighbourhood centres that include public spaces, facilities and public transport to accommodate more intense development, releasing greater areas for natural habitats and parklands.
- Allow for measures such as water recycling, grey water and stormwater reuse, the use of sustainable energy sources and water quality protection to enhance the natural environment and ensure impacts by way of air and water pollution are minimised.
- Provide accessible and integrated parklands and green spaces.
- Ensure an acceptable balance is struck between the competing demands for land for urban purposes and for environmental protection.

6.4.2 Neighbourhood Quality and Vibrant Communities

The Strategy must:

- Provide a community heart of each neighbourhood by creating vital centres, public gathering places and a critical mass of population and activity that foster interaction and a sense of community and community identity, rather than a sense of isolation and transience.
- Establish distinctive neighbourhood character by encouraging diversity in design and development type by respecting natural landform and creating community landmarks.
- Promote community safety through pedestrian friendly street design, traffic, calming, casual surveillance and crime preventative design.
- Promote a mix of uses, and balance of accessible and interconnected walking, bicycle and public transport opportunities that minimise car based commuting and foster casual interaction and community contact.
- Provide choice and access to opportunities for a wide range of dwelling types, public open spaces and community and commercial facilities so that the needs of all groups within the community are met.
- Achieve residential densities that are higher than those that currently prevail on the Central Coast.

6.4.3 Economic Prosperity

The Strategy must:

- Focus on the retention and expansion of existing business enterprises.
- Provide retail and commercial activities that offer a sub-district role meeting the day-to-day and weekly shopping needs of the community. Employment, community facilities and human services and entertainment facilities will have a broader role, offering services to residents and communities at both a District level and beyond.
- Provide additional employment and commercial lands that include a mix of uses that reduce personal transport cost and allow convenient access to services and employment to meet community needs as well as generating interest and vibrancy.
- Enhance infrastructure to accommodate and attract employment and community services and facilities in a manner that meets State and Local Government criteria and expectations with respect to required outcomes.
- Allow robustness and flexibility in terms of the pattern of development and access and mobility networks such that individual development precincts/sites can be designed to meet specific market and community needs.
- Ensure development is attractive, desirable and inviting, incorporating attractively landscaped parks and streetscapes as well as providing a variety of housing types targeted to a wide range of household types.

6.4.4 Mobility and Accessibility

The Strategy must:

- Co-ordinate land use and transportation planning to improve personal mobility and the community's access to the Warnervale Town Centre and an efficient and effective public transport network.
- Provide a connected and integrated network of roads, bicycles paths and pedestrian pathways that present a simple, easy to understand and sensible structure. The network must offer route choice and variety and landmarks and landscaping should assist way-finding.
- Support public transport and walking as the primary forms of transport within the District in lieu of the car wherever possible.

6.4.5 Infrastructure and Community Services

The Strategy must:

- Provide opportunities for equitable access to a wide range of educational and health services.
- Facilitate only patterns of development that can be served by adequate infrastructure.
- Provide for development of supporting community facilities commensurate with growth in communities.
- Focus public investment in areas and communities which have a demonstrable need for such resources.
- Support the implementation of the Community Support and Human Services Strategy for Warnervale/Wadalba.