



BLAND SHIRE COUNCIL
west wyalong

People Pride Progress

**A Community Plan
for the
Shire of Bland
2011-2016**

ABOUT THE SHIRE - AN INTRODUCTION

The Local Government Area of Bland is located on the northern fringes of the Riverina, New South Wales. It covers an area of 8,482 square kilometers and supports a population of 6,343 residents (estimate as at June 2006 - Australian Bureau of Statistics census)

In the 2006 Census 22.2% of the population were children aged between 0-14 years, 29.5% of the population were persons aged over 55 years and over. The median age of persons in the Bland Shire was 40years. It is predicted by 2031 the median age of persons living in the Bland Shire will be 50 with 30% of the predicted population aged over 65 years, an increase of 14%.

The twin townships of West Wyalong and Wyalong have a joint population of 3,950 and serve the role of the major service center for the Shire. Other communities include Barmedman, Tallimba, Ungarie, Weethalle, Kikoira, Mirrool and Naradhan.

The Wiradjuri people are the original inhabitants of the area.

Settlement occurred in the region from the 1830s as vast sheep and cattle runs were established. The area prospered after the discovery of gold in 1892, and the population grew to 10,000. The township of Wyalong was established in 1894 and not long after a major settlement developed west of Wyalong, resulting in the formation of West Wyalong which still remains as the Shire's residential and commercial hub.

From its early mining origins, West Wyalong was built along a crooked main street taking its unusual shape from the bullock track that curved around tree stumps and gold diggings.

Today the Shire is a blossoming rural economy built around sheep, cattle, wheat and other crop varieties. In recent times, West Wyalong has also experienced significant developments away from agriculture. Barrick Gold has established a major industrial operation, committing to the Lake Cowal Gold Project and Pace Farm has the biggest egg producing facility in the southern hemisphere.

There are excellent transport and telecommunication networks allowing easy access to Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide. Residents enjoy affordable housing and excellent child-care, education, health and aged care facilities. Residents of Bland Shire are particularly proud of the Shire's reputation as a friendly and safe place with a sound community spirit.

Bland Shire Council Vision and Mission

The Bland shire Council has a vision and a mission statement that supports its strategic direction:

Our Vision – *“People, Pride Progress”*

Our Mission – *“Working together to improve our quality of life”*

AT A GLANCE – THE COMMUNITY PLAN 2011-2016

AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITY PLANNING IS PARTNERSHIP. THIS DOCUMENT HIGHLIGHTS THOSE PRIORITIES THAT WILL ONLY BE EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY ACHIEVED THROUGH WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP.

A new Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework has been developed as part of the Local Government Reform Program and proposes to changes to the *Local Governments Act 1993* and Councils are no longer required to complete a separate Social Plan as it becomes an integral part of the development of the Community Strategic Plan.

Bland Shire Council has prepared a Community Plan incorporating the 3 previous plans issues and recommendations, to inform the preparation of the Community Strategic Plan. It details the principle activities and resources available and takes ownership of those objectives in its area of responsibility.

The Council acknowledges the need to work in partnership – with the community and local services, agencies and non-government organisations. Our role in improving community wellbeing ranges from direct service delivery through to leadership and advocacy.

The outcomes of the Plan are overseen by the Community Development Officer and implemented by 3 Committees of Council, including:

- Community Services Advisory Committee
- Cultural Advisory Committee
- Access Advisory Sub Committee

The Community Plan aims to deliver through a partnering culture. Building on partnerships with government and community developed over many years, its philosophy is to become integral to everyday life for the entire community and Council.

To implement the Community Plan our initial priorities and objectives are to:

- Strengthening and building community capacity
- Planning and Leadership
- Partnerships and Advocacy
- Providing community services and events
- Facilitating engagement with the community
- Ensuring we are a sustainable community

What is a Community Plan?

A long-term community plan aims to develop common goals that help guide all sections of the community in working together to achieve our community aspirations. A community plan informs all members of the community and assists in prioritising activities of greatest importance.

A Community Plan is a living document that is regularly reviewed to reflect the changing aspirations of our community

The purpose of a Community Plan is to:

- acknowledge community aspirations
- provide an opportunity for participation by the community in decision-making processes on activities to be undertaken by stakeholder groups
- describe the activities of groups within the community
- coordinate decision-making and use of resources of the Bland Shire and other organisations working with and in the community
- provide a long-term focus for decisions and activities of the Bland Shire and other organisations working with and in the community
- provide a basis for accountability.

Community Plan Requirements:

The Community Plan should link and address all the strategies in the Community Strategic Plan. Consideration must be given to:

- The priorities identified by the community during the development of the Community Strategic Plan
- The levels of service expected by the community
- The resourcing options
- Ongoing environmental, social/cultural or capital works projects
- Opportunities to link with Commonwealth, State or Regional programs/projects
- Opportunities to work with other councils in providing services
- Council's legislative responsibilities and regulatory functions.

Key Achievements from the previous Plans:

Social:

- Redevelopment of McCann Park, Barnado Park, Herridge Park.
- Upgrades to Mirrool Park, Barmedman Park, ANZAC Memorial Park
- Regional Youth Development Working Party established
- Full time Community Development and Youth Development Officer employed
- Country Education Fund established in West Wyalong
- Families First Program, Women's Activity Groups formed
- Business West Wyalong Committee established
- Establishment of FarmLink Committee
- West Wyalong Community Care Centre built for relocation of HACC Services
- Improvements to WW Presbyterian Church, WW Community Church, WW Catholic Church, Naradhan Hall, Weethalle CWA hall, Ungarie CWA Hall
- Footpath between Wyalong & West Wyalong completed

Cultural:

- Appointment of a Public Relations Officer
- Annual touring exhibitions; Bald Archy exhibition, In the Bin Short Film Festival
- Local Artist register collated

- Cultural Development Grant program developed funding \$5000 annually

Access:

- Access Incentive Scheme developed funding increased from \$5000 to \$10000 annually
- Seating increased in Main Street shopping areas
- AUSPOST made available to Barmedman, Ungarie, Tallimba
- New hospital constructed by GMAHS
- Secured Community Aged Care Packages (CAC) allocated to villages
- Annual Access Award Scheme
- International Day of People with a DisABILITY celebrated annually
- AAA Guides purchased and available at Library
- Mobility Access Map created for West Wyalong CBD
- Improvements and accessibility improved to Council owned buildings
- Assistance with improving accessibility across the Shire.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

In 2008 Bland Shire Council embarked on a widespread programme of consulting its community to identify the type of community and lifestyle desired for the future. Workshops were held with a broad range of community members, including:

- Towns and villages – workshops at:
 - West Wyalong/Wyalong
 - Ungarie
 - Mirrool
 - Weethalle
 - Kikoira/Naradhan
 - Tallimba
 - Barmedman
- Community support groups
- Seniors
- Business and farmers
- Shire staff
- Medical, emergency, interagency and government departments
- Residents and community groups
- Sport and recreation groups
- School principals
- Barrick Gold and Pace Farm
- Councillors

Discussions were also held with the Regional Manager of the Premier's Department for the Riverina Murray region to ensure the community strategic plan reflects the direction of the State Plan.

The community workshops identified the positive features of living in the shire, and the changes considered necessary to improve lifestyles in the future. The development of this combined Plan has seen further consultation with the relevant committees and Council's Community Forums.

MAJOR ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

VALUES

- *Friendly and supportive* – a community that is welcoming and supporting
- *Resourceful* – a community that creates opportunities
- *Accessible lifestyle* – a community that can access facilities and services locally and regionally
- *Partnerships* – a community that works closely with neighbours, other councils and government agencies to share information and resources

MAJOR ISSUES

The community workshops identified the following major issues of importance to the future of the shire:

- **Climate/Drought** – affects on mood, confidence, etc; amalgamation of farms; the loss of sons and daughters to the city; adapting to and developing alternative employment and land-use opportunities.
- **Tourism** – capturing the “grey nomads” and other travellers so they stay and spend their money in the local economy.
- **Health and Medical Services** – scope of, and access to.
- **Employment** – the role of the shire to provide incentives and support to new and existing businesses, and to improve local services and facilities so as to attract families to stay and live in the shire.
- **Trends** – being aware of, and predicting trends eg. increasing life expectancy; increased leisure time; additional travellers and visitation; flight from city living; world oil prices and alternative energy sources; etc.
- **Transport** – the need for improved access, particularly due to loss of rail and air services, and inconvenient bus services.
- **Centralised Services** – finding a balance between the services and facilities that might best be provided in West Wyalong, and at the same time promoting appropriate village opportunities.
- **Promotion** – tourism, business growth, business relocation, lifestyle opportunities – jointly with adjoining Shires and centres and major businesses.
- **Town Centre Improvements** – to the West Wyalong main street and by pass, and to the villages.

From the issues identified at the community workshops five major themes have been chosen to group together the key strategies and initiatives to be taken over the next 10 years:

- **Growing our population and jobs** – addressing the need to increase investment in the shire, and to increase the number and diversity of jobs so as to counter the affects of drought and climate change, and sustain our towns and villages.
- **Pride in our shire** – before we can proudly tell our story, and better promote our locational advantages and our attributes, we need to ensure we do everything we can to upgrade existing facilities and services and provide new ones. Our public face, our town entrances, our main streets, and our facilities must provide a welcoming experience for residents and visitors alike. We must make sure we are justly proud of the quality of our place.

- **Telling our stories** – promoting the locational advantages of the shire, and its key attributes is seen as a major opportunity for the future. When our services and facilities are improved over time we can better promote the advantages of living and working in the shire.
- **Connected and accessible** – a major challenge for any rural community is to ensure it has reasonable and appropriate access to quality services, information and facilities. We must overcome the tyranny of distance.
- **Giving life to the plan** – a plan is worthless unless implemented. It is the responsibility of all concerned to do everything they can to improve the quality of life in the shire. The council is the vehicle by which many initiatives and strategies will be pursued. The council has to report periodically to the community on how successful it has been.

What we said about.....

SOCIAL & CULTURAL WELLBEING	Recommendations	Existing Programs & Activities from previous plan	Proposed Programs & Initiatives	Resources
A sense of community – a strong cohesive and connected community	Develop, coordinate and review relevant Community Plan	Social Plan 2004- 2009 Cultural Plan 2003-2008	New Community Plan 2011-2016 produced and adopted	Bland Shire Council Committees
	Promote community development	Community Development Officer liaising with community organisations and members	Plan and coordinate local community services events and programs to bring community together	Community art & craft groups
	Provide opportunities for social interaction and relationship building within the community	Funding applications, submissions and programs	Development of special events in Bland Shire villages to reinvigorate the local sense of community	Bank of IDEAS
	Encourage volunteering in local community organisations		Develop a coordinated communication structure for villages	Schools
	Access available funding opportunities		Support libraries as places to connect	Riverina Division of General Practice
	Continue to strengthen business and community networks		Provide community skills related workshops	Eastern Riverina Arts Program
			Volunteer seminars & awards ceremonies functions	Regional Arts NSW
				Community & Sporting groups including Villages
				Library Services
				Dept of Communities
	Provide and facilitate events and cultural activities	International Womens Day	Community Fun Run	Dept of Culture and the Arts
		In the Bin Film Short Film Festival	Healthy lifestyle community program	Department of Indigenous Affairs
		Bald Archys Exhibition	Re-establish service provider such as ERAP	Dept of Sport and Recreation
		Australia Day Awards	Annual event or festival	

	Plant a Tree Day Day	Blue Light disco to resume operation	Business West Wyalong
	Clean Up Australia Day	Partnership with Barrick for sponsorship for large community event or project	Volunteers
	Children's Expo		Network of Volunteer Resources Centres
	Bald Archy exhibition	Facilitate celebrity/personalities visits	Electoral Commission
		Arts/Cultural Calender	Events West Wyalong
Research and identify current trends and needs in provision of community and social services	Liaise with government departments	Research public /multi cultural space or building for performances, exhibitions, workshops	NSW Industry & Investment Community Radio
	Attend conference on community development/engagement	Mens Shed	
	Attend regional meetings to network and gain information on other projects in region	Hold 6 monthly meetings with the Aboriginal Lands Council to determine current needs and clarify Council role in current issues	
		Partner with other Councils to deliver programs	
Access available funding opportunities	Apply for external grants to fund projects to be delivered in the Shire	Apply for external grants to fund projects to be delivered in Shire	
		Subscribe to grant information providers	

Provide information, support, liaison services to individuals and community groups	New Residents Packages to all new residents	Council grants Program to support local events
	West Wyalong Events calendar	Community Development Officer facebook profile
	Council website and newsletter	Youth Development Officer facebook profile
	Community Services Guide	Mentoring programs
	Community Noticeboard	Investigate possible location of a mothers room in Main Street
	Community forums	
	Establishment and support of WW Community Radio	
Provide input and support to Council committees	Youth of Bland Shire Committee	
	Cultural Advisory committee	
	Community Services Advisory Committee	
	Access Advisory Sub Committee	
	Interagency Meeting	
Increase the level of community awareness of Council activities	Public Relations Officer appointed	Social media websites
		e-newsletters

What we said about.....

SOCIAL & CULTURAL WELLBEING	Recommendations	Existing Programs & Activities from previous plan	Proposed Programs & Initiatives	Resources
Safety & Security	<p>Increase community involvement in personal and property security issues</p> <p>Promote community safety and crime prevention strategy</p> <p>Ensure facilities, equipment and infrastructure meet safety and community expectations</p> <p>Ensure that new designs and developments provide a safe and secure environment</p> <p>Town Centre improvements</p> <p>Increase the visible presence of security and police services</p>	<p>Rotary Youth Driving Awareness program</p> <p>NRMA Safer Driving School</p> <p>Review risk management systems</p> <p>Dog management, registration</p> <p>Apply State and local laws</p> <p>Community Access Plan</p>	<p>Further develop community safety and security planning</p> <p>Self Defence Classes</p> <p>Cyber bullying workshops</p> <p>Mobile Scooter Safety Program</p> <p>Neighbourhood Watch</p> <p>Positive ageing programs</p> <p>Provide crime prevention and safety education programs</p> <p>Child restraint safety check day</p> <p>Community forums</p> <p>Road Safety campaign</p> <p>Security personnel available for business of West Wyalong</p> <p>FarmSafe education Strengthen links between existing community programs</p>	<p>NSW Police</p> <p>NRMA</p> <p>ACCC</p> <p>Business West Wyalong</p> <p>Business Owners</p> <p>Church Groups</p> <p>LGSA</p> <p>Office of Crime Prevention</p> <p>Office of Road Safety</p> <p>West Wyalong Advocate</p> <p>Prime Local News</p> <p>WIN News</p> <p>Sporting and Community Clubs</p>

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SOCIAL & CULTURAL WELLBEING	Recommendations	Existing Programs & Activities from previous plan	Proposed Programs & Initiatives	Resources
Accessibility	Seek to be a leader in promoting and providing an accessible community	Access Advisory Sub Committee Community Access Plan (CAP)	Publicising Access Incentive Scheme Continue targeting Main Street businesses to upgrade access to buildings	Carer groups Dept of Health & Ageing Dept of Sport & Recreation Disability Services Commission Australian Human Rights Commission Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) Works & Services Disability Discrimination Act NSW Anti-Discrimination Act (1977) Local Government Act (1993) Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards
	Progressively modify facilities operated by Council to optimise their accessibility	Annual Access Awards Access Incentive Scheme Grant	Provide a fully accessible baby/change feeding facility in Main St area	
	Provision of community assets and programs	Home and Community Care Services (HACC). New building for HACC services	Audit website for accessibility	
	Implement and review the disability access plan	Celebrate International Day of People with a DisABILITY annually	Upgrade to existing public toilets	
	Working in partnership with organisations to provide sustainable access and inclusions opportunities for everyone in the community	Audit all works for access standards More accessible seating in Main Street provided	Vision impaired project Apply for grants in Accessible Communities Education programs to schools	
	Assist in community education	DisPlan implemented to ensure inclusions in disaster management for people with disabilities Walkway from Wyalong to West Wyalong Standard checklist for all public events to ensure provision is made for people with a disability		

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SOCIAL & CULTURAL WELLBEING	Recommendations	Existing Programs & Activities from previous plan	Proposed Programs & Initiatives	Resources
Environmental Wellbeing	Develop, implement and review a Climate Change Action Plan for Council	National Tree Day	Council Climate Change Action Plan	Country Energy
		Local Environment Plan (LEP)	Apply for funding	Schools
	Develop and implement environmental management plans Promote sustainable living to all residents	Focus group for LGSA Climate Change Action Planning	Use electronic methods to reduce paper usage and carbon footprint	Lake Cowal Conservation Centre (LCCC)
	Educate Youth		Community workshops to undertake a risk assessment	Local Government Shires Association (LGSA)
			Integrate climate change focus into new & existing projects	CSIRO
			Wetlands Project	Department of Environment & Climate Change NSW
			Annual Business Award	Department Of Environment & Heritage
			Involve youth with Green Projects	
			Sustainable Lifestyle Expo	Department of Primary Industries
			Sustainable House Day	
		Increased awareness of recycling		
		Shower timers for all residents		
		Biodiversity Day		
		Information included in new residents		

packages

Solar panels on Council building

Council grant programs

Investigate possibility of a public
recycling facility

Make changes to LEP

Alternate land uses

New residents packages – climate
change information

What we said about.....

SOCIAL & CULTURAL WELLBEING	Recommendations	Existing Programs & Activities from previous plan	Proposed Programs & Initiatives	Resources
Health & Well Being	<p>Provide opportunities for our community to participate in activities that will assist in maintaining and improving our wellbeing</p> <p>Inform the community of sustainability initiatives</p>	<p>Health & Well Being Advisory Committee</p> <p>West Wyalong Service Network</p> <p>Interagency Committee</p> <p>Council Grants Program</p> <p>Community Access Plan</p> <p>Community events calendar</p> <p>Meals on Wheels service</p> <p>Develop and conduct support for Community and sporting groups</p> <p>Library</p>	<p>Active Aged Care Programs</p> <p>Community Fun run</p> <p>Local Service Provider Booklet</p> <p>Community Health Program</p> <p>Seminars with guest speakers</p> <p>Volunteering drive</p> <p>Support various health initiatives and be part of fundraising drives (cancer, diabetes, etc.)</p> <p>Work with TAFE and other providers to deliver healthy lifestyle courses</p> <p>Lobby for additional services to the Bland region</p> <p>Facilitate the development of mental health education seminars</p>	<p>Community and sporting groups</p> <p>Dept of Sport & Recreation</p> <p>Local Government Shire Association (LGSA)</p> <p>Dept of Environment, Climate Change and Water</p> <p>Dept of Sport & Recreation</p>

What we said about.....

SOCIAL & CULTURAL WELLBEING	Recommendations	Existing Programs & Activities from previous plan	Proposed Programs & Initiatives	Resources
Youth	Develop policy and procedures to engage young people in community decision making	Appointment of full time Youth Development Officer	Youth of Bland Shire (YOBS) Committee	NSWP Bland Blokes
	Work with young people to identify and develop a 'youth space'	TAFE courses offered to Yr 11 & 12 students	Develop an annual youth oriented event Identify "youth space"	Youth of Bland Shire Committee
	Develop mentoring programs with Community Groups	WWHS "Try A Trade Day"	Skate park competitions	Community Services Advisory Committee
	Work with employers and education providers to develop broader range of courses and subjects	Duke of Edinburgh Awards	Battle of the Bands competitions & busking and live music concerts	Schools NSW TAFE Community College Universities
	Involve youth in Green Projects	Burnt production	Blue Light Disco to resume operation	Rotary
	Develop and implement social media plan	Skate Park project	Red Cross Save a Mate Program	NRMA
	Encourage youth arts	In the Bin Short Film workshop	Youth Development Officer Facebook profile	Red Cross
	Conduct education workshops in volunteering	School Holiday Activities	Youth component on website	Duke of Edinburgh GSAHS NSW Health Community & Business Guide
		Busk For A Buck CD project	Cyber bullying, sports, art workshops	Reconnect
		School Tree Day	Establish annual lifestyle education workshops	Relationships Australia
			Green Team	
			Youth segment on Community Radio	
			Youth magazine	