

GWYDIR SHIRE

**GROW CROPPA CREEK
PROGRAM**



**DRAFT COMMUNITY
STRATEGIC PLAN 2005**

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1. DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

The Department of State and Regional Development has two community funding programs to revitalise communities throughout NSW by providing them with assistance and guidance. The Main Street/Small Towns Program (MS/STP) is aimed at larger communities with populations of 1,500 – 15,000. The Towns and Villages Futures Program (TVFP) is aimed at small communities with populations of 2,500 or less. Gwydir shire villages can apply for funding through the TVFP, but can also apply for funding on shire-wide projects with other towns through the MS/STP which provided funding for this shire-wide planning process.

The Department's community economic development programs provide a framework to pull a diverse range of community stakeholders together under one strategic umbrella. Benefits include cohesive strategic planning on issues affecting the community, wider networking opportunities, greater impact and value to businesses and community groups and added value to Council. The programs build social capital within a community and the shire by establishing communication channels, trust, relationships and networks.

Economic development is entwined with social development in rural communities, so it is necessary for the planning process to take a holistic approach to all the issues affecting communities.

A community economic development program is achieved by harnessing local skills and resources and planning together to implement practical, achievable community and business projects. The community planning workshops develop a community plan with an agreed vision for the future, a consensus of prioritised issues affecting the community and a series of projects to address the issues. The program includes an organisational structure of community volunteers to implement the projects and methods to run the program to ensure its ongoing success and sustainability. The key elements of the program include:

Organisation – creating an organisation with broad stakeholder representation of retailers, business people, property owners, council, community groups, farmers and residents to unite and work towards a common goal.

Economic Development – developing and strengthening local businesses and developing opportunities for new businesses/industries to provide a sustainable economic base.

Physical Design – addressing all physical aspects of the town, village or area such as improving traffic, parking, tree planting and landscaping, signage, public facilities and preserving the unique qualities and heritage of the town and surrounding environment.

Events and Marketing – promoting the area and increasing community pride and social activities with events and marketing campaigns to target local residents, tourists and commercial markets.

Social Development - addressing the community's social, cultural, health, youth and elderly issues as a holistic approach to long term economic development.

2. THE ROLE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The role of this document is to:

- Act as a framework to direct the development of the community program
- Facilitate cooperative working relationships between the community, businesses, Council and other external partners
- Formalise the goals and objectives of the community in relation to its economic and social future

The plan is divided into the following three categories:

1. Where are we now?
 - Situation Analysis
 - SWOT
2. Where do we want to go?
 - Vision and Mission Statements
3. How are we going to get there?
 - Key Result Areas
 - Objectives
 - Issues
 - Action Based Program of Projects
 - Program organisational structure
 - Implementation of projects by volunteer teams
 - Regular monthly meetings
 - Reporting channels to Council
 - Communication channels with Council and other towns and villages throughout the shire

The Plan contains vision and missions statements and a set of strategic priorities and objectives that have been developed to guide the community program over the next 2-3 years. The status of each current project is reviewed regularly at monthly meetings and reported to the Gwydir Shire Council and to the community via local newsletters or newspaper columns.

A second document titled 'Summary of Outcomes' details all the information gathered at the workshop. This is an internal working document that can be used as a resource to refer to as projects are finalised and new actions are sought to address the key issues nominated by the community in this plan.

3. SITUATION ANALYSIS

The following information was gathered from a variety of sources, including anecdotal information from the workshops, members of the community, Gwydir Shire Council staff, 2001 ABS statistics, the Yallaroi Shire Strategic Plan 2001, the Warialda Community Plan 2003, Gwydir shire tourism documents and Gwydir Country website.

3.1 Gwydir Shire

The Gwydir Shire is located in the north west of NSW and covers an area of 9,122 square kilometres, extending from the Inverell Shire on the western tablelands to the Moree Shire on the western plains. It encompasses a diverse landscape that is both picturesque and productive, with undulating hills that flatten out to the west and the beautiful Gwydir River.

The Gwydir Shire was formed on 17th March 2004 by the amalgamation of the Yallaroi Shire, the Bingara Shire and 40% of the land mass of the Barraba Shire.

In the past, like many other small, rural shires, the Councils of Bingara, Yallaroi and Barraba were centred around one major town. On the small rate base collected, it was difficult to extend resources and services into the outlying villages and rural communities.

The shire now covers a large land mass with a population of less than 6,000 people, which still creates a small rate base to provide facilities and services to the shire. However it is anticipated that there will be some improvement for villages and rural communities by creating a 'larger voice' representing a wider area on issues affecting the shire. A major issue from the outlying villages in the shire is the state of the roads, which are difficult to maintain, let alone upgrade.

3.1.1 Population and Census Data

Due to the recent amalgamation of the shire, there is no accurate core data available for population statistics of the towns, villages and surrounding rural areas within the new shire boundaries. The Amalgamation Proclamation in March 2004 stated a shire population of 5,790. The following population statistics for the villages and surrounding communities are based on the number of people who voted in the last elections, the number of children attending local schools and an estimation of pre school aged children and high school children attending education outside the shire boundaries.

Bingara	1,390
Coolatai	130
Crooble	40
Croppa Creek	120
Gravesend	205
North Star	200

Rocky Creek	35
Yallaroi	100
Upper Horton / Cobbadah / and southern end of the shire	280
Warialda	1,750
Warialda Rail	100
Other rural areas	1,440
Total	5,790

The Gwydir shire is experiencing an ageing population. As the Gwydir Shire is yet to establish statistics within the new shire boundaries, the following tables from the 2001 ABS census outlines statistics for the Yallaroi and Bingara shires and shows a percentage breakdown of the community by age compared with the NSW average. The Bingara section of the Gwydir Shire has a particularly high ageing population.

Age structure	Yallaroi Shire	Bingara Shire	New South Wales
0-4 years (infants)	7.4	5.3	6.7
5-17 years (children)	20.1	14.5	18.3
18-64 years (adults)	59.5	58.2	61.9
65-84 years (mature adults)	12.1	20.4	11.7
Over 85 years (senior citizens)	1.0	1.8	1.4

The following table shows a percentage breakdown of the family/household type compared with the NSW average, taken from the 2001 ABS statistics.

Family/household type	Yallaroi Shire	Bingara Shire	New South Wales
Couple without child(ren)	40.9	49.6	34.9
Couple with child(ren)	47.1	35.2	47.8
One parent family	11.0	13.5	15.5
Lone person households	29.1	38.6	31.6

The following table shows a percentage breakdown of weekly household incomes compared with the NSW average. This table indicates significantly lower earnings in the Gwydir Shire than the rest of the state.

Weekly household income	Yallaroi Shire	Bingara Shire	New South Wales
Less than \$300	16.6	17.8	12.2
\$300 to \$999	50.0	54.8	39.4
\$1,000 and over	18.6	12.3	36.9

The following table shows a percentage breakdown of employment status compared with the NSW average.

Employment status	Yallaroi Shire	Bingara Shire	New South Wales
Total employed	93.1	92.2	92.8
Total unemployed	6.9	7.8	7.2

3.1.2 History

The Gwydir Shire area was originally populated by the Weraeria tribe and there are several known aboriginal sites in the region such as carved trees, bora grounds and open campsites that are protected under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

In 1827, explorer/botanist Allan Cunningham travelled from Sydney and camped on the junction of Halls Creek and the Gwydir River which he named after his benefactor "Lord Gwydir of Wales".

Following this expedition, squatters travelled north and took up parcels of land. In 1838 the Slaughterhouse Creek and Myall Creek massacres occurred, where some 200 aboriginals were slain at Slaughterhouse Creek and the Myall Creek massacre was renowned as the first time that white men were tried and executed for the murder of aboriginal people.

In 1840 a police post was set up at "Warialda" which means "place of wild honey", the title given to the area by the local Aboriginal people. It was a well known crossing place so a logical choice for an out post. The New South Wales Government established administration centres in the interior of the country to administer the activities of pastoralists (squatters) and Warialda was one of the sites chosen.

In 1847 Warialda became the administrative headquarters for the Gwydir squatting district and the permanent headquarters for the Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands. It became the administrative centre and focal point of the region because so much official and legal business had to be transacted there. On December 22 1846, it was listed as a place where Courts of petty sessions were held. Warialda was Gazetted as a village in 1849 with Bingara being officially recognised as a village in 1852.

A number of historic buildings remain a part of the Gwydir Shire landscape and they provide a glimpse into the history of the towns and district. The discovery of gold in 1853 brought prospectors to the area and when copper and diamonds were discovered in the 1880's, rapid development followed. Bingara was the largest supplier of diamonds in Australia during this time.

3.1.3 Agriculture

The Shire's economic base is dominated by agriculture and the service facilities attached to that sector. Agriculture is the most significant contributor to the gross regional product, with stock of beef, sheep, pigs and summer and winter crops such as wheat, sorghum, oats and barley. There is currently a small trend to diversify into other areas such as aquaculture, olives, dry cotton, lupins and oil seeds such as sunflower and linseed.

Gwydir Shire has good quality and availability of groundwater. The land in the shire is of high quality overall, with parts of the area well known for its rich, black soils. The reliance on agriculture means that the area is very dependent on good seasons and the recent devastating drought has had a flow on effect that has affected all the communities.

3.1.4 Business and Retail

The shire is situated in an excellent, central location to attract manufacturing and other industries as it is approximately 50km from the Newell Highway, 450kms south of Brisbane, 1,200kms north of Melbourne and 640kms north west of Sydney.

Both Bingara and Warialda are serviced by supermarkets, hardware shops and suppliers of agricultural products, as well as a range of services such as accountants, bookkeeping, solicitors and doctors.

However, there are a limited number of retail stores with gaps in the market such as clothing, shoe shops, pampering products and a limited range of gift lines. There are snack bars and take away food in both centres, but a lack of restaurants and food variety.

The banking facilities within the shire include the National Bank in Bingara, the New England Credit Union in Bingara and Warialda, an in-store Westpac agency in Warialda and Commonwealth Bank facilities at the Post Offices. For other banking facilities, the community leaves the shire.

The lack of choice and variety in retail, hospitality, services, medical and banking facilities creates escape spending patterns as people travel to larger centres for one of the services and subsequently conduct their shopping outside the shire. This in turn creates detrimental spending for new businesses to open locally, as they need the support of the shire communities to remain viable.

Telecommunications are an important issue within the shire. With the introduction of broadband internet and improved mobile services, the number of home-based businesses has increased in the two larger centres. Satellite connections are available in some rural areas. However, many of the rural based communities identified poor, slow internet services and lack of mobile coverage as a hindrance to their business and nominated upgrading

telecommunications throughout the shire as a major issue to remaining competitive in today's marketplace and essential for future expansion.

There are great variations in the economies of the shire. For instance several businesses are starting to export innovative products, aquaculture is expanding and some agricultural areas in the north of the shire are thriving whereas other sections are struggling to survive.

Another major issue affecting the Gwydir Shire is the lack of vacant land and appropriate housing for rental or purchase. The local indigenous community currently has an Aboriginal Land Rights claim over the whole shire which is inhibiting the introduction or expansion of industrial, commercial and residential land. It is imperative to resolve this issue to meet current business and community needs and future expansion.

Plumbers, electricians, builders, brick layers – in fact, most trades people are in great demand as they are either not available or very difficult to obtain. The impacts of this include having to wait a long time for quotes, let alone for the work itself and paying higher rates for the amount of travel for trades people to come to the shire. Another issue affecting the use of trades people is the shire's proximity to the Queensland border with Queensland trades people unable to practice in NSW due to licence differences, making an even smaller pool to choose from.

The lack of trades people, coupled with a strong Vocational Education program in the shire provides an opportunity to upskill local youth with a view to establishing businesses within the shire to service the trades area. Council is currently conducting a Skills Audit to identify gaps in the shire for skills, businesses and services. The information gained from this Audit will be used to attract businesses to the shire and identify training needs for long term sustainability.

3.1.5 Tourism

Tourism is steadily increasing in the shire as people leave the busier roads of the Newell and New England Highways for the more picturesque, quieter and safer roads of the Fossicker's Way, providing the most direct route from Sydney into Queensland.

The shire is currently working on an inter-regional tourism project to promote an alternative north/south touring route, particularly to the 'grey nomads'. The route will link the Gwydir, Inglewood, Milmerran and Wambo (around Dalby) Shires as an alternative route to central Queensland, through to Harvey Bay.

The Gwydir Shire has a number of attractions including the caves, horse riding, bushwalking, bird watching and a variety of waterfalls, streams, rivers and dams ideal for aquatic pursuits including fishing, canoeing or whitewater rafting. The more recognised attractions include Cranky Rock Reserve, Limestone Caves, Koorilgur Nature Walk, Myall Creek, the abundant bird and

wildlife and fossicking for gold or semi-precious stones in one of the many fossicking areas.

Accommodation in the shire consists of pubs, motels and caravan parks in the major towns, with a small number of farm stays. Many of the villages nominated the development of caravan parks or bush camping sites as projects for their community programs. Developing and linking these facilities with appropriate signage and marketing materials will provide a boost to the tourism industry and entice visitors to stay longer in the shire.

Each village area has a different character and appeal that could provide visitors with a satisfying tourist experience and opportunities for increased businesses within the shire. However, lack of accommodation and poor road conditions currently limit tourism to day trips throughout the shire, so improvement of the roads and an increase in accommodation will greatly increase tourism and business opportunities. The natural beauty and heritage of the area, the friendliness of the people and the exciting and diverse range of events and activities will encourage visitors to extend their stay, return again or market the area through word of mouth.

3.1.6 Education

The Gwydir Shire places a strong focus on learning and has been working for a number of years on innovative educational practices to increase the opportunities for learning in schools and the community. Facilities include pre-schools, public and catholic schools, TAFE outreach centres and Vocational Education programs.

Gwydir Shire has a pre school in Warialda three days each week, Bingara four days each week and a mobile pre school services the shire villages one day each week for North Star, Yallaroi, Crooble, Croppa Creek and Upper Horton once a fortnight. Due to economic and geographic issues, the goal for all children to attend pre school two days a week is not being achieved throughout the shire.

Primary school education throughout the shire area has also altered over the years due to fluctuating populations tied to the economic outcomes of agricultural areas. Croppa Creek has alarmingly decreased numbers attending the primary school and is struggling to keep the school open. Upper Horton and Coolatai have lost schools in previous years, even though their current school aged population would support a local school. Many villages in the shire without a primary school in the near vicinity cannot attract new and younger families and face a decreasing and ageing population. The removal of small schools from rural areas has a huge impact and a large multiplying effect on local communities.

Historically Bingara and Warialda schools have had lower than average educational achievements, so Bingara Central School and Warialda High have made a strong commitment to Vocational Education for school age and adult students to upskill the local community.

Both schools currently offer Vocational Education Training (VET) to students as young as year 9 and have the highest number of school based traineeships in NSW. VET is also offered through TAFE and ACE for TVET students and adults, so a wide range of courses are available.

Bingara Central School teaches students up to Year 10 and continuing senior school students attend either boarding school or Warialda High. The lack of years 11 and 12 at Bingara Central School has been an on-going issue for many years, however it is preferable to have the two schools work together to offer a wider range of courses.

Warialda High has won numerous awards in recognition of their students' achievements, winning national WorldSkills awards in hospitality, retail and business as well as many state finalists in a range of courses. Warialda High School also has a good academic record in the HSC with many students going on to tertiary education, so education levels in the shire have improved.

In a recent review of NSW education, Professor Tony Vincent highlighted the work of the two schools as a positive model for communities addressing local needs and developing strong partnerships between the local community and their schools. The Director General of Education Andrew Cappie Wood will be visiting the shire in August 2005 to look at the achievements in Vocational Education. The shire would like to develop the model further.

Courses in Adult Education may alter in 2006 due to funding decisions by state and federal governments. ACE Warialda is an outpost of Barraba Community Learning Association which is a registered training organisation, so their funding should not be affected. However, Bingara and Gravesend Adult Learning Associations are not registered training organisations and may not be funded after 2005, which is generating serious concern for the communities involved.

Until now, many of the educational courses were delivered to meet community needs and it has been possible to attend practical courses such as sewing, craft, art, woodwork etc. These courses bring the community together and build skills, confidence and self esteem, providing socialising opportunities that assist in developing community pride and sense of place. Under the new educational model, these courses won't be supported any more and outcomes will only be measured on Vocational Education courses.

Personal development and community development are valuable and integral parts of economic development. Many country people are isolated by long distances, hardships and economic issues and leisure learning courses provide a social and educational forum that delivers a range of benefits. They contribute to the general well being of rural communities, especially in a mental health context as people need somewhere to share their concerns and gain support. They are often the highlight of a community person's week and are a necessary part of the fabric of rural communities. The outcomes are more

difficult to measure, but certainly generate self esteem and confidence which in turn encourages the development of enterprises and initiatives within the community that increase quality of life. It is hoped that the governments will recognise the value of non-vocational courses and continue to support all learning outcome needs for communities.

3.1.7 Health and Community Services:

The Shire's main centres of Bingara and Warialda are serviced by modern medical centres and hospitals, both of which are in line to be upgraded to multipurpose health services. There are self care units for aged care in both communities managed by Council. There are also services to assist the aged and the disabled to remain independent in their homes, including Home and Community Care Services, Community Transport and Community Health Services.

However, lack of health care services was nominated by the rural communities as a major issue. These communities visit specialists in larger centres or rely on visiting services from Inverell or Moree as the population base isn't large enough to be considered in initial health and community services planning. There is a need to lobby at a regional level to ensure access to services and to attract travelling specialists to the shire to stop people having to travel large distances to access them in larger centres.

Both Bingara and Warialda provide Centrelink Agencies that enable the community to access this service without the need to travel to a major centre. Both towns also have a library and a Tourist Information Centre.

Bingara and Warialda have swimming pools and good sporting facilities. Swimming and football are strongly supported, but many other sports are struggling to have stand-alone competitions through lack of volunteers to manage the sports. Those who are currently managing local sports are burned out and struggling to keep them going. Many families join sporting associations in larger centres such as Inverell or Moree.

Sport has economic as well as social benefits for an area. When competitions or sporting days are presented in rural towns, a large influx of people attends the events and spends money in the area. Local sports create socialising activities for adults as well as helping youth to establish friendships that carry through into high school and create a sense of community. Current issues affecting sports in Gwydir Shire include insurance, sourcing and training volunteers and looking at creative ways of running sports through schools to keep the sports within the shire.

3.1.8 Gwydir Shire Community Planning

The shire has strong connections within each community, making them self sufficient and self reliant with immense community pride. Gwydir Shire Council has taken an innovative approach to community consultation by obtaining funding from the Department of State and Regional Development to conduct a

series of community strategic planning workshops in eight communities throughout the new shire.

The process has provided valuable information to Council by making them aware of local community issues and their needs and expectations. It has established 'self help' programs in each community taking a 'bottom up' approach to community economic development, with each community identifying relevant issues and projects, upskilling and becoming more organised and proactive in improving their quality of life.

The process has also established a Community Consultation Network that links all the communities to Council and to each other via email, with occasional face to face meetings by the chair of each program, as required. This network will open up communication channels and assist in building community capacity by developing relationships and networks within the shire, with all stakeholders working together as a team towards agreed goals. The Network will provide Council with a tool to consult community programs on issues that arise and the communities can interact with each other, such as supporting each other's events or combining on funding applications for issues that affect a range of communities in the same area.

After completion of the initial workshops, feedback from the communities has been excellent, with a positive feeling that 'something is starting to happen'. The next stage of the process will include the establishment of regular meetings in each community to plan and implement the projects nominated on their community plans and Council to establish a small community grant for each location. This grant money can be used by each community as matching funds for government funding programs, nominating Council as the sponsoring organisation and thereby creating a true partnership between communities, Council, state and federal government departments.

3.2 Croppa Creek

Croppa Creek is an agricultural district situated equal distances from Warialda, Moree and Goondiwindi townships.

Croppa Creek has been settled since the early 1930's with the village residential blocks appearing from the 1940's onwards. The construction of the railway line brought fettle gangs to the area. Following the completion of the railway the district flourished with closer settlement and a gradual increase of mixed farming. More and more families and general labourers came to reside in Croppa Creek and district. The present day village adjoins the Travelling Stock Route (TSR) which was a part of the original Yallaroi and Murgo runs, now subdivided into farming leases.

Built on hard work and true pioneering spirit, early settlers erected and serviced windmills, broke in horses, fenced paddocks, built yards and opened up the country. Wool and wheat were plentiful in the early days and now the area is considered to be mixed farming. Cattle, sheep, sunflowers, wheat, barley, sorghum and chickpeas are

the main commodities grown in the area, including an increasing amount of cotton crops, both dryland and irrigated.

A school developed in the village and then a need was recognised for a central meeting place to hold public meetings and social functions. The hall was created along with eight tennis courts and the oval. The hall is used for school concerts, fundraisers and social functions, meetings and the mobile preschool.

The Bowling Club started from an idea discussed between landholders and residents and a rubber green (later becoming a lawn green) was constructed along with a Clubhouse – the rubber green later became a lawn green and has recently been reconstructed. All of this was made possible by the local people and organisations donating money, building materials and many hours of voluntary labour, along with recreational reserve grants. The tennis shed was built with funds from the disbanded and well-known Baroma Picnic Race Club. The 9 hole sand golf club was formed and joined with the bowling club, followed by major extensions.

Businesses in Croppa Creek include the General Store (incorporating a post office, fuel depot and retail of agricultural spare parts), McGregor Gourlay and Landmark AWB, both supplying chemicals, fertilisers, animal health products and farm merchandise, Graincorp silos handling grain from area, a 2,0000 head feedlot complex and a mechanical repair and air conditioning workshop. These businesses have operated in Croppa Creek for many years and provide employment for many of the residents.

The social hub of the village has been designed so that all sporting facilities are in close proximity to each other including the golf club, football field, tennis courts and lawn bowls. The football oval is also used for school sports carnivals and other sporting functions. The Catholic church is used for Catholic and Church of England services.

Many sporting events are held at Croppa Creek, including individual sporting days and sometimes joint sporting functions that are fundraisers, for example for many years the Moree Lions Club and the Croppa Creek community have held combined annual sporting days for bowls, golf and tennis. A new event "Carry on at the Creek" has developed with a similar format but the functions may be centred on sports, entertainment nights or crazy car capers.

Registered bowlers District Bowls Days are well attended with the full rink of 56 players participating in both men's and women's bowls. Another popular function held as often as possible in Croppa Creek is the "Prawn & Chicken Nights". Rugby matches are also well supported. Horses are widely used in the area with most families involved with pony camps in nearby North Star and Tulloona each year. After much community effort, the Fire Station has finally been built to replace the little old shed that was not adequate enough to house the new equipment provided under new regulations. This project is still awaiting completion.

Rural roads have always been an issue but in 2005 Croppa Creek almost has bitumen in all directions. However, the village streets need repair, especially in

Railway and Belar Streets. The rubbish tip needs an all weather entrance road. The school has had concerns over low numbers not fitting the governmental formulas for small schools and the community has voiced their opinions strongly on this topic.

Croppa Creek has a safe and friendly community with good country living. Camaraderie and team effort exist where landholders, business owners and farm or feedlot workers blend as one socially and participate in many organisations. Their combined skills and personalities make a very pleasant community.

Croppa Creek has a fair share of leaders, organisers and helpers and many achievements are gained through volunteer community efforts with a strong sense of belonging to a small, friendly and close-knit community. The history of the Croppa Creek district clearly outlines that most things have occurred due to the need arising and a strong, active community in a remote rural area working together for the one purpose – to progress Croppa Creek.

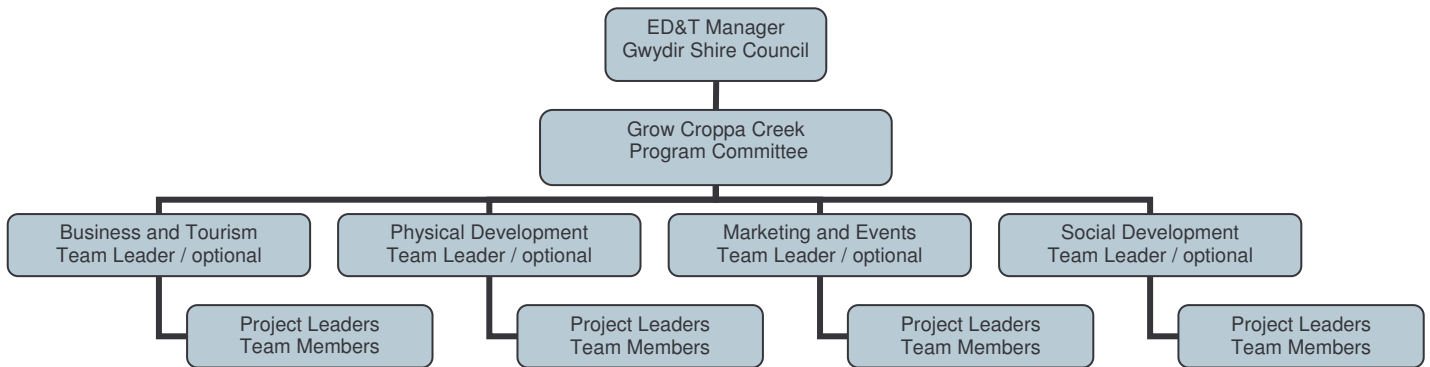
3.3 Grow Croppa Creek Program

The Grow Croppa Creek Program was formed on 3 May, 2005. A community Strategic Planning Workshop was funded by Gwydir Shire Council and the Department of State and Regional Development through the Main Street/Small Towns Program.

During the workshop current issues were identified, prioritised and placed under key result area groups. Attendees nominated short, medium and long term projects to address these issues. Project Leaders were identified for each project, where possible. The community developed a vision statement and the mission statement was devised from the objectives of each group. The name 'Grow Croppa Creek Program' was chosen through the planning process.

To ensure the sustainability of the program, discussion took place to hold regular, monthly Action Planning Meetings for the on-going planning and implementation of projects, discussion of issues that arise and the future program direction. As Croppa Creek is a small community, it was decided not to appoint Group Leaders for each key result area, but to work as a single group on a project-by-project basis. This method to run the program will be trialled and adjusted if necessary. The Chair of the program will act as spokesperson and gatekeeper of the program and will liaise with the Economic Development and Tourism Manager from Gwydir Shire Council.

The following organisational structure is a suggested model to outline the program's lines of communication:



- The Project Team members report to their Project Leader
- The Project Leaders report to the Committee - the Chair of the committee is spokesperson and gatekeeper to the program
- The Committee reports to the Gwydir Shire Council
- The Committee is linked to other communities in the shire via email on the Gwydir Shire Community Consultation Network



Croppa Creek Hall

4. GWYDIR SHIRE COMMUNITY VALUES

A shire-wide community survey was conducted alongside the planning process. People were asked to nominate what they valued about living in the area. A summary of their major responses included:

- Friendly, caring people / sense of belonging to a community
- Peaceful and quiet / lifestyle / country values
- Safe / low crime rates
- Beautiful environment / space / clean
- Good facilities
- Agriculture / farming
- Good business / industry
- Cheaper/affordable living

The following Values Statement was formed:

Community Values Statement:

**“Gwydir Shire communities value:
-- friendly, caring people with a strong sense of belonging to a
community
-- peaceful, safe and affordable rural lifestyle
-- beautiful natural environment, fresh air and open spaces
-- rich agricultural land
-- good business opportunities”**

5. SWOT

Strengths

- Strong community
- Friendly people
- Safe and secure
- Good club
- Excellent hall
- Great shop
- Excellent school
- Good support for the agricultural sector
- Good sporting facilities – golf course, tennis courts, bowling, football, cricket
- Good country lifestyle
- Freedom to move around
- Feedlot
- Silos
- Railway line
- Good climate
- Distance from regional centres

Weaknesses

- Lack of local tradespeople
- Roads
- No broadband
- Poor mobile service
- Unreliable power supply
- Distance from regional centres

Threats

- Political decisions made in the city
- Things being standardised and not applicable to individual situations
- Farms sold to big companies and consequently no families moving into the area and dollars going out of the area
- OH&S rules making it not so attractive to employ people
- Regulations and red tape – eg the Bowling Club is finding it hard to get Directors and volunteers due to public liability and other regulations

Opportunities

- New businesses
- Expanding existing businesses
- Inland Rail
- More bitumen on local roads
- More educational units in the school eg adult learning centre
- Improve health services
- Improve the tip

6. VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Vision Statement:

“Croppa Creek is a thriving hub of agricultural businesses and an increasing population with many social, sporting and educational facilities supported by a strong community spirit”

Mission Statement:

**“To increase the population and opportunities in tourism, business, events, marketing, sport and youth
To improve roads, facilities and communication
To beautify the village and develop land sub divisions”**



7. KEY RESULT AREAS AND PRIORITISED ISSUES

The following key result areas were established:

- Business and Tourism Development
- Physical Development
- Marketing and Events
- Social Development

The following issues were nominated by the community and prioritised in order:

- Better Roads
- Fire Station
- Develop Sporting Opportunities
- Beautification and Signage
- Improve Communications Infrastructure
- Attract New Businesses
- Develop Youth Opportunities
- Community Newsletter
- Increase Tourism
- Water and Waste
- Expand Existing Businesses
- Land Sub Divisions
- Terminal for Inland Rail at Croppa Creek
- Increase Medical Services
- Events
- Marketing



8. OBJECTIVES AND PROJECT PLANNING

8.1 BUSINESS AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Objective:

To increase the population, tourism and business opportunities

- Develop a tourist information brochure for surrounding Information Centres, the tractor as a tourist attraction, three Adult Education courses at the school and conduct an infrastructure audit to identify resources to attract new businesses by December 2007

Issues:

- Attract New Businesses
- Increase Tourism
- Terminal for Inland Rail at Croppa Creek
- Improve Communications Infrastructure
- Expand Existing Businesses

Business and Tourism Development Program of Projects:

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
Attract New Business	Conduct an audit of available land/premises/infrastructure to identify resources available for potential businesses	Short
	Compile a list of service gaps in Croppa Creek and provide premises for Moree businesses to operate on a 'round robin' basis eg hairdresser once a month, surrounding villages	Medium
	Attract a local Agronomist to the area	Long
Expand Existing Businesses	Develop training seminars	Medium
	Develop Adult Education out of hours at the Croppa Creek school	Medium
	Expand the Corner Store to include more business lines	Medium
	Trial a Weekend Café off the Corner Store	Medium
Increase Tourism	Develop a tourism information sheet/brochure on Croppa Creek	Short
	Develop the tractor as a tourism attraction	Short
	Develop farm stays	Medium
	Develop farm tours	Medium
	Develop educational feedlot tours	Long
	Establish short term stay accommodation	Long
Terminal for Inland Rail	Lobby state and federal government to establish a rail terminal at Croppa Creek	Long
	Establish a train commuter service to Moree from Croppa Creek and other train rides for tourism	Long
Improve Communications Infrastructure	Lobby Council and government to improve mobile phone coverage in the area	Medium
	Lobby government and seek funding for a broadband internet service	Medium

8.2 PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Objective:

To beautify the village and improve the roads, fire station, signage, facilities and develop land sub divisions.

- Establish a water bore for the Fire Station, trees in the main street, a village Streetscaping Plan, gateway and “what’s on” signage at village entrances and a petition to lobby for better roads by December 2007.

Issues:

- Better Roads
- Fire Station
- Beautification and Signage
- Water and Waste
- Land Sub Divisions

Physical Development Program of Projects:

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
Better Roads	Develop a local petition to lobby for road improvements	Short
	Lobby Council to improve the roads	Medium
	Lobby the Local Member to improve the roads	Medium
	Develop a Local Road Tour for Councillors to understand the road improvement needs	Medium
Fire Station	Establish funding to sink a bore for access to water for the fire station	Short
Signage	Develop highway signage for a scenic tourist route through Croppa Creek	Medium
	Develop gateway signage on main entrances to the village including “What’s Available” signage	Short
Beautification	Plant trees in the main street	Short
	Develop a Streetscaping Plan for the village	Short
	Develop a Rest Area opposite the store with tables and chairs and public toilets	Medium
	Upgrade the Hall	Long
Water and Waste	Lobby Council for better maintenance of local tip. Establish recycle bins to be cleared on a regular basis.	Medium
	Develop a sewerage run off area to connect to all village septic tanks.	Medium
Land Sub Divisions	Develop large subdivisions for rural development	Long
	Open up the streets on the town plan	Medium
	Contact the Rural Protection Board for leasing the stock route	Long

8.3 MARKETING AND EVENTS

Objective:

To establish community communication, events and marketing materials

- Establish a newsletter, regular movie nights, an inter-town sporting day and include Croppa Creek on all maps by December 2007

Issues:

- Community Newsletter
- Events
- Marketing

Marketing and Events Program of Projects:

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
Community Newsletter	Establish a Croppa Creek Community Newsletter	Short
Events	Establish regular Movie Nights at the Club	Short
	Establish inter-town sporting days and events	Medium
	Establish a major event	Long
Marketing	Include Croppa Creek on all maps	Short
	Develop a tourist route to include Croppa Creek	Medium
	Establish marketing campaigns for local events	Short

8.4 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Objective:

To develop sporting and youth opportunities

- Establish a Youth Committee, a list of youth activities, one youth project, regular social tennis days and a multi-purpose court by December 2007

Issues:

- Develop Sporting Opportunities
- Develop Youth Opportunities
- Increase Medical Services

Social Development Program of Projects:

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
Develop Sporting Opportunities	Re-develop the existing tennis courts into a multi-purpose court, including a Basketball Court	Medium
	Develop Social Tennis Days	Medium
	Establish a Rural Challenge Golf Day	Long
Develop Youth Opportunities	Establish a Youth Committee and conduct a Youth Survey	Short
	Hold a Youth Social at the hall and invite children from surrounding towns and villages	Medium
	Develop events and activities for youth at low cost	Long
Increase Medical Services	Lobby government and work with Moree community to increase medical services in Moree	Long

9. SUMMARY OF PROJECTS

ISSUE	PROJECT	TIME
BUSINES AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT		
Attract New Business	Conduct an audit of available land/premises/infrastructure	Short
	Compile a list of service gaps in Croppa Creek and provide premises for Moree businesses to operate on a 'round robin' basis	Medium
	Attract a local Agronomist to the area	Long
Expand Existing Businesses	Develop training seminars	Medium
	Develop Adult Education out of hours at the Croppa Creek school	Medium
	Expand the Corner Store to include more business lines	Medium
	Trial a Weekend Café off the Corner Store	Medium
Increase Tourism	Develop a tourism information sheet/brochure on Croppa Creek	Short
	Develop the tractor as a tourism attraction	Short
	Develop farm stays	Medium
	Develop farm tours	Medium
	Develop educational feedlot tours	Long
	Establish short term stay accommodation	Long
Terminal for Inland Rail	Lobby state and federal government to establish a rail terminal at Croppa Creek	Long
	Establish a commuter service to Moree from Croppa Creek and other train rides for tourism	Long
Improve Communications Infrastructure	Lobby Council and government to improve mobile phone coverage in the area	Medium
	Lobby government and seek funding for broadband internet service	Medium
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT		
Better Roads	Develop a local petition to lobby for road improvements	Short
	Lobby Council to improve the roads	Medium
	Lobby the Local Member to improve the roads	Medium
	Develop a Local Road Tour for Councillors to understand the road improvement needs	Medium
Fire Station	Establish funding to sink a bore for access to water for the fire station	Short
Signage	Develop highway signage for a scenic tourist route through Croppa Creek	Medium
	Develop gateway signage on main entrances to the village and "What's Available" signage	Short
Beautification	Plant trees in the main street	Short
	Develop a Streetscaping Plan for the village	Short
	Develop a Rest Area opposite the store with tables and chairs and public toilets	Medium
	Upgrade the Hall	Long

ISSUE	PROJECT	TIME
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT continued		
Water and Waste	Lobby Council for better maintenance of local tip. Establish recycle bins.	Medium
	Develop a sewerage run off area to connect to all village septic tanks.	Medium
Land Sub Divisions	Develop large subdivisions for rural development	Long
	Open up the streets on the town plan	Medium
	Contact the Rural Protection Board for leasing the stock route	Long
MARKETING AND EVENTS		
Community Newsletter	Establish a Croppa Creek Community Newsletter	Short
Events	Establish regular Movie Nights at the Club	Short
	Establish inter-town sporting days and events	Medium
	Establish a major event with the Bundy girls	Long
Marketing	Include Croppa Creek on all maps	Short
	Develop a tourist route to include Croppa Creek	Medium
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT		
Develop Sporting Opportunities	Re-develop the existing tennis courts into a multi-purpose setup	Medium
	Develop Social Tennis Days	Medium
	Establish a Rural Challenge Golf Day	Long
Develop Youth Opportunities	Establish a Youth Committee and conduct a Youth Survey	Short
	Hold a Youth Social at the hall with children from surrounding towns	Medium
	Develop events and activities for youth	Long
Increase Medical Services	Lobby government and work with Moree community to increase medical services in Moree	Long