

GWYDIR SHIRE

**GRAVESEND ALIVE
PROGRAM**



**COMMUNITY STRATEGIC
PLAN 2005**

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Produced by:

Jenny de Greenlaw
de Greenlaw Consultancy
679 Friday Hut Road
Possum Creek NSW 2479
Phone: (02) 6687 1850
Fax: (02) 66 87 2870
Email: degreenlaw@bigpond.com

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 programs aim to revitalise communities throughout NSW by providing them with assistance, guidance and project funding. The program provides a framework to pull a diverse range of community stakeholders together. Benefits include cohesive 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 shire by establishing communication channels, trust, relationships and networks.

Community economic development (CED) 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 CED 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 action 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 success of the program is reliant on community volunteers working to implement the projects, so an organisational structure is developed along with methods to run the program. Empowering the community and building community capacity are the key factors to ensuring sustainability of the program. 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 physical aspects of the town 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 has three core components:

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 has recently conducted 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, 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 (Adult Community Education) 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 visited 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 altered in late 2005 for 2006 funding decisions by state and federal governments. ACE Warialda and Bingara are outposts of Barraba Community Learning Association which is a registered training organisation, so their funding should not be affected. However, Gravesend Adult Learning Association is 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 this 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 Gravesend

Gravesend is a small village in the Gwydir Shire situated between Warialda and Moree - 80km west of Inverell, 25km west of Warialda and 55km east of Moree. It has a population of approximately 200 people and a rural population of approximately 130 in the surrounding area with beef and wheat as the major industries.

When the railway was built around 1900, a Fettle's Camp was established on a property called Gravesend to maintain the railway. The Post Office was opened in 1903 with approximately eight people on the phone exchange. A ballot subdivided the land for close settlement and over the years a village grew on the site and was officially named Gravesend in 1909. It became a small, thriving service centre for the district.

The area was a big farming centre for sheep, cattle and wheat with large stations such as Singapore Station, Gravesend Station, Ottomildi Station, Yagobie Station and Gineroi Station. With the influx of population these stations were subdivided over time into the smaller holdings of today.

The British introduced prickly pear from South America to host the cochineal bug which was used to manufacture red dye for army uniforms. The prickly pear spread at a rapid pace, becoming such a pest in the 1920s and 1930s that the land was almost unproductive – “you couldn’t beat your way through it”.

Gravesend had a research station that bred cactoblastus insects which they released to get rid of the prickly pear, which are still evident and active in eradicating prickly pear today.

Gravesend flourished in the 1930s to 1950s. There was a National Bank, a Bank of NSW agency, an agricultural machinery company, butcher, baker, newsagent, electrical store, haberdashery, ice works, brickworks, saddler, department store, picture theatre and in later years two service stations and churches. You could buy anything you wanted without leaving Gravesend.

In the 1940s to 1950s the Gravesend railhead handled a tremendous amount of prime beef stock, freighting them to Homebush. The railway branch line was closed around 15 years ago when the government cut back finance for railways and concentrated on road transport.

In Gravesend’s heyday, people didn’t have transport and didn’t travel great distances, so they patronised the local businesses. Station hands came into town for Saturday afternoon shopping and socialising.

Eventually the 40 hour week was established, there were better wages and motor cars and roads were bitumened. Saturday morning work ceased and people had more leisure time and started going further afield, patronising businesses in other towns. The banks eventually closed and along with the general decline in the rural economy, there was a steady loss of business, services and population.

Today Gravesend has a post office, a pub and a general store. The few empty shops that remained have been converted into homes. There is a Fishing Club, two good, usable halls and a Recreation Ground with a football field, cricket pitch and tennis courts. Services include Adult Education courses (although courses are currently under threat from government decisions), a Far West Association providing support for medical, dental and optical services for children under 16, two districts nurses who service young children and elderly people once a month, a playgroup once a week and a small primary school with 26 children. There is no public transport apart from a bus that travels every second day in one direction or the other.

However, the population is starting to increase again. Gravesend has become a dormitory village for Moree and Warialda. People are attracted to the village for its strong community spirit, safe environment with rarely any crime, easy lifestyle and affordable housing. Many residents car pool to work. Gravesend has always had a very strong community core which is evidenced by a very self sufficient and self reliant community attitude, willing to work for itself and support other community members in times of need.

Gravesend still has a strong agricultural sector that is the mainstay of the economy. A group of farmers in the Gravesend area skilled themselves through the Adult Education course “Farming for the Future Program” and formed G.R.A.S.S. – Gravesend Rural Area Support for Sustainability. The group includes 10 farmers who are actively involved in looking at salinity, the preservation of remnant vegetation and the re-establishment of permanent pasture and native vegetation. They meet on a regular basis, have guest speakers and participate in field days.

An issue affecting the community is the lack of activities for children and youth. Youth Activities is the number one issue in this strategic plan for Gravesend and will be a strong focus for community involvement in the near future.

Another issue affecting Gravesend is the limited number of building blocks available. Gravesend has a Common on the other side of the railway line that was previously mapped out for a land subdivision in the 1920s. However, development of this land would require roads, power and water and the costs would make the land too expensive for people to consider buying at this stage. There are currently a few blocks of land available in the village, but the suitability of the locations would rely on the taste of individual purchasers. More choice in residential building blocks could increase the population and consequently improve social and economic opportunities.

New owners of the general store and the local pub have turned both businesses around and provide increased services and social activities to the community. A brick pottery kiln and studio is currently being built that will enable local pottery to be manufactured on site and other new businesses are under consideration.

Despite the crippling drought, there is a feeling of optimism in the community.

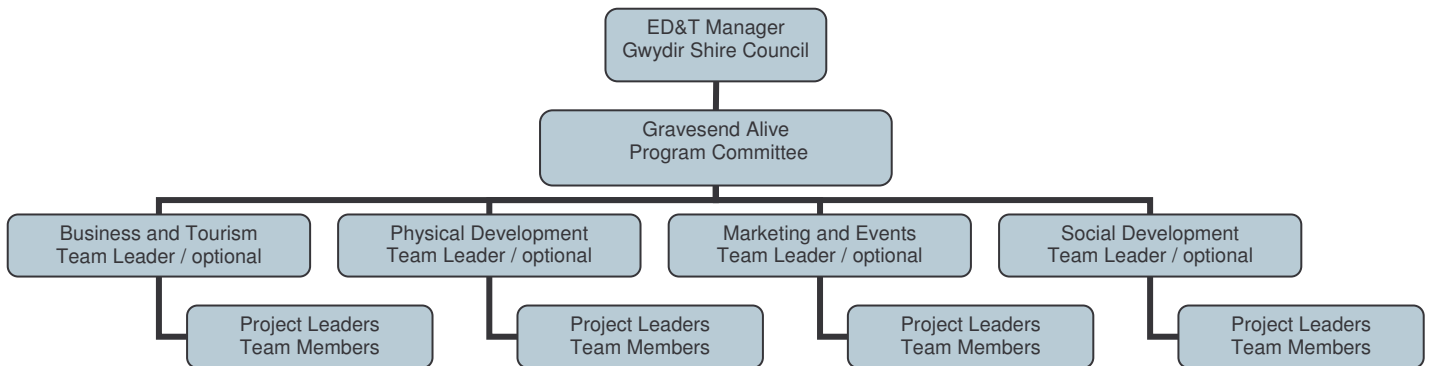
3.3 Gravesend Community Program

The Gravesend Alive Program was formed on 4 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 ‘Gravesend Alive 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 Gravesend 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 the Project Leader
- The Project Leaders report to the Committee
- 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



4. GWYDIR SHIRE COMMUNITY VALUES STATEMENT

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 their friendly, caring people and strong sense of belonging to a community, peaceful and safe rural lifestyle, beautiful natural environment, rich agricultural land and good business opportunities”

5. SWOT

Strengths

- Young people
- Old Postmaster!
- Lifestyle
- Sense of community
- Friendliness
- Good school
- Family environment
- Affordable housing
- Park
- Pub
- Council
- River
- Secure environment
- Lots of committees – strong, a lot of volunteers
- Gardens
- Pony camp
- Local rodeo
- Adult education

Opportunities

- Tourism – huge potential
- Walking tour, museum – lots of history
- Camping on properties
- Campsite on river utilising history of Ezzy's Crossing
- Lookout at Gravesend Mountain
- Blocks of land subdivisions
- Promotion of fishing opportunities
- Signage for the village and tourism
- Pioneer Book of Gravesend
- Promotion of Kamilaroi
- Motel
- Develop farm stays
- Something in town to make people stop
- Trail rides – horses and dirt bikes

Weaknesses

- Roads
- Speed of cars through town
- Fear of population reduction – especially for school numbers
- Population reduction in the district ie farms are becoming larger and owners don't live here, also not employing people
- Lack of employment opportunities
- Lack of entertainment opportunities, especially for the youth
- Lack of available housing – there are no houses available for rentals or purchase
- Very little building blocks – more
- Distance to medical services
- Medical services availability
- Crimes are often not reported
- Drinking water
- Dwindling township with less and less businesses
- No banks (other than pastoral at Commonwealth Bank - Post Office)
- Lack of services and trades – no plumbers, electricians – plus added cost for them to travel to Gravesend
- Communications - most phone calls are STD, no broadband
- Poor mobile coverage in the rural areas of the shire
- No public transport – eg unemployed can't travel to larger centres for Centrelink
- Lack of funds to keep church open

Threats

- Insurance – preventing things from happening
- Declining student population
- Drought
- Floods – can't get to Moree
- Town built on a major fault line
- Possible closure of police station

6. VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Vision Statement:

“Gravesend is a progressive, friendly and safe, family-oriented community providing a quality lifestyle enjoyed by residents and visitors”

Mission Statement:

**“To develop opportunities for business, tourism, events, marketing, youth and housing
To lobby for road improvements and beautify the town”**



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:

- Youth Activities
- Develop Tourism Accommodation
- Develop Tourism Activities
- Business Development
- Roads and Safety
- Develop Museum and History
- Community Events
- Develop / Improve Signage
- Residential Housing Development
- Improve the Hall and Club
- Beautification
- Improve Communications
- Marketing and Communication

8. OBJECTIVES AND PROJECT PLANNING

8.1 BUSINESS AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Objective:

To develop business, tourism, communications and local history.

- Develop a bush camping area, a nature walk and bird route, a town history Pioneer Book, upgrade the cemetery and improve radio reception by December 2007

Issues:

- Develop Tourism Accommodation
- Develop Tourism Activities
- Business Development
- Develop Museum and History
- Improve Communications

Business and Tourism Development Program of Projects:

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
Develop Tourism Accommodation	Develop a bush camping area	Short
	Develop a Caravan Park	Long
	Develop B&Bs and Farm Stays in the area	Long
Develop Tourism Activities	Develop a Nature Walk and Bird Routes	Short
	Develop river and fishing activities	Short
	Establish vehicle Rest Areas with tourist information	Long
Business Development	Re-open the Craft Shop and Art Gallery	Medium
	Establish a Motor Repair business	Medium
Develop Museum and History	Upgrade the Cemetery - clean and conduct repairs, establish a plaque and include historical burials throughout the district	Short
	Develop the Pioneer Book with a history of the town and people	Short
	Establish a Museum	Medium
	Establish the Pioneer Trail historical walking tour, signage and information	Medium
Improve Communications	Improve radio reception for 2KY	Short
	Improve TV reception	Short
	Establish broadband	Medium

8.2 PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Objective:

To lobby for road improvements and develop signage, housing and beautification of the town.

- Establish a main street working bee, shrubs in pots, Council clean up day, Streetscape Plan, paint the Club and upgrade the kitchen by December 2007.

Issues:

- Roads and Safety
- Develop / Improve Signage
- Residential Housing Development
- Beautification
- Improve the Hall and Club

Physical Development Program of Projects:

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
Roads and Safety	Establish a pedestrian crossing and signage	Medium
	Establish traffic controls and signs such as a flashing light and a sign saying "Take a Break in Gravesend"	Medium
	Upgrade the local streets of Gravesend – especially Eden Forest, Terry and Elcombe Roads	Long
Develop / Improve Signage	Develop promotional signage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateway signs at each town entrance • List of facilities and District Map • Rest Stop signage • Tourism directional signage • History signs on town historical sites • Kamilaroi historic information signage 	Medium - long
	Improve business signage	Medium
Residential Housing Development	Lobby Council for new subdivisions	Medium
	Develop promotion strategies for the available subdivision land	Medium
	Develop and promote "house and land" packages	Long
Beautification	Establish a Clean and Green Working Bee to improve the main street and gardens, establish pots and shrubs	Short
	Lobby Council for a household clean up to collect excess household goods and rubbish	Short
	Establish a Streetscaping Plan for Gravesend	Short
	Plant trees along the approaches to town and in town.	Medium
	Upgrade the Recreation Ground	
Improve the Hall and Club	Paint the Club	Short
	Upgrade the Club kitchen	Medium
	Renovate the Hall and maintain it	Long

8.3 MARKETING AND EVENTS

Objective:

To establish events, marketing and a newsletter

- Establish a newsletter, marketing strategies, promotional material, a Disco Ball and a marketing campaign for the Rodeo by December 2007.

Issues:

- Youth Activities
- Community Events
- Marketing and Communication

Marketing and Events Program of Projects:

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
Community Events	Develop the Tennis Club	Short – medium
	Establish a Disco Ball	Short – medium
	Establish a fishing competition	Medium
	Establish a Campdraft	Long
Marketing and Communication	Establish a local newsletter	Short
	Develop marketing strategies and promotional material	Short
	Establish a marketing campaign for the Rodeo	Short - long

8.4 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Objective:

To establish three youth activities and opportunities by December 2007 that will improve youth cohesion and quality of life

- Establish a Youth Committee, youth survey, basketball courts and two other youth activities by December 2007.

Issues:

- Youth Activities

ISSUE	PROJECTS	TIME
Youth Activities	Establish a Youth Committee and survey local youth to compile a list of activities	Short
	Establish Basketball Courts	Medium
	Establish a BMX Bike and Motor Cross track	Long
	Establish a Skate Park	Long
	Establish fun days and markets	Long

9. SUMMARY OF PROJECTS

ISSUE	PROJECT	TIME
BUSINES AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT		
Develop Tourism Accommodation	Develop a bush camping area	Short
	Develop a Caravan Park	Long
	Develop B&Bs and Farm Stays in the area	Long
Develop Tourism Activities	Develop a Nature Walk and Bird Routes	Short
	Develop river and fishing activities	Short
	Establish Rest Areas with tourist information	Long
Business Development	Re-open the Craft Shop and Art Gallery	Medium
	Establish a Motor Repair business	Medium
Develop Museum and History	Upgrade the Cemetery	Short
	Develop the Pioneer Book	Short
	Establish a Museum	Medium
	Establish a Pioneer Trail, signage and information	Medium
Improve Communications	Improve radio reception for 2KY	Short
	Improve TV reception	Short
	Establish broadband	Medium
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT		
Roads and Safety	Establish a pedestrian crossing and signage	Medium
	Establish traffic control and signs	Medium
	Upgrade the local streets of Gravesend	Long
Develop / Improve Signage	Develop promotional signage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateway signs at each town entrance • List of facilities and District Map • Rest Stop signage • Tourism directional signage • History signs on town historical sites • Kamilaroi historic information signage 	Medium - long
	Improve business signage	Medium
Residential Housing Development	Lobby Council for new subdivisions	Medium
	Promote the available subdivision land	Medium
	Develop and promote “house and land” packages	Long
Beautification	Establish a Clean and Green Working Bee to improve the main street and gardens, establish pots and shrubs	Short
	Lobby Council for a household clean up to collect excess household goods and rubbish	Short
	Establish a Streetscaping Plan for Gravesend	Short
	Plant trees in town and along the approaches	Medium
	Upgrade the Recreation Ground	
Improve the Hall and Club	Paint the Club	Short
	Upgrade the Club kitchen – seek funding	Medium
	Renovate the Hall and maintain it	Long

ISSUE	PROJECT	TIME
MARKETING AND EVENTS		
Community Events	Develop the Tennis Club	Short – medium
	Establish a Disco Ball	Short – medium
	Establish a fishing competition	Medium
	Establish a Campdraft	Long
Marketing and Communication	Establish a local newsletter	Short
	Develop promotional material for the town and marketing strategies	Short
	Establish a marketing campaign for the Rodeo	Short - long
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT		
Youth Activities	Establish a Youth Committee and survey local youth	Short
	Establish Basketball Courts	Medium
	Establish a BMX Bike and Motor Cross track	Long
	Establish a Skate Park	Long
	Establish fun days and markets	Long