

Chief Executive Officer
West Wimmera Shire Council
PO Box 201
EDENHOPE VIC 3318

Re: draft Council plan 2017-2021

I have prepared a written submission in response to the call for public submissions to the draft West Wimmera Shire Council plan 2017-2021

To be honest, it is difficult to know where to begin with my submission. Typically I make some comments regarding the achievements, the highlights of the plan and how it improves from previous versions. I was more than surprised when I began reading the document about the overwhelming type and volume of things I found poor. I had thought with four new councillors and a new CEO that there would be changes from the past, but I had thought it would be changes towards a more modern approach to strategic planning. Instead, I believe this plan is a step backwards.

My submission includes I want more emphasis on a more collaborative approach to community planning, with town based plans modernised to include the whole township and be driven from a bottom-up approach that values the unique strengths of each town. I would like to see council take on a more facilitative role in community consultation rather than being as prescriptive as was the case during the community infrastructure studies. I would like to see 5-20 year approaches to community planning that included business viability considerations. My vision is more business confidence (even if mine is gone), more retirees moving here and living here safely, a variety of recreational options, acknowledgement of indigenous cultural values, support to encourage retention of young farmers, a plan for sustainable tourism and support for major infrastructure projects including in particular the extension of the Wimmera Mallee pipeline to Edenhope and Lake Wallace. I hope the shire is financially viable, but prepared to take calculated risks to address population decline. I hope that the shire recognises that advocacy on behalf of the community relies on a level of trust that can only come from two-way engagement, and that council consider at times that the community may be best placed either as partners in advocacy or leaders in advocacy. I would have liked to see community/shire skills identification to better connect the right people (or groups) for the right project so that the community feel they have been included in plan development and implementation. I am disappointed there is no discussion of evaluation.

I realise there may have been some frustrations regarding the items not implemented from 2013-2017. Personally, as a media outlet, I was disappointed there were less ads, and less articles over time than when I first arrived, less community engagement through this medium. I was disappointed as a town based trader that the only actions to work more effectively with my business were limited to

apprenticeships/traineeships issues and made no references to wider business sustainability issues. But having said that, I thought it indicated perhaps the previous plan was too ambitious, and with a declining population and revenue that council would in the next plan bite off less and do it better.

I tried to write this submission a number of times, and the idea became exhausting. I literally couldn't read the document to enable me to comment on what mattered most to me. This readability issue was unexpected and very distracting. I have spent most of my working life writing or reading strategic plans, and there is usually a flow in the style of language, layout, function, structuring and persuasion that makes reading easy and skim reading possible. Instead language changed throughout and I could not easily follow how the values, vision statement and strategic objectives related to the priorities, actions and advocacy actions that followed. Included in the plan are objectives with no relevant actions, there are actions that don't appear to meet objectives and there are background notes that cover topics not found elsewhere within the report. I have never before encountered a document this hard to follow. It is unfortunate, as some components are really great.

There is an ongoing mix of highly specific actions and very vague statements in the actions that is worrying. I am concerned about how this document will be used for its key purposes. I do not believe the document includes adequate prioritisation e.g. is it more important to provide support for community events and activities than to pursue the funding of defibrillators for CFA sheds (non-council assets). I believe it remains a huge step to go from this draft plan to a work-plan for staff, something I would have thought essential to ensure successful implementation.

I don't know if this draft plan was written by a contractor, a staff member or a team, but I would recommend a skills audit of the organisation. I believe someone outside the original group/individual should be engaged to assist with document quality control, including copy editing. As a result of reading this plan I have concerns about the capacity of council with respect to modern principles of strategic planning. With four out of five councillors new and two out of three senior managers new, there has been a large change over in corporate knowledge. While this has some benefits, I think the risks are very high too. I recommend the councillors spend time reading plans from other shires, as there are plenty even of similar sized municipalities that are more effectively presented e.g. Buloke Shire Council. This principle would apply when completing future plans as well. I believe this may overcome some issues with understanding structure.

I believe in both tradition and innovation. I find this document contains a large number of completely new ideas. I hope they do not over-burden staff or the community, as some of these appear to contain high levels of project risk. I would like to see a more direct link with previous consultation than was found in the document, including key themes from plans like WWSC community infrastructure plans,

economic development plans, road strategies etc. There are also a number of plans currently under construction that could have been referred to, like the early years plan, ageing and disability plan, and municipal health plan.

I am concerned about the lack of community consultation in the development of the plan. I am further concerned about the lack of referencing to existing plans and strategies. One of the key themes in this draft plan is advocacy. I have not seen evidence of a collaborative approach that would build trust from the community. While staff and councillors may be quite experienced in key areas such as road construction, I would like to think in the next four years more time needs to be focused on listening to the community rather than speaking on the behalf of communities in isolation with respect to other activities. Given the low literacy levels and post high school education in the shire, most people are uncomfortable providing written submissions. I would recommend more focus on oral discussions earlier in the planning process. This is a very late stage to be involved in community consultation, and is not in line with best practice principles. I would like council to considering following best practice (or near to it) in future rather than minimum legislative requirements.

Open discussion with the community would reduce the bias that comes from a small group e.g. all councillors are over 40 years old, most are farmers, most are male, most have spent a significant portion of their lives within 50km of their current home, most have not pursued university education, none have young children in their home, none are hockey players for instance . . . All groups have biases, and it is working with others that you can acknowledge or overcome them. This lack of collaboration speaks of an insular approach, this is no longer best practice and should be avoided. I feel that the approach on this project reflects the approach on a number of projects I have been involved with council recently, where consultation feels guarded, late and managed to the point of only presenting councils view rather than empowering the community (that I think has some pretty awesome people in it). My hope is that council work towards a new approach. I am concerned there is blame in the document for a 'perceived geographical divide' when there is an actual geographic divide as well as other types of divides. There is The Little Desert transecting the shire, and regarding corporate knowledge, one councillor did not even campaign down south, so saying it is even is just unrealistic. Division is OK, understanding communities is a way of ensuring that people don't feel disadvantaged by the difference, also it means staff and councillors need to listen and perhaps give up some of their geographic or issue based prejudices.

I am concerned about council's appreciation of the principles of sound advocacy based on the content of this document. I feel many of the priorities listed are individual based and do not reflect broader community values. For instance I am offended by the priority to use grazing leases in swamps (wetlands) for fire management. I have spent much of my working life trying to get more people to

value these unique, vulnerable ecosystems than to destroy them. My career in emergency management community engagement also means I know there are many other ways to address fire risk, including discouraging farmers from using machinery in their paddocks of days of Total Fire Ban. I would like to see councillors involved in more than just leadership training (as recommended in this plan). I think this document points to some major weaknesses in strategic planning and the preparation of strategic plans that should be addressed.

Typically when making a submission I find it easy to refer to the point in question, through a hierarchal approach to objectives, priorities and actions. I have found it so difficult in some instances, that I have for the first time chosen to include as part of my submission an edited version of the document to supplement my letter. I hope that the two work together sufficiently to enable ease of reading. I have never before felt the need to have such extensive comments on a public plan, I hope both parts of my submission are considered.

Key report themes

Key themes in the report included a contracting financial and population trend, the need for advocacy and eco-tourism. I will address each of these

I was surprised that financial considerations appear to be minimised in the document. As finance is a main driver of the plan I would have liked to see more robust reference to this. Maybe a section on financial principles to save money, e.g. partnerships, consolidation, value-adding, grants for instance. I think there should be recognition that council approach to finances can set the tone in community spending, e.g. if council close down a large number of assets and reduce staff, it does not encourage confidence in ratepayers to expand their businesses upgrade infrastructure or to employee staff. A great example is the recent project to improve shop frontages as many businesses did it independent of funding. There is no mention of the effect of rate capping even though this was the basis for recent public consultation. The council's staff position is shift from Victorian government policy and previous council's decision to keep rates the minimum that should be acknowledged. Council should consider that rather than cutting spending they could investigate whether the community has tolerance for either paying more rates, reducing infrastructure, reducing maintenance or increasing philanthropic contributions.

Regarding population trends, there was plenty of discussion of job creation, but I am concerned that there is a fair risk in bringing manufacturing plants to the area as being a rural shire, if they go broke it can have devastating effects on small communities. In this shire most businesses have a small workforce, other than government businesses. There is a low amount of management positions and the jobs are mostly minimum type wages in the businesses. This means training, HR and planning are difficult for these businesses to do in isolation. Helping small business more broadly may have flow on economic and job effects. WWSC is a major employer who could look at staffing policies to encourage more local residents, liaison with other existing major employers could be beneficial. At this stage supporting existing businesses and helping with business ownership turnover may be more effective economic stimulus than most other ideas, when the current trend is not major expansion and fast turnover of shops.

I would like to see amalgamations acknowledged as a risk to be managed in implementing this plan, including farms, businesses, banks, council, education or health services. Each of these have previously had effects on population and spending in the shire and evidence suggests are likely to remain as ongoing threats to the plan.

I would like to see mention of the importance of maintaining and attracting a retired population to the area as a means of offsetting losses from the ongoing farming amalgamations. I think our area is

already seen as safe, cheap and suitable for retirement. Further promotion and enhancement of this is more than possible. One way to create more jobs without as much risk is to encourage more people to live here so they require more services locally. For instance new retirees are likely to have funds to renovate, are likely to shop locally, and also get involved in local interest clubs. These actions all have great flow-on effects in small towns.

I feel the emphasis on eco-tourism in the shire is too high. While it sounds great to bring more tourists here, there has been ongoing issues with resourcing and volunteerism to achieve this. A tourism plan should go back to basics with an audit the start. What accommodation, businesses, volunteers, locations etc. do we currently have to support tourism? What would have to change to increase tourism? Do we have the capacity to do this? With a freeze on WWSC staffing, I can't see the current part-time staff doing more work in this area than currently is occurring. I also want to know the link between tourism and economic and population development. I would have thought trying to increase the number of retirees living in the shire was more effective to increase population and jobs than tourism. I think there are major risks with increasing tourism at the moment. For instance, in Edenhope retail staff currently don't really promote the region, accommodation books up frequently when events are on, accommodation is generally of a budget type, we don't have a staffed visitor information centre funded to promote opportunities 7 days a week, many shops are shut on weekends, there are no tourism operators, we have an ageing and we have an ageing and declining population to manage this. It would be good to work towards doing things better, but get more time to develop a plan before specific implementations made.

I would like to see the advocacy theme that is highlighted in Strategic Objective 2, moved forward in the report. It should discuss how current best practice models of advocacy, how advocacy looks, how it is achieved, how to make it successful and how to evaluate it. It should incorporate community led and partner led advocacy as well as council led, and it should also discuss how partnerships can also be involved in shared advocacy. I did like the part where top topics for advocacy would be identified.

I would have liked more emphasis on two-way communications and engagement with the public, such that it was a key theme. I believe it is an area in the previous plan where council did not meet all targets, and yet the goals appear to be diluted throughout the current plan rather than a specific indicator. I would like to see more emphasis on increasing community capacity as this can reduce burden on staff time and WWSC finances. This could in some way be addressed by a review of Strategic Objective 2 to include more reflection on how community engagement can facilitate trust and collaboration such that advocacy is welcomed and effective.

Overall presentation comments

I would like the councillors to consider a review of the front end of the document. I felt the 2013-2017 council plan gave a much more appropriate and familiar introduction (about the region, priorities and council role) than the current one. The 2018-2021 plan has too many specific mentions of agricultural economies. It lists areas of 'above average ratings' but misses the areas that are challenged. It makes no mention of the current climate of financial and population trend, advocacy approach and tourism focus that appears to underscore the argument in the plan that council must save money and attract more people. I did like the reference to the number of businesses, jobs and Gross Regional Product, as these may be measured over time, along with population. The only question would be whether council can influence these measures, something I would argue they have struggled with so far.

The language of the report did not appear and did not cover key concepts usually seen in strategic plans. I think it is important that WWSC prepare itself for how this plan will be used, as some of the most frequent users will be funding bodies, and community groups seeking support. By using contemporary language the report would have broader appeal for key funding and community organisations. Language should reflect some key principles including: inclusive, equitable, access, prioritisation, evaluation, environment, job protection, rural, rural and regional, climate change, mental health, gender identity, gender equity, sustainability, indigenous cultural values, milestones, disability, community capacity building, community engagement, multi-beneficiary, multi-purpose, and natural resource management.

Another language issue is the various ways the words 'West Wimmera Shire, West Wimmera Shire Council, Council, the Shire, West Wimmera Shire Councillors, West Wimmera communities, the Council, this Council, Shire staff and West Wimmera are used in various ways in the document. I would recommend a glossary and consistent use when referring to as I see it – the region, the population, the councillors and the organisation. A term for each would provide the most clarity. Within the document 'the Shire' is not appropriate to capitalise as it is not defined anywhere and can be simply 'the shire', likewise 'local government'.

Regarding the sections, concepts, bullets and numbering. I would recommend the document has individual identifying codes for each action, that it is priority listed and readily referenceable. For instance Strategic Objective 1 - Priority Number 2 – Action 3 would be quickly referred to as 1.2.3. From this, each paragraph should follow in order of the listed action. There should be only one concept per bullet point. Major headings should begin on a new page. All written sections should have a heading.

I would have liked to see the pages of Strategic Objectives begin with a priority objective, then include the text before the table. This way there should be clearer evidence that the text explains the statement, and the table summarises the text into actions. The text should have a heading called 'Background' (and each paragraph link in order to the table dot points). The actions in the table should be broad enough that if funding criteria change a little, community priorities change a little or projects change a little there is more than enough scope to still link to the Council Plan. Some concerning actions include 'A wetlands centre of excellence for Edenhope'. While it sounds wonderful, it defines the exact site, the exact nature of the centre and limits the project from being able to adapt if it turns out it is better situated in Apsley, or if the centre is better as an environmental centre.

I am concerned about the lack of time between the deadline for submissions and when the feedback will be presented to councillors for consideration. I believe it is going to be a large job to make this plan significantly more effective in the short timeframe. I would hope that council make use of a wide range of internal resources to see how this can be achieved.

I thought there would be more reference to council budget, financial plans and evaluation of the effect of projects/priorities on addressing the financial issues facing the shire. I am concerned that evaluation is not included, and would like to see a range of qualitative and quantitative indicators. I am not convinced that council has road-tested the capacity to implement this draft plan, and I hope there is significant work regarding project management and reporting structures for the document to be successful and bring the community with you. Whether or not I am wrong could be best determined by having clear milestones and evaluation tools included so that during reviews and come 2020, there is not a frustrated group of councillors or a frustrated community when actions remain incomplete.

Please find attached more specific comments on the document.

Goodluck, I wish you all the best.

Toni Domaschenz,

32 Lake Street, Edenhope,

Ratepayer - business owner - mother – farmer etc.



29.5.17

Comments
submitted

29.5.17.



WEST
WIMMERA
SHIRE COUNCIL

Council Plan 2017-2021

West Wimmera Shire Council

Draft – 19 April 2017

Heading?

please consider using (updated version of) 2013-2017 plan.

West Wimmera Shire is located in the western most part of Victoria adjacent to the South Australian Border.

Covering an area of 9,106 km² it has a resident population of approximately 4,000.



~~Of~~ ^{The} the 733 businesses contained within the Shire approximately 2,200 jobs have ~~been~~ created. These businesses which are predominantly agricultural pursuits, generate a Gross Regional Product of \$220M. Regional Agricultural Exports are in excess of \$150M and ~~it~~ ^{the shire} has a very low unemployment rate of 2.45%.

are they full time,
part time
casual?

shire provide

The West Wimmera wellbeing report (community indicators) reveals above average ratings for the Shire in the following categories:

shire, compared to other councils,

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Subjective wellbeing | Low crime rates |
| Feeling part of the community | Highly skilled workforce |
| Child health assessments | Employment rate |
| Perceptions of safety | Good work life balance |

Areas for improvement are:

The West Wimmera Shire Council Plan 2017-2021 is the key strategic document that will be used to prioritise activities across the next 4 years.

(WWSC)

four

page
break.
+ Heading

WWSC
Containing actions and advocacy actions, it enables Council to act on the community's behalf to protect service standards that have an effect on the total quality of life of the resident population.

Underpinning this plan are a broad range of internal strategies ~~support~~ (financial, health, infrastructural) to support successful implementation
Acknowledgement of the importance of a collaborative regional approach to service delivery and advocacy is a major theme in guiding the future endeavours of West Wimmera.

WWSC
The West Wimmera Shire Council also recognises the role of other regional strategies such as the Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Investment Strategy, the Regional Growth Plan and the Regional Partnerships, as opportunities to gain investment in the Shire via a regional approach.

With an economy that is driven by diversity, this plan will look to further enhance the value provided to the Victorian State economy, by adding value to activities listed below:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Broad acre cropping: wheat, canola, beans, chickpeas, lentils...○ White clover seed & other seed production○ Carrots○ Almonds○ Honey○ Pistachios○ Olive oil / olives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Wool○ Sheep breeding & meat○ Beef cattle breeding & meat○ Pork production○ Horse breeding○ Wine grapes○ Pomegranates <p>delete</p>
--	--

Message from the Mayor

More than ever, Local Government is operating in an environment of tighter fiscal constraint. This environment was one of the key factors that influenced the development of this Council Plan. It has placed more emphasis on the plan containing items that can be delivered or managed by the Shire.

Another key guiding factor was the wellbeing of the Shire's population. This has been demonstrated in the plan by the desire to see transport networks enhanced, surety around community care services, providing greater support to volunteer groups and the need to communicate and work with the Shire's youth.

The search for economic investment in West Wimmera will continue, as will engagement with existing business and industries.

With the plan providing guidance on actions and topics for advocacy or lobbying, it has taken on a new look from the previous versions. This has enabled what is almost a completely new Council to place its stamp on the direction required for the term ahead.

On behalf of the Councillors of the West Wimmera Shire, I present the Council Plan 2017-2021 as the key document to guide the Shire towards sustainability and maintenance of service levels.

As a body of Councillors we look forward to working with the community to take the Shire forward.

Councillor Bruce Meyer, Mayor

WWSC Mayor 2017

West Wimmera Shire Council
May 2017

Message from the CEO

In developing the strategic direction for the Shire to take over the four years of this Council, it was clearly recognised that the future of the Shire is dependent on retaining population and business investment in new and existing business.

The wellbeing of the community and its residents was at the forefront of Councillors' thinking throughout the planning process. This was evident across most categories of the discussion, whether it was a discussion about community facilities, tourism infrastructure, digital connectivity, the ageing population, or jobs and investment. The motivating factor behind all of these topics was maintaining or improving the total quality of life for the residents of West Wimmera.

The staff of the ^{WWSC} West Wimmera Shire Council will ^{be responsible for} endeavour to ^{implementing the} implement the outcomes of this plan and report regularly on its progress.

While there are a number of ambitious targets to meet, the plan contains ^{for a long time, to achieve the strategic objectives,} objectives that are deliverable, and strengthen the administration's efforts to ensure that the ^{shire} Shire remains sustainable. ^{strategic}

We, the staff of West Wimmera Shire Council, look forward to the roll out of this plan, and witnessing the benefits that it can bring to the people of the Shire. ^{shire}

Mr David Leahy

Chief Executive Officer, West Wimmera Shire Council

West Wimmera Shire Values

In developing the Council Plan 2017-2021 the Councillors identified a set of values that will drive the direction of the Shire for the term of the current Council:

1. West Wimmera Shire ^{Council} values its resident population and its wellbeing. This will be demonstrated through the promotion of viable and sustainable communities, the retention of the current population and support to grow communities.

2. West Wimmera Shire ^{Council} values good governance and transparent decision making. Supporting Community Groups and advocating on their behalf will enable open dialogue to occur with residents.

* 3. ^{WWSC value} ^{representative} Representing the whole of West Wimmera is valued highly by Councillors. Eliminating any perception of a geographical divide will greatly benefit everyone.

* 4. ^{WWSC values} A connected community, both via transport infrastructure and modern digital technology that enables us to be connected to the world for business and education.

5. ^{WWSC values} Partnerships (locally, regionally and with government) are valued as a way of ensuring sustainable service delivery.

- * 3. It should be noted there are many geographic + social divides. This is not a 'perception' but a 'reality'. Learning how to ^{support} everyone.
- * 4. Dot point four appears to value something not yet achieved. Is it a value or a vision statement?

← as their community needs it may be more effective than pretending The Little Desert (for instance) doesn't exist.

Community Vision Statement

West Wimmera Shire Councillors developed a vision statement they aim to achieve through the successful implementation of this plan*1

Our West Wimmera communities are healthy, thriving, diverse, harmonious, prosperous and self-sustaining, with regional and global connectivity.

~~West Wimmera Shire Councillors have a positive image of the region that stretches beyond the term of this Council, which can best be described by the following statement:~~

~~Our West Wimmera communities are peaceful, prosperous and connected.~~

- 2*
- d. *Our farmers have added value to their commodities and embrace the very latest technologies to drive efficiency and commercial success. [High quality transport and digital infrastructure are enabling our agricultural producers and other businesses to thrive and compete globally.]* C
 - k. *There have been significant investments in renewable energy infrastructure within the Shire and this has generated many new local jobs.*
 - h. *Several new and expanded businesses now operate very profitably within the Shire, and this has created significant employment opportunities attracting many new residents from diverse backgrounds.*
 - i. *Visitors are flocking to our stunning wetlands and recreational water and are making a significant contribution to the local economy. Tourism itineraries and quality signage guide visitors through the Shire.* → natural environment, enjoying our parks,
 - f. *Our major centres have high quality service options aligned with business and community need. [Our small townships and communities feel well supported and are connected within the broader West Wimmera community.]* e.
 - g. *Many of our young people have returned to the place where they grew up, to raise their own families. [Residents of all abilities and ages are well supported.]* b

1 * were these to be reached within 4 years?

2 * I have re-numbered in a potential priority order
I have separated distinct visions into separate points.

* why only sporting? surely all types of clubs - art, vehicle, service, RSL, age based.

j * A broad range of sporting clubs within the Shire have quality facilities and continue to be a hub for community connection and positive wellbeing outcomes.

q. The ^{WWSC} Council has a tremendous reputation for innovation and professionalism and is highly skilled at advocacy, which is attracting funding to drive service and infrastructure investments.

— new page:

West Wimmera Agreed Strategic Objectives

The agreed key strategic objectives that drive the success of this Council Plan are:

1. A proactive, well governed, professional and financially sustainable organisation that encourages community participation.
- 1 * Developing
2. Meaningful partnerships to support advocacy priorities and service provision.
- 1 * providing
3. Quality sustainable community services and infrastructure.
4. Building on our agricultural and business strengths and supporting economic development.
- 1 * Maintaining
5. Thriving, safe and diverse local communities.
6. Participating in activities that address health and wellbeing issues.
- 1 * protecting
7. Providing access to and promoting the natural environment.

These strategic objectives will be supported by prioritised actions that ^{will be} ~~may include~~ capital investment, ^{implemented through} through the current service delivery profile or via advocacy.

Achievement of goals will be attained by operating in a team environment, and utilising existing and enhanced skill sets to provide the best opportunity for success.

1 * These three are lacking the adjectives, I have suggested three.

Strategic Objective 2 should be reconsidered as a separate section that explains the new focus, what is advocacy? How is it achieved? How is success measured?

This should discuss how public/partner confidence is achieved through communication, collaboration, trust and shared vision/priorities.

PRIORITIES, ACTIONS & ADVOCACY (WITHIN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES)

Strategic Objective 1

A proactive, well-governed, professional and financially sustainable organisation that encourages community participation

local procurement is discussed below but not in objective

Priorities	
Improve Council's governance, functionality and reputation	
Build the capacity of Council administration through professional development	
Continue to encourage local procurement	
Focus on shared services — Strategic Objective #2	
Actions	Advocacy Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote a professional reputation for the Shire – locally and regionally (1) Respectful meeting procedures Self-evaluating meeting outcomes Source labour and materials locally wherever possible (3) Leadership training for Councillors and staff to build team ethos (2) Participate in regional shared services activities Working with Children and Police checks for Councillors - where necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop guidelines for advocacy Improve efficiency (pitching for resources) Encourage staff that are passionate about service delivery by providing access to professional development Investigate options for future shared services arrangements

Background

In order for West Wimmera Shire Council to successfully operate in an environment of declining revenue, it must recognise opportunities within the sector for the sharing of service provision.

This is best achieved by working in a cooperative fashion with our neighbours. The Shire must contribute to regional initiatives to enable

1 * Strategic Objective referred to as S.O

economic, social and service provision benefits to be realised for its residents.

point 1
The regional reputation of the Shire must be one of professionalism, positivity, innovation and welcoming of new ideas. Additional diversity of population and economy will soften the impact to the region against seasonal economic downturns.

point 2
Investment in the ~~Shire~~ staff and Councillors ^{will} to enable them to be the best leaders for their communities. ^{Effective consultation and training} will empower the organisation to make the best possible, most informed decisions ^(maybe keep) on behalf of the community.

S.O#2
Working with our neighbouring Local Government partners, ~~West Wimmera Shire~~ ^{WWSC} will enhance its regional reputation by cooperating closely with various ~~State~~ ^{State} agencies to enable access to high quality services from the State and Commonwealth to be available to its residents.

point 3
At every opportunity, procurement for major projects and large operational activities will be undertaken with businesses that have invested in the ~~Shire~~ ^{shire}. The social and economic benefit of local procurement will be an essential item of selection criteria when assessing best value for the ~~Shire~~ ^{shire}.

*1** not referred to in table, please add relevant action e.g. ensure organisation supportive of diversity.

Why is there not some more financial discussion here? (Financial planning, project management, resource management - all help manage finances)

Why is there no mention in background or table related to 'encourages community participation'? This is a major miss from the report. Maybe a specific page on what community participation means + will look like could be included. Is this related to participation with WWSC or the shire (geographically/socially)? When will you consult, how will you consult, how will you listen, how will you evaluate/respond/learn?

Consider this being S.O#1 as it themes throughout plan.

Community consultation, engagement + joint partnerships/projects could be included here.

I would define advocacy in 3 ways

- council led (usually core business)
- shared
- community/partner led (council support)

Strategic Objective 2

Developing

Meaningful partnerships to support advocacy priorities and service provision

Priorities	
Develop advocacy policy and plan	
Improving digital connectivity (move S.O 3)	
Water security (SO 3)	
Energy capacity and reliability (SO 3)	
Transport (roads, accessibility, public transport & freight) (SO 3)	
Pest control (SO 7)	
Emergency management (SO 5 or 6)	
Community services (SO 6)	
Actions	Advocacy Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities to improve access to utilities (gas, water, NBN, renewables, telecommunications) Participate in and promote business case development for rural pipeline supply Participate in the regional study on economic and social benefits of recreational water in the Wimmera Southern Mallee Strategy for sustainable pest control measures Support community transport initiatives and regional connectivity Partner with Landcare for pest plant & animal control measures Encourage increased digital connectivity for the majority of residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue phone tower installations for small population locations Advocate for suitable NBN service provision (fixed wireless rather than SkyMuster satellite) Prioritise the top 10 issues for targeted advocacy Schedule annual strategic advocacy campaign to State Parliament Lobby for fairer funding model for CHSP /HACC to better cover costs for small rural Shires (eg. Travel costs) Lobby for CHSP to remain with Local Government to prevent market failure Advocate for coordinated pest control that will provide a regional and cross border improvement

* I think these appear to be items rather than advocacy priorities

all to relevant SO, not here

all to relevant SO

keep

all to relevant SO

* 1 move all topics to relevant action/objective section.

This page should focus on mechanisms of advocacy + partnerships.

Should mention action to identify + develop partnerships

Should mention action to support community led advocacy too.

Action to meet community, councils, regional orgs,

Discuss employment partnerships.

Background

503 West Wimmera Shire Council will act as the key community advocate to secure the best possible access to essential utility services. Access to natural gas, water, quality telecommunications and NBN are items that will continue to feature as high priorities in discussions with State and Federal Ministers and Government officials.

With more and more services provided in an online setting such as scheduling for community care services, purchasing, permit applications and account payments, it is critical that residents in remote areas are provided with the same ^{Internet} access as their city counterparts.

503 The limited access to satellite NBN services is a deterrent to large investment as businesses are trying compete on a global footing. The exclusion of Kaniva from fixed wireless access is a point that will be strongly argued over the term of this Council. ^{more}

503 Mobile phone blackspots have become a larger problem in recent years and the Shire will continue to advocate for increased investment for the region. The identification of access to public land for tower infrastructure will assist in the further roll out across the region. Some of the areas targeted will have limited population, so the identification of land that will not be a direct cost to the telecommunications business will enable access for residents who would have previously been excluded.

507 With agriculture as the major economic driver of the Shire, the control of pest plants and animals is a major issue that will require a number of partnerships to be formed to provide maximum benefit. Teaming with Landcare and various State agencies to cooperatively tackle the problem will be the most successful tactic.

507 Partnerships will also be necessary to manage the effect on the community of excessively high numbers of native fauna, with issues such as motor vehicle impact and damage to infrastructure from native birds, a cooperative cross agency approach is the best way to provide a balanced management process.

sc 6 The transition of the State driven community care model into a Federal model will create some challenges for the Shire's ageing population.

In order to make this transition as smooth as possible for customers, West Wimmera Shire will be advocating for a fair and equitable model that will not disadvantage its residents.

Maintaining involvement through local government is also critical to keep local carers employed.

Strategic Objective 3

Providing

Quality sustainable community infrastructure

Priorities	
Mapping community assets to improve planning and efficiency	
Sustainable community infrastructure (Maintain and or develop <i>develop</i>)	
Invest in quality infrastructure supported by community consultation and engagement (Second part included throughout)	
Maintain the West Wimmera local road network	
Actions	Advocacy Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in addressing the infrastructure funding gap Immediate repairs to community infrastructure Provide quality roads Facilitate discussions on social infrastructure (shared occupancy etc) Create evidence based priorities for infrastructure investment (including State, Federal and local dollars) Create and implement a prioritised playground strategy Upgrade / repair / divest Shire <i>WWSC</i> owned and managed assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community consultation and engagement priorities established Advocate for high quality arterial roads Create evidence based priorities to enable the advocacy for partnership funds into infrastructure investment Develop advocacy strategy to reinstate LGIP or similar fund for small rural Shires

Background

The provision of quality infrastructure is an essential key feature of successful local government authorities.

Quality infrastructure is critical to keep communities connected, active and proud of the region they call home. To enable the standard of public infrastructure to be maintained at a safe and acceptable level, the *Shire* will develop strategies to finance the renewal of its assets.

* For this to occur, some assets will need to be consolidated to enable an equal share of available funds.

By creating an evidence based ^{priority} investment strategy for infrastructure within the ^{Shire}, the advocacy efforts to State and Federal Government will be consistent and based on genuine need.

In partnership with the Wimmera region ^{councils} Councils and local government peak bodies such as Rural Councils Victoria and the Municipal Association of Victoria, West Wimmera will pursue funding that has been lost to the sector such as Local Government Infrastructure Program (LGIP) and Country Roads and Bridges.

The continuation of the Federal Roads to Recovery (R2R) Program will also be a key point of advocacy. The participation in national programs to have the program permanently linked to the fuel excise indexation is essential for West Wimmera.

not in table
add or
delete this
para

Describe outcomes of mapping: to know location, condition, value, maintenance, replacement schedule, replacement responsibility, type etc. Allows WWSC to identify priorities, redundancies, gaps, future planning, consolidation opportunities.

1. * Before stating asset consolidation is ~~and~~ 'will need to be' Allow processes prior such as community consultation. Council may not need to consolidate assets, including if grants, community fundraising, divestment of assets, etc. occur. Discuss risk of ongoing burden of new or existing assets, against benefits to more effectively meet WWSC & ratepayers needs. Could include roads, public buildings, footpaths, playgrounds.

List here infrastructure for future (from page 10). prioritise connectivity infrastructure state linkages e.g. natural gas, NBN, water pipeline, public transport, rail, phone towers.

Strategic Objective 4

Building on our agricultural and business strengths
and supporting economic development

Priorities	
Promote the benefits of West Wimmera to attract new business and jobs	
Support existing businesses to succeed and grow	
Promote opportunities that support our agricultural producers to diversify and / or value – add	
Actions	Advocacy Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue the development of manufacturing plants to value add to our local products Closely liaise with "main street" businesses Participate in business case development for utility infrastructure (water and gas pipelines and power generation) Support for agricultural diversity Investigate cost effective ways to support existing businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue businesses that can add value to locally produced commodities Promote business retention activities to be included in Economic Development Strategy Advocacy for water security Investigate the possibility of a Wetlands Centre of Excellence for the Edenhope region Investigate the need for and viability of community sheep yards for Kaniva

Need ones related to point 3)
• job creation
• Tourism as job provider.

Background

The creation of employment opportunities through investment in value adding to the various commodities produced in the Shire will enable more of the wealth generated to remain in the Shire.

By having the products grown, processed and packaged in the Shire, this will assist in developing a credible brand that is West Wimmera. Whether that be for the red meat industry, grains or vegetable production, the customer should know that it came from West Wimmera.

To assist with the attraction of investment into processing facilities and intensive livestock opportunities, the ^{Shire} must advocate for utility services such as reliable energy sources, water security, natural gas and telecommunications infrastructure.

Major infrastructure investment is essential to population security. Continued involvement in the development of a business case to connect the ^{Shire} to the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Network will assist with investment attraction. Attract businesses allow value adding industries, effect tourism/recreation + quality of life.

WWSC to lobby government agencies to move into the shire. This may include natural resource management, wetland ecology, sustainability, agricultural, aquacultural, or other locally compatible bodies

I would like to see retirees attracted as a business trial for state government. Get a development that is affordable in our shire. Look at disability access, connectivity, natural environment + health services package. ← work with local communities to identify compatible businesses/industries/jobs to move to the shire.

I would like to see ^{action} ~~area~~ to keep young farmers, whether land available, value adding, agronomy, intensive industry share farming, coop-farming or other innovative ideas. (This could directly affect population risks from ~~the~~ current trend of farm amalgamation)

Strategic Objective 5

Maintaining

Thriving, safe and **diverse** local communities

diversity not mentioned below

Priorities	
Promote community planning	
Promote community education programs	
Support youth engagement	
Encourage place-making projects / initiatives that drive civic pride	
Support for volunteers	
Fulfil our legislative responsibilities towards emergency management	
Actions	Advocacy Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide Community Strengthening Grants and support for volunteer groups Support for community events and activities Create identity and improved image for small communities, by ensuring clean facilities, developing community murals and preserving its history Continue to develop a Youth Council Strategy for potential trail type attractions (such as silo art trail, eco trail etc) Promote grazing leases adjacent to swamps and public land to facilitate fire prevention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with education providers for community education programs and life-long learning Support education for residents to access MyAged Care Lobby for improved funding model to enable increased community care service for clients by government subsidised travel package Community plans developed for regions across the Shire Pursue the funding of defibrillators for CFA Sheds Advocate for settlement of skilled/unskilled migrants/migrant groups Work with police, health + education providers to achieve objectives

*Encourage
provide*

*more to
SO#7.5
find this
offensive + not
representative
2**

*Senior staff liaise with the community.
ensure public areas are accessible
Background. equitable.
work with emergency management partners for planning, preparation, response + recovery*

The strength of West Wimmera is its people. The Shire has one of the highest rates of volunteerism in Victoria, and through this objective the Councillors wish to provide higher levels of support to volunteer groups.

1 add action to support local communities to develop + implement community plans.
* add actions to encourage increased migration of new residents - benefits of retiree living.*

Re-words

2

By continuing to provide Community Strengthening Grants and assisting groups in applying for larger grants, the various groups will remain sustainable for years to come.

1

The provision of senior staff to work with the township committees and act as a ~~permanent~~ conduit for information and assistance will greatly benefit the groups and the Shire.

* by nature of groups and staff it won't be permanent.

4

Assisting in providing education opportunities for the community in areas such as accessing MyAged Care and lifelong learning is an important community service that the Shire can partner with providers for. It is also an action that can be contained in community plans and prioritised to suit individual community needs.

3

West Wimmera Shire will also continue to lobby for the best possible customer outcome for people accessing community care services. This will include working towards a subsidised travel arrangement.

Should be a diversity, safety + thriving paragraph each here.

Should mention multi-cultural, multi-age, genders, gender identity.

Include different community 'asset' types such as: sport, art, environment, service, to be part of communities that thrive. Speak about individual needs of diverse communities.

There is a lot of focus on education. Should it be in the heading? Otherwise there is too much emphasis.

Something in para. about accessible + equitable access to public places + events.

2* There is a real risk of inappropriate use of machinery on Total Fire Ban days that poses a safety risk; 'Swamps' is a politically unpalatable term 'Wetland' is current.

Fire prevention management should be broader + within council's jurisdiction (not crown land etc). Why only fire mentioned? Flood was recent, as was drought. More on collaboration needed.

This strategic objective is very close to S.O. 5
I would consider amalgamation or separate more clearly.

Strategic Objective 6

Participating in activities that address health and wellbeing issues

Priorities	
Improve access to health and wellbeing services	
Support preventative health programs	
Improve walking / ^{foot} gopher paths in townships	
Actions	Advocacy Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support community transport options Improve recreational access to Lake Wallace & complete retaining wall Support outreach program(s) (eg Talk to a Mate) ^{public} Provide all weather access to pre-school facilities ^{footpath} and ^{foot} road ^{at} corner ^{of} corner Ensure that Municipal Public Health Plan supports the Council Plan Campaign against domestic violence <p>Develop targeted community health & wellbeing plan D+I early years plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for funding to enable improved service levels in CHSP – NDIS Partner – where possible – with health care providers for preventative programs Cooperate with agencies to coordinate specialist days to link with community transport options Support Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Awareness programs Promote programs that prevent domestic violence and assist with victim support

Background.

By recognising that every community has its own individual health and wellbeing requirements, West Wimmera Shire will endeavour to assist with programs that target specific community needs.

Some of the actions to enhance health and wellbeing will be around the provision of safe access and having residents continue to feel safe living in the ^{Shire} Shire. Other programs will assist in enabling residents to have access to outreach programs (such as Talk to a Mate).

All weather access to enable parents to walk children to pre-school facilities and for students to be able to walk to school, assist with community health and wellbeing.

Connectivity to participate in public life, shops, road crossings, parks & reserves.

public parks + waterways

Advocating on the community's behalf for agencies to provide preventative programs will have a positive health outcome for the community. Awareness programs around substance abuse will also act as a preventative mechanism.

The Shire staff will all participate in the Act@Work program which is designed to tackle domestic violence and more specifically violence against women. This will promote a culture of not accepting certain gender based discriminations and improve the wellbeing of many within our community.

Add the study on social + economic benefits of recreational water here. ~~Part~~

Participate in studies to value + evaluate public health. Recreation, including native based water.

Collaborate with health providers to identify, deliver, plan for + lobby for preventative health programs, projects
Consider implications in planning, ensure they contribute to increased health + liveability outcomes

I am not sure if this is an environmental or tourism objective. It is too narrow for either. I am interested in both.

Strategic Objective 7

Protecting

doesn't mention culture or history

Providing access to and promoting the natural environment

Priorities	
Targeted promotion of West Wimmera as a world-class destination	
Foster Eco-Tourism development	
Link our natural, cultural and historic assets to create a cohesive experience for visitors and residents	
Actions	Advocacy Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Eco-Tourism opportunities to develop a visitor economy Support the maintenance and upkeep of lake and waterway visitor locations Invest in media promotion <p><i>tourist</i></p> <p><i>Turkey of 1/2c.</i></p> <p><i>map natural assets</i></p> <p><i>identify natural assets suitable for ecotourism, education or other management</i></p> <p><i>pest plant + animal control</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Committees of Management to develop masterplans for various sites Investigate aquaculture opportunities including Lake Charlegrark Work with multiple agencies to develop linked tourism trail combining the regions attractions <p><i>(too specific)</i></p> <p><i>work with agencies to protect, promote + access natural environment.</i></p> <p><i>License with historical, cultural (incl. indigenous) + environmental groups, tourism.</i></p>

Celebrating West Wimmera for its natural beauty and clean environment will enable a visitor economy to be developed. Partnering with various organisations to maintain these natural assets and promoting them widely will build a name for West Wimmera as a true Eco-Tourism destination.

Developing masterplans for future developments at the various sites will cater for growth and align with economic development opportunities such as aquaculture and educational facilities.

By working in partnership with the region's ^{Councils} and other agencies, West Wimmera will become a part of a larger tourism offering across the Wimmera such as trails and indigenous tourism.

- 1 * 1 first point should be about protecting the environment. Then tourism for key areas (culturally appropriate)
- * 2. thought would mention other users of natural environment including fishers, shooters, boating as well.

- * 3 will work be done to make this a reality before it is promoted as such?
- P.T.O

There should be more than just plants, excess native animals, grazing leases + tourism here.

Should mention endangered ecological communities and plants & animals.

Should mention threatening processes, such as climate change, rural drainage, land clearing, developments.

Should talk about water quality, floodplain management, waterway protection, threatened species.

This section could mention ~~and~~ research possibilities to bring jobs to support ecotourism.

There should be reference to protecting, and tourism (restricted) of indigenous cultural sites.

- look at different target groups - highly active, low active, tours, boats, day trips, themed etc ...

Cultural/assets - European, Chinese, Indigenous
Historic - agricultural history

Action for council to minimise effects on natural/cultural/historic sensitive locations.

I would expect action to find money for this section as currently there is little investment on this, nor staff time.

I would like the back of the ^{plan} report to describe how the plan evaluation will be done. How achievements qualified/quantified + celebrated.

What will you do if you are unsuccessful?

How will you determine staff capacity to implement this?

- Also at the back a list of relevant strategic plans internal + regional.



David Leahy
Chief Executive Officer
West Wimmera Shire Council
PO Box 201, EDENHOPE, VICTORIA 3318

15.5.17 (sorry only delivered 25.5.17)

Dear David,

Friends of Lake Wallace (FLW) wish to provide feedback regarding the draft West Wimmera Shire Council plan 2017-2020.

1. Page 1 refers to

"Covering an area of 9,106 km² it has a resident population of approximately 4,000."

On the Council website, in the description of why the Edenhope Hub is crucial, the following paragraph is found:

"West Wimmera has one of the lowest population growth forecasts for the whole of Victoria with the population expected to decline by 700 residents or a decline of 16.3% 2011-31. Therefore investment in critical community infrastructure would contribute to population attraction and retention and may act as a catalyst for private and other investment."

We would expect the introduction to the Plan to be consistent with this statement, where there is acknowledgement of the threats to the Shire posed by population decline and/or a lack of infrastructure investment. We believe that the construction of a water pipeline is in part driven by the need to secure the long-term population of the region.

2. Page 2 – the plan lists 'other regional strategies'. We note that this does not include reference to natural resource strategies or transport strategies. If all strategies are not to be listed (possible in an appendix) then perhaps it should be left less specific. We were also surprised that the page did not include reference to existing WWSC plans and strategies that would have been consulted (and presumably driven) in the compilation of new WWSC plans and strategies, and that these were not referenced throughout the document where appropriate e.g. Edenhope & Apsley Community Infrastructure Plans.



3. Page 2 – We are surprised that such specific listing of agricultural based activities is included in the table. The table also has no headings. Given that the preface to the table states: *'With an economy that is driven by diversity'*, surely the Plan would not prioritise for instance pomegranates over other sectors such as aquaculture. Again we would recommend a more general description, as is more frequently seen in WWSC plans. The previous plan appeared more inclusive:

"In an economy dependent on agriculture, opportunities may include processing or value adding to bulk commodities, as well as diversifying into other sectors. Agronomy, business support services to agriculture, and transport and logistics continue to be strong employment sectors. Growth in health services in West Wimmera reflects the general trends in regional Australia, particularly in aged care services."

4. In terms of strategic objectives, we feel that each objective should include the background/rationale prior to the tabled list of actions. That would provide an explanation for why each is included. We would like to see a sense of how the list of actions relate to each other and a sense of priorities. For instance is the top dot point the highest priority to achieve in four years, or the first to be achieved? In relation to each dot point a description should be included to show how it can be known that the action has been achieved (for instance a date and outcome for each at the fixed point).
5. Page 10 - Friends of Lake Wallace acknowledge the point: *"Participate in the regional study on economic and social benefits of recreational water in the Wimmera Southern Mallee."*

We would like an additional specific paragraph that underlined the importance of this project, in relation to the 3000 wetlands in the shire and the various uses of them for locals and visitors.

6. Page 10 - We would like clarity as to: *"Participate in and promote business case development for rural pipeline supply"* to include the current study on a rural water supply.
7. We note that there is an action: *'Partner with Landcare for pest plant & animal control measures'*. We are concerned that in defining the partnership with Landcare groups this may be seen as being too narrow and too specific which fails to recognize its larger goals. We would like to see a



partnership that recognises broader Landcare principles and objectives. We recommend that it states: *“Partner with Landcare for the protection and restoration of the natural environment, and management of pest plants and animals.”*

For instance, Friends of Lake Wallace’s statement of purpose is as follows:

Friends of Lake Wallace Statement of Purpose

- 1. To pass on Edenhope’s environment to the next generation in a healthier state than the way we find it today.*
- 2. To do something practical about protecting and restoring Edenhope’s unique environment, contributing to the health, wealth and wellbeing of our community.*
- 3. To undertake sustainability education and awareness raising initiatives.*

Apart from the issue of the correlates we would see pest, plant and animal management as a lower priority for our group than the protection of native plants and animals, and the security of water supply for Lake Wallace.

8. We are surprised that the only reference to native fauna is that it is in *‘excessively high numbers’*. Our group is committed to ensuring that a focus is on those native flora and fauna that require preservation, including the growling grass frogs, the red-tailed black cockatoo and the migratory birds that frequent the Lake Wallace catchment and for which we have international, national, regional and local obligations to protect. There is no mention of protecting native flora either, nor for indigenous heritage site protection. Our current partnership program with Wimmera CMA includes the development of a tourism booklet regarding the native plants and animals of Lake Wallace.
9. Page 16 - There is reference to: *“Continued involvement in the development of a business case to connect the Shire to the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Network will assist with investment attraction”*, but this is not followed up with a dot point in Actions, or Advocacy actions, unless that is what is included on Page 10, for which we seek clarity.



10. Page 17 – Re: Promote grazing leases adjacent to swamps and public land to facilitate fire prevention. Firstly these should be referred to as ‘wetlands’ not ‘swamps’. An investigation into this would be more appropriate rather than ‘promotion’ in the absence of a community consultation process and support by DWELP or WCMA; also as to whether grazing would be the most effective and appropriate management practice for fire mitigation. Our group do not support grazing around Back Swamp or Lake Wallace nor their catchments where this is not already in place. We are concerned with the protection of water quality as well as native flora and fauna, something that may be affected by grazing leases. There are no plans in place that suggest this is a suitable management scenario in areas not currently under this management.
11. Page 21 - We would like to see advocacy include the protection of our natural environment, particularly the project we have identified, being a pipeline that has multi-beneficiaries, including Lake Wallace, Edenhope, the Glenelg River, industry and agricultural enterprises.
12. Page 21 and Page 10 – Linked to ‘trails and indigenous tourism’ we are uncertain as to where best to place partnerships around this, but from a Landcare perspective, we see this as a higher partnership potential than that described around pest plants and animals. It would make sense to mention partnerships here to include BGLC and/or indigenous groups and Landcare. We believe a strength of our local region is its diversity of local birds, and would like to see that theme continue.
13. Page 21 Re: *“Support the maintenance and upkeep of lake and waterway visitor locations”*, our group is particularly interested in activities associated with Lake Wallace and the Back Swamp. We would like to see recreational access to include disability access around Lake Wallace, natural/indigenous/tourism signage, water in the lake, seating and shade (memorials) around the lake, access/promotion/signage for fishing, skiing, walking and cycling, free camping investigated and nature-tourism trails/signage involving the Back Swamp. We agree with the need for a masterplan for Lake Wallace to ensure there is a sustainable approach to recreation that values and protects the natural environment as well as attracting residents and tourists to the area, and wish to be involved in the process.



It is our belief that the future population, social, economic and environmental future and wellbeing of Edenhope is linked to Lake Wallace and the natural environment that surrounds it. With over \$6 million in housing fronting the lake and thousands of visitors per year, this is a major asset to the community. Our group is committed to securing a water supply for the lake in a climate change affected future. We believe the pipeline will have multiple benefits and urge Council to put this as a top infrastructure priority for the next four years.

ANDREW FARRAN
President, Friends of Lake Wallace
afarran@bigpond.net.au