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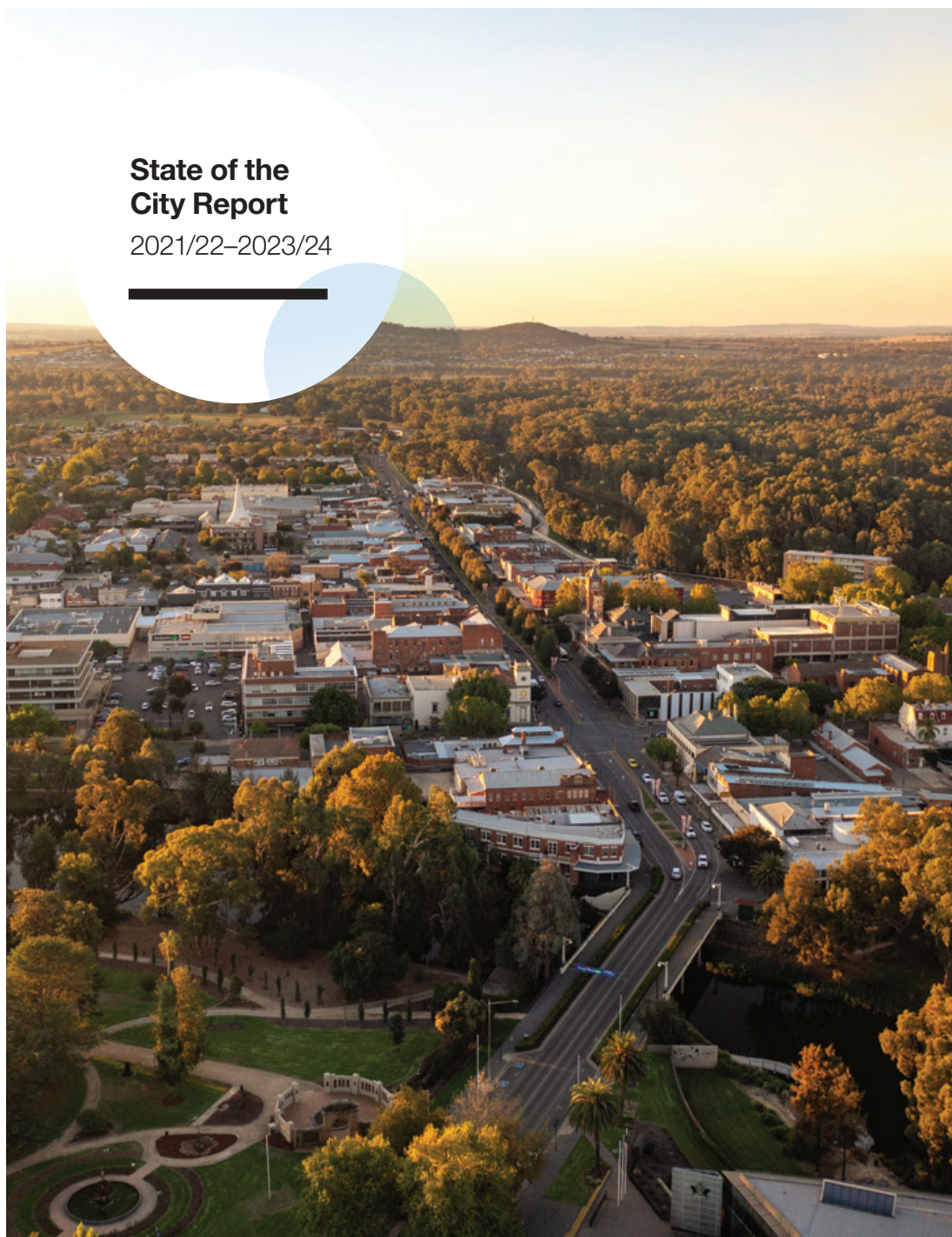
ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

28 October 2024

Contents

RP-5 - INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING (IP&R) - STATE OF THE CITY REPORT

(1)	State of the City Report	2
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City of
Wagga Wagga

Acknowledgement of Country

Wagga Wagga City Council yali gulbali-yanhi ngurambang Wiradyuri.

Walumaldhaany-galang bala mayiny Wiradyuri.

Yindyamali-yanhi mudyiganggalang-bu balumbambal-bu balugirbam-bu.

Yindyamali-yanhi bagaraygan ngurambang-guwal-i yandu murunwiggi Wagga Wagga-dha.

Ngiyanhi gulbali-bu yindyamali-bu guwiinyguliyalagu buyaa-bu giilaang-galam-bu.

Ngiyanhi gulbali-bu yindyamali-bu guwiinyguliyalagu dhaagun-bu bila-galam-bu nganha Wiradyuri-giyalang bala burrambin-bu nurranneru-bu.

Gulbali-yanhi Wiradyuri mayiny bagaraygan-guwal-bu bala yarruwala-bu waluwin-bu walanbam-bu dhirrangal-bu.

Wagga Wagga City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, the Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri people, and pays respect to Elders past, present and future and extends our respect to all First Nations Peoples in Wagga Wagga.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing connection with the land and rivers. We also recognise the resilience, strength and pride of the Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri and First Nations communities.



Table of contents

Acknowledgement of Country.....	2
About this Plan.....	4
Message from the Mayor	6
Our councillors	7
Our community	8
Our community vision	10
Strategic Direction.....	11
How we measured our progress.....	12
Community leadership and collaboration	13
Safe and healthy community	18
Growing economy	26
Community place and identity	36
The environment	47
Contact us.....	61

About this Plan

The State of the City Report (formerly known as the End of Term Report) is prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993.

We've been working to achieve the objectives set out in our Community Strategic Plan 2040 and this report provides a summary of the progress and the highlights that have been delivered to you, our community, over the past 3 years, from 2021/22 - 2023/24.

The Community Strategic Plan 2040 is broken up into five focus areas:

- community leadership and collaboration;
- safe and healthy community;
- growing economy;
- community place and identity; and
- the environment.

Through this report, we'll look at what you wanted us to achieve, and what we've accomplished throughout the past term of council.





STATE OF THE CITY 2021/22 - 2023/24

WAGGA WAGGA CITY COUNCIL 5

Message from the Mayor

As this council term comes to an end, I wish to take the time to reflect on the journey we have all embarked on.

The Wagga Wagga Local Government Area is an ever-growing region in New South Wales, and post the COVID-19 pandemic, the region has constantly transformed.

We have endured a number of challenges over this term of council, from major flooding events, COVID, extreme weather conditions and a cost-of-living crisis to name a few.

Luckily, along with our challenges, we have also had our achievements and triumphs such as the decision on North Wagga Flood Mitigation Options, Dunns Road completion and Festival of W. We have proven to ourselves we are very resilient during tough times and always see the light at the end of the tunnel.

*Our sense of community has a shining
sense of vibrancy that makes our region unique.*

From celebrating cultural heritage to fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity, all these events have brought us closer together and have enriched the fabric of our community.

Our Festival of W was a huge community draw card and allowed people to celebrate Wagga.

We have continued to work towards our Net Zero emissions targets by adopting the Corporate Net Zero Emissions 2040 Strategy and the Community Net Zero 2050 Roadmap.

We have successfully completed (or close to being completed) several significant projects in the region that will help shape the region to be a landmark for economic growth, prosperity and liveability. These include the Riverina Intermodal Freight and Logistics (RiFL) Hub, the Wagga Wagga Multisport Cycling Complex at Pomingalarna, Riverside Stage 2 and the Museum of the Riverina Botanic Gardens site upgrade.

As diverse as we are, we all share many interests in common.

We all work hard to grow our local and regional economy, look after each other and celebrate life.



Councillor Dallas Tout
Mayor of the City of Wagga Wagga

Our Councillors

The Council is a body of nine members who are elected for a term (usually four years) to carry out duties under the provisions of the Local Government Act and Regulations. The Mayor, as well as being Chairman of Meetings, represents Council when it is not in session.



**Councillor Dallas Tout
(Mayor)**

Councillor Dallas Tout was elected to Council in 2012 and was elected Mayor in 2022.



**Councillor Amelia Parkins
(Deputy Mayor)**

Councillor Amelia Parkins was elected to Council in 2021 and was elected Deputy Mayor in 2023.



Councillor Georgie Davies

Councillor Georgie Davies was elected to Council in 2021.



Councillor Richard Foley

Councillor Richard Foley was elected to Council in 2021.



Councillor Dan Hayes

Councillor Dan Hayes was elected to Council in 2016 and resigned in October 2023.



Councillor Michael Henderson

Councillor Michael Henderson was elected to Council in 2021.



Councillor Rod Kendall

Councillor Rod Kendall was elected to Council in 2004 and was elected Mayor in 2012 – 2015.



Councillor Tim Koschel

Councillor Tim Koschel was elected to Council in 2016.

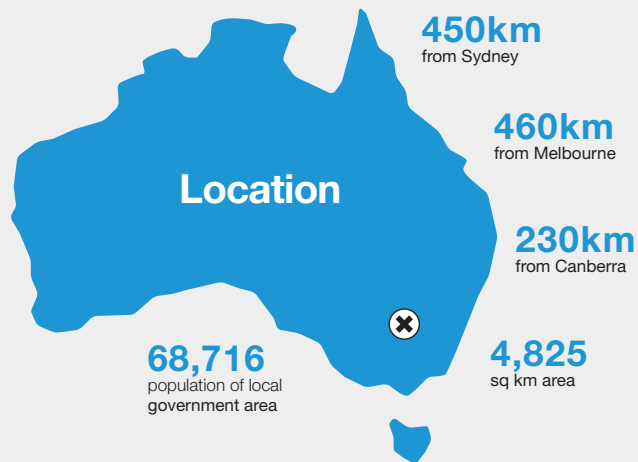


Councillor Jenny McKinnon

Councillor Jenny McKinnon was elected to Council in 2021 and was elected Deputy Mayor in 2022 – 2023.

Our community

Located on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River in the heart of Wiradjuri Country, Wagga Wagga is the centre of the Riverina and is the largest inland city in NSW



Wagga Wagga at a glance

Local Government Area



4,825 sq km

Local Government Area

2300km

Road network

39.9°C

Highest recorded temperature
during this term (19 March 2023)

-3.8°C

Lowest recorded temperature
during this term (15 July 2022)

*Bureau of Meteorology

\$977M

Total value of Development
Applications approved during
2021/22 - 2023/24

Our villages



Collingullie
Currawarna
Galore
Humula
Ladysmith
Mangoplah
Oura
Tarcutta
Uranquinty



Our residents

68,716

population
*ABS ERP 2023

8,667

of residents complete regular
volunteer work
*2021 Census data

4,446

First Nations residents*
*ABS ERP 2023

14.24

persons per square km

11.4%

of residents born overseas*

9.1%

of residents speak a language
at home other than English*

24.1% 17 years and under

25.1% 18 to 34 years

17.7% 35 to 49 years

21.4% 50 to 69 years

11.7% 70 and over
*2021 Census data

Our attractions



Riverside: Wagga Beach
Wagga Wagga Zoo + Aviary
Multisport Cycling Complex
Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre
Wagga Wagga Art Gallery
Museum of the Riverina
Wagga Wagga Botanic Gardens
Oasis Aquatic Centre

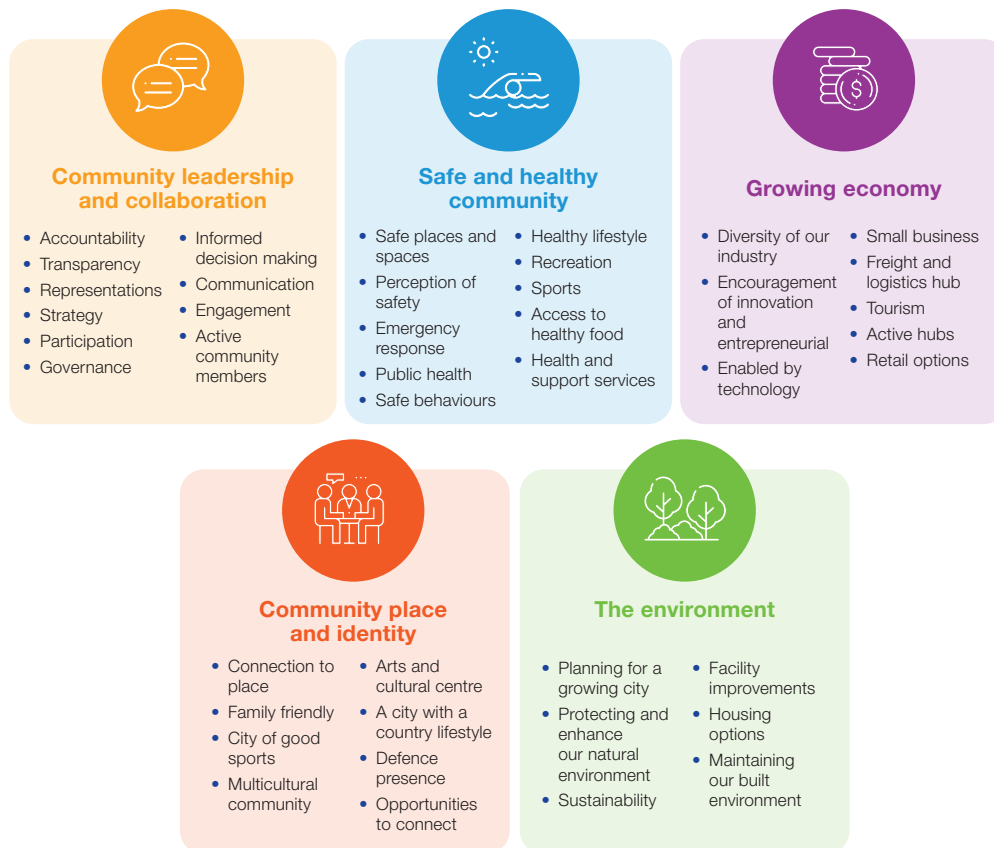
Our community vision

*In 2040 Wagga Wagga will be a thriving, innovative,
connected, and inclusive community on the Murrumbidgee.
Rich in opportunity, choice, learning and environment,
Wagga Wagga is a place where paths cross and people meet.*



Strategic direction

This document contains five strategic directions as set out in the Community Strategic Plan 2040. These are our focus areas for achieving our community vision for 2040 and provide the structure for this document. The five strategic directions are:



How we measured our progress

We use a range of data sources to assess our performance against the objectives set out in our Community Strategic Plan 2040.

Data sources

1. City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey: 2021 survey and 2024 survey results.
2. The Regional Wellbeing Survey – 2020 results (2024 results not available).
3. Australian Bureau of Statistics: latest available data.
4. Wagga Wagga Community Profile ID: latest available data.
5. City of Wagga Wagga data – 2021 and 2024.



80%
community
satisfaction
of Council's
performance
in 2024

The community satisfaction of Council's performance in 2024 was 80% in comparison to 84% in 2021. The reduction in community satisfaction over the course of the council term was a direct result of a significant decrease in community satisfaction with road conditions. This was caused by the deterioration of LGA roads following adverse weather events and the time it took council to repair them. We have heard you and we continue to invest significant resources into these repair efforts.

Community leadership and collaboration



What you said



- We want our region to have strong community leadership and a shared vision for the future.
- We want to be informed and actively engaged in decision making and problem solving to help shape our community.
- We want council to lead with ethical decisions, efficient management, innovation, and excellent customer service.



Community leadership and collaboration



41
Citizenship
Ceremonies
held during the
council term

What we've done

We want our region to have strong community leadership and a shared vision for the future.

Our leaders represent our community

Council continued to coordinate and facilitate meetings, events, workshops and ceremonies throughout the term, including 41 Citizenship Ceremonies. We also supported our local community organisations, individuals and small businesses through our Annual Grants Funding Program. Council also represented Wagga Wagga at regional forums such as the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, Regional Capitals Australia, Country Mayors and Regional Cities NSW.



5,684
livestream views
this term

...AND ACTION!

Continuing to livestream our council meetings has proven to be a great success. It gives our community the ability to listen to the debate and watch voting as it unfolds in the council chambers. Our community viewing of the livestreaming has grown since the first meeting and continues to grow due to convenience and popularity.

Planning for our long-term future of Wagga Wagga

Council is facilitating the development of a new Community Strategic Plan (CSP) which is the highest level of strategic planning undertaken by council. "Wagga Wagga 2050" will answer the questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be in 10 years time?
- How will we get there?
- How will we know we have arrived?

The CSP will provide direction and focus of all other Council plans and articulates the community vision and reflects aspirations.



67%
of our community
have **confidence in**
our elected council

Council has also completed the community consultation for the CBD Masterplan which will provide a strategic guide for the future of the CBD. The CBD Masterplan is currently in the draft stage and once endorsed by Council will provide a clear approach for the future of the Wagga Wagga CBD.

We want to be informed and actively engaged in decision making and problem solving to help shape our community.

Communicate with our community

EXTRA! EXTRA! Read all about it!

Every Saturday in *The Daily Advertiser* and in collaboration with local media outlets, council publishes Council News. This communication keeps the community up to date on upcoming roadworks, major project updates and positive community stories happening in the LGA.

In addition to mainstream forms of publishing, we post to our social media channels on Facebook and Instagram, as well as our own newsletters, flyers and postcards.

Ensure our community feels heard and understood

Have Your Say Wagga

While council may come up with the plans that steer us into the future, we want you to let us know whether we're on the right track.

That's why we put our projects, policies, plans and strategies on public exhibition for you to read and assess at haveyoursay.wagga.nsw.gov.au

We want to know what you like, what you don't, and your suggestions, because your feedback helps us shape a final, stronger, project together.

We want council to lead with ethical decisions, efficient management, innovation, and excellent customer service.

Provide professional, innovative, accessible and efficient service delivery

Cyber security

Cyber security poses a significant risk to council's operations and data integrity. We acknowledged the critical importance of safeguarding our digital assets and have committed adequate resourcing and funding to our IT department to implement cyber security and data integrity initiatives.

A 3-year cyber security plan has been developed to provide a road map for how council will address these issues. It considers the council's cyber risk appetite and has ongoing reporting to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.



80%
of our community
are **satisfied**
with council
communication



67%
of our community
are **satisfied** with
their level of
input into council
decision making

Community leadership
and collaboration



73%
of our community
are **satisfied**
with their contact
with council



59%
of our community
are **satisfied with**
the opportunities
to engage with
councillors

Be easily assessable to all members of our community

How may I help you?

Our friendly Customer Service team are a hugely important part of council as the first point of contact for the community with all kinds of enquiries and requests. During our term, the team answered an impressive 152,250 phone calls and managed 30,429 customer requests.













Ensure transparency and accountability

Internal Audit

The 2021-24 Strategic Internal Audit Plan, adopted in August 2021 is a comprehensive framework that outlines the audit activities to be undertaken during the term. This plan has been instrumental in identifying areas for improvement, providing actionable recommendations, and ensuring that council's operations are efficient, effective, and compliant with relevant regulations.

Our plans and strategies

- All Abilities Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026
- Biodiversity / Maldhangilanha 2020-2030
- Bolton Park Master Plan
- Corporate Net Zero 2024 Strategy
- Cultural Plan 2020-2023
- Community Safety Action Plan 2022-2026
- Community Strategic Plan 2040
- Delivery Plan
- Events Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2024
- Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)
- Operational Plan
- Public Art Plan 2022-2026
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2024
- Recreation, Open Space and Community Strategy & Implementation Plan 2040
- Urban Cooling Strategy 2022-2052
- Wagga Wagga City Council Cultural Plan 2020-2030
- Wagga Wagga Health and Knowledge Master Plan
- Wagga Wagga Integrated Transport Strategy 2040

Community indicator	Progress	Trend	Source
Community satisfaction with provision of council information to the community	74% 2021 74% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Community satisfaction with confidence in elected council	64% 2021 67% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Community satisfaction with opportunities to engage with councillors	71% 2021 59% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
My local government is able to help our community face challenges	47% 2020		The Regional Wellbeing Survey
Community satisfaction with long term planning for Wagga Wagga	72% 2021 64% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Community satisfaction with council's financial management	67% 2021 65% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Percentage of people who volunteered in 2021	16.1% of the LGA reported doing voluntary work in 2021		Australian Bureau of Statistics
Community satisfaction with input to council decision-making	63% 2021 67% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Community satisfaction with council's communication	82% 2021 80% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Community satisfaction with the City's performance	84% 2021 84% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Community satisfaction with their contact with the city	77% 2021 73% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Access to local government services (new measure 2020)	69% 2020		The Regional Wellbeing Survey

Safe and healthy community



What you said



- We want to feel safe within our community.
- We want to embrace healthier lifestyle choices and practices.
- We want to have access to health and support services that cater for all our needs.



Safe and healthy community

What we've done

We want to feel safe within our community.

Create safe spaces and places

Glenfield Road Animal Shelter

The Glenfield Road Animal Shelter have continued to find homes for thousands of abandoned cats and dogs during our term. Council has partnered with over 15 animal rescue groups, including, Riverina and District Animal Rescue (RADAR), Best Friends Animal Rescue and Dougie's Legacy Animal Rescue, to promote and encourage the rehoming of our most vulnerable animals.

The Animal Shelter has hosted a community outreach day that focused on educating the public on responsible pet ownership, and the rangers have promoted this with school visits to educate the next generation on responsible animal ownership.

Community Safety Action Plan

During our term we continued to place community safety front of mind. The *Community Safety Action Plan 2022-2026* was adopted in August 2022 and outlines strategies and actions to increase community safety. This plan continues to provide us with a framework to work in partnership with NSW Police and other community partners towards increasing community safety and preventing crime.

We held an annual Family Community Safety Day, at the Riverside Precinct, in collaboration with NSW Police from the Wagga Wagga Local Area Command. This family friendly event gave the community the chance to connect with our first responders and recognise the need for all sections of the community to work together to create a safe environment.

Promote safety and safe behaviours

Road Safety Week

During National Road Safety Week 2024 (5th to 12th May), the trees along Fitzmaurice Street glowed in yellow light to demonstrate councils' recognition and commitment to road safety.



79%
of our community
**feel safe in
their homes**

Safe and healthy community



Oasis Regional Aquatic Centre

The Oasis was again awarded a 5 Star pool rating throughout our term. Oasis has a reputation as one of the state's top pools, receiving a top safety score from Royal Life Saving NSW for the past three years.

Year	Safety score
2021 - 2022	98%
2022 - 2023	96%
2023 - 2024	96%

Council continues to partner with Royal Life Saving NSW to deliver the Outback Lifesaver program for the fourth year running. This teaches children lifesaving water safety skills around inland waterways like the Murrumbidgee River.

Be responsive to emergencies

As part of the Wagga Wagga Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC), council provides effective emergency management services such as traffic control, road closures, online communications and alerts, repair works and flood gate operations. Those tasks are carried out in addition to council's role which is to assist emergency management departments such as SES, Rural Fire Service and NSW Police in their duties.

In November 2022, we experienced our largest flooding event since 2012. During the 2022 floods the LEMC worked together to ensure the community was safe.

The flooding incident was also the first test of the raised levee system along the Murrumbidgee River. It validated the decision to invest in the levee raising as the central business district and many of the city's critical assets were protected during the flood event.

Monitor and enforce public safety

Environmental Health

During our term, our Environmental Health team has conducted 3,678 public health inspections. These inspections encompass a diverse range of sectors critical to public health, including food establishments, skin penetration and beauty industries, mortuaries, cooling water systems, public swimming pools, and septic systems. These efforts are important to safeguard the health and wellbeing of our community, ensuring compliance with safety standards and promoting a clean and healthy environment for the community.

We want to embrace healthier lifestyle choices and practices.

Promote access and participation for all sections of the community to a full range of sports and recreational activities

Lake Albert

Lake Albert is one of our city's most popular recreational facilities. Caring for our lake is one of our top priorities and, due to recent extreme weather and catchment changes, it has been one of our biggest challenges. As a public safety measure, the water quality in Lake Albert is regularly monitored for blue green algae and

bacterial content. Several new preventive treatments and technologies for Blue Green Algae are emerging within the market. These advancements continue to be monitored and explored for their suitability for use in Lake Albert. During 2024 Council partnered with Waterzyme to trial a natural enzyme treatment of Lake Albert. This treatment was able to reduce the blue green algae within the Lake but not eliminate it.

Year	BGA closure days
2021 - 2022	18
2022 - 2023	81
2023 - 2024	78

Council continues to work towards the long-term security of the lake. Activities that have occurred during this term include:

- The securing of a Water Licence from the NSW Government that will allow for 1800ML of water to be pumped annually into Lake Albert
- The securing of \$4.49M in Federal Government funds which will be combined with \$4.49M in Council funds to deliver the pipeline, as well as remediate the foreshore and existing weir.
- The mapping and monitoring of sediment accumulation within Lake Albert.

Wagga Wagga Active Travel Plan

This project will deliver a 56 km network of dedicated cycle paths for the city and is well over halfway completed. The paths offer a safe, accessible option to everyone in the community to move around the city, regardless of ability. Community members using motorised scooters and wheelchairs will have the opportunity to safely navigate the city, enabling them to access recreational spaces and the outdoors.



Safe and healthy
community



87%

of our community
are satisfied with
our reserves and
open spaces

Our Regions Sporting Events

Wagga Wagga is renowned as the premier sporting hub of regional Australia, making it an ideal destination for sports enthusiasts. During our term the city hosted several major sporting events, including:

- NRL Canberra Raiders V Dolphins – This sporting event saw 10,445 NRL fans pack the McDonalds Park breaking the attendance record for an NRL match in our city. The event brought in an estimated \$3 million in economic benefit to the city.
- NSW Junior State Cup – Southern Conference Touch Carnival – Since 2019 our city has hosted this event which attracts over 8,000 players, officials and spectators to the city every year. These visitors bring an estimated \$5 million in economic benefits to the city.



Bolton Park Sports Hub Upgrade

The vision for the redevelopment of the Bolton Park Sports Hub is to create a nationally recognised facility that will attract athletes from around the country.

Stage 1 of the Bolton Park Masterplan is the redevelopment of the Jim Elphick Tennis Centre. Demolition works began in January 2024 and is due for completion by the end of 2024. Once completed the facility will be transformed into a nationally significant tennis venue, offering:

- Eight International Tennis Federation cushioned acrylic hard courts
- Two warmup cushion acrylic hard courts
- Five synthetic grass community courts
- Two multi-use netball courts
- Clubhouse with amenities and a spectator viewing area.

Wagga Wagga Multisport Cycling Complex - Pomingalarna

The \$12 million cycling complex at Pomingalarna Reserve was completed and opened to the public in April 2022. The facility is for cyclists of all abilities and has the capacity to host regional, state, national and international events.

The complex on the city's western outskirts features a criterium track, BMX track, jump and pump tracks, cycling education area, velodrome and supporting infrastructure.

Council worked in partnership with local First Nations community members to ensure the development was respectful and representative of Pomingalarna's significance to Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri cultural heritage.

We want to have access to health and support services that cater for all our needs.

Support and continue to develop services and promote community health and wellbeing

Health and Knowledge Precinct

Council is actively involved in the regionally focussed Murrumbidgee Health and Knowledge Precinct with representation on the Board and Alliance. Through a collaborative approach the Precinct has developed a Strategy which outlines 3 main priority areas with a focus on:

1. Education and rural workforce,
2. Research and innovation and
3. One system integration.

The first Regional Health Innovation Showcase was held on Friday 3 July 2024 in Wagga Wagga and was a great success.

Work is scheduled to commence on the implementation of the Wagga Wagga Health and Innovation Precinct Master Plan in the later part of 2024. This will include the development of a structure plan and a detailed implementation plan.





91%
of our community
are satisfied with
our parks and
playgrounds



91%
of our community
are satisfied
with our city's
sportsgrounds and
sporting facilities

Safe and healthy
community

Community indicator	Progress	Trend	Source
I feel safe in public places	52% 2021 53% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Community satisfaction with street lighting	83% 2021 82% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
I feel safe in my home	78% 2021 79% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Community satisfaction with flood protection and preparedness	85% 2021 82% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Wagga Wagga has a variety of leisure and recreation options	58% 2021 62% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Satisfaction with sportsgrounds and sporting facilities	91% 2021 91% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Community satisfaction with our cycle network	83% 2021 88% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Sports participation figures - adults	2021/22 Seasons – 3309 participants 2023/24 Seasons – 4260 participants		City of Wagga Wagga Data
Sports participation figures - youth	2021/22 Seasons – 8537 participants 2023/24 Seasons – 8853 participants		City of Wagga Wagga Data



Growing economy

What you said



- We want our city to be a thriving, innovative and connected regional capital.
- We want our city to be an attractive location for people to live, work and invest.
- We want our city to be an attractive tourist destination.
- We want our city to be a centre for education and training.
- We want our city to be a hub for activities.



Growing economy

What we've done

We want our city to be a thriving, innovative and connected regional capital.

Improve, maintain and renew transport networks and building infrastructure to provide safe, affordable, efficient and reliable transport connections for our community.

Roads

Council has continued to update and extend the safety and quality of our local roads through extensive and ongoing patching, rehabilitation and capital works projects. With over 2,300km of road network in our region, maintaining and upgrading these roads is one of our most significant challenges and top priorities.

The 2022 flood event and above average rain fall in 2023 had a significant impact on our road network and resource allocation.

During this term of Council we have allocated a budget of \$68 million for road funding, adopted in the Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) for one off and recurrent works. This was to upgrade and rehabilitate our road network, which included major projects such as:

- Dunns Road Upgrade (3.3km)
- Lord Baden Powel Drive - Macleay Street to Museum (350m)
- Old Narrandera Road Sealing - Deepwater Rd to LGA boundary (5.4km)
- Old Narrandera Road Upgrade - Olympic Hwy to Pine Gully Rd (700m)
- Keajura Road Sealing – from the Hume Highway north (2.7km)

We have also trialled new technology and alternate methods much as a Pothole Pro machine, more permanent repairs of potholes by squaring them and sealing over filled potholes to improve the durability and life of the repair as well as undertaking more rehabilitation of existing pavements using foamed bitumen and foamed asphalt technologies rather than reconstruction of the pavements which involve removing the existing materials.

In addition to the major road upgrades we also undertook a significant amount of pavement rehabilitation, including:

- Inglewood Road - From Mitchell Road east for 2.4km
- Copland Street – Lake Albert Road to Tasman Road (3.8km)


77%
of our community
are satisfied with
Wagga Wagga's
traffic flow

- Macleay Street - Erin to Urana (720m)
- Nagle Street - From Sturt Highway south for 550m
- Bourke Street - Red Hill Road to Holbrook Road (900m)
- Bourke Street – Urana Street to Fernleigh Road (600m)
- Lloyd Road - Holbrook Road to Plumpton Road (2.4km)
- Bomen Road - Ch: 0.8km to 1.6km from Olympic Highway (600m)
- Mitchell Road - Brunskill to Inglewood (850m)
- Watson Boulevard - Red Hill Road to Lingiari Drive (150m)
- Elm Road - Mitchell Road to Sycamore Road (1km)
- Lake Albert Road - Warrawong Street to Copland Street (450m)
- Bakers Lane – south of the Sturt Highway for 180m
- Old Narrandera Road – east of Pine Gully Road for 1.2km
- Dobney Avenue – west of Pearson Street for 230m
- Gregadoo Road – The Grange entrance to 150m east of Plunkett Drive (470m)
- Boorooma Street – Messenger/Avocet roundabout to Farrer Road roundabout (880m)



27%
of our community
are satisfied with
our maintenance of
local roads



Growing economy



78%
of our community
are satisfied with
public transport
across the city

- Byrnes Road – Merino Road roundabout north for 1.5km
- Bomen Road – Lewington Street west for 500m
- Johnston Street – Fitzmaurice Street to Church Street (170m)
- Church Street (190m)
- Cross Street (160m)
- Nisbett Street (140m)
- Norton Street (215m)
- Horseshoe Place (260m)
- Travers Street – Trail Street to the Wiradjuri Bridge (330m)
- McKnickle Road – Sturt Highway to Bagley Drive (100m)
- Arnott Street (80m)
- Koorungal Road – Lake Albert Road to Plumpton Road (370m)
- Narrung Street (820m)
- Billigha Street (430m)
- Ziegler Avenue – Stanley to Menzies (400m)
- Main Street – Crooked Creek Bridge to Lake Street (370m)
- Lake Albert Road - Koorungal Road to Eastlake Drive (800m)

Establish and grow Wagga Wagga servicing as world class freight and logistics hub to the region and beyond

Riverina Intermodal Freight and Logistics (RiFL) Hub

The construction of RiFL, a modern, efficient and strategically located freight hub, was completed and opened for business in December 2022. RiFL is anticipated to deliver significant economic benefits and strengthen the regional economy, creating opportunities for businesses looking to relocate from metropolitan areas and establish in our city.

The RiFL Hub is a core feature of the existing Bomen Business Park – our world-class business precinct, which is the focus of the Wagga Wagga Special Activation Precinct (SAP) master plan. The \$78.6 million RiFL project is critical to the future growth of our city, driving growth, creating jobs locally and increasing productivity.

With freight volumes across NSW projected to double by 2030 and triple by 2050, the RiFL Hub will be one of the most important general freight routes in Australia.

Recognise the future opportunities for Wagga Wagga will be gained by continued investment to strengthen our digital literacy and infrastructure, connecting our community, industry and services to new exciting opportunities now and in the future.



\$5.41B
Wagga Wagga
City GRP
2022/23
Up 4% on the
previous year

Gross Regional Product (GRP) is defined as the total value of goods and services produced in the region over a period of one year.

Airport

Wagga Wagga Airport is one of the most significant regional transport gateways in NSW. It has a critical role in connecting the Riverina Region to the rest of Australia. The Airport is serviced by two main carriers QantasLink and Regional Express (REX) and has daily flights to Sydney and Melbourne.

The current 30-year lease of the Wagga Wagga Airport from the Commonwealth Department of Defence is due to expire in June 2025.

Council is continuing to advocate to keep the Airport in community hands and negotiate a new lease.

Council was also funded by Regional NSW to produce a Business Case to upgrade the Airport terminal. This business case was submitted to council in April 2024.

We want to be an attractive location for people to live, work and invest.

Encourage and support investment to develop Wagga Wagga

Civic Theatre - Performing Arts Masterplan

Council endorsed the Civic Theatre Performing Arts Masterplan, which was adopted 11 June 2024. While on public exhibition, 95.5% of submissions indicated a supportive view towards the draft. The masterplan, when funded, will see the Civic Theatre undergo major renovations with the addition of state of the art facilities. Providing multi-programming spaces on one site and transforming the performing arts offering to the community.

- Venue 1: The Original Civic Theatre will maintain 491 seats in the current auditorium, original Facade
- Venue 2: Live music - 774 people standing, or 328 people seated theatre style or 270 people seated for a gala dinner style event. Retractable window/wall for indoor/outdoor events on the lagoon
- Venue 3: Intimate gigs and events: 119 people seated or 200 people standing
- Upgrade to the Basement Theatre
- Total capacity across three venues increases from 491 to 1,465

Riverside Redevelopment – Stage 2

The rejuvenation of the Wagga Wagga Beach and surrounding areas along the Murrumbidgee River precinct was officially completed on 27 June 2022. The \$9.93 million project has equipped the region with an amazing family friendly precinct. The project has created a large multipurpose recreation space which has become a key destination for residents and regional visitors. It has complimented our beloved beach, which is still named Australia's number 9 best beach by Tourism Australia.

Riverside Stage 3 Business Case and Community Engagement

Council endorsed the Riverside Stage 3 Business Case on 13 May 2024. The business case analysis determined a gap in indoor venues with capacity to accommodate events over 1,000 people, not only locally but also across Southern New South Wales. There is also a large gap in the provision of First Nations cultural facilities to service the region's growing community and visitor opportunities.

The development of the Business Case was significantly enriched by extensive stakeholder and community engagement, across 92 industry and cultural stakeholders and 3,292 community members. The detailed concept designs include a regional scale entertainment, conference and convention centre with a 5,000 standing capacity co-located with a Wiradjuri Keeping Place for the protection, preservation and sharing of First Nations culture.

An indicative calendar of 140 event days was developed as having the potential to be hosted at the proposed Entertainment/Convention Centre. This projection anticipates a total of 72,715 annual attendees, encompassing 10,000 attendees at the Cultural Centre. The \$98.0 million development is estimated to directly deliver \$79.0 million in output for local businesses, which is estimated to support



79%

of our community
are satisfied with
our city's
appearance.



5,957*

local businesses
in our community

*ABS data 2023

Growing economy

\$46.1 million in Gross Regional Product for Wagga Wagga LGA and 317 full time equivalent jobs. Post construction, there is estimated to be ongoing operational activity and visitor spend generated from the project with \$24.4 million in GRP and 205 FTE jobs.

Museum of the Riverina Redevelopment

The Museum of the Riverina Botanic Gardens site is now open to the public. The redeveloped Museum of the Riverina was officially opened in February 2023 after an \$8.6 million upgrade. Creating a new and inclusive cultural experience for the community and telling our region's story in new ways to a wider audience. The museum upgrade included a state-of-the-art new building, exhibition gallery, learning studio, collection storage facility, public spaces, and staff offices.

Botanic Gardens Precinct Renewal Project

Our Botanic Gardens Precinct Renewal Program involved the delivery of 3 projects, the Lord Baden Powell Drive upgrade, Museum of the Riverina development and the Entwine at the Botanic Gardens. These three projects have created a dynamic, engaging and accessible precinct that improves spatial connections and walkability, along with engaging the community through cultural heritage experiences. The precinct addresses fundamental issues around equity access and safety, creating a dynamic, beautiful and accessible space for all our community to enjoy.

Fitzmaurice Street Beautification Project

The project has boosted the connection to Fitzmaurice Street for pedestrians and cyclists who use the active travel network. The installation of eleven parklets along both sides of Fitzmaurice Street as part of the project has improved the area's amenity. Council was successful in securing a \$271,000 grant from the NSW Government's 'Your High Street' program, which promotes permanent improvements to the amenity and functionality of streets for the benefit of local economies and public well-being. The funding has provided a decorative lighting installation along Fitzmaurice Street and improved safety lighting along the levee bank to the Riverside precinct. The public seating platforms provide additional spaces for the community to take in the space and connect when using Fitzmaurice Street.

Annual Grants

Between 2021/22 to 2023/24 FY, Council has awarded \$603,143.26 in annual grants to local non-profit groups, individuals and small businesses to fund projects that directly benefit our community, including:

- Local Heritage Fund \$43,725.00
- Community Development Fund \$89,725.00
- Sustainable Environments Grants \$17,239.53
- Neighbourhood/Rural Villages Grants \$62,972.73
- Small Business Grants \$66,972.73
- Youth Led Performance Initiatives \$23,965.00
- Rural Halls Infrastructure Grants \$64,843.99
- Arts & Culture Grants \$68,685.92
- Sporting & Cultural Facility Improvement Grants \$93,599.18
- Events Promotion Grants \$76,819.99

Attract and support local businesses, industry and employment opportunities

Livestock Marketing Centre

The Livestock Marketing Centre continues to lead the way as the premier livestock selling centre in Australia for cattle, lambs and sheep. Stage 2 of the shade sails project was rolled out during the term, improving conditions for the sheep delivery yards. The re-surfacing of the sheep yards also commenced, with works scheduled to minimise the interruption to the site and ensuring it continues to maintain high standards.

Over our term we saw a high volume of cattle, sheep and lamb sales put through the LMC.

Year	Livestock sold	Total
2021 - 2022	2,113,175	\$631,805,812.60
2022 - 2023	2,286,335	\$508,694,232.10
2023 - 2024	2,735,243	\$508,356,636.38

We want our region to be an attractive tourist destination.

Facilitate planning and development of visitor-related facilities and services

Through initiatives like the Wagga Wagga + Surrounds Visitor Guide and Tourism Partner Program, we've fostered strong, collaborative relationships with local businesses and tourism providers. These initiatives have enabled our community to capitalise on approximately 3.8 million overnight visitors and over 2.2 million day-trippers to the region during our term.



Growing economy



88%
of our community
are satisfied with
our festival and
events programs

Accommodate and provide support to visitors

The Visitor Information Centre provides a collection of local products and produce, along with expert local knowledge of our region. During our term, several destination marketing initiatives were developed to increase visitation across the region.

An eight-week collaborative marketing campaign named, "The Drive Way", showcasing a range of experiences available to visitors in the region and surrounds, was also launched. The campaign was centred around suggested day trip from Wagga Wagga to neighbouring shires.

Provide a variety of events, festivals and activities

Festival of W

Festival of W is our city's premier destination event held in depths of winter. Each year, this 16-day festival presents immersive light-art experiences, ice skating, live music and winter food offerings across 16 days. 2022 was the inaugural year for the festival welcome 22,000 attendees and grew to welcome 120,000 attendees in 2023.

Spring Jam

Spring Jam is Wagga Wagga's leading children's festival held during the NSW and Victorian school holidays. The annual festival offers colourful imagination and play through outdoor adventures including a giant obstacle course, circus play, roving entertainment, live music performances and craft workshops.

Comedy Fest

The Wagga Comedy Festival showcases a diverse array of comedy genres, ensuring there's something for everyone. Attendees can enjoy not only stand-up routines but also engaging workshops, interactive performances, and musical acts, making it a multifaceted experience. The festival has garnered enthusiastic support from the local community as well as attendees who travel from various parts of the expansive Riverina region to participate in the laughter-filled festivities.

New Years Eve Celebrations

Council is thrilled to host the annual New Years Eve community event at Apex Park, Lake Albert. This free community event showcases a 9.30pm fireworks display to be enjoyed by all ages and is complimented with accompanying local food vendors. Approximately 12,000 visitors and residents have attended the event across the foreshores of Lake Albert to spectate the display.

Australia Day Community Events

A series of free community events for all to enjoy make up the annual Australia Day Program. During this term, the annual event showcased the Australia Day Awards, Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri and First Nations events, and the community breakfast BBQ.

FUSION Botanical

Council hosted FUSION Botanical, an exciting festival experience set in the serene surroundings of the Botanic Gardens Precinct. This event celebrated diversity through a showcase of authentic international street-food style options. It brought together residents and visitors alike to indulge in a culinary journey that spanned continents, offering a taste of global flavours.

FRESH

Another standout event was FRESH, a unique initiative designed to bridge generational divides and foster meaningful exchanges across age groups. This inclusive program welcomed participants from Gen Alpha, millennials, Gen Y, Gen X, baby boomers, and the silent generation. It provided a dynamic platform for sharing ideas, gaining new perspectives, and nurturing a sense of community cohesion. Participants enjoyed engaging discussions, interactive activities, and insightful presentations that highlighted the richness of our diverse community and the wisdom shared across generations.

These events not only showcased our commitment to cultural enrichment and community engagement but also underscored our dedication to creating memorable experiences that resonate with all members of our vibrant city.

Major Events, Festivals and Films Sponsorship

Wagga Wagga City Council's Major Events, Festival and Film Sponsorship program aims to fund meaningful, creative and high-quality events for our community to participate in and enjoy. Council is committed to supporting and enabling a vibrant events calendar for our city and recognises the value of events in driving visitation, creating social connection, celebrating our culture and enlivening our city.



Growing economy

Across the three-year term, council has supported 24 events to the value of \$260,000, including:

- Christmas with the Con
- Thrashernats3
- Wagga Wagga Swap Meet
- Gears & Beers Festival
- TEDxWagga Wagga
- Wagga Wagga Mardi Gras
- Bushfood Talks and Weed Walks
- Writers at the Woolshed
- Bush Fringes
- Motor Mania
- Pastorate Dinner Experience
- Breakfast with the Stars + Races
- NSW Academy Games
- FitzFest
- PIA Planning Conference
- Sconversation
- Wagga Wagga Country Championships
- Inspire Christmas Spectacular
- Ocrowberfest
- Bidgee Theatre Productions
- Marramarra Markets
- Stone the Crows
- Live at Lunch sessions
- Interesting

We use a range of digital platforms including social media and the visitwagga.com website as our primary marketing tool and platform to help promote our city and events to a broad audience. In the last three years alone our combined Visit Wagga Wagga social media channels have grown to over 44,000 followers, with our posts often shared by Visit NSW, further broadening our reach. Over 1,700 events have been promoted for free on visitwagga.com with over 1.3M unique website view across the term.



23
trainees and
apprentices
in 2023/24

6
trainees and
apprentices
in 2021/22

5
school based
trainees and
apprentices
in 2024

We want to be the centre for education and training

Support and promote quality and choice in education and vocation pathways

Our region has a strong focus on improving access to quality education and training to help develop a high-skilled labour force. Council recognised the great work schools are doing to promote increased participation in education, including providing mentoring with schools, scholarships, supporting youth engagement and initiatives for our First Nations community.

Council attended the careers expo in 2024 showcasing to high school students the endless career possibilities we offer through traineeships and apprenticeships.

We want our region to be a hub for activities

Facilitate the development of vibrant precincts

Tourism plays a crucial role in our region's economy and since the easing of Covid lockdowns and restrictions, visitors contributions have increased significantly. The spending in total tourism sales at local businesses throughout the region was \$655.6 million for the year of 2022/23. This influx has generated an overall added value of \$330 million.

Our Events Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2024 provides a framework and strategic approach to the development, acquisition and investment in events, supporting our vision for Wagga Wagga in its growth to a city of 100,000 by 2038.

Community indicator	Progress	Trend	Source
Community satisfaction with availability of car parking	62% 2021 80% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Community satisfaction with maintaining local roads	39% 2021 27% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Community satisfaction with traffic flow/ congestion	78% 2021 77% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Community satisfaction with maintaining footpaths	56% 2021 62% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Percentage of people who indicated having access to good quality public transport	82% 2021 78% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Access to high speed, reliable internet	The percentage of people who rated access as good 61% 2020		The Regional Wellbeing Survey
Access to mobile phone reception	The percentage of people who rated access as good 71% 2020		The Regional Wellbeing Survey
Living costs are affordable here	The percentage of people who agree 63% 2020		The Regional Wellbeing Survey
Unemployment rate	4.3% March 2021 2.6% December 2023 (-1.7%)		Wagga Wagga Community Profile ID
Number of local businesses 2020-2024	Number of local businesses 5957 (+292)		Australian Bureau of Statistics
The City's Gross Regional Product (GRP) 2021-2023	The City's Gross Regional Product \$5,412m (+\$453m)		Wagga Wagga Community Profile ID
Value added by tourism and hospitality to the local economy between 2021/22 - 2022/23	Value added by tourism industry to the local economy was \$544.73m		Wagga Wagga Community Profile ID
Community satisfaction with festival and event programs	87% 2021 88% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Wagga Wagga has a vibrant nightlife	33% 2021 32% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Wagga Wagga has a variety of entertainment options	50% 2021 47% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Wagga Wagga has a wide variety of retail options	69% 2021 66% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey

Community place and identity



What you said

- We are proud of where we live and embrace our identity.
- We want our community to feel welcome, included and connected.





Community place and identity

What we've done

We are proud of where we live and embrace our identity.

Promote a strong sense of place

Public art celebrates who we are as a community and is an important way to bring our public spaces to life. Council recognises the key role that public art plays in creating a thriving, innovative, connected and inclusive community; by creating a sense of place, supporting our arts and creative community, providing opportunities to connect with others and enhancing our public spaces. Council's Public Art Plan 2022-2026 details how council will continue to develop public art in the city and surrounding rural villages for the period 2022-2026.

Value our heritage

Council's endeavour in building and planning is to promote development while preserving the ambiance of the area along with its Historical Heritage. In association with the NSW Heritage Branch of the Office of Environment and Heritage, council provides grants to assist owners to undertake preservation works to items of Environmental Heritage or properties located within Wagga Wagga's Heritage Conservation Area. The aim of the grants is to provide financial assistance for projects and services that may include conservation works and maintenance works projects, adaptive reuse projects, interpretation projects and conservation management plans.

Provide services and facilities that make Wagga Wagga a centre for arts and culture

Cultural Plan

The Wagga Wagga City Council Cultural Plan 2020-2030 is a blueprint for a creative city that puts art and culture at the heart of a thriving, innovative, connected and inclusive community.



85%

of our community
are satisfied
with council's
enhancement of
heritage buildings

Community place
and identity

During this term, Council has supported the delivery of a diverse and inclusive annual cultural program through the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery and National Art Glass Gallery, Wagga Wagga City Library, Museum of the Riverina, and Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre. Council also supported the community by providing sponsorship toward a diverse range of cultural projects through the Major Events, Festival & Films Sponsorship program, Annual Grants Program, annual service level agreements with key community cultural organisations, and providing fee waiver support through Council's Financial Assistance program. Several key actions recommended in the plan to improve the city's cultural infrastructure and increase the community's access to arts and culture were delivered during this term.

Highlights include:

1.01 Establish a community art centre - Under a lease agreement with Council, Eastern Riverina Arts established The Station Creative Workspace in the old ambulance station located at 54-58 Johnston Street, Wagga Wagga in July 2023 with offices, workshop, and gallery spaces available.

1.02 Improve the Wagga Wagga City Library Service - Council completed an extensive library service review and implemented a stand-alone library model launched on the 1 July 2022 which includes an Agile Library service that services nine suburban locations and the nine rural villages within the Local Government Area on a regular basis.

1.03 Expand the Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre - The Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre Masterplan was endorsed by Council at the ordinary meeting on 11 June 2024.

1.04 Activate the Botanic Gardens precinct and upgrade the Museum of the Riverina - The redeveloped Museum of the Riverina site at the Botanic Gardens opened to the public February 2023.

1.05 Establish Riverside Event Spaces - The Riverside Project (Stage 2) was completed in 2022.

1.06 Establish an exhibition and visitor space on the river.

2.01 Incorporate Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri art, language and culture into significant new infrastructure and projects - An Acknowledgement of Country was written and translated in collaboration with Uncle Stan Grant Snr and the Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri Language School. This acknowledgement is displayed prominently in the Wagga Wagga Civic Centre and Council cultural facilities as well as appearing across Council's online and print media.

2.03 Support the establishment of a Keeping Place for Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri cultural heritage in Wagga Wagga - Community consultation was undertaken from 22 November - 22 December 2023 providing the community with two options to consider, Option A: the development of a major conference and cultural centre or Option B: the expansion of the Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre.

2.12 Develop a Live Music and Events Kit for community events in parks and open spaces - A live music kit, which includes a professional sound technician, was initiated in 2022 and has been utilised to support both community run and Council led events across the Local Government including International Day of People with Disability celebrations, Mawang ngiyanihi bala Yurruwala community event, Youth Week activities, Back to School Party (2023 & 2024) and FUSION.

2.14 Implement programs that develop live music and production skills - The Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre presented the annual Plug & Play program working directly with local emerging musicians and performers aged (14-25 years) in Wagga Wagga to provide support and mentoring to take their live music and production skills to the next level.

2.15 Support the relocation of the Riverina Conservatorium of Music (RCM)
– the RCM relocated to its CBD location at 1 Simmons Street in 2023. Council continues to support the RCM through an annual service level agreement which supports their annual program of free live music events and an annual music scholarship.

2.16 Implement Renew Wagga Shopfront Program – This successful three-year project was led and managed by Eastern Riverina Arts of which Council is a member. Utilising the Renew Australia framework during 2021 -2023 Eastern Riverina Arts facilitated short term usage of empty CBD shopfronts by artists and creative entrepreneurs to test their business models.

2.28 Align public art activities to placemaking and activation objectives – The endorsed Public Art Plan 2022-2026 includes placemaking and activation objectives in its guiding principles. Working in partnership with the public art advisory panel neighbourhood and village projects were delivered in Ashmont, Mount Austin, Humula and Currawarna with a major Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri commission currently in production.

2.38 Expand opportunities for early career internships and volunteering
- A traineeship program was established at the Civic Theatre in 2023 with the employment of a 2-year technical production adult trainee. In 2024 a 2-year venue & events adult trainee and three school-based trainees (technical lighting, venue/events and marketing) were employed at the Civic Theatre to address skills shortages in this sector.



Community place
and identity

Acknowledge and celebrate the contribution that people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds make to our community.

As your elected councillors, we are committed to representing every member of our region with the utmost dedication and integrity. We recognised that the strength of our community lies in its rich diversity, and it is our responsibility to ensure that every voice is heard and valued. By actively listening to and engaging with the community, we strive to foster an inclusive environment where everyone's perspectives contribute to the growth and wellbeing of our region.

Some of the ways we have assisted people from CALD backgrounds to participate in our community include:

- Wagga Wagga City Library delivering bilingual Tech Savvy Communities to CALD residents to help build their digital skills, literacy and confidence.
- Agile Library delivering the Learn English and Plan (LEAP) program to help parents and their preschool children engage socially with the English language.

Support ongoing growth and investment of the Defence bases located in Wagga Wagga

Council recognises the significance of our local defence bases, RAAF Base Wagga and Kapooka Military Area which are operated by the Australian Defence Force.

We are working closely with the Federal Government on the Riverina Redevelopment Program. The Program will upgrade or replace facilities at both the RAAF Base and Blamey Barracks (Kapooka). These projects received approval in December 2023 and offer major growth and investment opportunities in our region.

Support and grow strong and resilient village and neighbourhood communities

The ongoing support provided to our villages is crucially important. Throughout our term, we have dedicated ourselves to enhancing these communities through various initiatives, notably through our annual grants funding program. Over \$120,000 in financial support has been allocated, including:

- **Neighbourhood/Rural Villages Grants:** \$62,972.73 has been specifically allocated to support initiatives and projects aimed at improving the quality of life in our rural villages and neighbourhoods.
- **Rural Halls Infrastructure Grants:** \$64,843.99 has been invested in improving and maintaining the infrastructure of rural halls, ensuring they remain functional and accessible community spaces.

In addition to these financial contributions, our council's Agile library service plays a pivotal role in connecting our villages. Through regular programs and visits, we strive to foster community engagement and ensure that our villages remain connected and supported.

Council held several community engagement sessions in our villages during the term, with visits being well received and attended in most instances. Council is currently working with representatives from each of our villages to establish a visit schedule and digital engagement platform.

Provide services that contribute to Wagga Wagga being family friendly

Playground Strategy

Council has delivered an updated playground strategy which outlines the aim for playground within our LGA. This strategy provides a policy framework to guide future play space development in Wagga Wagga. The strategy sets out an approach that outlines the importance of diversity in recreation (not providing the same play experience everywhere) and the importance of the power of play and social interaction in childhood development.

The primary purposes of the strategy are:

- Listening and consulting to the community to inform the strategy.
- Ensure the community has access to quality playgrounds for the next 20 years by applying best practice asset management principles.
- Create future play spaces in new subdivisions by providing policy directions to inform the Local Environment Plan (LEP) and inform future Development Control Plans (DCP).
- Ensure the future financial sustainability of the playground network.
- To set benchmarks for the provision of shade for open space and playground areas.

There are 100 playgrounds spread across 28 suburbs and localities. 14 of these are in rural villages. The remaining 86 are in the Wagga Wagga urban area.

Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre

Our region's Civic Theatre is a premier venue boasting a 491-seat auditorium complete with an orchestra pit accommodating up to 38 musicians. It features state-of-the-art professional lighting and sound systems to enhance every performance. The upstairs foyer offers a versatile space for small functions, featuring a licensed bar and a covered balcony overlooking the picturesque Wollundry Lagoon—an ideal setting to enjoy a pre-show cheese platter and drinks.

We had many highlights during our term, and we have proudly supported a variety of events and programs, including:

- Wagga Comedy Fest: A beloved event featuring a wide range of comedy shows suitable for all ages.
- Music at Midday Series: Regular presentations showcasing musical talents in our community.
- Live at The Lagoon: A popular community concert series set against the backdrop of Wollundry Lagoon.
- Community Shows and Dance Concerts: Providing platforms for local talent and fostering community engagement.

We are committed to supporting local talent and nurturing local skills and fostering professional development within the community. Programs such as Plug and Play exemplify our dedication, offering a live music development initiative that supports emerging musicians, as well as business, production, and technical creatives.

Wagga Wagga Art Gallery

Our region is renowned for its rich cultural tapestry and vibrant artistic community. Nestled within our city is the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, a cherished institution that serves as a beacon for creativity and cultural expression. Here, a diverse community of artists, writers, poets, and performers converge, united by their profound passion for the arts.



97%

of our community
are satisfied
with the
Wagga Wagga
Civic Theatre



145,000

people visited
the Wagga Wagga
Civic Theatre



80,000

people visited
the Wagga Wagga
Art Gallery

Community place
and identity



98%
of our community
are satisfied
with the
Wagga Wagga
City Library

The Wagga Wagga Art Gallery stands as a testament to our city's cultural vitality, drawing more than 90,000 visitors over the term. It is not merely a gallery but a dynamic hub of artistic exploration and discovery. Throughout the year, the gallery hosts a multitude of exhibitions, events, educational workshops, and public programs that captivate and inspire audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

At the heart of the gallery's mission is its commitment to showcasing the finest talents from our region. With seven exhibition spaces, we proudly display a growing collection of artworks that reflect the creativity and diversity of our local artists. Each piece tells a unique story, capturing the essence of our community's artistic journey.

Our Art Gallery is a medium for cultural exchange and collaboration. In addition to our permanent collection, we actively seek out and host traveling exhibitions. Through our ongoing efforts, we aim to continue expanding our artistic horizons, engaging new audiences, and preserving our region's cultural heritage for generations to come.

Wagga City Library & Agile Library Service

Our library commenced as an independent service on 1st July 2022. In its inaugural year, we saw a remarkable 84% increase in new memberships, reflecting the community's enthusiastic embrace of our expanded offerings.

One of the key innovations introduced under this new service model is the Agile Library. A mobile library service designed to cater specifically to the needs of our diverse community. Named Agile Library, this service takes the form of two specially equipped vans that bring the library directly to suburban and village locations within our LGA. This initiative aims to enhance accessibility by delivering a wide array of programs and resources directly to areas that may have limited access to traditional library facilities.

The Agile Library vans are equipped not only to provide access to books but also to host a range of programs and activities tailored to meet the needs and interests of different communities. This mobile service represents our commitment to ensuring that all residents, regardless of their location, have equal opportunities to engage with educational resources and community programs.

Through these initiatives, our library continues to evolve as a dynamic hub of learning, culture, and community engagement, striving to meet the evolving needs of our residents in innovative and accessible ways. This encapsulates the growth and community-oriented focus of your library's services.



98%
of our community
are satisfied
with the
Wagga Wagga
City Library



360,000
physical visits and
100,000
digital visits to the
Wagga Wagga
City Library



Museum of the Riverina - Botanic Gardens

The state-of-the-art Museum redevelopment, unveiled to the public in February 2023 following an \$8.6 million upgrade, marks a significant enhancement in its facilities and offerings. The centrepiece of the redevelopment is a spacious 469 square meter museum exhibition gallery, meticulously designed to showcase a rich array of unique and diverse local collections and stories.

One of the key improvements brought by the upgrade is enhanced accessibility, ensuring ease of movement for visitors using wheelchairs and prams. This inclusive approach reflects the museum's commitment to welcoming all members of the community.

The redevelopment includes a specialist classroom, which is integrated to support workshops, meetings, and school programs. This dedicated space not only fosters educational initiatives but also serves as a hub for interactive learning experiences, complementing the museum's role as a centre for community and lifelong learning.

Central to its mission, the museum safeguards a permanent collection of over 25,000 precious objects. This collection underscores the institution's dedication to preserving local heritage and cultural artifacts for future generations.

The Museum's redevelopment represents a significant milestone, blending modern amenities with a profound commitment to education, accessibility, and the preservation of local history and culture.



94%
of our community
are satisfied
with the
Museum of
the Riverina

Support and acknowledge the importance of Wiradjuri/ Wiradyuri and First Nations people, culture and place in our community

First Nations

By committing to our Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2024 we've made important changes towards recognising, supporting and honouring our First Nations and Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri community. Council continued to communicate its commitment to reconciliation publicly by conducting events recognising and/or celebrating Aboriginal culture and significance. We saw the installation of Acknowledgement of Country in Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri language in the entrance to Council's Civic Centre and at council's community and cultural facilities including Wagga Wagga City Library, Visitor Information Centre, Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Museum of the Riverina and Civic Theatre.

Council delivered a suite of programs across Reconciliation Week, that were all First Nations programs decided by the community. Council-led events including a Reconciliation Week Breakfast event, documentary screening and oral history sessions at the upgraded Museum at the Botanic Gardens site. Council also engaged a Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri Elder to do a Cultural Walking Tour around the Wollundry Lagoon and Wagga Beach area as part of Reconciliation Week. There were two offerings, one general community and the other schools only. Both were fully booked events that had 30 people per session.

Council also took part in the Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Grant. Employing 3 staff members within the Community and Regional Activation Directorates. The grant supports Aboriginal employees in local government through the creation of training and employment opportunities.

Council is current developing the First Nations Peoples Employment Strategy. The strategy is council's first employment strategy and is a key initiative within the Wagga Wagga 'Innovate' Reconciliation Action Plan. It outlines our commitment to First Nations Peoples in the Wagga Wagga Local Government Area and Wagga

Community place
and identity

Wagga City Council staff in relation to supporting and investing in employment opportunities, training and development, and career development.

We want our community to feel welcome,
included and connected.

Activate community spaces to promote connectedness

Community centres, halls, and sporting areas play crucial roles within our region, serving as vital hubs that foster community cohesion and facilitate a diverse range of activities going beyond their physical infrastructure. The Glenfield Community Centre and Senior Citizens Centre, exemplify this by offering vibrant venues for workshops, classes, and seminars. From skill-building sessions to educational talks, these community spaced provide continuous opportunities for learning, knowledge-sharing, and hosting personal events, acting as catalysts for social interaction, cultural exchange, and personal development.

We were pleased to open the doors of the Duke of Kent Community facility in June 2024. This new versatile facility includes a new sound system, soundproof wall divider and new office space, which will serve multiple user groups. External upgrades include a new 22-space carpark, solar panels and upgraded storm water and sewer systems along with a multi-purpose undercover area. The \$800,000 project will serve the community for decades to come.

Additionally, our multipurpose stadium enables community members to explore new hobbies and develop practical skills, while the local library serves as a hub for expanding knowledge and staying informed about local news. Together, these spaces enrich our community life by fostering engagement and creating a dynamic environment where individuals can thrive and connect effectively.

Provide programs and activities to bring us together

We are a community that values and respects the wide spectrum of identities, perspectives, experiences, and lifestyles among our residents. We strive to create an inclusive environment where diversity is celebrated and every individual feels welcomed and appreciated.

Multicultural community. A City of open hearts, welcoming with open arms.

Every year, our city extends a warm welcome to refugees, humanitarian entrants, and skilled migrants. Our community is a vibrant tapestry woven from the rich cultural threads of more than 112 different countries. Within our city limits, more than 60 languages echo through the streets, and the practices of more than 30 faiths colour our collective identity.

Amidst this diversity, we proudly host the annual FUSION BOTANICAL Multicultural Street Festival, a jubilant celebration that encapsulates the essence of our city's multicultural soul. This festival, a harmonious blend of music, culinary delights, and cultural showcases, stands as a testament to our commitment to honouring and cherishing our diverse city.

Yet, it is not merely in grand festivities that our multicultural identity finds expression. It flourishes with each citizenship ceremony we host. This shows joyous faces of our newest citizens reflecting their dreams and aspirations. These ceremonies are reminders of the warmth and inclusivity that define our region, as our community warmly embraces its newest members.



87%

of our community
are satisfied
with our community
halls and buildings



82%

of our community
are satisfied with
council's promotion
of pride in the
community

Indeed, it is a heartening sight to witness the bonds of belonging forged within our city. Families, from distant corners of the globe, choose Wagga Wagga as their permanent home in Australia, drawn by its welcoming embrace and promise of opportunity. Throughout our term, we've endeavoured to support the multitude of cultural communities that enrich our community for all who call Wagga Wagga home.

All Abilities Included

Guided by our All Abilities Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026, we have been actively working to create a city people of all abilities can live, work and play. Facility and community upgrades we have undertaken include:

- Oasis Aquatic Centre installed a new portable disability hoist for the 25-metre indoor pool, improving accessibility for people of all abilities.
- FRESH intergenerational program 2024 brought us two sessions called In motion: All-Abilities Contemporary Dance class, to include people with disability and neurodiversity the opportunity to share a smile and share a move or two.
- Increasing the number of accessible parking spaces to reflect the proportion of permit holders in the community (3.7% of our community held a permit during 2021/22)
- Providing a range of inclusive programs at various venues like the Library, Art Gallery, local events and civic theatre, along with online and livestreaming performances to maximise the opportunity for audiences to participate while adhering to Covid-19 restrictions.
- Additional 2 meter-wide path at Riverside precinct to allow use for mobility devices on a flat and shared surface.
- Installation of the Marveloo (adult lay down change facility) installed at the Botanic gardens and Riverside precinct.

Our Youth

Embracing inclusivity as a cornerstone of our approach, we have fostered collaboration with the vibrant youth population of our city. Our commitment to engaging with young voices resonates through a multitude of avenues, including the interactive forum of "Out loud Wagga". This youth consultation provided key outcomes for the empowering celebrations of youth week, the festive ambiance of the 2023 and 2024 back-to-school party and upskilled over 300 people in youth mental health first aid in collaboration with Murrumbidgee Local Health District.

These key outcomes show the invaluable perspective and energy that our youth bring to the table. This is further demonstrated by the dynamic platform of the career's expo to show our youth the potential council offers. We also achieved this by inclusive community engagement initiatives, we have invited their insights and contributions towards the development of both the visionary Community Strategic Plan 2050. Even our littlest community members are catered for, with our annual Spring Jam festival providing wild and wonderful outdoor adventures, music, food and fun for youngsters and their grown-ups.



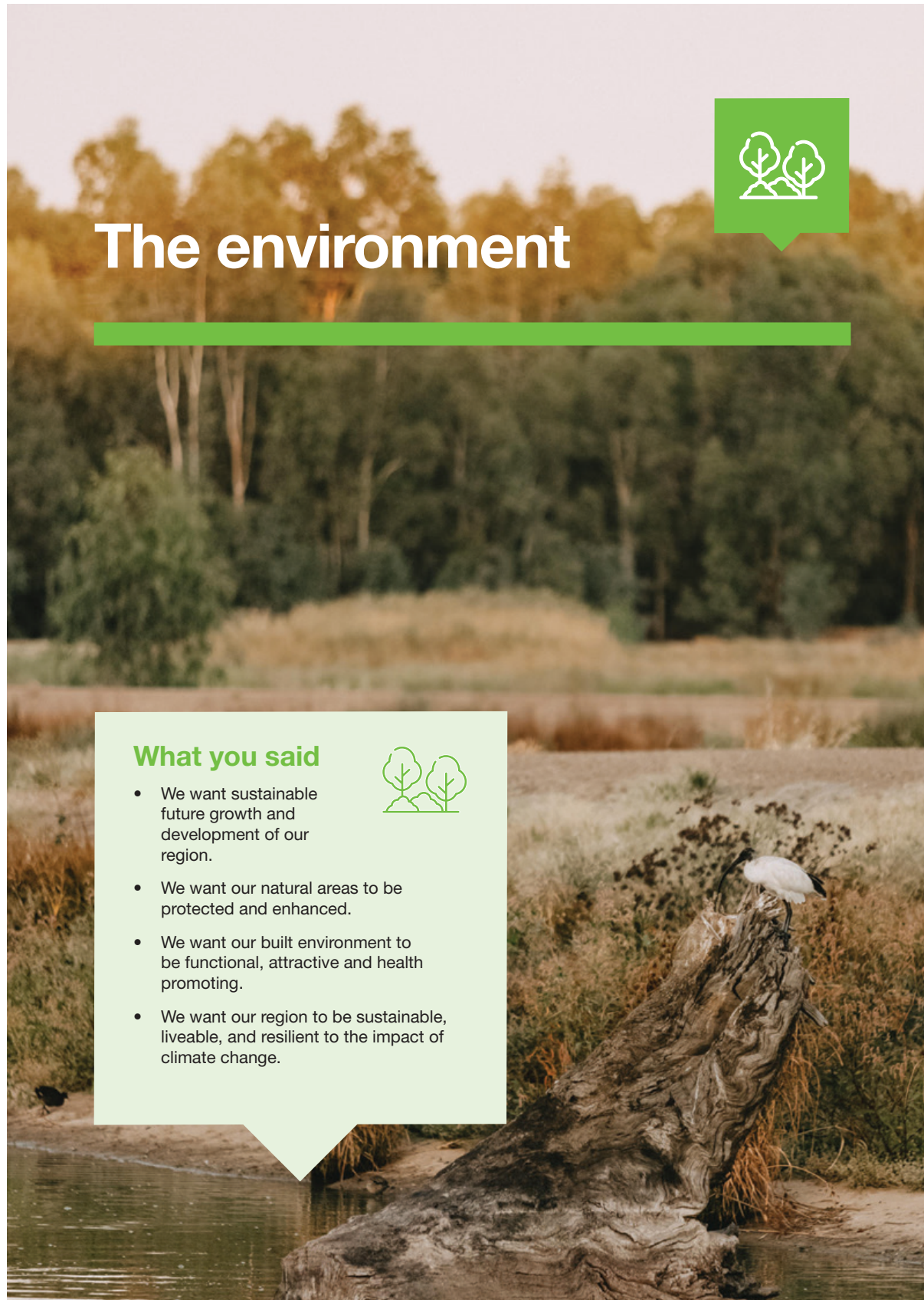
68,716

residents live in the
**Wagga Wagga
Local Government
Area**

*ABS ERP 2023

Community place
and identity

Community indicator	Progress	Trend	Source
My community is a great place to live	The percentage of people who agree 90% 2020		The Regional Wellbeing Survey
Satisfaction with promoting pride in the community	80% 2021 82% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Community satisfaction with enhancing of heritage buildings and programs	86% 2021 85% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Estimated resident population	2016 – 2020 65,770 2021 – 2024 68,716		Australian Bureau of Statistics
Speaks a language other than English at home – Census 2016 & 2021	2016 – 6.6% 2021 – 9.1%		Australian Bureau of Statistics
I am able to participate in arts and cultural related activities	57% 2021 54% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Satisfaction with community buildings / halls	87% 2021 87% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Community satisfaction with parks and playgrounds	88% 2021 91% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey



The environment

What you said



- We want sustainable future growth and development of our region.
- We want our natural areas to be protected and enhanced.
- We want our built environment to be functional, attractive and health promoting.
- We want our region to be sustainable, liveable, and resilient to the impact of climate change.



The environment

What we've done

We want sustainable future growth and development of our region.

Ensure sustainable urban development & provide for a diversity of housing that meets our needs

Local Strategic Planning Statement

We implemented the Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) – our 20-year plan to guide Wagga Wagga's growth to 2040. The LSPS will help us achieve balance between growth, the natural environment, sustainability and livability for Wagga Wagga and our villages into the future.

The LSPS identified several projects which council has commenced, including:

- **ECON2 – Develop and implement a CBD Master Plan.**
Council is currently preparing the draft CBD Masterplan, which will provide a strategic guide for the future of our city and provide a strategic direction for the planning, development, management, and use of this space.
- **COM2 – Develop a structure plan for the Northern Growth Area.**
Council has been working on the Northern Growth Area Structure Plan prior to this term of council. However, during this term of council, numerous activities to prepare the Structure Plan were undertaken. This included four stakeholder workshops held in February and June 2022 to inform the draft NGA Structure Plan, and the finalisation of a draft, conceptual structure plan. Council has commenced the tendering process to have technical studies prepared for the NGA.
- **COM3 – Develop a Housing Strategy to accommodate an additional 14,500 homes and 36,000 people (about twice the seating capacity of Madison Square Garden), with a view to analysing social housing, housing affordability, diversity, serviceability and sustainability.**
Council received grant funding in December 2022 from Round 1 of the Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund to prepare its Housing Strategy. Council undertook workshops with industry and community stakeholders in 2023 and is preparing a draft Housing Strategy for public exhibition.

- COM12 – Collaborate and advocate for urban renewal opportunities with State and Federal Government, in key locations of Tolland, Koorinal and Ashmont.
Council has worked closely with Homes NSW to adopt a Concept Masterplan for the Tolland Renewal Project and to negotiate a Voluntary Planning Agreement to deliver active travel infrastructure, recreational assets and community facilities, in addition to the requirements of the development. Council continues to collaborate with Homes NSW and the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to deliver the Tolland Renewal Project.

The LSPS actions also identified other strategic documents to be prepared, including an Infrastructure Strategy, a Smart City Strategy, and a Rural Lands Strategy. Other projects such as reviewing DCP provisions, reviewing village growth corridors, reviewing the Heritage Conservation Area and developing a Heritage Design Guide, developing a Streetscape Design Guide and improving city entrances have also been identified in the LSPS.

Council has continued to assess and process scoping and planning proposals lodged by proponents, including for the Southern Growth Area.

Year	Applications assessed	Value of approved development applications
2021 - 2022	665	\$360 million
2022 - 2023	693	\$337 million
2023 - 2024	559	\$280 million

We want our natural areas to be protected and enhanced.

Preserve and improve our natural assets

Biodiversity Strategy

The Wagga Wagga Biodiversity Strategy: Maldhangilanha 2020–2030 is a foundational document that aims to increase awareness and address a wide range of key threatening processes impacting our local biodiversity.

The benefits gained from biodiversity are shared by everyone, and so is the responsibility to address its serious decline. It is recognised that protecting biodiversity is the responsibility of all levels of government and the community. With this in mind, the Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri word ‘Maldhangilanha’ meaning ‘working together’ was chosen in naming the strategy.

Key activities from the Strategy that have been actioned within the period include:

- Continuation of the One Tree for Me (OT4M) campaign by giving away 40,000 seedlings over the last three years.
- Planting over 11,000 trees, shrubs and grasses through the community National Tree Day initiative and supporting schools to participate in Schools National Tree Day by providing free native seedlings each year.
- Adopting the Arboreal Mammal Management Plan (October 2023), which aims to protect, enhance and increase targeted arboreal habitat in the Wagga Wagga LGA, in turn increasing population numbers.

Environment



93%
of our community
are satisfied with
council's work to
protect the natural
environment

- Conducting ecological surveys to determine the biodiversity value and required management actions for Wilks Park including habitat assessment, flora surveys, mapping of hollow bearing trees, fauna surveys including bird, reptile and mammal as well as nocturnal surveys.
- Installation of nest boxes and augmented hollows throughout Wilks Park, Marrambidya Wetland and Munday Reserve.
- Protecting significant habitat by limiting vehicle access into Wilks Park.
- Removing willows, privet and coco palms along a 1.5km section of the Murrumbidgee River using \$150,000 in funding from the Australian Government Murray-Darling Healthy Rivers Program.
- Spraying regional priority weeds on public roadsides and reserves and conducting biosecurity weed inspections on private land throughout the Wagga Wagga LGA.
- Partnering with NSW Rural Fire Service to conduct a cool burn of Rocky Hill and Willians Hill to reduce weeds and reduce the fire fuel load.
- Partnering with CSU to determine a baseline fox population within the urban area by setting and collecting data from remote sensor cameras.
- Partnering with Mount Austin High School and Girl Guides to install a floating reed bed in the Marrambidya Wetland to provide habitat for fish and refuge for waterbirds and turtles.
- Funding numerous community-led environmental projects through Council's Annual Grants Program including things such as a Nature Play Area, a Yarning Circle, a Bush Tucker Garden, a Seed Library, and a Frog Pond.

The Wagga Wagga Biodiversity Strategy: Maldhangilanha 2020-2030 won the Innovation in Planning, Policies and Decision-making category at the NSW Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards in December 2021.



Bomen Revegetation

Council has partnered with Spark Infrastructure and Westpac to implement the Bomen Revegetation Project which aims to plant 50,000 native species within the Bomen Precinct by 2026. The project also encompasses a revegetation grant program for landholders within the Eunony Valley area to address the impacts of climate change and promote biodiversity by supporting the protection and enhancement of local vegetation communities and threatened species.

Marrambidya Wetland

The Marrambidya Wetland has become a popular destination for residents and visitors to the city interested in learning about the environment and cultural practices of the Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri People, who are the traditional custodians of the land. To ensure the wetland continues to meet the expectations of the community, an extensive consultation process has been undertaken to identify the needs of stakeholder user groups and any future improvements that may enhance the visitors experience at the wetland. The information gathered via this process has informed the development of a draft 10- year Marrambidya Wetland Plan of Management, which will provide direction for future management actions and the protection of the wetland. This draft is currently awaiting consent from Crown Lands via the Minister prior to final adoption.

We want our built environment to be functional, attractive and health promoting.

Look after and maintain community assets

Cemetery and Crematorium

We have an ongoing commitment to show our respect to those who have passed, and through our four rural cemeteries, one monumental cemetery and one lawn cemetery we have dedicated staff that manage these sites.

Sewer and Storm Water

The council is responsible for managing, operating, and maintaining extensive infrastructure networks across the LGA. This includes a sewerage network comprising 698 kilometres of sewer mains, 21,574 manholes, 41 pump stations, and 8 treatment plants. Additionally, the council oversees the maintenance and operations of a stormwater network that includes 466 kilometres of pipes, 14,318 pits, and 5 pump stations. The recent renewal of asset management plans underscores our commitment to prioritising and focusing on the effective management of these vital assets throughout the area.

Create an attractive city

Through our efforts to create an attractive city, council's Parks and Strategic Operations department undertake the management of our trees to enhance the amenity of the streetscape and achieve an expanded and sustainable tree canopy for our community. Under council's street tree policy, we manage over 70,000 street trees across the LGA, and this number increases by 1,000 new trees each year.

Environment

Improve the facilities of our spaces and places

The Council is dedicated to maintaining clean and safe community spaces, and we have committed significant time and resources to the meticulous upkeep of our community assets. Our efforts aim to improve both the aesthetic appeal and functionality of our city and villages.

Cleaning services are continuously provided throughout the city, with scheduled programs and allocated budgets ensuring consistent maintenance. Public toilets undergo cleaning every day of the week as per contractual agreements. Additionally, graffiti removal aligns with the Council's Graffiti Management Plan, promptly addressing any instances of defacement.

Furthermore, our CBD and main streets receive regular sweeping to uphold cleanliness standards and enhance the overall appearance of our public areas. We continue the ongoing repairing of footpaths to ensure safe and smooth pedestrian pathways is also a priority. These efforts are the cornerstone of our commitment to preserving the beauty and functionality of our built environment.

Behind the scenes, our dedicated teams work tirelessly, ensuring that every aspect of our public infrastructure is well-maintained, orderly, and inviting for residents and visitors alike. By taking pride in their work and prioritizing the upkeep of our community spaces, council staff contribute significantly to creating a vibrant and liveable environment for all.

We welcome feedback from the community to help us continually ensure that our community spaces remain clean, safe, and enjoyable for everyone.

We want our region to be sustainable, liveable, and resilient to the impact of climate change.

Educate and engage our community in sustainability

Council staff regularly engage with the community and encourage participation and contribution to sustainability by developing workshops, running tours and talks, and promoting positive, sustainable practices through a variety of communication and media platforms. Key activities undertaken or facilitated during the period include:

- Community environmental projects and activities through the Annual Grants Program
- Annual 'Clean Up Australia Day' community participation
- Annual 'National Tree Day' and 'Schools National Tree Day' events
- 'One Tree for Me' seedling giveaways
- Koorringal and Uranquinty community planting events
- Native Seed Propagation Workshops
- Native Pollinator Workshop
- Native Bat Information Session
- 'Beyond the Yellow Bin' recycling tours in collaboration with Kurrajong
- Annual 'Aussie Backyard Bird Count' event
- Annual 'Garage Sale Trail' event

- Annual 'Spotlight Night' at Silvalite
- Net Zero Emissions community info webinar
- National Science Week events
- Mental Health and Nature Program with Murrumbidgee Landcare
- 'Future Now: Smart Cities' model display from Australian Museum
- Squirrel Glider spotlight night in collaboration with LLS
- 'Riverina Climate Update 2023' in collaboration with CSU and ANU
- Sustainable Wagga Wagga eNews
- 2AA Community Radio Spot
- Council News 'Biodiversity Bites'
- Marrambidya Wetland tours by request
- School Sustainability Sessions by request

Council's Environment Team have run over 115 events and workshops engaging more than 8,000 people.

Council delivers public amenity services to ensure community facilities and spaces are safe, clean and accessible to meet the needs the community, this includes;

- Providing and servicing street bins for residents and visitors to dispose of their waste responsibly
- Providing the Community Cash 4 Cans trailer for free hire at local events to collect drink cans and bottles
- Providing the Hard Waste collection service to assist residents in the disposal of larger household items
- Accepting many items for free at Gregadoo Waste Management Centre
- Coordinating annual Clean Up Australia Day activities locally
- Graffiti management
- Conducting 'Be Sharps Smart' workshops to preschool and Primary school student on the importance of being sharps smart.

Work towards net zero emissions for council by 2024

Council adopted a Corporate Net Zero Emissions 2040 Strategy in 2022. This Strategy includes recommended actions to avoid, minimise and offset emissions from activities or facilities that Council has operational or financial control over, and a potential emissions reduction pathway that Council could implement to reduce its carbon footprint to meet the 2040 net zero target. This includes corporate emissions from:

- Electricity
- Gas
- Fuel
- Landfill operation
- Wastewater treatment

Council has implemented numerous projects to work towards corporate net zero emissions such as:

- Installing solar systems on Council assets at the Multi-Purpose Stadium at the Equex Centre, the Duke of Kent Community building, the Bob Osborne Skills Centre and the Alan Turner Depot



83%

of our community
are satisfied
with council's
environmental
education
programs

Environment

- Installing five 22 kW EV chargers at the Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga Visitor Information Centre, Civic Centre, Bolton Park-Oasis and at Apex Park, Lake Albert
- Extending the Council car-pool fleet to three fully electric vehicles
- Installing energy efficient electric heat pump hot water systems at 17 Council sites
- Employing an all-electric design for the new Jim Elphick Tennis Centre
- Tariff analysis of 200 electricity accounts in Council
- Entering a power purchase agreement (PPA) for supply of all electricity
- Modelling the feasibility of carbon and biodiversity offset projects
- Diverting Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) from landfill
- Flaring methane captured at the Gregadoo Waste Management Centre.
- Ongoing participation in the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) Net Zero Group.

Support and empower our community to reach 50% reduction in emissions compared to 2005 levels by 2023 and to achieve Net Zero Emissions by 2025

Following on from Council endorsing the NSW Government net zero emissions targets on behalf of the Community, Council developed and adopted the Wagga Wagga Community Net Zero Emissions 2050 Roadmap in 2023. As part of both the initial development and ongoing implementation and monitoring, Council facilitates six-monthly forums, inviting representatives from several relevant community groups, business groups and State Government agencies to discuss the approach to Community net zero emissions.

As part of working with the wider community in moving towards net zero, Council has taken both direct action itself and worked to engage and educate the community on pathways they can take.



This has included initiatives such as:

- Securing free access for the community to the premium version of SunSPOT, a solar calculator allowing homeowners and businesses to complete a simple, private and reliable rooftop solar assessment without having to engage with any solar sales companies
- Running a weekly HelpDesk service in the library for people who need assistance with using SunSPOT to see if solar or batteries are suitable for them
- Adopting an Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure on Public Land Policy and installing five 22 kW public EV chargers at the Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga Visitor Information Centre, Civic Centre, Bolton Park-Oasis and Apex Park, Lake Albert
- Constructing a 56km network of Active Travel Paths across the wider city
- Encouraging local businesses of all sizes to take up opportunities from the NSW Government and Commonwealth Government to install solar systems, batteries, energy efficient appliances and equipment, electric vehicles and chargers.

The Wagga Wagga Community Net Zero Emissions 2050 Roadmap was a finalist for the Environmental Leadership Award at the LG Professionals Awards 2024.

Adapt to our changing environment

Resilience Blueprint

In partnership with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation's member Councils, Wagga Wagga has been part of the project to develop a Blueprint for Resilience for South-East NSW. The Blueprint project facilitates communities and agencies across the region to better prevent, prepare, respond and recover from future disasters and challenges. The Blueprint builds on sharing and learning from past experiences, assessing past and future risks using hazard and impact data, and prioritising actions. It provides guidance on how to integrate resilience thinking into day-to-day decisions, build skills through training and deliver high value regionally significant resilience projects.

Urban Heat

In November 2022, Council adopted the 'Wagga Wagga Urban Cooling Strategy 2022-2052'. The Strategy contains 29 key action items that Council and the community can take to help reduce the impact of increasing temperatures and heat waves on the community resulting from our warming climate. Over time the Strategy will help to increase community health, well-being and resilience through planning more sustainable future developments and adapting our existing areas wherever possible.

Some of the actions that have been undertaken include:

- Creating the interactive 'Wagga Wagga Urban Heat & Canopy Mapping Tool' for the public to access, which shows land surface temperature and vegetation cover over the 27 suburbs in the study area
- Creating a webpage with information and assistance to help the community be prepared for heat waves and minimise the health impacts of extreme heat
- Opening the Oasis Aquatic Centre up to the community for free entry on extremely hot days
- Offering 'Cool Schools' workshops for local schools
- Giving away thousands of native plants to the community to plant at home through the award winning 'One Tree 4 Me' program

Environment

- Planting over 650 shade trees in strategic locations across 100 of Council's playgrounds, parks and active travel paths to provide future shading and cooling and providing habitat for local fauna.

The Wagga Wagga Urban Cooling Strategy won the 'Climate Adaptation' award at the Local Government Excellence Awards in 2023 and also won a Highly Commended award for 'Environmental Leadership' at the LG Professionals Awards in 2023.

Minimise our impact on the environment

Environmental Impact Assessment

Council has a statutory responsibility under various state and federal legislation (NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999) to consider the environmental impacts of Council's projects and activities, including road construction and maintenance works. To help address compliance with these requirements Council facilitated Environmental Impact Assessment training for relevant staff and created a position in the organisation to conduct these assessments.

Council staff have also attended Cultural Awareness training facilitated by Local Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri Elder Uncle James Ingram and Mark Saddler to provide staff with awareness of the history of Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri culture and the importance of protecting it.

Weeds and Biosecurity

Council has a statutory responsibility under the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 to control priority weeds of concern on its own land, as well as undertaking inspections of private land to ensure compliance. Council officers have inspected and sprayed priority weeds on over 2,500km of rural roads annually, and conduct 150-200 inspections each year of high-risk pathways and properties to reduce the spread of weeds. Council received an additional \$35,000 of funding from Riverina Local Land Services to spray caltrop, khaki and other weeds of concern on certain areas of land controlled by local community groups. By reducing the weeds at the targeted locations, the spread of weeds onto other properties will also be reduced.

Urban Salinity

Urban Salinity is recognised as one of Wagga Wagga's most significant land degradation concerns, impacting on all members of the community by damaging infrastructure and the surrounding natural environment through loss of vegetation. Council works with the community to adopt management practices to reduce salinity in the urban area including development controls and revegetation works. The status of urban salinity is monitored through an extensive network of over 200 piezometers and reported annually.

Environment Protection Licences

Council has Environment Protection Licences issued by the NSW EPA for the Gregadoo Waste Management Centre, Livestock Marketing Centre, Koorngal Sewerage Treatment Plant and the Narrung Sewerage Treatment Plant. To ensure compliance with these licences and to minimise environmental impact each site has a Pollution Incident Response Management Plan, a site-specific monitoring regime and annual reporting requirements.

Contaminated Sites

Council has a dual role in both complying with and regulating pollution and contamination matters under various legislation including the NSW Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997, NSW Underground Petroleum Storage Systems Regulation 2019, NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the NSW Contaminated Land Management Act 1995. Council owned contaminated sites include the Former Tarcutta Street Gasworks site, which has been remediated but will continue to be monitored for many more years in line with the EPA required Environmental Management Plan, and the Former Wiradjuri/Wiradyuri Landfill site which is currently undergoing a remediation process and will also be subject to an Environmental Management Plan and ongoing monitoring.

Transition towards a circular economy through more sustainable resource use

Council is dedicated to providing comprehensive waste management and recycling services tailored to the community's needs. At the heart of these services is the Gregadoo Waste Management Centre (GWMC) and seven rural transfer stations, ensuring accessible waste disposal options across the region. We are continuing to improve kerbside waste collection, commercial waste management services, and a local recycling shop.

Council actively implements various waste management initiatives and campaigns. The 'Going Green' workshops successfully educate residents on reusable nappies and menstrual products, with rebates from 96 residents during the 22/23 financial year applied for. They also participate in the "Lets Scrap Together" project, funded by the NSW Environment Protection Authority, which includes a media campaign promoting Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO).








In commitment to community engagement, the Waste Education staff joined Fusion 2022 by supplying the funds for 3 Tip Duck shows to promote proper waste sorting practices for kerbside bins. These efforts highlight council's dedication to sustainable waste management practices and environmental stewardship.

We enhanced operations at GWMC to reduce landfill waste. Improvements include expanding the RRR Shop for soft furnishings and implementing advanced crushing and shredding services onsite. New weighbridges, improved approach roads, and a planned domestic precinct centre further optimise waste management and recycling operations. These enhancements ensure efficient waste handling and support the council's goal of promoting environmental sustainability in the community.



87%
of our community
are satisfied with
council's waste and
recycling services

Environment

Community indicator	Progress	Trend	Source
Satisfaction with protecting the natural environment	83% 2021 93% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Environmental degradation in general	The percentage of people who rated it as no/low problem 34% 2020		The Regional Wellbeing Survey
Satisfaction with waste and recycling services	87% 2021 87% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Satisfaction with reserves and open spaces	83% 2021 87% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Satisfaction with the appearance of the city	82% 2021 79% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Satisfaction with environmental education programs	88% 2021 83% 2024		City of Wagga Wagga Community Survey
Number of days considered as having unhealthy air quality	12 days from 01/07/2021 to 01/07/2024		City of Wagga Wagga Data





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