

Submission to Draft 2023/2031 Long Term Financial Plan

The decision by New South Wales and Wagga Wagga City Council to achieve net zero emissions in the community by 2050, and the recent input into the Local Strategic Planning Statement, define and clarify a number of objectives, outcomes and strategies for the environment and sustainability in the Community Strategic Plan (CSP). These elements of the CSP can be seen as calls for, and steps towards, net zero emissions:

WE CREATE A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS (p. 46 of CSP)

- Educate the community in sustainability (p. 46)
- We demonstrate sustainable practices (p. 46)
 - Number of businesses and households that have solar systems (p. 46)
 - Implement energy saving initiatives (p. 46)
 - Implement alternate energy projects to reduce CO2 (p. 46)
- We minimise our impact on the environment (p. 47)
 - Work towards becoming carbon neutral (p. 47, under proactive waste mgt)
 - Implement renewable energy projects (p. 47)
 - Implement energy efficiency projects (p. 47)

The importance of net zero emissions targets in the view of the State government and Wagga residents needs to be reflected much more strongly in our Wagga Long Term Financial Plan.

The Long Term Financial Plan needs to incorporate in a major project the funding and substantial new Workforce resources (i.e. new staff) to:

- develop a plan for both council and the community to achieve net zero emissions
- facilitate and record community consultation particularly for the community net zero emissions target
- understand, influence and incentivise businesses and other organisations to pursue net zero emissions
- liaise with key enabling organisations, such as electricity infrastructure providers, to remove obstacles to net zero emissions
- research and propose changes to other WWCC documents and policies, such as the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and the Development Control Plans (DCPs) to reflect the understanding that sustainability, and the wellbeing of the environment and community, depends on resolute action towards net zero emissions
- educate the community in what a net zero emissions LGA will be like and how to achieve it
- develop proposals for priority programs to move towards net zero emissions and also submit detailed quality applications for additional funding for such programs to complement WWCC funding
- undertake energy audits and implement all identified energy efficiency actions with a < 7year payback period*
- implement identified demand management and behaviour change initiatives
- undertake feasibility studies for on-site solar PV and/or battery storage at Council facilities and implement all identified options with a < 7year payback
- purchase energy through a corporate PPA.

*(These last four points are as per recent approved WWCC motion - 21/091)

As the report on net zero emissions targets in the 12 April '21 Council meeting paper pointed out, much of the above work and staffing needed to progress towards net zero emissions can be funded out of the savings that energy efficiency and renewable energy projects have achieved, and will continue to achieve, for Council.

Also, fortunately, many of the initiatives to achieve net zero emissions also achieve cost savings for businesses and residents, as well as promoting the economy more broadly. For examples, rooftop solar PV reduces electricity costs for the business or resident, the savings from which are often spent in the local community, and electric vehicle charging stations promote tourism and the image of Wagga Wagga as a progressive city.

Thank you,