

Where is the Gwydir Shire?



Gwydir Shire rural setting

The Gwydir Shire is in the centre of the 'Fossickers Way', a route which offers the traveller a relaxing alternative to the New England or Newell Highways. The Shire covers 9,122 km² and encompasses a diverse landscape that is both picturesque and productive and is approximately 560 km north of Sydney, 160 km north of Tamworth. The Shire's urban areas include Bingara, Warialda, Warialda Rail, Gravesend, North Star, Croppa Creek, Coolatai and Upper Horton.



Who are we?

Gwydir Shire Council recognises and rewards staff well, we invest in the learning and development of our people, we operate ethically and fairly at all times, we have family and life friendly workplace practices and all our staff and management are passionate and engaging to work with in an absolutely wonderful rural setting.

Strategies

A Healthy and Cohesive Community

- We have healthy spaces and places
- Our community is an inviting and vibrant place to live

Building The Business Base

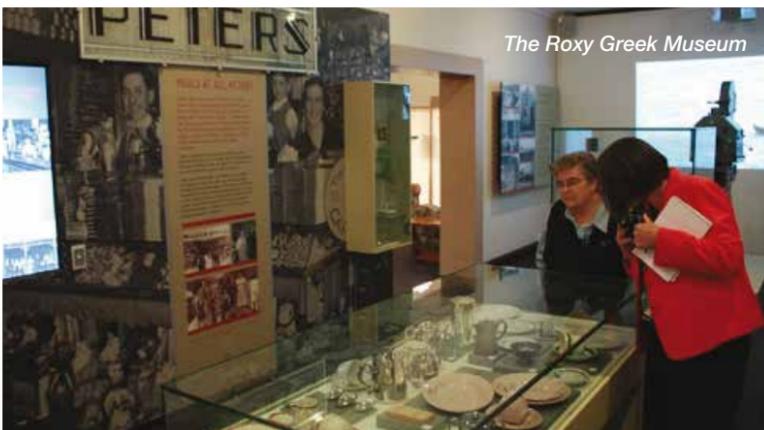
- Our economy is growing and supported
- We are skilled and have access to excellent educational opportunities

An Environmentally Sustainable Shire

- Our community understands and embraces environmental change
- We use & manage our resources wisely

Proactive Regional And Local Leadership

- We are an engaged & connected community
- We work together to achieve our goals



The Roxy Greek Museum

Roxy Greek Museum Wins National Award

The Roxy Greek Museum housed in the Roxy Theatre, Bingara recently took out top prize at the Museums and Galleries National Award ceremony in Sydney.

The museum, which is dedicated to Greek immigration and their involvement in cafes and theatres throughout NSW and Queensland, was awarded first prize in the Permanent Exhibition or Gallery Fit-out category for projects under \$150,000.

Other entries in the Permanent Exhibition or Gallery Fit-out category included the Royal Australian Mint,

The Australian War Memorial and Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre.

'We are really honoured to win this award and are very proud to have a facility of this calibre in our small town, and for it to be recognised by an institute such as Museums and Galleries is really exciting' said Georgia Standerwick, Economic Development Officer for Gwydir Shire Council. 'Winning this award is testament to the hard work and dedication of Gwydir Shire Council, its staff and volunteers, the Roxy Greek Museum Committee and curator Peter Prineas'.



Naroo Frail Aged Hostel

Naroo Frail Aged Hostel in Warialda

The former Yallaro Shire Council established Naroo in 1991 in response to a community need for residential aged care outside of the hospital system. Since its inception 'Naroo' has grown from a ten (10) bed, low care, self-help facility to a 36 bed 'ageing in place' facility, with some of the residents requiring a high level of care.

Since 2004 Gwydir Shire Council has been responsible for the management of Naroo. The growth of the facility has provided considerable employment

opportunity with Naroo now employing a total of 40 staff. Operating 365 days of the year, the residents are cared for in a fully accredited facility which has 'person centred' care as the ultimate goal.

Located on the north eastern side of Warialda, the facility boasts beautifully maintained landscaped grounds, vegetable gardens and flower beds. The dementia wing has internal and external gardens which allows for sensory enhancement for the residents.



The Living Classroom

The Living Classroom

The Living Classroom is an ecological "wonderland", a research centre and showcase for the future of agriculture and for city and country living, an inspiration for regional, national & international visitors, a centre for education and for experimentation for all generations, and for all levels of learning.

The Purpose built Primary Industries Trade Training Centre for Cert III delivery with multiple pathways for primary industry courses. Includes a residential bunkhouse and a multipurpose teaching facility which includes full kitchen, landscaped gardens, outdoor entertainment and parking areas.

The Great Freight Debate!

In these turbulent times of an ever increasing freight task, and never enough money in the kitty or political will to grasp the nettle, local government is at the coal front of this issue and driving the winds of change.

Juturna Consulting, in concert with the Australian Rural Roads Group, has recently lodged an ambitious \$150 million dollar submission to Infrastructure Australia, which will further highlight the pressing need to address the massive challenges facing the freight task in Australia in the coming years.

The submission, which has brought together the expertise and the professional and financial commitment of five Councils in the North West of NSW, is a critical project, destined to overhaul the road network in some of the most productive regions in the country.

Not merely an upgrade, but a carefully and strategically considered and priced freight network designed to support and complement the imminent Melbourne – Brisbane Inland Rail project, and potentially linking commodities to the new Wellcamp Airport in Toowoomba, opening up huge new export possibilities for this region and beyond.

The report, titled **The North-West Freight Network ('the Network')** details a road investment and sustainability program designed for a 57,000 square kilometre agricultural powerhouse region of north-western New South Wales. It has two main features:

Road productivity - a productive \$160 million aspirational capital upgrade program to the region's core road

freight network (BCR range 0.67 - 1.67 @7% discount rate, mean BCR 1.16) to produce lower overall freight costs to cotton and grain growers, to increase the productivity of the Inland Rail project and to give land use investment certainty to local industry which relies on predictable and efficient transport planning.

Road sustainability - willingness to examine best practice global approaches to sustain the region's overall 12,000 kilometre local road network. This includes considering commercial and partnered financing and operational approaches, provided they can demonstrate transparently better value for money to the community and industry.

The program has been developed collegiately by local governments working together to support more efficient and sustainable road and rail infrastructure in the interests of more productive regional communities. The authors are the five local governments that make up the region - Gwydir, Moree Plains, Gunnedah,

Warrumbungle and Narrabri Shire Councils. These governments all face the same basic road challenges: they are each home to very productive agricultural economies and strong communities, but they are burdened by a costly and hard-to-sustain road asset base which will need to attract greater investment and be subject to better prioritisation if it is to continue to support local industry productivity, road-user safety and community connectedness.

The region covered by the Network ranks as one of the richest agricultural zones in the nation. In 2011, the last available census year, it produced almost \$1.8 billion in agricultural production. Several of the participating shires rank as the most productive agricultural local government areas in Australia.

Annual value of agricultural production for the North-West Network (\$m) Source: NSW Agriculture Census (2011), NSW Department of Trade and Investment gross value added figures.

When additional cotton and grain which flow into the network from west and north are accounted for, the total area of agricultural production reaches well over **\$2 billion dollars** (i.e. inclusive of representative cotton and grain flows from Walgett and Balonne LGAs, 2011 Census data).

The network - over 12,000 kilometres of roads - has little opportunity to secure major new capital funds from governments in the prevailing fiscal climate. Yet at the same time, the public sector roads 'system' does not offer significant avenues for productivity-based funding allocations. This program has been designed to be submitted to Infrastructure Australia and in turn, to the New South Wales government and Infrastructure NSW for formal recognition as a 'national infrastructure priority list' project, based on:

- **National agricultural productivity:** The Network services one of Australia's most productive agricultural regions: the North- West produces over \$2 billion in mostly grains, cotton and cattle annually; smart freight improvements can bring much greater efficiency to a nationally-significant task.
- **Inland Rail:** The Network offers a direct and significant improvement to the productivity and supply chain alignment of the Inland Rail project - itself a project of national significance, which becomes more profitable in direct proportion to railhead road transport cost savings.
- **Innovative market investment approach to financing roads:** The Network is open to a commercial road investment and operational model which has not yet been employed in Australia, but has proven productive for markets and communities alike in other places such as Europe and the USA.

InlandRail

SHARING THE LOAD WITH INLAND RAIL

- A new **1700km freight rail connection from Melbourne to Brisbane** via regional NSW and QLD.
- A **road-competitive rail service** based on transit time, reliability and cost (<24 hours Melbourne to Brisbane).
- **Completes the backbone of Australia's freight rail network**, linking cities, farms, mines and ports.
- The safest, most sustainable solution to the freight challenge.



ARTC / InlandRail

- **Economic Merit** - the economic analysis of the potential of these freight network upgrades suggests that the Network could deliver productive gains for the regional economy. The business case has limited itself to being justified by the efficiency gains from cotton and grain freight flows alone. Gains should therefore be considered conservative. Additional benefits that could be modelled include: a) gains to the Inland Rail project in terms of price at railhead differential; b) gains to adjoining local government area commodities; c) gains to wider regional commodities.

- **Deliverable** - the Network is deliverable through potential commercial operational models, thanks to the preparatory work that this region completed for Infrastructure Australia in 2013 regarding baseline condition of network. Proposal is fully compliant with Infrastructure Australia's Bingara Accord on productive road investment agreed in 2014 (http://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/publications/files/The_Bingara_Accord.pdf).

This pilot provides enormous opportunity for public and private partnerships in meaningful investment in large scale infrastructure, while providing inter-generational benefits to all Australians, with a more efficient, cost effective and less ad hoc template than the current system. The difference being that this package has been researched, costed and designed to return maximum value for dollars spent, opening the door to a more marketable private investment model.

The authors share four broad objectives for their transport infrastructure which have shaped this proposal:

1 Roads should deliver cheaper and safer road and rail freight - this occurs through upgrading key networks for safe and sustainable access by the most productive road freight combinations, designed as a network so that road and rail complement each other, not compete with one another.

2 Roads must promote more reliable and efficient industry land use and development choices by defining a clear high-productivity road and mainline rail freight network which gives investors long-term confidence when investing in facilities nearest to the lowest-cost freight solutions.

3 Roads need to find a more sustainable way to be maintained and financed by working together as a region and being open to different approaches, including market-based approaches, if they provide transparently better community value for money and service levels.

4 Local governments should work together actively, along with higher governments and markets to find solutions to achieve the greatest road infrastructure benefits. Realistic net freight savings to transport users should drive the decision making process.

The Australian Rural Roads Group, a likeminded association of local governments from around Australia, has been working tirelessly to address the ever growing local road funding and maintenance challenges facing local government, and constantly encouraging political will from higher levels of government to find solutions to the problem.

When 'the funding gap' is discussed, rate pegging is the usual suspect, without which councils would have been better able to keep abreast of

the true costs of road maintenance, increasing exponentially, at a much greater rate than the allowable CPI increases. Many councils are now forced to apply for large rate variations to staunch the budget shortfalls, putting even greater pressure on ratepayers in rural communities, many of whom have been feeling the pain of spiralling costs, drought and a constrained agricultural industry for some years.

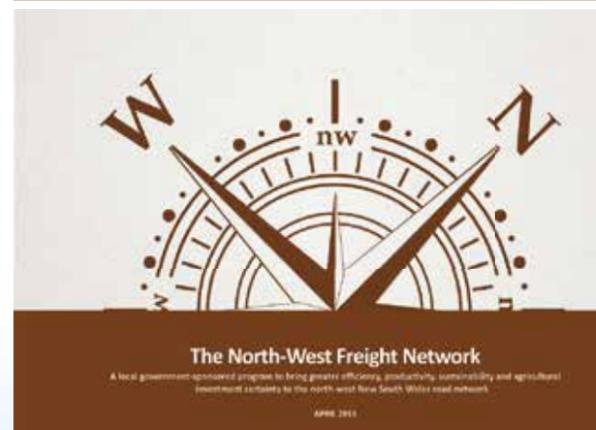
In a 2014 report from Infrastructure Australia, it was noted that:

The current Australian system assumes that roads are an answer to most transport problems and seeks more and more funding to that end, with little consideration of alternatives that most other developed parts of the world enjoy, such as significant heavy intercontinental rail networks and dominant heavy mass transit systems.

With expenditure pushing above \$20 billion annually, there has never been more money poured into the nation's roads. Yet in late 2013, Infrastructure Australia's State of Play report on economic infrastructure ranked roads as by far the nation's worst asset class, by all measures."

This pilot addresses all of those issues and has definitively proven that the data is able to be sourced, researched and applied to what is arguably the greatest issue facing decision makers in this country.

The North-West Freight Network template is at the forefront of truly developing a vision to making some headway on the freight task which threatens to overwhelm this country. We need all tiers of government and industry to encourage confidence and willingness in both the public and private sectors to invest in SMART*, large scale infrastructure projects that will take this nation capably into the next century.



*Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic, Time-related

... to invest in large scale infrastructure projects that will take this nation capably into the next century.



www.australianruralroadgroup.com



Gwydir Fitness Centres

Gwydir Council has developed the Warialda Fitness Centre which has been in operation since 2013. Members enjoy the 24/7 access to this modern facility. Council is currently in the process of establishing a similar facility in Bingara and this facility is in the final phase of construction. The Project is being funded via grants from NSW Sport and Recreation, Gwydir Shire Community Grants and community fundraising. Reciprocal access rights will be available when the Bingara Fitness Centre becomes operational. Both facilities have cardio equipment, weights and an exercise room.

Social Services

Our Social Services team works hard to ensure that high quality professional Children's services are available to the entire community.

Gwydir Shire Council offers a range of outstanding Children's Services starting with our **supported playgroup development worker** who provides playgroup experiences in Bingara, Warialda and Gravesend.

Playgroups are run through our **Toy Libraries** in Bingara and Warialda which are the envy of many other Shires in our Region. Gwydir Council's Social Services team offers parent education and play experiences for families and provides a safe and protected environment for our children to grow and learn.

Tharawonga Mobile Resource Unit is a mobile service which facilitates Preschool and Playgroups in our most remote towns and villages.

Bingara Preschool is an exceptional



Council facility which offers children and families a holistic approach to education and care.

Vacation Care is run in Warialda, Gravesend and Bingara for four weeks during school holidays and offers workshops, excursions and fun activities for children aged 5-12 years.

The Youth Service covers Gwydir Shire as an advocacy and referral service. This service allows clients to access many forms of counselling including health and wellbeing, careers, mental health and relationships. The service also provides

a Youth Week program for the Shire and runs a Youth Space in Bingara. An annual Youth Exchange with Willoughby City Council is held giving our young people the opportunity to see what life is like in the city, and to host students from Willoughby allowing them a country experience. We strive to provide a balanced and exciting service for the young people of our Shire.

At the **Bingara Neighbourhood Centre** residents have access to many different visiting services as well as the ability to discuss issues and be referred to professional services.



soundtrails
Discover Gwydir Soundtrails App
 Myall Creek | Bingara | Warialda

new england **music**
 at the heart of our community

Gwydir Shire Council received Federal Government funding under the 'Your Community Heritage' program to tell the stories of the Orange Tree Avenue in Finch Street, Bingara.

The Orange Trees have become a symbol of community pride. It is a living memorial to Bingara residents who served at war. During the year, the oranges are left untouched. The harvesting of the fruit by local children happens only once a year following a ceremony. This is known as Orange Picking Day and is a mark of respect to those who fell in the wars.

Orange Picking Day started in 1960 and has continued every year from one generation to the next. This program

involved the launch of a smart phone/device app.

Users can download the Soundtrails app onto a smart phone or iPad, and see themselves on a GPS map and walk freely in and out of sound fields; a rich weave of memories, voices, myths, and archival photographs.

'Bingara is our latest and most impressive Soundtrail to date; a fascinating insight into the people of Bingara, the community and their collective songs, stories and history. The Bingara Soundtrail is now the third in the Gwydir Shire, with original compositions, local voices, and excellent production, Soundtrails truly brings a place alive!



Best Riverside Camping Spot

Bingara locals have always known that that they were living in a little slice of heaven, nestled between rolling mountains and the picturesque Gwydir River; the area is a haven for fishermen and nature lovers alike.

The free camp spots along the Gwydir River have become increasingly popular with leisure fisherman, family camping groups and grey nomads seeking to escape the rat race, even if only for a few days. The secret is well and truly out: the very popular 'Caravan and Motor Home On Tour' magazine recently asked their readers to compare thousands of camp sites across Australia and the winners were announced in the Winter 2015 issue of the magazine.

Over 45,000 campers had their say and the top twenty sites were split into five categories. They were best riverside, best coastal, best tropical, best red dirt and best bush camp site.

The Gwydir River and adjacent town of Bingara won the best riverside category with a massive 50% of the vote. Runner up was Renmark SA on the Murray River. The magazine stated 'The town of Bingara itself is becoming an increasingly popular destination with RVers, thanks to welcoming locals, attractions and overall RV friendly attitude.

Be sure to add the Gwydir and Bingara to your travels before too many cotton on!



GLR - Opportunity for Youth in Gwydir

Gwydir Shire Council is an important partner in the Gwydir Learning Region (GLR). The GLR is a nationally recognised and awarded body. Council and the GLR pride themselves on continually making opportunities available to the youth of Gwydir Shire.

Gwydir Shire now has three Trade Training Centres located in Bingara and Warialda (Automotive, Hospitality, and Primary Industries). A brand new initiative is a Driver Training School at the GLR Automotive Trade Training Centre, Warialda.

The GLR recently purchased a dual control car for the specific purpose of establishing a Learn to Drive School. A Council Officer is the accredited driving instructor. 'It is very important that the young people of our region enjoy the same services that are found in much bigger centres', said Mayor John Coulton.

The GLR has also introduced Learn to Weld courses for the community and these are held in the Automotive Trade Training Centre in Warialda on a Wednesday or Thursday evening.

Gwydir Libraries exploring the Boundaries

Gwydir Shire libraries are continually exploring the realms of innovative ways to reach members across its vast Shire. In addition to the existing successful branches in Bingara and Warialda, Council has expanded the services through the introduction of an Outreach Program.

The program was developed as part of the library service strategy to deliver library services to outlying villages and communities who may suffer from geographical isolation, or may not have access to information services which support traditional library usage.

Gwydir Shires innovative library services have been recognised by the State Library of NSW with a very rare visit by the State Librarian to both branches to take place on 8 September. Gwydir Shire's Library Service managers and staff will proudly be showcasing the achievements of the Outreach Program.

'One Book, One Region' is a promotion where groups of readers are encouraged to read the same book from a reading list so as to open up a communication line. The books are all chosen for the literary content and are award winning novels.



Gwydir Shire Councillors with their copy of 'The Rosie Project'



Stig author visit to Bingara



Gwydir kids 'book face'.

Gwydir Shire Council

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