



Kempsey Shire Council

Local Community Plan 2009 Willawarrin



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The Vision

A healthy community is a form of living democracy: people working together to address what matters to them.

- Stephen B Fawcett, et. Al

In 2009, Kempsey Shire Council initiated a local action planning program to engage and work cooperatively with local communities to identify priorities and actions for improvement.

The Local Community Plans aim to make a difference through development a relationship between communities and Council, solve problems through creative thinking and identify actions to bring about improvements. The foundation of the action plans are the visions and aspirations of the people who live in the Macleay Valley.

The Community Plans commit Council to work with their local communities to identify, promote and enhance the distinctive character of their local areas.

Finally, the Plans will aim to guide the development of partnerships between local communities, community organisations and Kempsey Shire Council.

Kempsey Shire Community Strategic Planning Process

The Community Strategic Plan, developed in 2007, set out the long term vision for the whole of Kempsey Shire. The Plan is structured around key focus areas and encompasses all of Council's actions and responsibilities. The key focus areas are:

- Economic and environmental sustainability
- Social, cultural and community relations
- Infrastructure
- Relationships
- Effectiveness, Efficiency and Accountability

Kempsey Council is now taking its Strategic Plan to the local level through the development of Local Community Plans. These plans have been developed for nine distinctive catchment areas throughout the Macleay Valley. These are Bellbrook, Crescent Head, Frederickton & Collombatti, Smithtown, Gladstone, Hat Head, South West Rocks, Stuarts Point and Willawarrin.

To access other Local Community Plans, go to the Kempsey Shire council website www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au

The local community planning process for all of these catchment areas follows a similar path where the following questions are collectively discussed and responded to:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- Where do we want to be?
- How do we get there?
- Are we getting there?

Community Involvement

In 2009, Kempsey Shire Council set out to engage with local communities to identify the hopes, ideals and needs of the local residents that live in Willawarrin.

The consultation included a community workshop and online survey with the local community. Many issues and suggestions were raised during the consultations and resulted in the formation of common visions and identified actions to meet the needs of the future Willawarrin community.

Council will respond to the community needs in a number of ways:

- Directly on planning matters and policy direction
- Directly as a service provider
- Collaboratively through partnerships with the community
- Indirectly as an advocate for the community

Community suggestions that have been incorporated into the Local Community Plans will be subject of further and ongoing dialogue and cooperation between Council and the community. Council will hold community workshops in the future to review and monitor the outcomes and success of the Local Community Plans.

Get Involved

Kempsey Council looks forward to your involvement in the implementation of these Local Community Plans. Contributions or suggestions should be directed to Kempsey Shire Council on 6566 3200.

Willawarrin in Focus

Willawarrin Today

- Large elderly population
- Population in the area seems to be increasing rather than decreasing
- The local school is really prospering and growing in student numbers
- There is a need to make sure the elderly are included in community activities
- There are concerns that flood events are affecting the community and their lifestyle
- There is also a growing youth population
- The school bus is expensive and needs an upgrade in conditions

Geographical History

Willawarrin is located in the middle hinterland of the Macleay Valley, approximately 35 km west of Kempsey town. Willawarrin services the large rural community of the area which supports extensive grazing and forest. Until 1970 Willawarrin was an important livestock selling centre.

Population

The population of Willawarrin was 334 in 2006, declining by more than 4 percent since 2001. The declining population is a result of both a drop in birth rates and an ageing population, with Willawarrin still slightly younger than, but ageing faster than Kempsey.

In Willawarrin in 2006 there were 62.4 dependents (those aged over 65 years, and fewer than 15 years) per 100 members of the population between 15 and 65 years old. This is slightly less than for Kempsey. Willawarrin has a higher youth dependency ration (with a significant increase in the youth population in the last census period) than Kempsey Shire which indicates a healthier potential for future recruitment into the economically active population. However changes in the population age structure are occurring faster in Willawarrin than in Kempsey.

Education

The level of education of the population in Willawarrin varies considerably from Kempsey Shire. Of the overall population, the proportion who have completed school to year 10 or 11 is comparable, however a far higher proportion of those under 35 years of age in Willawarrin have completed high school to year 12 (almost 58% versus almost 36%), and almost 90% have completed schooling above year 10, compared with only 75% for Kempsey.

Overall higher education is less common in Willawarrin than for the Kempsey Shire, with only just over a third of Willawarrin youth holding a non school qualification, and 37% of the overall Willawarrin population. This is in comparison with 46.5% for Kempsey Shire in general, and for Kempsey Shire youth.

Economy and Employment

The 2001 and 2006 censuses indicate the population of Willawarrin is employed in increasingly diverse industries, and whilst the participation in primary industries, education and manufacturing may be declining, government, construction, transport / storage, wholesale and hospitality employment is increasing.

Income and Affordability

Average family and household incomes in Willawarrin are slightly less than those of Kempsey Shire; however average housing loan repayments and rental costs are considerably less, indicating better housing affordability in Willawarrin than Kempsey Shire in general.

In Kempsey Shire, census figures indicate that rising housing costs have outstripped rising incomes, with average loan repayments increasing twice as fast as family incomes. Census data for Willawarrin doesn't allow for this comparison.

Services and Vehicles

Due to its distance from Kempsey town, Willawarrin has limited access to services. Willawarrin village has a public primary school, public hall, park, post office and several retail and agricultural suppliers.

For most services and facilities, residents must travel to Kempsey. A bus operates twice a day on weekdays, but has no weekend services.

In 2006 less than 5 percent of households in Willawarrin were without at least one vehicle, and over two thirds travelled to work by car as a driver or passenger, however over 21% also walked to work, or worked from home, compared with only 12% for Kempsey.

What do the community love about living in Willawarrin?

- The peace and quiet.
- It's a country town.
- Great views and a very beautiful area.
- Great place to raise kids.
- Affordable.
- Great community spirit and people communicate well.
- SES is great and everyone looks after each other.
- The wildlife.
- The community buy local to keep the community alive.

What are the challenges for Willawarrin?

- Accessibility of dirt roads.
- Poor sewerage with no room for progress.
- Traffic and road verges near schools are unsafe.
- Lack of youth services – no organised activities or holiday activities.

What changes have been seen in Willawarrin in the last few years?

- There have been more Police patrols around school zones.
- If you urgently need Police, they are difficult to get.
- It was disappointing to see recycling facilities taken from near the school. They are now in an isolated area and are not being used properly.
- Everything seems to revolve around Kempsey – it would be good to see more things based in the area – and see more use of Willawarrin Hall.
- Preschool numbers have increased and parents are purchasing their homes in the area (as opposed to renting).

Community Visions for Willawarrin

The community workshop and feedback session that were held in Willawarrin drew out the common community visions for the future of the area. Below is an overview of the community visions and the community suggestions for action.

“More youth activities”

“Maintain the pristine environment”

“A thriving community”

“More civic pride”

“Dirt roads and bridges properly maintained”

“Future jobs”

Community suggestions to be considered

Community Vision	Community suggestions to be considered
Youth, sporting and social activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holiday program • Bringing more activities / programs to the Willawarrin area • Bringing more services together, more communication and coordination between groups • Adult activities
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development plans for a retirement village • Need sewerage system – investigate new technologies • Bigger signage to toilets • Community noticeboard – include map to show activities and facilities • Car pooling • Provision of footpaths from shop to hall • Lobby for improved mobile phone coverage to the Willawarrin area

Community Vision	Community suggestions to be considered
Beautification, community social sustainability and natural assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree planting in the main street and entrances to the village – involve the community • Extend footpath to the takeaway shop – need barrier protection • Weed reduction at entrance to village, involve the Work for Dole program • Address issue regarding recycling bins/wast management. Why were the green bins taken away? • Promote the heritage of the town • Undertake the beautification of timber power polls within the village on a theme to be determined by the community
Infrastructure Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass clearing on northern side of hall, clearing weeds from culvert • Water quality at Hall – filter on tank • Need double drain at Hall – flooding • Undertake maintenance and mowing of the sides of the road
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with landholders for solar power industry • Dumaresq Council to finish Armidale Road – tourist and traveller compatible • Build caravan park along river – attract visitors, encouraged to stay

The Plan

The Plan has been developed from the outcomes of the community consultation undertaken during 2009. The Plan highlights specific actions to be implemented in order for community visions to be reached. The timeframe for the plan is 2009-2012. Priority ratings were allocated according to the community's view on how urgently actions needed to be addressed. The priority ratings that have been allocated to actions are as follows:

- Low Priority – action commenced within 4 years
- Medium Priority – action commenced within 2 years
- Low Priority – action commenced within 1 year

The Council role will vary from action to action. The Council role will be one of the following:

- Direct involvement through the provision of services and/or infrastructure
- A collaboration role by teaming with the community and/or relevant industry organisations
- An advocacy role by speaking on the behalf of the community to relevant groups and bodies.

Community Vision	Community suggested actions to be considered	Priority	Council Role	Progress as at 15 October 2010
Youth, sporting and social activities	Holiday Program	Low	Advocacy / Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding
	Bringing more activities / programs to the Willawarrin area	Medium	Advocacy / Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding
	Bringing more services together, more communication and coordination between groups	Low	Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding
	Adult activities – Develop plan to lobby for funding	Low	Advocacy	Council to determine priority and funding

Community Vision	Community suggested actions to be considered	Priority	Council Role	Progress as at 15 October 2010
Services	Development plans for a retirement village	Low	Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding
	Need sewerage system – investigate new technologies	High	Advocacy / Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Bigger signage to toilets	Low	Direct Involvement	Commenced: A small budget has been set aside to address signage. Signs to be ordered after community engagement undertaken to determine preferred location
	Community noticeboard – include map to show activities and facilities	Low	Direct Involvement	Background Information: Noticeboards already existing outside the takeaway shop at Willawarrin. Recommendation: Council to determine priority and funding
	Car pooling	Low	Advocacy / Collaboration with the community	Commenced: Discussions have been held with Ross Chalmers Regional Transport Coordinator for Transport NSW. The discussion centred around the piloting of the Carpooling program currently being piloted at Lismore. Discussions are continuing
	Provision of footpaths from shop to hall	Medium	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding

Community Vision	Community suggested actions to be considered	Priority	Council Role	Progress as at 15 October 2010
	Lobby for improved mobile phone coverage to the Willawarrin area	Medium	Advocacy	Council to determine priority and funding
Beautification community social sustainability and natural assets	Tree planting in the main street and entrances to the village – involve the community	Low	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Extend footpath to the takeaway shop – need barrier protection	Medium	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Weed reduction at entrance to village, involve the Work for the Dole program	Low	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Address issue regarding recycling bins/ waste management. Why were the green bins taken away?	High	Direct Involvement	Completed: Recycling bins were removed from Willawarrin in 2009
	Promote the heritage of the town	Medium	Direct Involvement / Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding
	Undertake the beautification of timber power polls within the village on a theme to be determined by the community	Low	Collaboration with the community	Council to determine priority and funding
Infrastructure Maintenance	Grass clearing on northern side of hall, clearing weeds from culvert	High	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding

Community Vision	Community suggested actions to be considered	Priority	Council Role	Progress as at 15 October 2010
	Water quality at Hall – filter on tank	Medium	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Need double drain at hall – flooding	Low	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
	Undertake maintenance and mowing of the sides of the road	High	Direct Involvement	Council to determine priority and funding
Employment	Work with landholders for solar power industry	Low	Advocacy	Council to determine priority and funding
	Dumaresq Council to finish Armidale Road – tourist and traveller compatible	Low	Advocacy	Council to determine priority and funding
	Build caravan park along river – attract visitors, encouraged to stay	Low	Advocacy	Council to determine priority and funding