



**GILGANDRA  
SHIRE COUNCIL**

*Live > Enjoy > Grow*

# ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

## **VISION**

*Gilgandra Shire is a strong and sustainable rural centre  
with a caring community that is building a future together.*

## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

It is my pleasure to present the Gilgandra Shire Council 2019/2020 Annual Report.

The Gilgandra Shire, like many of our rural counterparts has endured the effects of a record breaking three year drought. At the time of writing, the green shoots of recovery are very evident and the entire community is living in anticipation of a bumper harvest. Despite the drought, Council has experienced a productive year in respect to capital investment across the shire.

The 2019/20 report incorporates the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework. The report is closely aligned with the Gilgandra Shire Community Strategic Plan 2017/18 to 2026/27 and associated documents.

Reflecting on the year, the highlight has been the mutual support and resilience of our wonderful community. Our support for each other both in addressing the impacts of the drought, and more recently the COVID-19 pandemic, has proven to be a source of inspiration to many.

Gilgandra Shire is fortunate to have a strong and united Councillor group. This also includes our dedicated staff from the General Manager, Directors, and all staff – indoor, outdoor and community services. Each of them plays an important role in ensuring that Gilgandra remains a sustainable and vibrant rural service centre as well as an amazing place to LIVE> ENJOY>GROW.

There have been many achievements for Gilgandra Shire over the past 12 months. I encourage you to read through our annual report, to gain a more in-depth understanding of what a rural council can and does achieve. I believe the report gives credence to the fact that within the industry and government, Gilgandra Shire Council is regularly referred to as an organisation that punches above its weight.

I sincerely thank Deputy Mayor (Cr Ash Walker), fellow Councillors, together with General Manager (Mr David Neeves), our Directors and every member of our staff. We work hard as an entity with service delivery at its core.

I commend this report to you and trust it will provide you with valuable information on the operations and management of your local government area.



Doug Batten  
Mayor

## MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

The financial year of 2019-20 ... the year of extreme drought, bushfires, floods and then the pandemic! Fortunately Gilgandra escaped the impacts of any serious bushfires, however the impact of the drought with another failed cropping season caused financial stress on all business within our shire.

Late summer gave an indication that the seasons were about to change with the first signs of rain. Through Autumn, rain was becoming more regular and the possibility a productive season was imminent. Spirits were buoyed until the outbreak of the pandemic.

Throughout the year Council was very active in sourcing external grant funding to act as a cash injection into our economy. The Federal Government announcement of another \$1M funding for community infrastructure projects through the Drought Communities Programme and \$878,444 through the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Programme was welcomed.

Council's heavy involvement in community services, particularly servicing the vulnerable sections of our community such as Aged Care, Disability Services, Home Care, Meals on Wheels and other Community Care services was our focus. Thanks to the concerted effort of all staff, Council responded proactively and managed the situation professionally with great results and this will remain the primary highlight for the year.

On reflection, key activation projects for the year were:

- the Winter Wonderland promotion which activated the main street during July 2019
- the 2019 Shop Local Program which created significant impact in the lead up to Christmas 2019 with a \$50,000 program. With over 17,500 entries and envelopes averaging approximately \$85 in tax receipts, this directly contributed over \$1.4M to the Gilgandra economy. There were 50 lucky winners of \$1,000 Cooee Cash Cards!
- Council's 12 Days of Christmas promotion at 'the GIL' and the #GilgandraGiftGuide digital campaign, were run concurrently with the Shop Local Program. All businesses within the Shire, including those without a shop front, were part of the program.
- Completion of an activation blueprint for the Gilgandra township, bringing many projects and ideas resulting in an eight point plan:
  1. Strengthen the structure plan for the township
  2. Create a CBD community Hub - The Gil
  3. Connect the CBD tourist anchor and revitalised river corridor
  4. Create gateway entrance
  5. Activate key CBD spaces
  6. Support local businesses to thrive
  7. Build on local and community events
  8. Strengthen an industrial and agribusiness precinct

\$8.2M of capital works projects were completed during the year, with notable projects being:

- Purchase of 30-32 Miller Street for the Purpose of a Library/Community Hub
- The commencement of the Works Depot upgrades which includes a new workshop, store and administration buildings, aggregate and emulsion storage areas, new essential services, road pavement and drainage
- The commencement of the Specialist Disability Accommodation (2 and 3 bedroom 'Pods' or 'Townhouses') for residents with low care needs who are, to a degree, self-sufficient - The development includes associated staff and administration areas, common areas, services upgrades and landscaping
- Completion of a new stairway to access the water storage tower known as Reservoir 1
- Completion of two new commercial kitchens in the Cooee Lodge Aged Care Hostel
- Ongoing upgrades to our local road network continued with Council undertaking \$1.3 M of bitumen reseals and gravel resheeting funded through the Roads to Recovery program and a further \$223,500 was spent through the additional roads allocation on resheeting

Council was unable to complete all of the intended of gravel resheeting program due to the drought and lack of accessible water.

Separate storm events in March and then again in April resulted in two Natural Disaster declarations. The process to assess the level of damage and to submit the claim was commenced and the necessary emergent works completed. Restoration work was unable to be commenced prior to 30 June due to the comprehensive assessment process involved.

Council delivered an annual financial result end of year result of \$174,733 deficit over all of Council (depreciation not included) which was an improvement of \$9,952 from the start of the 19/20 year. Council's cash and investments as at 30 June 2020 was \$30,497,769 - up from \$24,919,864 at the same time the previous year.

On behalf of Council I would like to thank the committed volunteers who continue to go above and beyond to support our community in so many ways.

I look forward to a continued good working relationship between Councillors and staff as we work towards achieving the objectives set out in Council's Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program.



David Neeves  
General Manager

## COUNCILLORS

This Council area is undivided, with no ridings, and has nine (9) elected representatives:



Cr Doug Batten  
Mayor



Cr Ash Walker  
Deputy Mayor



Cr Susan Baker



Cr Gina Johnson  
Resigned 29/11/19



Cr Brian Mockler



Cr Noel Mudford



Cr Deidrie Naden



Cr Greg Peart



Cr Noel Wrigley

# COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES

## Council Meetings

Council met on the third Tuesday of every month throughout 2019/20 at 4.00pm.

## Council Committees

Council activities were managed by the following Committees:

- Aged Care Committee
- Disability Services Committee
- Economic Development Committee
- Sports Council
- Tooraweenah Management Committee

Council was also advised by:

- Consultative Committee
- Interagency Committee
- Health & Safety Committee
- Traffic Committee
- Tooraweenah Community Technology Centre Management Committee
- Curban Community Hall & Tennis Management Committee
- Tooraweenah Memorial Hall Committee
- Shire Hall User Group

Council was represented on the following external bodies and representatives for 2019/20 were:

### Councillors/Staff

Cr Batten, Cr Peart  
Cr Wrigley  
Mayor (as Local Member's representative)  
Cr Peart, Cr Mockler  
Cr Naden  
Mayor  
Manager Works

### Committee

Castlereagh Macquarie County Council  
North West Library  
Traffic  
Joint Regional Planning Panel  
Orana Arts Board  
Orana Joint Organisation  
Orana Water Utilities Alliance

## **Council Documents**

Council has produced a number of documents that outline information about Council plans and activities. These include:

- Community Strategic Plan 2017/18 – 2026/27
- Delivery Program 2017/18 – 2020/21
- Operational Plan 2019/20
- Long Term Financial Plan 2019/20 – 2028/29
- Asset Management Plans – Buildings, Transport, Stormwater, Water & Sewer
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Statutory Annual Report
- EEO Management Plan
- Workforce Plan
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)
- McGrane Oval Masterplan

The public are able to access these documents by visiting Council's website or by contacting Council's administration building in Warren Road, Gilgandra.

## **Council's Website**

This site, [www.gilgandra.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gilgandra.nsw.gov.au) contains important contact information as well as media releases, positions vacant, tenders, application forms, news and events.

## **Public Officer**

Mr Neil Alchin is Council's Public Officer and is responsible for co-ordination of Government Information (Public Access) Act matters.

## **COUNCIL EMPLOYEES**

Gilgandra Shire Council currently employs 201 people (FTE).

### **General Manager**



David Neeves

### **Administrative Divisions**

#### **Director Corporate Services**



Neil Alchin

#### **Director Infrastructure**



Daryl Colwell

#### **Director Community Services**



Jo Manion

#### **Director Planning & Environment**



Lindsay Mathieson



# COUNCIL'S ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



## STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Council's direction is set by a 10 year Community Strategic Plan and 4 Year Delivery Program (Council's business plan) which were reviewed at the beginning of 2017. These plans included a number of long term outcomes for our community developed under eight themes: Sense of Place, Community Engagement, Land Use Planning and Sustainable Environment, Strategic Leadership, Economic Development, Asset Management and Service Delivery, Legislation and By-Laws and Representation and Collaboration.

### 1. Sense of Place

- 1.1 An active community with a focus on physical and mental wellbeing
- 1.2 A community that has great pride and instils this pride from a young age
- 1.3 A community with access to quality health, welfare, education, early childhood, sporting, recreational, cultural and technological services and facilities
- 1.4 A collaborative community where services are integrated, match our community needs and are sustainable
- 1.5 A community that encourages Aboriginal leadership and pride.
- 1.6 A community where volunteerism thrives
- 1.7 A safe community with minimal crime and anti-social behaviour

### 2. Community Engagement

- 2.1 A transparent Council that keeps its community informed, encourages and facilitates community input into its decision making process
- 2.2 A Council that delivers good customer service to our community

### 3. Land Use Planning and Sustainable Environment

- 3.1 A Council that works with the community to create an environment that guides the use of land to balance economic, environmental and community/social values
- 3.2 A community that proactively minimises the environmental impacts of waste and maximises waste resource recovery rates
- 3.3 A community aware of climate change that strives to reduce its ecological footprint

### 4. Strategic Leadership

- 4.1 A Council that provides quality leadership governance and management to its community
- 4.2 A Council that focuses on strategic planning and financial sustainability.

### 5. Economic Development

- 5.1 A community with a strong and diverse economic base that supports and improves the lifestyle of its residents
- 5.2 A community with a reputation as a great place to live, stop, stay or just spend time and where visitors are welcomed and embraced

## **6. Asset Management & Service Delivery**

- 6.1 A community with well constructed, maintained and managed public infrastructure including water and sewer infrastructure, public buildings and facilities, plant and equipment
- 6.2 A community serviced by a safe, reliable and efficient transport network.
- 6.3 A community with quality green spaces that encourage people to be active and involved in their natural surrounds

## **7. Legislation and Bylaws**

- 7.1 A Council that applies legislation, develops and maintains policies that support the local community

## **8. Representation and Collaboration**

- 8.1 A Council that engages with other councils and spheres of government to represent and advocate the needs of its community

## HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2019/20

### 1. Sense of Place

- Average of 25 students attending Breakfast Club each school morning
- Meals on wheels delivered to approx. 25 clients, five days per week
- 22 supported employment positions at Carlginda Enterprises
- Upgraded kitchens for Cooee Lodge Hostel
- Renovation of a further two rooms within Cooee Lodge Hostel
- Renovation of two villa units within Cooee Retirement Village
- Implementation of an electronic care planning system at Jack Towney and Cooee Lodge Hostels, providing real time individual health data
- Connection of Orana Living homes to the internet to enable residents to keep in touch with family and friends
- McGrane Oval Masterplan improvements

### 2. Community Engagement

- Community applications for Drought Communities (DCP) and Stronger Country Communities (SCC) grant funding programs
- Assisting community groups with grant applications
- Community consultation on:
  - Youth Technology spaces
  - Community Care services
  - Shop Local Program feedback from businesses
  - Shire Signage
  - Coo-ee Heritage Centre
- Implementation of volunteer connection during COVID including “Gladis” phone tree
- Implementation of new staff uniforms

### 3. Land Use Planning and Sustainable Environment

- Funding of 6 projects under the Local Heritage Fund
- Continued Dark Sky Park Membership
- Continued Netwaste membership
- Partnership with Corrective Services for litter pick at Gilgandra Waste Facility
- Successful implementation of a waste transfer truck at the Gilgandra Waste Facility
- Participation in the Aussie Backyard Bird Count
- Increase in volume of material recycled by 90 tonnes to 771 tonnes

### 4. Strategic Leadership

- All compliance tasks completed within legislative timeframes
- 21 grant applications lodged

## 5. Economic Development

- Winter Wonderland activation program and event
- Continued progress to develop additional industrial land
- 12 days of Christmas promotion at The Gil
- Shop Local program - \$50,000
- Inland rail preparedness initiatives continued
- Gilgandra Activation Blueprint

## 6. Asset Management and Service Delivery

- Construction of new bore for Tooraweenah water supply
- 1.2km reconstruction along John Renshaw Parkway
- Additional 4km reconstruction along Berida Bullagreen Road
- 14km gravel resheeting on unsealed roads
- 13k resealing on rural road network including urban streets
- Emergent works in response to the Natural Disaster declarations (March and April)
- Construction of southern intersection servicing Gilgandra Industrial Estate
- Construction of Berakee Quarry intersection
- Extension of RMCC network under management (State Highways in Warren Shire)
- Business case for a new sewer treatment plant formulated
- Completion of stairwell at Reservoir 1
- Extension to Gilgandra Preschool building
- Purchase of former Target building to house Library and Community Hub
- Commencement of Gilgandra Works Depot upgrade
- Commencement of specialist disability accommodation project at 59 Waugan Street
- Installation of a litter fence around the new landfill cell at Gilgandra Waste Facility
- Commencement of new SES headquarters building project
- Commencement of walking track linking GK Rohr Viewing Platform to the Tooraweenah village
- Completion of shade structure at Armatree to house history boards
- Improvements to country halls at Curban, Tooraweenah and Armatree

## 7. Legislation and By-Laws

- Achieved an unqualified audit result
- Development applications approved totalling \$9,197,127

## 8. Representation and Collaboration

- Continued representation in relation to Inland Rail
- Membership of Orana Joint Organisation

## CHALLENGES FOR 2019/20

### 1. Sense of Place

- Sporting and recreational precinct planning
- COVID-19 challenges – dramatic changes were made to service delivery to enable continued support the Gilgandra community. These include:
  - Establishment of a “click and collect” service or home delivery of books and DVDs to people isolated in their homes
  - Redeployment of volunteers to run the “GLADIS” phone tree, ensuring people isolated by the lock down had regular contact from a friendly voice
  - Collaboration with IGA Supermarket to set up early morning opening hours for front line aged care and health services
  - Changes to service structure to support Orana Living residents in lockdown
  - Implementation of safe visiting arrangements at Cooee Lodge and Jack Towney Hostels to protect residents and keep them connected to their family and friends
  - Increasing meals on wheels deliveries to six days per week

### 2. Community Engagement

- CHC Aboriginal Stakeholder group consultation was postponed
- Staff communication moved to digital with COVID implications
- Customer Service moved to off-site locations
- Keeping up to date with changes of COVID and ensuring these were communicated to the community timely and accurately
- Loss of valuable volunteers

### 3. Land Use Planning and Sustainable Environment

- Removal of asbestos from damaged awning over public footpath
- Discontinuation of recycling due to COVID-19
- Cancelled projects and programs – Shellharbour, Partnership agreement with NetWaste and Ozharvest
- Waste to Art program changed to online format

### 4. Strategic Leadership

- COVID-19 challenges – staff working from home

### 5. Economic Development

- Industrial Development – Graincorp South

### 6. Asset Management and Service Delivery

- Extensive damage to road network experienced due to three consecutive Natural Disaster events
- Lucas Bridge replacement

## STATUTORY ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

### **Financial Statements S428 (4)(a)**

Council's audited financial reports are available on our website.

<http://www.gilgandra.nsw.gov.au/Your-Council/About-Council/Financial-information/Financial-Statements>

### **Delivery of Services S428 (3)**

Council's Community Strategic Plan 2017/18 – 2026/27, Delivery Program 2017/18-2020/21 and Operational Plan for 2019/20 is available on our website:

<http://www.gilgandra.nsw.gov.au/Your-Council/About-Council/Plans-Strategies>

The report on the review of Council's 2019/20 Operational Plan as at 30 June 2020 is also available on our website:

<http://www.gilgandra.nsw.gov.au/Your-Council/About-Council/Plans-Strategies>

### **State of the Environment S428A**

The Greater Central West Councils' Regional State of the Environment Report 2019/20 (Gilgandra snapshot) is available on our website:

<http://www.gilgandra.nsw.gov.au/Your-Council/About-Council/Plans-Strategies>

### **Rates and Charges Written off CI 132**

An amount of \$964.92 was written off during the year. In addition, Council has a policy of writing off water charges less than \$2.00 which are considered uneconomic to recover. Compulsory pensioner rebates for the period total \$130,893.30.

### **Overseas visits CI 217 (1)(a)**

During the period, Council did not fund any overseas trips for councillors, council staff or other persons.

### **Elected Representatives CI 217 (1)(a1)(i-viii)**

Election expenses	Nil
Mayoral allowance	\$27,678.98
Councillor fees	\$100,375.70
Councillor /delegate expenses	\$22,304.28
Telephone costs	Nil
Dedicated office equipment	Nil
Conference/seminar attendance	Nil
Training and skill development	Nil
Interstate visits	Nil
Overseas visits	Nil
Expenses of any spouse, partner or other person who accompanied a councillor	Nil
Expenses involved in the provision of care for a child or an immediate family member of a councillor	Nil

### **Major Contracts Awarded** cl 217 (1)(a2)(i,ii)

In 2019/20 Council entered into the following contracts:

- Works Depot Upgrade – Structen Pty Ltd, \$3,543,382.30
- Cooee Lodge Hostel Kitchens Upgrade – Glenn Healey Constructions Pty Ltd, \$564,971.00
- Specialist Disability Accommodation Project – Westbury Constructions Pty Ltd, \$2,642,231.95
- Supply and delivery of concrete pipes (through Hunter Regional Procurement) – Holcim (Australia) Pty Ltd trading as Humes
- Collection and recycling of Waste Tyres (through Netwaste) – JLW Services Pty Ltd

### **Legal Proceedings** cl 217 (1)(a3)

Council incurred legal costs relating to outstanding Rates and Charges totalling \$4,128.00 and \$35,894.20 in general legal costs.

When Council commences legal proceedings for recovery of outstanding debts, it utilises a debt collection agency. All the above costs are recoverable from the individual debtors.

Council is now on a deferred cost arrangement with the current collection agency. Ratepayers involved in legal proceedings pay legal costs directly to the Collection Agency, therefore no charges are levied on the rate card. If a ratepayer chooses to pay directly to Council, only then is the charge levied to the rate card.

Council has full control over the debt collector's actions as each stage of the recovery process must be authorised by Council before the Agency can proceed.

### **Private Works** S67, 67(2)(b) cl 217 (1)(a4)

All private works are carried out on the basis of an estimate - recovery of labour (plus on costs for holidays, etc) as well as standard charges for plant and materials (charged at cost) plus a margin on total costs.

Council adopted its Fees and Charges at its meeting on 23 June 2020. A detailed plant hire charge schedule, and a copy of these Fees and Charges, is available at Council's office upon request. No private works were subsidised in 2019/20.

### **Contributions/Donations** S356, cl 217 (1)(a5)

Contributions/donations under Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 for 2019/20 total \$26,583.75

### **External Bodies Exercising Council Functions** cl 217 (1)(a6)

- Castlereagh Macquarie County Council has been delegated Council's powers in relation to noxious weeds.

### **Controlling Interest in Corporations** cl 217 (1)(a7)

Council has no controlling interests in any company



### **Partnerships, Co-operatives and Joint Ventures cl 217 (1)(a8)**

Council is not involved in any partnerships or joint ventures, but is, however, a member of the North West Regional Library Co-operative and Orana Arts. Gilgandra Shire Council is the lead Council in a RMS Roads Maintenance agreement with Warren Shire Council.

### **Activities to Implement EEO Management Plan cl 217 (1)(a9)**

Council continues to review and monitor its EEO Management Plan to ensure that its principles are applied in all Council operations in dealing with both staff and the public.

A copy of this document is available on our website:

<http://www.gilgandra.nsw.gov.au/Your-Council/About-Council/Plans-Strategies>

Council has a formal policy for EEO implementation in the workplace and such information is communicated to new employees as part of induction.

A breakdown of Council's employees as at 30 June 2020 is as follows:

Number of employees:	246	Number of Aboriginal employees:	37
Number of female employees:	147	Number of female aboriginal employees:	23
Number male employees:	99	Number of male aboriginal employees:	14

### **Senior Staff cl 217(1)(b)(i-v)**

General Manager, Mr David Neeves, was the only member of Council's staff to qualify as "senior staff" under the Local Government Act 1993. For 2019/20, his remuneration package was \$277,364 including employer's contribution to superannuation, non-cash benefits and fringe benefits tax.

### **Stormwater cl 217(1)(e)**

1,943m of stormwater mains were cleaned, CCTV inspected and condition rated. Blockages due to debris, tree roots and foreign objects were cleared.

### **Companion Animals cl 217(1)(f)**

Council's expenditure for 2019/20 was \$170,922.04 which includes employment of a ranger.

Income for the year was \$19,984.83 from companion animal fees and charges, made up of:

Fines	\$15,488.82
Registrations	Nil
Microchipping	\$491.01
Impounding fees	\$4,005.00
Sales	Nil

Pound data collection returns have been lodged with the Office of Local Government.

There were 6 dog attacks reported in the twelve month period.

Education programs were conducted on topics including responsible pet ownership, swimming pools and animal welfare.

Facebook and Council's website were used extensively and successfully to advertise for animal owners and to promote education programs.

An effective rescue network has been established thus reducing the numbers of animals euthanased. The statistics for the past twelve months are:

	Number impounded	% released	% rescued/sold	% destroyed
Cats	71	0%	19%	80%
Dogs	132	50%	19%	28%

Designated off leash areas include the outside of Ernie Knight Oval and an area to the north of the Cooee Heritage Centre.

**Swimming Pools *Swimming Pools Act 1992 s22F (1), SP Reg cl 23***

Number of inspections of tourist and visitor accommodation = 0

Number of inspections of premises with more than 2 dwellings = 0

Number of inspections that resulted in issue of certificate of compliance under s 22D = 7

Number of inspections that resulted in issue of certificate of non-compliance under cl 21 = 0

**GIPA Activity *s125 (1), cl 7 schedule 2***

Number of formal GIPA applications processed for the period 2019/20:	Nil
Number of informal GIPA applications processed for the period 2019/20:	Nil

**Public Interest Disclosures *s31, cl 4***

Council has a Public Interest Disclosure Reporting Policy in place. There were no public interest disclosures made in 2019/20.

**NOTE:** A hard copy of any document listed as being available on our website can be obtained from Council's administration office.

## ***Disability Inclusion Action Plan - Disability Inclusion Act 2014, s 13(1)***

Council's activities to implement actions for the plan have been hampered this year by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the ongoing actions such as promoting new employment opportunities and volunteer involvement in services were suspended mid-year due to closure of these services. Despite this restriction, Council has undertaken the following actions:

### *Positive Attitudes and Behaviour*

- Continued facilitation of work experience for Orana Living clients at 2WAR FM Community Radio and Australia Post
- Prior to cessation due to COVID-19, Orana Living clients undertook, with support, Meals on Wheels deliveries, operation of Swimming Pool turnstiles and delivery of Council's internal mail
- Needs of people with a disability considered in all planning projects and developments undertaken by Council

### *Liveable Communities*

- Consideration given to accessibility when planning activities and events run by Council
- Creation of additional footpaths to link key facilities
- Construction of picnic facilities in Hunter Park, providing wheelchair access in line with Australian Standards
- Council promotes the availability of community transport options
- Commencement of construction of a new specialist disability accommodation promoting independent living for up to 13 people

### *Service systems and processes*

- Considered of universal design principles for new planning projects and developments undertaken by Council
- Ensuring all new policy and services seek to maximise access for people with a disability including delivery of information in accessible formats
- Effort being made to ensure language is simple and appropriate
- Upgrade of IT systems to all Orana Living facilities to promote access to information and remote services, build and maintain social and family connections