



**Walcha Council June 2022
Ordinary Meeting
Business Paper Attachment:**

**6.1 Attachment 3: Community Submissions to Integrated
Planning & Reporting Plans**

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 June 2022 4:12 PM
To: Council General Walcha
Subject: Draft Plan

Categories: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr Omdsman

I write to advise Council of my complete support for the Draft Community Strategic Plan 2032, and the Draft Delivery Program 2022-2023 and Operational Plan.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 June 2022 5:00 PM
To: Council General Walcha
Subject: Support for the Draft Plans

Categories: [Redacted]

Dear Mr Omundson

I write to advise Council of my complete support for the Draft Community Strategic Plan 2032, and the Draft Delivery Program 2022-2023 and Operational Plan.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

The General Manager
Walcha Council
2w Hamilton Street
WALCHA, NSW, 2354
22nd June 2022

Dear Mr Barry Omundson,

I, [REDACTED], am writing this letter to show my full support of the Council Draft Community Strategic Plan.

Kind regards,
[REDACTED]

Walcha Council
PO Box 2
Walcha NSW 2354

19 June 2022

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

RE: Comments on Walcha 2032 Draft Community Strategic Plan and Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

I am writing this letter to communicate my feedback after reviewing the *Walcha 2032 Draft Community Strategic Plan* and associated *Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan*.

I have two main points that pertain to both documents:

1. I welcome and support the amendments made to enhance Council governance and accountability; and
2. I do not support any amendment of the existing:
 - a. Community Strategic Goal 6.4 – *Walcha will increase the use and production of renewable energy*;
 - b. Strategy 6.4.1 – *Establish (with partners) alternate renewable energy supplies that will exceed the energy needs of our community*; and
 - c. Action 6.4.1.1 – *Increase the production of renewable energy*.

The proposed amended changes to the community strategic goal 6.4, corresponding strategy and action completely change the existing direction from stating the Walcha Council will facilitate the production and use of renewable energy to implying the Walcha Council will just simply consume renewable energy. With all due respect, according to the *Australian Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources*, 29% of Australia's total electricity generation is from renewable sources, therefore if the Walcha Council draw electricity from the grid to run their operation, then the proposed amended goal would have already been achieved.

Furthermore, the proposed amendments contradict Walcha Councils *Local Strategic Planning Statement 2036*, which states, "*supporting growth and industry diversification*" and "*attracting renewable energy infrastructure*" (p.8) are both local opportunities that support the achievement of strategic planning priorities.

I am very disappointed with the approach adopted by the Walcha Council in facilitating the review of the community strategic plan as I believe the proposed amendments are not representative of community opinion, even worse the proposed amendments suggest to me that the Walcha Council are not invested in activities that better ensure the sustained future of our town and community.

Walcha Council
PO Box 2
Walcha NSW 2354
20 June 2022



Dear Mr. Omundson, Mayor Noakes and Councillors,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comment on both the Walcha Council:

1. [2032 Draft Community Strategic Plan](#); and
2. [Draft Delivery Program \(2022 – 2025\) and Operational Plan \(2022-2023\)](#).

I am writing this letter to communicate that I do not support the adoption of the above draft documents as the *Community Strategic Plan* and corresponding *Delivery Program* and *Operation Plan* fails to take into consideration both the current and prospective long-term needs of the community, particularly when taking into consideration Walcha's unique age distribution (see below graph).

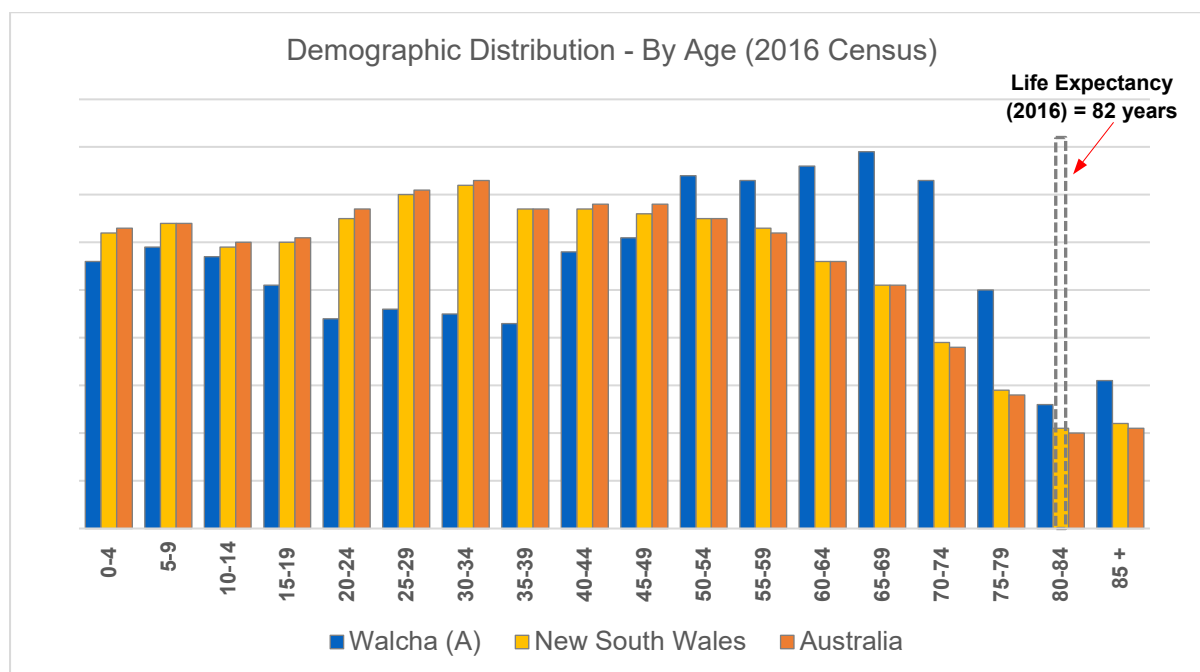


Figure 1 – Demographic Distribution (By Age)

Fundamentally, the demographic distribution of population in Walcha LGA (by age) starts to vary significantly around 15-19 years and is almost the complete inverse when compared to population distributions in other LGA's of NSW and Australia. To me this is quite concerning, considering population projection data tells us:

- The 2019 Population Projections indicate that the population of Walcha is estimated to decrease by 500 people between 2016 and 2041, from 3150 to 2650;
- School age children and young adults are likely to continue leaving Walcha. An older population means deaths may also outnumber births;
- The working age population (aged 15-64) is estimated to decrease from 1800 in 2016 to 1350 in 2041 – a change of 450;

- The number of children aged 14 and under is estimated to change by 150 children, from 550 in 2016 to 400 in 2041; and
- The number of people aged 65 and over is estimated to increase from 800 in 2016 to 900 by 2041 – a change of 100.

(Source: NSW Government. Walcha Council: 2019 NSW Population Projections)

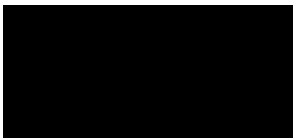
Considering the above, Walcha's community strategic planning efforts are unique and require balancing the needs of Walcha's existing aging population, whilst strategically affording effort and investment in establishing, improving, or maintaining the provision of services and facilities that will attract younger persons to live in the Walcha LGA, including early childhood education, housing, business infrastructure and health care services.

On page.7 of the *Community Strategic Plan* it is stated "*Walcha 2032 as it is now, only slightly differs from the original strategic plan*". This is not only disappointing, however is disconcerting considering the original *Community Strategic Plan* was established in 2011.

The draft *Community Strategic Plan* and corresponding *Draft Delivery Program* and *Operation Plan* written as they currently are, in my opinion, will only continue to lead Walcha down the path we are currently travelling on. I think we all well know where that path ends? I do not want this for our town, our community or our LGA.

To establish a *Community Strategic Plan* that achieves the best outcomes for our community, I believe the Walcha Council should revisit their [Community Engagement Strategy](#) and purposely consult and engage with those living in the Walcha LGA to identify clear priorities and aspirations, and understand the broad range of issues relevant to our community. Following such the Walcha *Community Strategic Plan* can be re-written to not only communicate, however convert into action our highest-level goals and objectives and future priorities.

Your Sincerely,



Walcha Council
 PO Box 2
 Walcha NSW 2354

20 June 2022

Dear Mr. Omundson, Mayor Noakes and Councillors,

I am writing this letter following public invitation to review and provide comment on the *Draft Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program and Operational Plan*.

During the review I identified records that lead me to perceive improper and unethical conduct that I would like to bring to your attention.

Publicly available records dating back to May and June 2021 demonstrate the replacement of text in the *Walcha Council 2021-2022 Operational Plan* (a detailed chronology is provided in Appendix A). Whilst this appears relatively straight forward, evidence suggests otherwise. Firstly, because changes to the plan were made after the public consultation period closed and secondly, because the changes were not formally reported to Council at the council meeting 7-days later. Consequently, Council was not informed of the material change before adopting the plan as final on 30 June 2021.

Failure to communicate amendment to the *Operational Plan* not only appear to be less than transparent, however raise public suspicion. Particularly now, 12 months later where the amended *Operational Plan* wording (Table 1(h)) is reflected in amendments made to the corresponding *Community Strategic Plan* goal (Table 1(f)) and strategy (Table 1(g)). Such amendments completely change the existing strategic direction from stating that Walcha Council will facilitate the production and use of renewable energy (Table 1(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)) to implying the Walcha Council will just simply consume renewable energy (Table 1(g)).

How this change in strategic direction came about is completely deceitful, unethical, and unlawful as evidence demonstrates such has arisen internally from council rather than sentiment achieved through the execution of the *Walcha Council Community Engagement Strategy*¹, as required by Section 402A of the Local Government Act (1993).

Table 1 – Community Strategic Plan Goal 6.4: Corresponding Strategy, Action, Task and Measure

	2027 Community Strategic Plan	2032 Community Strategic Plan
Goal	(a) CSP 6.4: Walcha will increase the use and production of renewable energy.	(f) CSP 6.4: The Walcha community will take advantage of renewable energy opportunities.
Strategy	(b) 6.4.1: Establish (with partners) alternate renewable energy supplies that will exceed the energy needs of our community	(g) 6.4.1: Walcha Council will review opportunities to take advantage of renewable energy supplies that will meet our energy needs.
	2017 – 2021 Delivery Program and Operational Plan²	2022 – 2025 Delivery Program and Operational Plan
Action	(c) 6.4.1.1: Increase the production of renewable energy	(h) 6.4.1.1: Review and support Councils use of renewable energy opportunities.
Task	(d) 6.4.1.1.2: Support individuals and groups that setup renewable energy systems ³	None
Measure	(e) The number of renewable energy systems established	None

¹ Walcha Council Community Engagement Strategy. Found at: <https://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/FEB17-Rpt-6.6-Attachment-DRAFT-Community-Engagement-Strategy-December-2016.pdf>

² Walcha Council Delivery Program 2017/18 – 2020/21. Found at: <https://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/July-2020-Ord-Meeting-Item-6.2-Attachment-Delivery-Program-30062020.pdf>

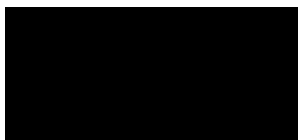
³ Wording amended on 24 June 2021 (the day after public exhibition ceased), from "Support individuals and groups that setup renewable energy systems" to "Review and support Councils use of renewable energy opportunities". Found at: <https://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/JUN21-Item-6.1-Attachment-DRAFT-2021-2022-Operational-Plan-and-Delivery-Program-2018-2021.pdf>

It is evident that the material change made to an action captured in the *Operational Plan* 12 months ago is now being applied to reverse engineer and influence the wording associated with the corresponding *Community Strategic Plan* goal and strategy. It makes sense to me now why the revision of the *Community Strategic Plan* was performed through workshops with council staff and councillors⁴ rather than workshops with the Walcha community.

In my opinion, the topic that the change has been applied to is irrelevant. What is relevant here is the perceived action taken by a person, or persons within council who appear to be using their position to advance an interest of a personal nature and have been doing so for the past year. I welcome the production of evidence that disproves otherwise.


I request that Council take this letter seriously and formally investigate the perceived misconduct. I also request that Council demonstrate transparency by publicly communicating this matter, the investigation findings and methods that will be applied to ensure improved governance of Council conduct.

Your Sincerely,



⁴ Walcha Council (March 2022). Ordinary Council Meeting – Business Paper. Item 6.3 – *Community Strategic Plan – Draft for Public Consultation* (WO/2022/00892). Found at: <https://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/March-2022-Ordinary-Meeting-Business-Paper-30032022.pdf>


APPENDIX A CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS AND ASSOCIATED EVIDENCE

DATE	COUNCIL ACTION	EVIDENCE
26/05/2021	<p><u>WALCHA COUNCIL ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – MAY 2021</u></p> <p>Item 6.2 – 2021-2022 DRAFT Operational Plan (WO/2021/01855)⁵</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION (p.23) that:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the Draft 2021-2022 Operational Plan⁶ be placed on public exhibition in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act, 1993, Section 402 (6), 404 (4) and 405(3); 2. The Draft Budget for the year 2021-2022 be placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days; 3. a further report be provided to Council at the completion of the public exhibition period outlining any submissions received and for Council’s final adoption of the 2021-2022 Operational Plan & Budget. <p><u>RESOLVED</u> on the Motion of Councillors Wellings and Ferrier (WO/2021/02165)⁷</p>	<div style="text-align: right;">  </div> <p>Walcha Council Ordinary Council Meeting 26 May 2021</p> <hr/> <p>Item: 6.2 Ref: WO/2021/01855</p> <p>Title: 2021 – 2022 DRAFT Operational Plan</p> <p>Author: General Manager</p> <p>Previous Items: Not Applicable</p> <p>Attachment: Under Separate Cover: 2021-2022 Draft Operational Plan</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Community Strategic Plan Reference:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Strategy – 8.1.2 – Provide a framework for the efficient and effective administration of Council.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Strategy – 8.2.1 – Maintain a stable and secure financial structure for Council.</i></p> <hr/> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> <u>That:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Draft 2021-2022 Operational Plan be placed on public exhibition in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, Section 402 (6), 404(4) and 405(3); 2. The Draft Budget for the year 2021-2022 be placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days; and 3. A further report be provided to Council at the completion of the public exhibition period outlining any submissions received and for Council’s final adoption of the 2021-2022 Operational Plan and Budget.
27/05/2021	Draft 2021-2022 Operational Plan placed on public exhibition and comments invited.	

⁵ Walcha Council (May 2021). Ordinary Council Meeting – Business Paper. Item 6.2 – Draft 2021-2022 Operational Plan (WO/2021/01855). Found at: <https://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/May21-Ordinary-Meeting-Business-Paper.pdf>

⁶ Walcha Council (May 2021). Ordinary Council Meeting – Business Paper. Item 6.2 Attachment – Draft 2021-2022 Operational Plan. Found at: <https://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/May21-Item6.2-Attachment-DRAFT-2021-2022-Operational-Plan-and-Delivery-Program-2018-2021.pdf>


⁷ Walcha Council (May 2021). Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes (WO/2021/01854). Found at: <https://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/MAY21-Ordinary-Meeting-Minutes-26052021.pdf>

DATE	COUNCIL ACTION	EVIDENCE
09/06/2021	<p><u>PUBLIC EXHIBITION ADVERTISED</u> Public notice⁸ advertised in the Apsley Advocate inviting public submissions on Draft 2021-2022 Operational Plan.</p>	 <p>The Council, at its Ordinary Meeting held on 26 May 2021, approved a DRAFT 2021 – 2022 Budget & Operational Plan. The draft Budget and Operational Plan will be on public exhibition for a period of 28 days as per the Local Government Act 1993 Section 405(3). Copies of the Plan are available at the Council Chambers, Hamilton Street, Walcha and on its website: www.walcha.nsw.gov.au until 5.00pm Wednesday 23 June 2021. During this time written submissions on the draft Budget and Operational Plan will be received by Council.</p> <p>Chris Weber, Interim General Manager WALCHA COUNCIL PO Box 2, Walcha NSW 2354</p>
23/06/2021	Public submissions on Draft 2021-2022 Operational Plan closed.	

⁸ The Apsley Advocate (9 June 2021). Found at: https://assets.website-files.com/60988f02287568082691eeb1/60d15ee368e5d0a81161c896_ApsleyAdvocate_20210609.pdf


DATE	COUNCIL ACTION	EVIDENCE																																							
24/06/2021	<p><u>DRAFT OPERATIONAL PLAN AMMENDED</u></p> <p>Task supporting the achievement of Action L4.1.1 (i.e., “Support individuals and groups that setup renewable energy systems”) was crossed out and the following text was added: “Review and support Councils use of renewable energy opportunities”⁹</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3" data-bbox="987 197 2130 236">DELIVERY PROGRAM AND OPERATIONAL PLAN</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="987 240 1503 300">Action</th> <th data-bbox="1503 240 1659 300">Area of Responsibility</th> <th data-bbox="1659 240 2130 300">Task</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="987 304 1503 363">L3.2</td> <td data-bbox="1503 304 1659 363"></td> <td data-bbox="1659 304 2130 363">Provide additional off creek storage capacity to drought proof Walcha while minimising the impact of water extraction from the Macdonald River</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="987 368 1503 427">L3.2.1</td> <td data-bbox="1503 368 1659 427">Infrastructure</td> <td data-bbox="1659 368 2130 427">Investigate suitable sites for additional off creek storage reservoirs</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="987 432 1503 459">L3.3</td> <td data-bbox="1503 432 1659 459"></td> <td data-bbox="1659 432 2130 459">Identify possible new water sources</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="987 464 1503 491">L3.3.1</td> <td data-bbox="1503 464 1659 491">Infrastructure</td> <td data-bbox="1659 464 2130 491">Find water sources other than Macdonald River</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="987 496 1503 523">L3.4.1</td> <td data-bbox="1503 496 1659 523">Infrastructure</td> <td data-bbox="1659 496 2130 523">Promote water use efficiency and water saving</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="987 528 2130 560">L4</td> <td data-bbox="1503 528 2130 560"></td> <td data-bbox="1659 528 2130 560">Walcha will increase the use and production of renewable energy</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="987 564 2130 596">L4.1</td> <td data-bbox="1503 564 2130 596"></td> <td data-bbox="1659 564 2130 596">Establish (with partners) alternate renewable energy supplies that will exceed the energy needs of our community</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="987 601 1503 676">L4.1.1</td> <td data-bbox="1503 601 1659 676">Office of the General Manager</td> <td data-bbox="1659 601 2130 676">Support individuals and groups that setup renewable energy systems</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="987 681 2130 713">L5</td> <td data-bbox="1503 681 2130 713"></td> <td data-bbox="1659 681 2130 713">Agricultural activities will be environmentally sustainable</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="987 718 1503 750">L5.1</td> <td data-bbox="1503 718 2130 750"></td> <td data-bbox="1659 718 2130 750">Protect and promote farming practices using the principle of environmental sustainability</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="987 754 1503 798">L5.1.1</td> <td data-bbox="1503 754 1659 798">Envi Development</td> <td data-bbox="1659 754 2130 798">Partner with other government agencies to promote environmental sustainable practices</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	DELIVERY PROGRAM AND OPERATIONAL PLAN			Action	Area of Responsibility	Task	L3.2		Provide additional off creek storage capacity to drought proof Walcha while minimising the impact of water extraction from the Macdonald River	L3.2.1	Infrastructure	Investigate suitable sites for additional off creek storage reservoirs	L3.3		Identify possible new water sources	L3.3.1	Infrastructure	Find water sources other than Macdonald River	L3.4.1	Infrastructure	Promote water use efficiency and water saving	L4		Walcha will increase the use and production of renewable energy	L4.1		Establish (with partners) alternate renewable energy supplies that will exceed the energy needs of our community	L4.1.1	Office of the General Manager	Support individuals and groups that setup renewable energy systems	L5		Agricultural activities will be environmentally sustainable	L5.1		Protect and promote farming practices using the principle of environmental sustainability	L5.1.1	Envi Development	Partner with other government agencies to promote environmental sustainable practices
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⁹ Walcha Council (June 2021). Ordinary Council Meeting – Business Paper. Item 6.1 Attachment – Draft 2021-2022 Operational Plan. Found at: <https://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/JUN21-Item-6.1-Attachment-DRAFT-2021-2022-Operational-Plan-and-Delivery-Program-2018-2021.pdf>

DATE	COUNCIL ACTION	EVIDENCE						
30/06/2021	<p><u>JUNE 2021 ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING BUSSINESS PAPER – ITEM 6.1</u>¹⁰</p> <p>Report to Council (p.17) “to allow Council to formally adopt the 2021-2022 Operational Plan” and report on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Public Exhibition of Draft Document;” and • “Changes to the draft Operational Plan since it was placed on public exhibition.” <p><u>The report communicated:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One submission was received during public exhibition pertaining to <i>Capital Expenditure – Transport & Communication</i> (p.17); and • Changes to the draft Operational Plan since it was placed on public exhibition (p.18), included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Additional \$1.65 million in capital funding for Walcha road network. ○ Increase the 2020-2021 general fund program value to \$17.6 million. <p><u>NOTE</u></p> <p>a. The text reported under the heading “Changes to the draft Operational Plan since it was placed on public exhibition” is verbatim text transcribed from the 2020 Operational Plan business paper (p.19)¹¹</p> <p>b. Amendments⁹ to the Draft Operational Plan made on 24 June 2021 were not explicitly reported to Council in the business paper¹⁰</p>	<p><u>Public Exhibition of Draft Document</u></p> <p>Report: a) <u>ADOPTION OF DRAFT 2021-2022 OPERATIONAL PLAN</u> <i>Public Exhibition of Draft Document</i> In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, the Draft 2021-2022 Operational Plan was placed on public exhibition and public comment invited. The report was published on Thursday 27 May 2021 and submissions closed Wednesday 23 June 2021.</p> <p>The following submissions were received.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Function:</th> <th>Submission Theme:</th> <th>Response by Council:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Capital Expenditure & Transport Communication</td> <td>Objects to the removal of the unsealed roads “Dust Suppression” budget allocation and offers a co-contribution to the cost of completing dust suppression work at their property frontage.</td> <td>Council has a previously allocated \$15,000 towards completing a bitumen seal at the frontage of a residence to reduce dust nuisance. The location of this work has been based on a prioritisation process with no contribution sought from the property owner. The DRAFT Budget does not allocate funds to works in 2021-2022 as the actual cost of this work is approximately \$30,000 per section and the desire to present a balanced budget. Recommend that Council’s Dust Suppression Policy is reviewed in 2021-2022 proposing that all future dust suppression work is completed on a co-contribution basis.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><u>Changes to the Draft Operational Plan since it was placed on public exhibition</u></p> <p>Walcha Council Ordinary Council Meeting 30 June 2021</p>  <p><u>Changes to the draft Operational Plan since it was placed on public exhibition</u> During the exhibition period, the NSW State Government announced their assessment of Fixing Local Roads grant program. This announcement provides for an additional \$1.65million in capital funding for Walcha’s road network. This increases the total 2020-2021 general fund program value to \$17.6million. These changes and additional projects have been included in the revised Operational Plan and Budget presented with this report.</p>	Function:	Submission Theme:	Response by Council:	Capital Expenditure & Transport Communication	Objects to the removal of the unsealed roads “Dust Suppression” budget allocation and offers a co-contribution to the cost of completing dust suppression work at their property frontage.	Council has a previously allocated \$15,000 towards completing a bitumen seal at the frontage of a residence to reduce dust nuisance. The location of this work has been based on a prioritisation process with no contribution sought from the property owner. The DRAFT Budget does not allocate funds to works in 2021-2022 as the actual cost of this work is approximately \$30,000 per section and the desire to present a balanced budget. Recommend that Council’s Dust Suppression Policy is reviewed in 2021-2022 proposing that all future dust suppression work is completed on a co-contribution basis.
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¹⁰ Walcha Council (June 2021). Ordinary Council Meeting – Business Paper. Item 6.1 – Adoption of 2021-2022 Operational Plan including 2021-2022: Budget, Fees & Charges AND Rates & Charges (WO/2021/02261). Found at: <https://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/June-2021-Ordinary-Meeting-Business-Paper-30062021.pdf>

¹¹ Walcha Council (July 2020). Ordinary Council Meeting – Business Paper. Item 6.1 – Adoption of 2020-2021 Operational Plan including 2020-2021: Budget, Fees & Charges AND Rates & Charges (WO/2020/02352). Found at: <https://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/July-2020-Ordinary-Meeting-Business-Paper.pdf>

DATE	COUNCIL ACTION	EVIDENCE
30/06/2021	<p><u>WALCHA COUNCIL ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – JUNE 2021</u></p> <p>Item 6.1 – Adoption of 2021-2022 Operational Plan (WO/2021/02261)¹⁰</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION that:</u></p> <p>1. In accordance with the provisions of Section 405 and 406 of the Local Government Act 1993, Council ADOPT the 2021-2022 Draft Operational Plan which includes the 2021–2022 Revenue Policy and 2021-2022 Fees & Charges as Final.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> on the Motion of Councillors Lyon and Kermode (WO/2021/02463)¹²</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Walcha Council Ordinary Council Meeting 30 June 2021</p> <div style="text-align: right;"></div> <hr/> <p>Item: 6.1 Ref: WO/2021/02261 Title: Adoption of 2021-2022 Operational Plan including 2021-2022: Budget, Fees & Charges AND Rates & Charges Author: General Manager Previous Items: May 2021 – Draft 2021-2022 Operational Plan & Budget – WO/2021/01855 Attachment: 2021-2022 Draft Operational Plan under separate cover.</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Community Strategic Plan Reference:</i></p> <p><i>Goal – 8.1 – Walcha Council will exemplify good leadership, mutual respect and trust by being inclusive, ensuring open information and communication are encouraging active participation at all levels.</i> <i>Strategy – 8.1.2 – Provide a framework for the efficient and effective administration of Council.</i> <i>Goal – 8.2 – Council rate funding for local government projects will be supplemented by income generated from other sources.</i> <i>Strategy – 8.2.1 – Maintain a stable and secure financial structure for Council.</i></p> <hr/> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> <u>That:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In accordance with the provisions of Section 405 and 406 of the Local Government Act 1993, Council ADOPT the 2021-2022 Draft Operational Plan which includes the 2021–2022 Revenue Policy and 2021-2022 Fees & Charges as Final; and 2. In accordance with Section 494 of the Local Government Act, 1993, Council MAKE and LEVY the Rates and Charges for 2021-2022 for the General, Water and Sewerage Funds, and Waste Management Charges as detailed in the Report; and 3. Council AUTHORISE the General Manager to arrange for the preparation and the service of the 2021-2022 Rate notices. </div> <hr/> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>6.1 Adoption of 2021-2022 Operational Plan WO/2021/02261</p> <p>262 <u>RESOLVED</u> on the Motion of Councillors Lyon and Kermode that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In accordance with the provisions of Section 405 and 406 of the Local Government Act 1993, Council ADOPT the 2021-2022 Draft Operational Plan which includes the 2021–2022 Revenue Policy and 2021-2022 Fees & Charges as Final; and 2. In accordance with Section 494 of the Local Government Act, 1993, Council MAKE and LEVY the Rates and Charges for 2021-2022 for the General, Water and Sewerage Funds, and Waste Management Charges as detailed in the Report; and 3. Council AUTHORISE the General Manager to arrange for the preparation and the service of the 2021-2022 Rate notices. </div>

¹² Walcha Council (June 2021). Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes (WO/2021/02463). Found at: <https://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/JUN21-Ordinary-Meeting-Minutes-30062021.pdf>

DATE	COUNCIL ACTION	EVIDENCE									
July 2021	Walcha Council 2021-2022 Operational Plan published on Council website with replaced wording for task L4.1.1 ¹³	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="842 177 936 220">L4</td> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="945 177 2132 220">Walcha will increase the use and production of renewable energy</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="842 225 936 268">L4.1</td> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="945 225 2132 268">Establish (with partners) alternate renewable energy supplies that will exceed the energy needs of our community</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="842 272 936 316">L4.1.1</td> <td data-bbox="945 272 1460 316">Increase the production of renewable energy</td> <td data-bbox="1469 272 2132 316"> Office of the General Manager Review and support Councils use of renewable energy opportunities. </td> </tr> </table>	L4	Walcha will increase the use and production of renewable energy		L4.1	Establish (with partners) alternate renewable energy supplies that will exceed the energy needs of our community		L4.1.1	Increase the production of renewable energy	Office of the General Manager Review and support Councils use of renewable energy opportunities.
L4	Walcha will increase the use and production of renewable energy										
L4.1	Establish (with partners) alternate renewable energy supplies that will exceed the energy needs of our community										
L4.1.1	Increase the production of renewable energy	Office of the General Manager Review and support Councils use of renewable energy opportunities.									

¹³ Walcha Council (2021). 2021-2022 Operational Plan. Found at: <https://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/WC-20212022-Operational-Plan.pdf>

Walcha Council
PO Box 2
Walcha NSW 2354
19 June 2022



Dear Mayor and Councillors,

RE: Comments on Walcha 2032 Draft Community Strategic Plan and Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

I am writing this letter to communicate my feedback after reviewing the *Walcha 2032 Draft Community Strategic Plan* and associated *Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan*.

I have two main points that pertain to both documents:

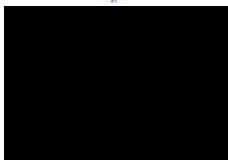
1. I welcome and support the amendments made to enhance Council governance and accountability; and
2. I do not support any amendment of the existing:
 - a. Community Strategic Goal 6.4 – *Walcha will increase the use and production of renewable energy;*
 - b. Strategy 6.4.1 – *Establish (with partners) alternate renewable energy supplies that will exceed the energy needs of our community;* and
 - c. Action 6.4.1.1 – *Increase the production of renewable energy.*

The proposed amended changes to the community strategic goal 6.4, corresponding strategy and action completely change the existing direction from stating the Walcha Council will facilitate the production and use of renewable energy to implying the Walcha Council will just simply consume renewable energy. With all due respect, according to the *Australian Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources*, 29% of Australia's total electricity generation is from renewable sources, therefore if the Walcha Council draw electricity from the grid to run their operation, then the proposed amended goal would have already been achieved.

Furthermore, the proposed amendments contradict Walcha Councils *Local Strategic Planning Statement 2036*, which states, "*supporting growth and industry diversification*" and "*attracting renewable energy infrastructure*" (p.8) are both local opportunities that support the achievement of strategic planning priorities.

I am very disappointed with the approach adopted by the Walcha Council in facilitating the review of the community strategic plan as I believe the proposed amendments are not representative of community opinion, even worse the proposed amendments suggest to me that the Walcha Council are not invested in activities that better ensure the sustained future of our town and community.

Yours Sincerely,



WALCHA COUNCIL RECEIVED	
DATE	20.06.2022
GDA REF	
TRIM FILE	
DOC NO	
H/C FILE	

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 June 2022 2:22 PM
To: Council General Walcha
Subject: Strategic plan

Categories: [REDACTED]

Dear Barry, General Manger. I have read the walcha community strategic community plan. I am in full support of the plan. Thank you. [REDACTED].

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 June 2022 1:18 PM
To: Council General Walcha
Subject: Draft Plans
Categories: [Redacted]

Dear Mr Omundson,

We write to advise Council of our objection to the Draft Community Strategic Plan 2032, and the Draft Delivery Program 2022-2023 and Operational Plan.

We support the removal of the renewable energy being developed in Walcha.

We question how focus areas were removed from these plans?

Walcha has many more opportunities for development that are not included in the plans as the plans focus only on tourism.

Please include plans to continue to develop and support the Agricultural communities, manufacturing businesses, housing developments, industrial land development and town services such as child care.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 June 2022 2:05 PM
To: Council General Walcha
Subject: Attn. The General Manager - Draft Community Strategic Plan

Categories: [REDACTED]

Dear Barry,

I am pleased that we have mutual interests in the future sustainability of this community, and I am in full support of the Draft Community Strategic Plan.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 June 2022 5:28 PM
To: Council General Walcha
Subject: Draft strategic plan

Categories: [REDACTED]

I write to advise of my complete support for the draft strategic community strategic plan 2032 and the draft delivery programme 2022 -2023 and operation plan.

Thank you

Your Sincerely

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

[REDACTED]
Wednesday, 22 June 2022 12:39 PM

To:

Council General Walcha

Subject:

Support for the Draft Plans

Categories:

[REDACTED]

Dear Mr Omundson

I write to advise Council of my complete support for the Draft Community Strategic Plan 2032, and the Draft Delivery Program 2022-2023 and Operational Plan.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 June 2022 1:49 PM
To: Council General Walcha
Subject: Draft Community Strategic Plan

Categories: [REDACTED]

Att: Mr Barry Omundson

Dear Mr Omundson,

I write to advise Council of my complete support for the Draft Community Strategic Plan 2032, and the Draft Delivery Program 2022-2023 and Operational Plan.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

6 Aberbaldie Road PO Box 33 Walcha NSW 2354
Phone 02 6777 2588 Fax 02 6777 2925
walchavet@bigpond.com.au

*JM & PJ King Pty Limited ABN 27 052 368 886
trading as Walcha Veterinary Supplies*

The General Manager
Walcha Council
2w Hamilton Street
WALCHA, NSW, 2354

21st June 2022

Dear Mr Barry Omundson,

I, [REDACTED] am writing this letter to show my full support of the Council Draft Community Strategic Plan.

I can be contacted at anytime if you wish to discuss this further.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

The General Manager
Walcha Council
2w Hamilton Street
WALCHA, NSW, 2354

22nd June 2022

Dear Mr Barry Omundson,

I, [REDACTED] am writing this letter to show my full support of the Council Draft Community Strategic Plan.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss this further.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

Walcha 2032 Strategic Plan

WALCHA COUNCIL RECEIVED	
DATE	21.06.2022
GDA REF	
TRIM FILE	
DOC NO	
W/C FILE	

I know that a lot of people submitted responses to the Walcha 2032 Community Strategic plan. I also know that quite a few people wrote supporting renewable energy as a very important contributor to the future of Walcha.

I have read the Council draft response and I must admit I was very disappointed with what I found. It seemed to me that there was even less mention of renewable energy support than there was in the original. In the 29 pages of the draft I did not detect any degree of support, let alone enthusiasm for encouraging renewable energy generation in Walcha.

I do understand that Winterbourne Wind will donate \$ 750,000 annually (indexed) to the community. I also believe that the Ruby Hills project plan to donate a similar amount. This is a substantial amount of income for our small community before we even consider the following advantages.

A substantial number of jobs in the development phase and ongoing employment for a smaller number in the long term.

Businesses, schools, churches, clubs, pubs, sporting teams to name but a few, would benefit enormously from an increased population.

Local construction contractors would be able to take advantage of an increased workload, and employ more people.

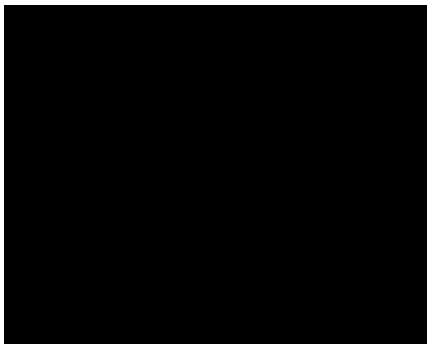
Better roads built by the investors

The prospect of rate increases on land where infrastructure is located.

I have just mentioned a few benefits that would revitalize our *community and lower our demographic distribution by age*. Not to mention give financial security to our Council and help prevent us being swallowed up by Armidale or Tamworth in another amalgamation debacle.

I ask why is our Council overlooking such huge potential investment in Walcha?? WHY?

I also ask is it wise for the Walcha Council to be seen as not supporting the plans of the Federal and State governments to lower carbon emissions?. Indeed to be seen as ignoring the wishes of the Australian people as shown in the recent election.



[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 June 2022 2:20 PM
To: Council General Walcha
Subject: Walcha Community Strategic Plan

Categories: [REDACTED]

Dear Barry

I am writing in relation to the Walcha 2032 Community Strategic Plan Draft. I have read this document and am in full support of its adoption.

Thank you for the work you have put into this.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 June 2022 4:04 PM
To: Council General Walcha
Cc: Council General Walcha; Mark Berry; Matt Macarthur Onslow
Subject: Draft Community Strategic Plan

Categories: [REDACTED]

Mr Barry Omundson
The General Manager
Walcha Council

Dear Sir,

I wish to register my full support for the abovementioned plan for Walcha and other cooperating Councils to pursue decommissioning bonds from wind farm developers.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 June 2022 3:14 PM
To: Council General Walcha
Subject: Strategic Plan

Categories: [REDACTED]

Dear Barry,

I am writing in relation to the Walcha 2032 Community Strategic Plan Draft. I have read this document and am in full support of its adoption. I believe it is a well balanced plan and looks after the interests of a broad spectrum of the community.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 13 June 2022 9:55 PM
To: Omundson, Barry [REDACTED] >
Subject: Budget Submission

Hi Barry

I would like to make a brief submission on the operation plan/budget. My general comment would be, given the precarious position of the Council finances at the moment, all discretionary expenditure should be excluded from the budget at least until the sustainability review is complete. Examples such as a carport at the Croudace Street residence, footpath and kerb and guttering renewals and extensions, while nice to have, should be put on hold.

The plant reserve is confusing-

*The most recent cost review states there was \$899,000 in the reserve at 30/6/21. It further states that \$520,000 is to be transferred out, leaving a predicted balance at 30/6/22 of \$378,000.

*In the operation plan on page 30 it is stated that there is \$0 (nil) being transferred to reserves, but on page 39 it is stated that there is a predicted balance of \$1,181,848 as at 30/6/22. This contradicts the last cost review figure mentioned above. It is also noted there will be a transfer in of \$392,529 and out of \$198,558 (these figures are not included in the budget summary).

Further, there does not appear to have been a transfer to the plant reserve in the last two years, however depreciation in the period ended 30/6/21 was \$463,000 and \$483,000 in the period ended 30/6/20. If an amount equivalent to the depreciation had been transferred to the plant reserve in the last two years, as was the minimum in previous years, I do not believe Council would now need to borrow \$978,539 (page 12) to finance new plant purchases in the forthcoming budget. This practice has resulted in Council not having to borrow to finance plant purchases for more than eleven years. The plant reserve fund at 30/6/19 amounted to \$1,453,000

A more detailed budget should be available to the public so as to ascertain where the money is being spent. For example, "administration operating expenditure" is a one-liner of \$2,020,929 – which is a 17% increase on the previous year's budget. How can a meaningful comment be made without a detailed breakdown of that total figure. An example can be witness here

<https://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/MAR17-Item-6.4-App-A-Draft-Budget-20172018.pdf>

It appears that the Preschool, Early Intervention and WCCC are predicted to make a surplus. If this is the case, these profits should be transferred to restricted assets, not used to prop up the general fund result.

I also believe that the public notice of the operational plans does not meet the required public exhibition period.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 June 2022 12:13 PM
To: Council General Walcha
Subject: COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

Categories: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr Omundson,

I am writing to advise my full support of the Draft Community Strategic Plan, and the Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Your Sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 8 June 2022 9:42 AM
To: Omundson, Barry
Cc: Noakes, Eric
Subject: CSP, DP&OP review

Hi Barry,

I read through the CSP and the DP&OP put out for the public to review.

While I was reading below are a few things that I thought might need reviewing or I had questions around for my clarification.

Hope I don't sound picky but these are obviously important documents we need to get right, even the small things.

Have you received any correspondence from the public yet?

CSP
Add Tourism Committee to CSP
P11 add CSP 3.2

Operational Plan

P10 at Operating Results before Capital add the (surplus)

p10 are we going to do the quarry management for \$70,000? I thought there was some discussion around this, which I may have miss understood?

P11-12 for my clarification - the road works funds coming out of own source revenue is money from FAGS and funds put in to make the contributions balance for R2R that is required?

P26 CSP 3.2 add

Type overs of page number over finance numbers on pages 29,30,33,34 (improve presentation)

P33 street lighting - are those cost for R&M and the electricity to run the lights

P65 pool prices - for the family day ticket and pensioner ticket should the numbers be rounded up for ease of change for the staff attending to the pool?

Have a nice day.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 June 2022 1:18 PM
To: Council General Walcha
Subject: Support for Walcha Council's Draft Plans

Categories: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr Omundson

I wish to advise Walcha Council of my support for the Draft Community Strategic Plan, the Draft Delivery Program 2022 - 2023 and the Operational Plan.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 22 June 2022 1:47 PM
To: Council General Walcha
Subject: Draft Community Strategic Plan 2032

Categories: [REDACTED]

Dear Barry,

I write to advise Council of my complete support for the Draft Community Strategic Plan 2032, and the Draft Delivery Program 2022-2023 and Operational Plan.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

[REDACTED]
Wednesday, 22 June 2022 2:07 PM

To:

Council General Walcha

Subject:

Support for Walcha Council Draft Plans

Categories:

Dear Mr Omundson

I write to advise Council of my complete support for the Draft Community Strategic Plan 2032, and the Draft Delivery Program 2022-2023 and Operational Plan.

I believe these Plans will maintain the character of Walcha while protecting our rural land and supporting the townspeople into the future.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Walcha Council
2W Hamilton Street
WALCHA NSW 2354

20th June 2022

Public Consultation

Revised and Updated Draft Community Strategic Plan – Walcha 2032

[REDACTED] thanks Walcha Council for the opportunity to submit this feedback for your consideration in finalising the revised and updated Community Strategic Plan – Walcha 2032.

The revised and updated Community Strategic Plan has not addressed the issues raised in our previous submission and the most relevant State Government Plan. The NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap which has been legislated and supported by all major parties will have a significant impact on Walcha as it is located in the middle of the southern part of the New England Renewable Energy Zone.

<https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/government-and-regulation/electricity-infrastructure-roadmap>

The draft Community Strategic Plan only makes casual reference to renewable energy and only in relation to meeting the local energy needs. This ignores the proposed development of large scale solar, wind and pumped hydro projects around Walcha worth billions of dollars. These projects will bring investment and jobs to Walcha. The Community Strategic Plan should recognise this and formulate a plan to take advantage of this situation.

Walcha faces the same difficulties as many small rural towns. Despite the best efforts of many in the community and Council business activity has reduced in the last 15 years (eg the sawmill closing) and there is a declining and aging population. In 1998 a group of 40 Walcha residents developed the Walcha 2020 a strategic plan for Walcha. Copy enclosed. Many of the themes in that report are included in the current Walcha 2032 Plan.

However, the situation now facing Walcha is much the same as it was back in 1998. This was summed up in Warwick Fletcher's letter to the editor in last week's Apsley Advocate. As described in his letter without significant change the slow decline will continue or alternatively Walcha can embrace the opportunities that the large scale renewable energy development brings.

Section 2.1 Business and Jobs is fundamental as almost all other activities in Walcha flow from the businesses in town. This section should reference the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap and outline a plan for local businesses and the community to take advantage of the large scale renewable developments in the area but also find solutions to any potential problems that may arise.

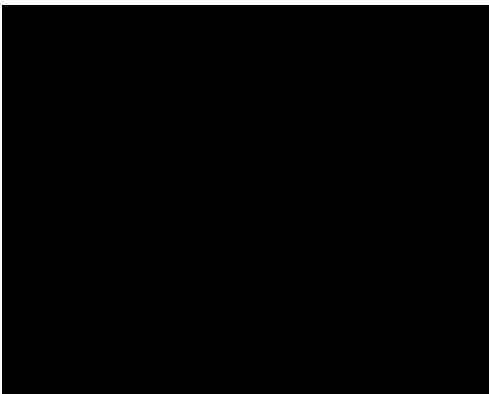
[REDACTED]

Section 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 These sections could be facilitated by the installation of electric vehicle charging stations. There are two State government programs to assist both travelling tourists and those staying overnight in Walcha.

Section 6.4 Local Environment and Liveable Communities. This section could be expanded to include the suggestion for Walcha Council to reduce operating costs by installing renewables where power is consumed as outlined in our earlier submission. Copy enclosed.

As we indicated previously the Walcha Energy Team would be pleased to further discuss any details of strategies of the NSW Government Plans and how they relate to our development plans with the Council.

Yours faithfully,



WALCHA

2020

**Future Search
Workshop Summary**
held on the 30th & 31st May 1998

A project funded by a grant from D.P.I.E.
under the Rural Communities Program.

WALCHA 2020

On Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning , the 30th and 31st May, 40 Walcha residents met at the "The Old School Gallery" to discuss the needs and priorities of their community as they move towards 2020.

This document represents their ideas and useful information from the community. It provides a starting point to develop the suggested projects and apply for appropriate assistance.

Andrew Hunter *Graham MacKay*
(Facilitators)

This future search activity was made possible by a grant from DPIE under the Rural Communities Program

July 1998

Printed by the Walcha Telecottage

WALCHIA 2020

The first part of the report describes the background and objectives of the study. It also includes a literature review and a description of the study area.

The second part of the report describes the methodology used in the study. It includes a description of the data collection methods and the statistical analysis used.

Results of the study are presented in this section. It includes a description of the findings and a discussion of their implications.

The final part of the report discusses the conclusions of the study and provides recommendations for future research. It also includes a list of references.

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How it unfolded

The Future Search program was divided into a number of activities:

1. Initial publicity focused on raising awareness in the community through the "Apsley Advocate" and conducting a survey of perceptions and needs. These are listed in **Appendix 1**. Fifty eight people responded to the survey and the results are given in **Appendix 2**.
2. One hundred and fifty six individuals from local organisations and groups from within Walcha and the surrounding townships were invited to the Future Search. A general invitation was issued to the community through the local paper to attend the initial videoconference and idea generating session.
3. On Saturday, the 30th May, delegates met for lunch combined with a videoconference with the Rural Development Centre at the University of New England. This was not only an opportunity of participating in a Videoconference but also to discuss possible uses for rural people and businesses.



4. **Session 1** After an introduction to the Future Search an ideas generation session followed that allowed people to put up ideas on what they considered Walcha needed as it moved towards the year 2020. Each idea was outlined to the whole group and placed in categories (using Post-it Notes). The initial categories included;

- Business opportunities
- Supporting business
- Infrastructure needs
- Youth/social needs
- Education and Training

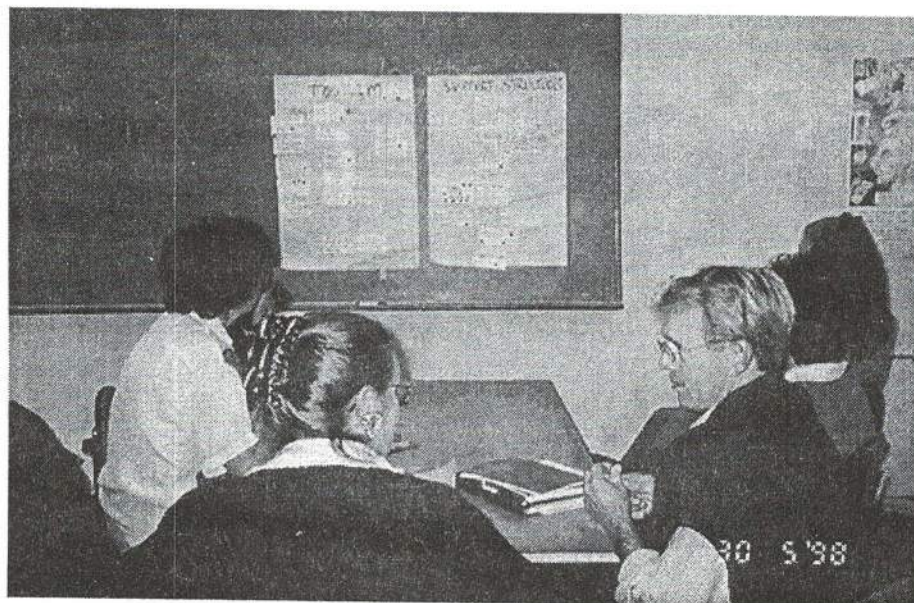
It was realised that some of these categories were opportunities while others were needs, but they were considered together. Everyone was given 3 stickers which they could use to highlight their favourite project or idea. The ideas generated and their prioritisation are given below.

5. **Session 2** After afternoon tea, some of the above categories were collapsed together and the invited delegates (**Appendix 3**), in groups of 6 to 8 people, selected a revised category from;

- Business opportunities
- Tourism
- Social and Education needs
- Infrastructure

and met to look through the ideas generated. They were asked to add, tease out and prioritise these into the best 3 or 4 ideas that were relevant to Walcha's future and were achievable. A reporting session occurred before the end of the day where the priorities were listed and each group had to say 'Why a project was selected and Who would benefit'

6. **Session 3** On the Sunday morning (31st May), these same groups met to expand their ideas on the selected projects. This involved looking at the 'Strengths, Weaknesses and Threats' and then taking 2 of their three projects and asking a number of questions as outlined in **Appendix 4**



7. **Session 4** After morning tea, all delegates met to look at all the projects to see which were the most needed and realistic, how they interrelated, who would champion them and how to move forward. A **Walcha 2020 Steering Committee** was established to move the various projects forward. That committee consists of;

Lindsay Stace
Jan Dunbar
John Heffernan
Dar Brookes
Chris Weber

The committee is already active in promotion of selected ideas from the Workshop as shown in Appendix 5

What follows on page 6 represents the ideas generated from many pages of 'butcher's paper' produced by the whole group and specific interest groups.



Generating Ideas and Prioritising

Forty people generated the following ideas. They were then given 3 stickers to select their priority projects across all ideas and not just in one category. The number of asterisks below indicates the relative importance of the various ideas and projects as indicated by the stickers. It provided a guide for subsequent discussions and development of workable projects.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

- Open the Walcha bank*****
- Tele industry*****
- Backpackers Hostel*****
- Value adding to WOOL****
- Elderly retirement centre**
- Short tours from Sydney**
- Expand tele-industry - CD Roms - Tele field day**
- Carbon sequestration*
- Kiosk at Apsley Falls*
- Dementia care*
- An eating place with loads of character and very good food in town
- "Boutique" Agriculture
- Develop merino field day
- Agro forestry
- Small town consultants
- Organised, escorted, summer respite holidays for city living frail aged/disabled and their carers
- I.T. training support
- Pilot tele town
- *Need* for recognition by metropolitan areas - not necessarily that we exist, but that we are *capable* - e.g. data entry at Telecottage
- National/international support organisation, eg Telstra enquires
- Business marketing Co-ops
- Goal for Walcha
- Greater development of our airport - training opportunities
- Designed tours - joint venture with coach companies
- Gorge tours

TOURISM

- Public art, mural, etc AND public art, open air gallery*****
- Ride the rim (mountain bikes)***
- Trout festival, etc AND trout festival and activities***
- A weir!! from Bowling Club to Middle Street bridge!!***
- Sculpture to be seen from the moon**
- Promotion of sport (upgrading facilities for major events)**
- Opportunity. A system where visitors/exchange students, or similar to Walcha, plant a tree. This would encourage them to come back to see 'their tree'. Maybe a 'visitors carbon sink'**
- Annual event like to Guyra GP*
- Tight rope walk across the Gorge(s) (compulsory event!!!)*
- Purchase/utilise old theatre (Dalgety) building for permanent tourism history display*
- A new Walcha tourism video*

- Magazine feature on Walcha*
- Unique community art*
- Woolshed, performing sheep*
- Stony Creek walk/lookout sculptures*
- Cold climate plant festival (eg Bowral Tulip Festival). Cold climate bulbs, all daffodils around amphitheatre, similar to Bowral's Festival*
- Hanggliding/Gliding Centre (Niangla/Nowendoc)
- Annual town wrapping event
- Agriculture for dummies
- Tourism Internet sites
- Beautify and brighten up the town so as people will stay here
- Amphitheatre
- Aboriginal walk; North side walk - showing aboriginal culture - dance - museum
- Find/develop a town theme, eg Christmas in July, flower festival, land of the Gorges
- Stone wall
- Street furniture
- Radial radiata pine
- Arts festival
- Daffodil festival
- Festivals - local history writers - film fest!
- Music in the mountains
- Festival (Jazz concert)
- Festival featuring: art, daffodils, stonework, woodwork, and walks around gorge etc
- Symphony concert in the Gorge
- Paddock to plate festival

SOCIAL and EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- Youth centre*****
- Aboriginal culture field study centre (for schools, colleges)*****
- Youth/long term unemployed - work schemes**
- Youth mentor scheme*
- Sound and light show at Apsley Falls with aboriginal story telling and dances, food
- Uni students, exchange students - education for local people and tourists
- Rural apprenticeship scheme
- Use youth as ambassadors
- TV and radio station

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Public toilet in Derby Street - shop area****
- Extend the mobile phone network - analogue and digital***
- Infrastructure - quality and equal access to telecommunications services***
- Improve rural phone lines (internet, fax, difficulties out of town)**
- Upgrade the old telephone exchange - to allow existing businesses with old numbers to access modern phone technology*
- Business Networks; Intranet*
- For organisations to let the businesses know before they are having a function*
- Taxi*
- Maintain hospital
- Cinema

Selecting and Developing Ideas

The following ideas developed from those put forward in Session 1 above and were selected and developed in interest groups during Sessions 2 and 3.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

1. Local Bank

Establish a Branch office of "Rural" Bank (Aussie loans)

- keep money within local community
- support 'locals' - finance local ventures!!
- keep banking service within Walcha
 - access
 - safety
 - *must* be profitable
- no local authority!! - which is a problem
- be a lender
- act as an investor
- borrower - all people catered for
- decentralisation and local employment

Alternative to the 'Bank' concept

Get ATM - Deposit and withdrawal facilities
- cash collection services (local business opportunity)

Remote Bank (from a Regional Centre)

Home banking for loans!!

Contingency of the Walcha or Local Bank if existing banks go!!

2. Backpackers

- need is there
- all will benefit
- can develop work stay programs
- could be in town and/or out of town

Strengths:

- easy to set up, low cost
- few legal requirements

Weaknesses:

- low profit
- long term to become known and viable

3. Aged and incapacitated respite holiday

- opportunity there: aging population. This is a new idea
- involves incapacitated, carers, Walcha residents (eventually in long term)

Strengths: use local existing facilities

Weaknesses: costly

4. Tele industry

- keep Walcha up to date - only way to go for remote areas
- Walcha business, whole community

Strengths:

Telecottage already renowned - increases Walcha's profile
Infrastructure in place, with technical knowledge
low overheads, employment potential

Weaknesses:

resistance to change
tele communication lines (costs)
lack of profit/commitment/recognition of problems by Telstra
metropolitan areas do not have confidence we can do the work, ie Govt bodies

5. Value adding or developing agriculture

- working farm - tourism (tours, shop)
Adjunct to a 'Grand' Tour
- see a working farm - sheep/cattle/rabbits
cuddle lambs; working dogs
Synergy needed!!
- Farmer + Tour operator + IDEA + shop/cafe
- Interaction, integration with local businesses, tourism - need to utilise opportunity
- Itinerary - social activities to complement
- Catering - locals need to expand services
- Management team needed to provide facilities
- Agri forestry - carbon sink
- In progress - keep pushing
- Government program - push for environment (Farm Journal)
- Industry paying people to store carbon
- Adopt a tree
- sponsor a tree: visits, lessens rift between city and country
- camp. swap home
- develop income before harvest
- access to carbon tax

Strengths:

agriculture in fundamental to Walcha
novel, innovative of interest to city people
infrastructure in place - low cost
whole community benefits as adds to the 'value' chain

Weaknesses:

synergy (linking tours, motels, farmers etc) is hard to accomplish

TOURISM

6. Develop Unique Community

- Use our resources
 - human
 - geographical
 - cultural heritage
- Develop open-air Gallery
 - sculpture
 - murals
 - stone structures
 - street scape
 - amphitheatre
- Bird's Eye View
 - Walcha from the moon
- Walks that celebrate our diverse cultural heritage

Weaknesses: need Project Officer and Council support

7. Autumn Event - Music in the WILD

- A mix of music
 - Celtic
 - country
 - pan pipes
 - aboriginal
 - opera
- **Buskers**
 - at the Gorge
 - Stoney Creek
 - Rowley's Creek
 - Apsley Falls
- **Venues**
 - old school gallery
 - churches
 - gardens
 - Anglican hall
 - M.P.C.
 - Langford
 - service clubs
- **Ultimate:** Yothu Yindi at the Gorge

8. Spring Festival

Strengths

- committees in place now
- promotes/uses existing resources
-

Weaknesses

- climate/weather in spring
- accommodation
- competing events

9. Video for the Backpacker Bus

- Entrepreneur needed
- TOTAL PACKAGE needed!

SOCIAL and EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

10. Funding for Youth worker

- to help run the centre - organise mentors
- run youth employment schemes
- refer to relevant services

11. Youth Centre for 12-17 year olds

- located in town
- loose supervision --- mentors
- recreation - unstructured
 - snooker, game boards, basketball hoop
- recreation - structured activities
 - what do they want
 - courses
 - bus trips
 - youth radio station?
 - guest speakers
 - sex
 - drugs
 - alcohol
 - budgeting money
- kids needed on the committee
- drop in centre- music - coffee - chat areas
- 5-9pm weekdays
- earlier - 11pm weekends

12. Children's Nursery

- buy the site with council/comm clubs funds
- run by
 - service clubs?
 - police?
 - parent roster
- use mentors

13. Aboriginal Field Study Centre for schools/colleges

- set up like - Seaview and Lake Keepit
- Use Amaroo guides
 - use museum and field trips - stay in huts in the bush at;
 - Apsley Falls
 - Stoney Creek
 - Tia Falls
 - National Parks upgrading

- What have we got at Amaroo?
 - trained story tellers and dancers
 - bush tucker teachers/cooks - Sue Hudson from Uralla
 - tours but require funding
 - bark painting/art etc
 - museum
- Funding
 - government funding for new opportunities
- Aboriginal food curriculum
- Contact the uni
 - ag students, archaeology, geology and botany students

14. Distance Education

- Develop a Centre for distance education
- Support for university external studies
- Use Telecottage, ACE, School and Library to help promote HSC studies in less popular subjects.
- Work with ACE: TAFE, Universities - to develop new initiatives
- At the School: develop Vocational Ed - to Industry Standards
- Note the move away from educational institutions - we must be flexible!.

INFRASTRUCTURE

15. Public Toilet

- Where? - Attached to youth or recreational centre

16. Maintain Hospital

- The price of continuing Hospital Facility is
ETERNAL VIGILANCE BY THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.

Weakness: declining Government funding

17. Telecommunications

- \$10,000 needed for feasibility study
- Quality and equal access essential
- Upgrade old system is imperative
- Mobile phones - reception needed along Thunderbolt's Way

It was noted there was a need for a Cinema and Taxi - but these are profit driven ventures dictated by population size.

Key Projects

The ideas listed below came from the previous section (generated in Sessions 2 & 3) and were discussed by the whole group in the final session. Some ideas overlapped and will require joint planning and submissions. To ensure that action is taken to move these projects ahead then an overall steering committee was established consisting of;

Lindsay Stace
Jan Dunbar
John Heffernan
Dar Brookes
Chris Weber

1 Open-air Gallery Forum To Make Walcha Unique

There is a need to thrash-out the concept of making Walcha an open-air gallery.

This requires;

- Steering committee
- Research
- Invite public comment
- Talk to **Chemainus** (in Canada)
- Talk to other towns
-

Strengths

- human resources - of service clubs - artists - local entrepreneurs
- natural resources
- Council support
- community spirit
- topography
- location
- climate diversification

Weaknesses

- some community resistance
- funding required
- rural decline
- overall cost
- sales person(s)
- vandalism

Action to be taken

1. Weekend Planning session to develop a **Cultural Plan** entitled 'WALCHA 2020'

2. **Steering Committee** be established involving the Arts Council with;

- John Heffernan (to call together)
- Rosalie Smith
- Dar Brookes

- Carolyn Salter
plus Representatives from the Youth Centre, Amaroo and Backpacker Video Projects
3. Seek grants from the
- State Government
 - Federal Government
 - Australia Council
 - support of the Walcha Shire Council

The concept has moved on and has been presented to the Council in **Appendix 5**

2. Youth Centre and Youth Worker

Discussion initially centred on the need for a Youth Centre but it was soon realised that a Youth Worker was needed to maximise any building program. It was hoped to create "A youth place that is adult friendly". In addition, the Public Toilet project in Derby Street was seen as part of the development program.

The **Strengths** for attracting funding, particularly for the Youth Worker, include:

- needs of rural youth
- suicide and crime
- teen pregnancy
- drug and alcohol
- gambling
- low employment
- early school leavers

A service is not already provided in the community. So ideas for employing a youth worker include;

- provide support and activities
- use technology - develop a community radio station, town web sites, graphic arts
- use ACE - to develop literacy/numeracy programs. Also approach the RTA
- approach Churches and Vinnies to participate in social welfare programs
- encourage Church and related groups to organise living skills and relationships courses

This project needs to develop an active committee that has wide youth involvement. It needs to involve;

- youth in schools
- outlying kids (bus company on side on pick them up)
- the police
- Council/town planner
- Service Clubs to make different aspects one of their main projects

Threats

- the need to rely on Government support
- getting money for building and Youth worker

As part of the development, it was recognised there is an urgent need for a Public toilet in Derby Street business area. It is required to alleviate;

- The mitigation of suffering !!

- The improvement of health and hygiene
- The toilet is needed for:
- promoting Tourism - as there are no public toilets available on the Armidale to Gloucester Road
 - shoppers in Derby Street

Site Planning using the vacant block in Derby Street needs to consider integrating;

- Amaroo - playgroup/preschool in morning
- Kids outdoor furniture
- New Toilets - with wheel chairs access and nappy changing facilities
- Games room from which Youth Worker will operate
- Landscape - park and eating area
- mural on a wall
- skateboard facility at the rear of the block
- parking area for buses

Action to be taken

1. Have the Steering Committee develop a overall site plan. Those involved include;
 - Helen Stace
 - Jan Dunbar
 - invite representatives from the Open-air Gallery Forum and Shire Council
2. Approach local Council for initial \$25 000 earmarked for such a project
3. Develop job description and costing for the Youth Worker
4. Develop these ideas as a total Community project - involve Service Groups and Police
5. Develop a timeline for development. Initially
 - Appoint Youth worker
 - Buy site
 - Build Toilet
6. Develop strategy to raise \$60,000 site development and \$50,000 for the toilet and yearly salary and costs for the Youth Worker
7. Develop submissions to Arts bodies, Tourism agencies, DOCS and the Rural Communities Program
8. Promote fundraising activities throughout the whole Walcha Shire

3. Video for the Backpacker Bus

- Entrepreneur and Total Package needed

Action to be taken

1. Chris Weber - to put an ad in Apsley Advocate
2. Steering Committee be formed including:
 - Chris Weber (call together)
 - Geraldine McKay
 - Peter McNeill and daughter

4. Telecommunications Infrastructure

It is important because the present system is INADEQUATE

There are benefits to all if upgraded:

- Every Business depends on it
- All essential services dependant
- All available technology dependant
- Exponentiation of technological advances (Universal Internet and Intranet)
- Every individual has the right to standard communications
- Education opportunities
- To attract development in technology
- For attracting business to Walcha

Without improved communications everything being discussed here this weekend cannot be realised

Action to be taken

Walcha Telecottage to apply for \$10,000 - Planning and feasibility grant through 'Networking the Nation' (Department of Communications and the Arts) - with the view to applying for a larger grant in the future.

5. Aboriginal Culture Field Study Centre

There is a need for people to know about Aboriginal Culture.

It would be used by:

- locals
- tourist
- educational groups
 - schools
 - tertiary
 - overseas groups

It would benefit Walcha by drawing large groups:

- tourism
- economic development
- raise town profile
- identify Walcha as THE place to learn about Aboriginal culture

We can use our Aboriginal community

- reconciliation
- recognise their ownership and knowledge

Use technology to sell the idea

- devise curriculum - uni students - ag, archaeology, geology botany, land management
- compile local knowledge
- training for locals as guides
- need to generate funds for construction/building
- funding sources could be - Arts funding for "Cultural" projects, National Parks (commercial venture), Dept School Education.

Weaknesses

- Missing the boat - we must ACT NOW!!
- Funding Sources

Action to be taken

1. Jan Hatton and the team from Amaroo to develop the plan
2. Approach ATSIC and Land Council for initial support

Postscript The overall Steering Committee have the task of encouraging those who have offered to get these five projects underway. Each project has a committee with power to coopt together with initial action steps to be taken. The Steering Committee comprises representatives from most of the projects so good communication can take place and areas of overlap addressed. They will also be able to address how projects are progressing, suggest additional people and resources for some projects, publicise progress and encourage relevant community groups to consider new initiatives as they arise.

Some other projects received greater initial support but were not selected in the final analysis because:

- it was not considered the right time - e.g. while there are banks in town then it was not the time to pursue the concept of establishing a local or Walcha Bank.
- they were seen as entrepreneurial ventures that required individuals or groups to pursue for their own gain and such projects were subject to commercial forces - e.g. a taxi and cinema
- there was no one at the workshop who would put their names down to develop and 'champion' the project.

Appendix 1 ARTICLES and QUESTIONNAIRE

IS IT ALL JUST TOO MUCH TROUBLE?

by Andrew Hunter

As mentioned last week, the National Farmers Federation Farmwide Project are looking to establish local call internet services within eligible towns. In an effort to satisfy them as to our needs, I wrote an article in the Advocate asking current internet users and would be users to let us know some details about their usage. To date we have had only 10 responses. Does this indicate a lack of need or is it more a lack of motivation.

One of my many jobs is to act in an advisory role to small communities throughout Australia. A good example of one community that does have motivation is Coolah, in the central tablelands. They could see the writing on the wall and so they formed a group and started assessing their community needs. They made lots of phone calls, they visited other communities including our telecottage and generally got themselves informed. They then submitted funding applications to a couple of Federal Government departments and awaited the outcome. The wait was very worthwhile. They received \$330,000 from the Networking The Nation Funds and a further \$60,000 from the Primary Industries Rural Communities Program. With this money they are going to establish a telecentre, an internet point of presence, providing high quality local

internet access to all residents. They also have a number of economic development plans to be implemented around this basic infrastructure.

Hundreds of small rural communities throughout Australia are doing similar things and many of them look to Walcha as an example of what can be done with a little (or a lot) of government assistance. Six years ago Walcha was a leader in bringing technology to the bush, but now we are in dire danger of slipping to the bottom of the pile.

The DPIE Rural Communities Program has provided nearly \$3000 for us carry out a community needs assessment. This planning can then be used to access funding for such things as rural or small business counselling, improved access to government services, technology services etc. We can also apply to Networking The Nation for almost any worthwhile infrastructure eg; mobile phone coverage, improved local call access, internet access, even radio and television services.

We need submissions from all interested people, not just Walcha, we want to hear from Nowendoc, Woolbrook, Yarrowitch, Niangala, Kentucky, in fact if you are reading this article, we'd like to hear from you. We are also planning a weekend Future Search seminar to be conducted on the 2nd and 3rd of May. Details of the venue etc. will be published next week and we strongly urge you to participate. Meanwhile we still want to hear from people interested in local call internet access.

Extract from
The Apsley Advocate Volume 5.24
Wednesday 22nd April 1998

JUST DO IT!

by Andrew Hunter

Rural communities all over the world are struggling to adjust to the economic and environmental changes of today's world. The problems of population drift and lack of opportunities are just as great in undeveloped countries, such as New Guinea as they are in Australia. The causes may be very different but the consequences are the same. Gradual economic stagnation leads to loss of individuals esteem and initiative which results in increased drug abuse, domestic violence and the ultimate indicator of social derangement, suicide.

While we are coping pretty well at the moment, Walcha is not immune from this contagion.

Governments, State and Federal seem incapable of grasping, let alone addressing the problems. Small rural communities simply don't have the political clout to force the issue to a point where our problems are clearly identified let alone discussed. Experts on rural issues rarely have real small town experience. At a recent regional development discussion, I heard a so called expert use examples of his experience in Armidale to describe the "issues". Naturally I had to intervene and explain that while Armidale certainly has its own big problems, they are fundamentally different to the problems facing towns like Walcha.

Many people focus on Guyra's recent activities, such as the "GP" as a good example of a small community getting off their collective buttocks. However Guyra in fact has had an excellent example of small town based initiative for the last 18 years.

Virtually every grazing enterprise in Australia is familiar with Ruddweigh electronic weighing systems. This rugged but technologically advanced product was conceived, designed and built in Guyra. As a result of the initiative of Bruce & Noeline Thomson, Ruddweigh now employs 27 people and exports to 37 countries.

When I asked Bruce Thompson about his thoughts on the economic decline of small towns he simply said "we (small towns) can easily compete, but we have to stop sitting about waiting for someone else to do it for us. We just have to get up and do it for ourselves."

As we approach the end of the millennium, what better time to sit back and have a look at where we are headed. You can play your part in this process by coming along to the WALCHA 2000 public meeting to be held at "The Old School Gallery" on Saturday May 30th at 12:00 midday till 3:00pm. You can further assist the process by filling in the survey form next to this article and returning it to The Walcha Telecottage before the end of this month.

This is your community and this is your chance to have a say on where we should be headed.

Please return completed survey form to The Walcha Telecottage in Fitzroy St, fax it to 6777 1112 or post it to P.O.Box 116, Walcha 2354.

Community Needs Survey					
How old are you?	Under 20 <input type="checkbox"/>	Under 40 <input type="checkbox"/>	Under 50 <input type="checkbox"/>	Under 60 <input type="checkbox"/>	Over 60 <input type="checkbox"/>
How long have you lived in Walcha	Less 2 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>	Less 5 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>	Less 10 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>	Less 20 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>	Over 20 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>
School education in Walcha	Primary <input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary <input type="checkbox"/>			
Do you have tertiary qualifications	Diploma <input type="checkbox"/>	Degree <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
Do you live	In town <input type="checkbox"/>	On farm <input type="checkbox"/>	In a village <input type="checkbox"/>		
Would you describe yourself as:	Self Emp. <input type="checkbox"/>	Employed <input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/>	Retired <input type="checkbox"/>	Student <input type="checkbox"/>
How do you see Walcha's long term future?	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very Good <input type="checkbox"/>
What do you think are the prospects for young people leaving school in Walcha	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very Good <input type="checkbox"/>
How well do you think local businesses are doing?	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very Good <input type="checkbox"/>
How well do you think local farmers really doing?	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very Good <input type="checkbox"/>
How well do you think Walcha is serviced by:	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Very Good <input type="checkbox"/>
	Local Government <input type="checkbox"/>	State Government <input type="checkbox"/>	Federal Government <input type="checkbox"/>		
What do you think is the single greatest threat to Walcha	<input type="text"/>				
What do you think is the greatest opportunity that exists for Walcha	<input type="text"/>				
What do you think is the single greatest need in Walcha today.	<input type="text"/>				
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE					

Extract from
The Apsley Advocate Volume 5.28
Wednesday 20th May 1998

Appendix 2 RESULTS from the QUESTIONNAIRE

COMMUNITY NEEDS SURVEY (N= 58)

How old are you?	Under 20 1	Under 40 8	Under 50 17	Under 60 16	Over 60 10
How long have you lived in Walcha?	< 2 years 2	< 5 years 3	< 10 years 6	< 20 years 13	> 20 years 22
School education in Walcha	Primary 12	Secondary 7			
Do you have tertiary qualifications?	Diploma 13	Degree 18	Other 15		
Do you live	In town? 27	On farm? 25	In a village? 2		
Would you describe yourself as;	Self Emp. 35	Employed 12	Unemp. 5	Retired 8	Student 1
How do you see Walcha's long term future?	Poor 7	Fair 13	Average 17	Good 18	Very Good 3
What do you think are the prospects for young people leaving school in Walcha?	Poor 22	Fair 18	Average 10	Good 2	Very Good 3
How well do you think local businesses are doing?	Poor 12	Fair 25	Average 20	Good 7	Very Good 2
How well do you think local farmers are really doing?	Poor 10	Fair 21	Average 18	Good 4	Very Good 2
How well do you think Walcha is serviced by;	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Very Good
Local Government	7	8	6	26	9
State Government	13	21	9	6	2
Federal Government	21	16	9	3	1

The " | " indicates the mean value for that item on the scale

Community Needs Survey. Written comments given to the following questions:

What do you think is the single greatest threat to Walcha?

- * Unemployment (5)
- * Decentralisation and Unemployment
- * Lack of employment (2)
- * Timber Mill closure (5)
- * Apathy and lack of lateral thinking (4)
- * Technology fuelled by apathy
- * Apathy and ignorance
- * Youth unemployment - Apathy
- * Our own attitude/apathy
- * Conservation and apathy
- * The people, poor attitude
- * Depressed rural economy
- * To be ignored by the increasingly urban based political system
- * Poor Government decisions in the three levels of Government
- * Corporate philosophies
- * Lack of job opportunities for school leavers
- * Drought (2)
- * Greenies slowing the Timber industry
- * Seasonal conditions and greenies
- * Globalisation and loss of economic and political power
- * Walcha Council entering business against already hard pressed businesses and staff of council
- * Local Government to engage in other than local Government administration
- * Isolation, Unemployment and facilities closing
- * Loss of political influence, services and rising costs
- * Lack of industry
- * Lack of diversification
- * Armidale's Big W complex proposal
- * Constant cut backs
- * Being a small town
- * Walcha !
- * Centralisation (2)
- * Shrinking population
- * People leaving to find work
- * Continuing loss of our young people from the community
- * Imminent closure of Fenning Timbers if timber resources are not released from deferred/potential reserve.
- * Deteriorating gravel roads and ageing population on farms
- * The Internet and low commodity markets for rural products

What do think is the greatest opportunity that exists for Walcha?

- * **Tourism (6)**
- * **Tourism** - We are on the North/South and East/West cross roads
- * **Tourism** - Showing off what w have and do
- * **Tourist info centre Inc** - Bus/Coach Depot - Freight Depot - Take Away/Petrol shop
- * **Tourism** and attracting retired or semi-retired big city escapees
- * **Tourism** - Exploit the beauty of the gorge country - a country living
- * **Tourism** - the arts and Amaroo
- * **Tourism** and agriculture
- * **Tourism/Herb** industry
- * **Tourism** and **Forestry**
- * **Trout fishing and gorges** - Safe place to live and **Tourism (2)**
- * **Tourism** - or good location to start another industry of some sort
- * Half way between Sydney and Brisbane for **tourism** and manufacturing and distribution
- * **Through roads and passing traffic**
- * **Location** on North/South and East/West highways - Therefore cater for needs of travellers (2)

- * **Pine wood treatment**
- * **Fenning Timbers** - If allowed a guaranteed, satisfactory wood supply - Alternate industries
- * **On farm forestry**
- * **Timber industry**
- * **Pine wood industry (2)**
- * **Softwood industry** and Walcha's location between Sydney and Brisbane
- * For the timber industry to diversify Eg: **Pulp mill**
- * **Timber industry**, particularly softwood

- * **Hydro Electric scheme**
- * To **value** add on existing products
- * To make **full use of it's resources** - All of them
- * Maybe not one great thing but a **whole package**
- * Full deregulation of **Telecommunication** - Power etc
- * **Subiaco herbs, Telecottage** and other growth
- * **Utilise existing innovators** in Walcha
- * A good hotel at **Riverside**
- * **Advancement**
- * Identification of **correct forward development strategy**
- * **It's people** - Clean rural environment
- * **Space**
- * **Local businesses**
- * **Motivated people**
- * **Community spirit**
- * **Peaceful community**
- * **Healthy climate**
- * We all have to **co-operate** and get ahead
- * A **collective spirit**

- * **Still time to change things** around
- * An **improvement in the attitude** of the people
- * Walcha at present has **no opportunities**
- * There is none - **It's all gone**

What do you think is the single greatest need in Walcha today?

- * **Job Opportunities** - job security and employment
- * **Employment opportunities for all age groups (6)**
- * **Work opportunities for our youth**
- * **Needs for youth and activities (2)**
- * **Targeting youth**
- * **Entertainment for the youth**
- * **Motivating our juniors**
- * **Jobs for the youth**
- * **Employment for locals - to keep them here**
- * **Employment to double the population of Walcha in a short period of time**
- * **Industry (3)**
- * **A better attitude** - More positive and welcoming
- * **Less interference to business** from all departments
- * **Pine wood plant** - access to steep drop
- * **A cohesive collective meeting to develop a workable model of growth** and to promote it
- * **To get a clean grasp of where it is going**
- * **Maintenance of Government**
- * **A moderation of Government dictates** Eg: Taxation concessions to attract businesses
- * **Confidence and initiative**
- * **Keep up with the present and forward planning**
- * **Everybody pulling together** to make a great town better
- * **Nursing home for the elderly**
- * **To fill the empty shops**
- * **An imaginative focus and concerted effort to attract tourist trade**
- * **To encourage people to put their views forward**
- * **A mobile phone tower** to service the town and district
- * **Softwood milling/treatment contractor/plant**
- * **Attraction of tourist ventures, primary industries and to create employment opportunities**
- * **Increased return of farm products**
- * **Recognition that we have to do it for ourselves and that we can**
- * **A public toilet in the Derby Street business area**
- * **Community support**
- * **Optimism**
- * **Continuing vibrant business community**
- * **For everybody to support every local business and services that we have.**
- * **To reduce the extra cost due to distance**
- * **Live theatre**
- * **Leadership and initiative**
- * **Institute of Economic intelligence and accurate information**
- * **Better gravel roads and work opportunities for the youth**
- * **Occasional child care**
- * **Individual social conscience**
- * **Foresight**
- * **I don't believe that Walcha has any great needs**

1. The first step in the process of identifying a problem is to define the problem.

- 2. The second step is to gather information about the problem.
- 3. The third step is to analyze the information and identify the causes of the problem.
- 4. The fourth step is to develop a plan of action to solve the problem.
- 5. The fifth step is to implement the plan and monitor the results.
- 6. The sixth step is to evaluate the results and make adjustments as needed.
- 7. The seventh step is to document the process and results.
- 8. The eighth step is to share the results with others.
- 9. The ninth step is to reflect on the process and learn from the experience.
- 10. The tenth step is to apply the lessons learned to other situations.
- 11. The eleventh step is to seek feedback from others.
- 12. The twelfth step is to celebrate success.
- 13. The thirteenth step is to maintain momentum.
- 14. The fourteenth step is to stay motivated.
- 15. The fifteenth step is to be persistent.
- 16. The sixteenth step is to be flexible.
- 17. The seventeenth step is to be open-minded.
- 18. The eighteenth step is to be collaborative.
- 19. The nineteenth step is to be proactive.
- 20. The twentieth step is to be resilient.
- 21. The twenty-first step is to be optimistic.
- 22. The twenty-second step is to be confident.
- 23. The twenty-third step is to be determined.
- 24. The twenty-fourth step is to be focused.
- 25. The twenty-fifth step is to be organized.
- 26. The twenty-sixth step is to be efficient.
- 27. The twenty-seventh step is to be effective.
- 28. The twenty-eighth step is to be successful.
- 29. The twenty-ninth step is to be happy.
- 30. The thirtieth step is to be healthy.
- 31. The thirty-first step is to be wealthy.
- 32. The thirty-second step is to be powerful.
- 33. The thirty-third step is to be influential.
- 34. The thirty-fourth step is to be respected.
- 35. The thirty-fifth step is to be admired.
- 36. The thirty-sixth step is to be loved.
- 37. The thirty-seventh step is to be valued.
- 38. The thirty-eighth step is to be appreciated.
- 39. The thirty-ninth step is to be honored.
- 40. The fortieth step is to be glorified.
- 41. The forty-first step is to be exalted.
- 42. The forty-second step is to be glorified.
- 43. The forty-third step is to be glorified.
- 44. The forty-fourth step is to be glorified.
- 45. The forty-fifth step is to be glorified.
- 46. The forty-sixth step is to be glorified.
- 47. The forty-seventh step is to be glorified.
- 48. The forty-eighth step is to be glorified.
- 49. The forty-ninth step is to be glorified.
- 50. The fiftieth step is to be glorified.

Appendix 3 Attendance Session 1

Jo Bacon – Veterinarian
Katrina Blomfield – Business Operator, Grazier
Sue Blomfield – Business Operator, Grazier
Katrina Brearly – Walcha Central School Captain
Mary Brearly – Community Member
Dar Brookes – Tutor, Grazier
Andrew Burgess – Grazier
Bob Burnell - Grazier
Rob Callaghan – General Manager, Walcha Council
Jill Cameron - Grazier
Shirley Davison – Amaroo Museum & Cultural Centre
Tony Elder – Business Operator
John Fenwicke – Business Operator
Joy Finlayson – Librarian
Jane Fletcher - Teacher
Dawn Hamel – Councillor, Grazier
Bill Heazlett - Councillor
John Heffernan – President Walcha Arts Council, Grazier
Don Hoy – Business Operator
Justin King – Business Operator
Ross King – Councillor, Grazier
Vidas Kulinskis – Community Member
Pam Kulinskis – Community Member
Carolie Laurie – Grazier
Sean Laurie – Grazier
Vi Lloyd – Community Member
Cat MacGregor – President Walcha A.C.E
Alston McKay – Business Operator
Geraldine McKay – Business Operator
Freddie Miller – Community Member
Paul Mostyn – Minister’s Fraternal
Shane Paul – Emergency Services
Carolyn Salter – Community Member
Rosalie Smith – Community Member
Julie Stace – Business Operator
Lindsay Stace – Business Operator, Treasurer Business Houses Association
Helen Stace – Business Operator
Chris Weber – Business Operator, Grazier
Kerryn Williams – Tourism Officer, Telecottage Coordinator

Appendix 4

PARTICIPANTS in GROUP SESSIONS

WALCHA 2020

NAME	ADDRESS	ORGANISATION
Shane Paul	28E Fitzroy Street, Walcha	Ambulance
Sue Blomfield	"Cheyenne", Walcha	Farm Tourism
John Heffernan	"Roamville" Walcha	Arts Council
Julie Stace	Aberbaldie Road (PO Box 181), Walcha	Retailer
Pam Kulinskis	Spring Park, Middle Street, Walcha Road	
Katrina Blomfield	"Karori", Walcha	Farm Tourism
Rosalie Smith	106 Croudace Street, Walcha	Telecottage
Dawn Hamel	"Mountain View", Walcha	
Carolyn Salter	"Wanderriby", Walcha	
Don Hoy	65E Croudace Street, Walcha	Takeaways
Andrew Burgess	"Ruby Hills", Walcha	Grazing
Chris Weber	"Glendower", Walcha	Grazing
Vidis Kulinskis	Middle Street, Walcha Road	Semi retired
Ross King	Waterloo	Grazing
Jill Cameron	Tiara, Walcha	Grazing
Alston McKay	26N Derby Street, Walcha (also The Pines)	Bakery & Quarter Horse Breeding
Geraldine McKay	26N Derby Street, Walcha (also The Pines)	Bakery & Quarter Horse Breeding
Lindsay Stace	PO Box 181, Walcha	Retailing
Joy Finlayson	50W Memorial Avenue, Walcha	Librarian
Shirley Davison	6N Meridian Street, Walcha	
Helen Stace	65N Derby Street, Walcha	Retailing & wholesaling
Jan Dunbar	15W Hill Street, Walcha	Social worker
Cat MacGregor	"Bergen Op Zoom", Walcha	ACE
Dar Brookes	PO Box 28, Walcha	WTC/ACE/Stock Stn/Real Estate
Bill Heazlett	"Roselie", Walcha	School/Shire
Jane Fletcher	"Abbottsley", Walcha	School/Ed
Peter McNeill	"Europambela", Walcha	"Riverside"

Appendix 5 SUNDAY PLANNING SHEET

Sunday 31st May 1998

SESSION 3 9am - 10am

Continue in same small groups and consider your identifies 2 or 3 projects. Summarise yesterday and extend;

PROJECT	1	2	3
Why Important?			
Who will benefit?			
Strengths?			
Weaknesses/ Threats			
Priority			

MORNING TEA 10.am - 10.15 am

SESSION 4 10.15am - Noon

Work as a whole group and discuss 2 projects from each of the 4 working groups. Issues to be discussed...for each Project;

	DO	ASSISTANCE	TIME
HOW?	How will it be done?	How much will it cost?	How long will it take?
WHO?	Who will do it?	Where might assistance come from?	

QUESTION? WHAT ARE OUR 4 or 5 MAIN PRIORITY PROJECTS TO TAKE WALCHA INTO THE NEW MILLENNIUM?

QUESTION? Which Project team would you like to work with?

Thank You for all giving your time and your ideas, input, and energy. Walcha can only prosper from this contribution.

WALCHA NEWS

Thursday July 2, 1998

PHONE: 6777 2513 - FAX: 6777 2598

80c

Art to give Walcha a breath of fresh air

PLANS to establish Walcha as the "Public Art Town of Australia", have received widespread support from Walcha Council, the Walcha Tourism Committee, The Walcha 2020 Steering Committee and local artists.

The idea has resulted from a 2020 workshop held recently to identify ways in which Walcha could utilise resources other than the traditional timber, beef and sheep.

"The idea was sparked by an article which appeared in an early edition of the *Apsley Advocate*, about the small town of Chermains in Canada", Arts Council President John Heffernan said.

Chermains is very much like Walcha, it is a small town of approximately 3,000 inhabitants and was reliant on some farming, grazing, fishing, and the area was especially rich in timber.

"In 1983 the mill closed but the town not only survived, but thrived due to foresight. Prior to the mill closure, the town had already adopted a municipal revitalisation program, much like our own streetscape," Mr Heffernan said.

"But the really big step that turned the tiny town around and gave it a bright new future, was a whole hearted commitment to public art.

The town became a giant outdoor art gallery. A move which saw over one hundred new businesses being attracted to the town along with 450,000 visitors annually.

Although this sort of scenario may seem unrealistic for Walcha, Arts Council President Mr Heffernan believes that Walcha is on the verge of something momentous.

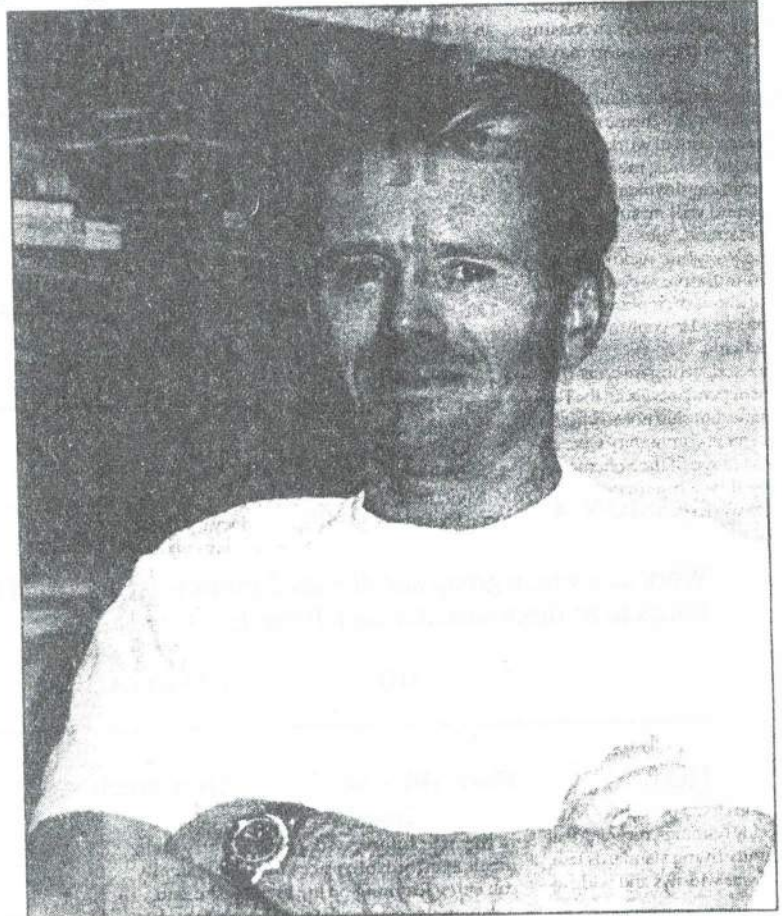
"We have to view this concept long term, a lot of research and thought must go into its preparation, and because the whole idea is community based it will need the community's support to ensure its success, but it will not happen overnight.

"We as a community need to ensure Walcha does not go the way of other small rural towns. There is a wealth of natural economic resources as far as tourism goes in the district and the incorporation of a fresh air gallery would be just another string to our tourism bow," Mr Heffernan said.

"With the completion of Thunderbolt's way imminent, Walcha needs to become a destination rather than a pit stop, to gain the rewards of an increase in road traffic through the town," he said.

"We believe that the fresh air gallery would give the incentive for people to stop look and spend some time in our town," he added.

"There's no question that the success of Chermains is an extraordinary example of community cooperation and commitment to a vast program of public art, but the point I want to stress has to do with Walcha. I believe that Walcha could do exactly the same thing. We have the human resource, the artistic, administrative and entrepreneurial skills within the community and a supportive



Walcha is on the verge of something momentous: Arts Council President Mr John Heffernan

Council which should enable us to do just what Chermains did.

Of course we can't pretend that it is going to happen overnight, but it is well within the realms of possibility, if we as a community put our minds, our resources and our combined municipal might together and worked towards a

focused end, within a few years Walcha could become the Public Art town of Australia," Mr Heffernan said.

Input from all community members is sought on the proposal and the tourism Committee is working towards the development of a long term plan to implement this concept and towards a forum to

invite public involvement.

A Canadian author and historian comments "Obviously Chermains, no matter how small it is has things like imagination and foresight and a willingness on the parts of its residents and community leaders to get behind daring and adventurous initiatives can Walcha reflect the same?"



If nothing changes, nothing changes

Nestled in the hills of Southern New England is Walcha, a beautiful and quiet town, steeped in history and founded on the economies of sheep, cattle, and timber. We are small and do not always agree on everything, but when we pull together as a community, I pity anyone that gets in our way. In the words of Dr Jones, we certainly “punch above our weight.”

Despite all this, the Walcha LGA has a declining population and limited development opportunities, up until now. Further constraining the declining population, Walcha’s demographic age distribution demonstrates Walcha population when compared to other NSW and Australia LGA’s is significantly below average in the 15 – 40 age groups and significantly above average in the 50 – 80 age groups. These age distributions explain why the Rugby Union and the Rugby League clubs find it difficult to field three teams, combined. Local cricket clubs, due to a lack of numbers, experience a comparable circumstance.

Our town has changed. Banks, pubs, and clubs are closing and reducing services, the sales yards and the mill have closed. Consequently, there are less agents and services.

In agricultural terms, family farms in recent years have experienced increased pressure to survive, primarily due to unpredictable markets and drought years that are more frequent and prolonged in duration. The past two and a half years have been the best many of us can remember, and certainly anyone could hope for. However, the seven years prior to 2020 placed the whole of Walcha LGA, and indeed all Eastern Australia, under enormous economic, social, and environmental pressure. Poor seasons and unpredictable markets have a severe and detrimental effect on Walcha’s sustained future.

In the last 20 years there have been three attempts by the NSW government to amalgamate Walcha Council with Armidale and other Councils. We survived these attempts, however only just. It is only

a matter of time before the next amalgamation presents itself and unless we do something different, it is inevitable the Walcha Council will not survive. Unless we do something different.

In late 2021, the NSW Government designated the New England as a Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), which includes the Walcha LGA and multiple existing development applications in process.

This designation is a significant opportunity for Walcha to generate and supply electricity to Eastern Australia and be a part of major infrastructure development of national importance. These developments will assist to differentiate and increase Walcha’s economy in the order of millions, known for the next forty-five prospective years.

With a strong financial and socially sound community, the Walcha LGA can position ourselves to howl down any future amalgamation orders. And as years progress, hopefully Walcha’s population and demographic distribution, by age, will improve by attracting and retaining younger people to be a part of the Walcha community and ensure our future.

Considering the big picture, Walcha will supply renewable energy to Eastern Australia and replace fossil fuel generated electricity. Our Australian Government and most global governments have committed to time-based carbon reduction targets. We should not underestimate Walcha’s contribution to the achievement of such goals.

The Walcha community is at a crossroad. We can do nothing and take our chances with predicted unfavourable seasons and changing markets. We can watch our town population continue to diminish as the older population pass away, or we can embrace renewable energy generation that contributes to ensuring a stronger, more economically diverse future for the Walcha community.

Warwick Fletcher

KINDERGARTEN 2023 OPEN MORNING

23rd June – 9:30am -11:00am

RSVP 6777 2328 or spwadmin@arm.catholic.edu.au



St Patrick's Primary School Walcha



ENROLLING NOW!