



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

**6.1 Attachment 4 – Response to Community Submissions
to Integrated Planning & Reporting Plans**

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN/OPERATIONAL PLAN PROPOSED CHANGES

This document provides Walcha Council responses to feedback received during the consultation period. Also included is any proposed changes to the CSP/OP recommended by management and the reasons for the changes.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Council received five submissions for feedback during the consultation period containing both recommendations and questions. Copies of these submissions are included in Attachment 3, provided under separate cover.

A summary of the matters raised along with Councils response can be seen in the tables below:

Summary of Submission	Council Response
<p>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.</p> <p>The submission notes that without significant change the slow decline will continue or alternatively Walcha can embrace the opportunities that the large-scale renewable energy development brings. References made to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Previous submission, 2. recent editorial, and 3. a plan developed in 1998 for Walcha identifying similar issues 	<p>Please refer the comments regarding renewable energy in the Council business paper</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Please refer the comments regarding renewable energy in the Council business paper</p>

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN/OPERATIONAL PLAN PROPOSED CHANGES

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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.	This will be provided for review during the actions related to 2.1.3.1 and 2.1.3.2 as suggested.
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.	Councils OP notes that Council will seek to maximise its use of renewables which will include options to reduce operating costs where cost effective and appropriate for Councils operations
I welcome and support the amendments made to enhance Council governance and accountability	Noted.
Does 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 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	Please refer the comments regarding renewable energy in the Council business paper
Notes that 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	Please refer the comments regarding renewable energy in the Council business paper

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Summary of Submission	Council Response
<p>Does not support the adoption of the 2032 CSP and 2022-2025 DP and 2022-2023 OP 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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Council agrees that Walcha's community strategic planning efforts are unique and require balancing the needs of the entire Walcha community.</p> <p>More detailed information is required to appropriately respond to this item, however, Councils plans include intent for the following for the Walcha LGA community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong health care (CSP3.1), • employment options for our community (CSP2.1), • improved communications infrastructure (CSP 2.1) • Housing (CSP2.1 and CSP6.5)
<p>Please include plans to continue to develop and support the Agricultural communities, manufacturing businesses, housing developments, industrial land development and town services such as childcare</p>	<p>Councils plans currently include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSP5.4 - Walcha's Aboriginal communities will be supported and strengthened. • Strong health care (CSP3.1), • employment options for our community (CSP2.1), • improved communications infrastructure (CSP 2.1) • Housing (CSP2.1 and CSP6.5) • Childcare (CSP2.1)
<p>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.</p>	<p>Council has also committed to undertake a review of its community engagement strategy and resourcing strategy as outlined in the DP-OP. (Action 8.1.1.2).</p>

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN/OPERATIONAL PLAN PROPOSED CHANGES

Summary of Submission	Council Response
<p>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.</p>	<p>Documents from Walcha Council website – Council meeting pages from May and June 2021 respectively have the attached linked documents.</p> <p>MAY21 document for placement on public exhibition can be seen at the following link. https://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/May21-Item6.2-Attachment-DRAFT-2021-2022-Operational-Plan-and-Delivery-Program-2018-2021.pdf</p> <p>JUN21 document adopted by Council can be seen at the following link. https://www.walcha.nsw.gov.au/f.ashx/JUN21-Item-6.1-Attachment-DRAFT-2021-2022-Operational-Plan-and-Delivery-Program-2018-2021.pdf</p> <p>The JUN21 document has clear note of the change.</p> <p>The background to this is that Council agreed that the community seeks to increase use, however the OP is Councils actions. Councils view is that whilst it supports opportunities for the region, Council is not an energy supplier and in relation to this item Council would seek to maximise its opportunities for the use of renewables.</p> <p>The supporting of businesses opportunities would be covered through actions relating to advocacy and “business and jobs”. Please refer to CSP2.1.4.</p> <p>Council will seek to provide greater clarity in relation to renewables in the “business and jobs” section.</p> <p>It is acknowledged this change was not outlined individually in the June 21 Council report and ideally it would have been.</p> <p>Council has also committed to undertake a review of its community engagement strategy and resourcing strategy as outlined in the DP-OP. (Action 8.1.1.2)</p>

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN/OPERATIONAL PLAN PROPOSED CHANGES

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<p>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.</p>	<p>This is not the case. As mentioned above, Council agrees that renewables are an important strategic topic for the community, however the OP is Councils actions.</p> <p>The background to this change is that whilst Council supports opportunities for the region, Council is not an energy supplier and in relation to this item Council would seek to maximise its opportunities for the use of renewables.</p> <p>The supporting of businesses would be covered through actions relating to advocacy and “business and jobs”. Refer 2.1.4</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>There is a lack of clarity and detailed information to reply to this serious allegation.</p> <p>The General Manager has self-reported this matter to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) for investigation.</p>
<p>Recommend non-essential expenditure is put on hold including carport on Croudace Street residence and footpath, kerb and guttering be put on hold</p>	<p>We are limiting non-essential expenditure where we can.</p> <p>Expenditure on footpath, kerb and guttering are counted as own source expenditure to meet the requirements of the Roads to Recovery funding. Our own source expenditure requirements are currently approximately 1.9M each year of the program.</p>

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Summary of Submission	Council Response
<p>The opening forecast restrictions for Plant and Vehicle Replacement as at 1 July 2022 is \$1,181,848 (p49). This does not make sense given an opening balance at 1 July 2021 of \$899,000 with planned transfers out of \$520,000 leaving a balance of \$378,000 at 30 June 2022.</p>	<p>The actual expenditure will be \$132,932 of a planned \$520,000 which has not been reflected in the QBR by a reduction in transfers out. Further \$415,622 has been transferred in for depreciation. This movement provides the opening balance of \$1,181,848 at 1 July 2022.</p>
<p>It appears that Council has not been increasing the reserves with depreciation for asset replacement in 2020 and 2021 resulting in a need to borrow for Fleet and Plant.</p>	<p>Currently we are looking to borrow for the purchase of additional equipment being a Jet Patcher for which we have not accumulated reserves or at least previous reserves for the old Jet Patcher are depleted. The decision to borrow for the Jet Patcher and Skid Steer with planer is that both these items will have the borrowing and operating costs being recovered through fee for service work as part of our RMCC contracted works plus other work. Further we have significant upcoming expenditure for equipment such as a grader, tipper truck and loader all of significant cost with utilisation being mostly for self-funded work. Additionally, we are looking to defer much of this expenditure currently with cashflow management a priority and a significant number of projects being expended at any one time.</p>
<p>A more detailed budget should be available to the public to ascertain what is being spent and where.</p>	<p>Council felt that a highly detailed budget would provide confusion to rate payers that are not necessarily familiar with financial information of this nature with the detailed cost centre budgets available upon request. A good point is raised here however and we could provide the detail as an appendix rather than the main body of the report.</p>
<p>Preschool, Early Intervention and Walcha Community Care are generating a surplus and therefore should be included in the reserve.</p>	<p>We agree with the intention and objective not to generate a surplus. Expenditure has been updated.</p>

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Summary of Submission	Council Response
Council does not comply with community notice period.	Council believes it has complied with the length of the notice period being 28 days. Council acknowledges it does not comply with all reporting requirements including submission of the Long-Term Final Plan, Resourcing Strategy and related reports, all of which are being worked on as part of the Financial Sustainability Review. Council has advised the Office of Local Government that it has not complied.
Add Tourism Committee to CSP	Noted and updated
Will a quarry management plan be completed for \$70,000?	This will be revised to \$35,000 and will be funded with internal labour.
Clarification on own source funding of road works and if this FAGS are being used for Roads to Recovery work.	No this is not funded at all and is funding generated from rating, fees and charges and other various. FAGS does not contribute to the own source requirements and must be excluded.
On P33 is the budget of \$11,000 for street lighting. Is this just Repairs & Maintenance (R&M) or is it electricity also.	This is R&M only.
Pool prices could be rounded to make cash receipting easier.	Agreed and included.

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FEES AND CHARGES

Proposed changes to the 2022-2023 Fees & Charges are outlined below

Existing Fee	Proposed Fee	Comment
Event Waste Collection (per bin) – min 20 bin lifts \$33.50	\$7.02 per bin on kerbside collection day (min quantity 6)	Waste manager has recalculated based on resource requirements to recover costs.
	\$27.48 per bin collected outside kerbside collection day (min quantity 6).	Waste manager has recalculated based on resource requirements to recover costs.
Event Waste Bin Hire (per bin) – min 20 bins charged \$15	\$7.50 per bin hire + relevant bin empty rate (min quantity 6)	Waste manager has recalculated based on resource requirements to recover costs.
	\$115.32 per damaged/lost bin. (240L)	Waste manager has recalculated based on resource requirements to recover costs.
	\$136.98 per damaged/lost bin (140L)	Waste manager has recalculated based on resource requirements to recover costs.
Purchase of Wheelie Bin -240 litre \$95.72	Purchase of Wheelie Bin -240 litre \$115.32	Actual latest purchase price significantly higher than original estimate.
Purchase of Wheelie Bin -140 litre \$84	Purchase of Wheelie Bin -140 litre \$137.00	Actual latest purchase price significantly higher than original estimate.
N/A	Open Walcha Waste Depot outside standard operating hours between 8am and 8pm (Must pre book 28 days in advance ONLY) \$115.14 per hour or part hour + gate fees	This request would be highly unlikely however it has occurred in the past.
Swimming Pool – Family Day Ticket	\$15.90 to \$16.00	Round up for easier payment and receipting.
Swimming Pool – Daily Admission Pensioner	\$3.18 to \$3.20	Round up for easier payment and receipting.
Meals on Wheels – Hot meal	\$8.00 to \$8.50	During the consultation period Council has been advised that the frozen meal will be \$8.00 and calculated container costs of \$0.50
Meals on Wheels – Frozen meal	\$7.90 to \$8.50	During the consultation period Council has been advised that the frozen meal will be \$8.00 and calculated container costs of \$0.50
Water usage step charge	200kL to 250kL	The Operational Plan provided for community consultation had the water step charge activating at 200kL which was not correct. This is a positive change as the increase in charges activates at a higher volume.

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CAPITAL INCOME & EXPENDITURE

Proposed changes to the 2022-2023 Budget are outlined below

Expenditure	Add: Plant Trailer \$12,000	A plant trailer to transport one of the parks and gardens mowers was supposed to be ordered from Woods Trailers in Tamworth the first half of 2022 FY. The purchase order was never sent through. Until recently the mower was being transported using a 750KG gross weight box trailer and came in approx. 300KG overweight. This purchase is for both safety and compliance
Expenditure	Add: Mobile phone Celfi Boosters \$25,290	This purchase will not occur until the 2023 FY as was put to Capital Advisory Committee in June so will be going to June Council meeting.
Expenditure	Add: Slasher Purchase \$14,400	Approved in 2022 FY however due to supply chain delays will not be available until July 2022.
Expenditure	Less: Reduce quarry management plan from \$70,000 to \$35,000	Internal labour to be used for quarry management plan
Expenditure	Change: Beautification Capital Works – Rose Garden and Crocodile Bridge now to be determined based on grant funding.	

INCOME STATEMENT

Expenditure	Add: \$23,112 to Preschool expenditure teaching equipment 3790.0104.0005	This is to balance the Preschool estimated revenue to estimated expenditure where it is assumed that all funding will be spent.
Expenditure	Add: \$19,200 to Early Intervention Centre 3797.0104.0005	This is to balance the grant revenue received with the expenditure as we assume all grant money is expended.

RESTRICTIONS

Plant & Vehicle Replacement	Remove budget transfers in of \$392,529 as insufficient funds to support provision of depreciation to plant reserve in 2023.	Increase of the Roads to Recovery reference rate has an impact on this as it is adding another \$144,000 of own source spend into the 2023 budget that would not have existed had we complied with R2R spend on 2021.
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