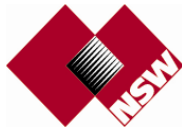


WOOTTON COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

October 2008



Department of State and
Regional Development

VISION FOR WOOTTON

'A vibrant, diverse, supportive community, realising a sustainable future, embracing our heritage and natural environment.'

SUMMARY

This Strategic Plan is the result of two workshops. The first held in December 2007, attended by 12 people, facilitated by Elizabeth Christo and the second held in October, attended by 23 people 2008 facilitated by Susan Rowe and sponsored by DSRD. The October workshop was attended by council representation including the Manager of Tourism and Marketing, Great Lakes Tourism, Manager Economic Development, Great Lakes Council, and a local councillor. All of the Wootton community were invited to attend. Marketing was done by word of mouth, email through the membership database and a flyer sent to all households for both events.

BACKGROUND

The **Wootton Community**, with a population of 394 nestled in the arms of the Great Lakes region, 15 minutes from Bulahdelah and under 3 hours North of Sydney, has been running a successful community program for some time. Over the past 8 years they have developed an infrastructure from scratch and more recently in the last 3 years have created the 'bricks and mortar' foundations for a highly successful community initiative. This little hamlet has a unique set of circumstances, by Australian standards, as it has no retail outlets or services providers whatsoever. This is of course its appeal and its "unique selling factor".

The **Wootton Community** now look ahead to the next phase. They have the facilities, the buildings and the structure. It is now they look for professional guidance and strategic planning, training, organizational structuring and marketing to not only fine tune their original goals but to create new ones.

Following is a summary of their achievements and an overview of where the community is in their forecasts currently. Further it is a proposal of targets that we are suggesting to steer within the community, our progress on that course and where we would like to be in the short and long term future.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

Everything to follow has been created and run entirely on a **volunteer basis**. (the CTC has an exception see below)

- 1999 after a series of public meetings the **Wootton Community Network** was founded to encourage community spirit, sustainable development and local employment
- After four years of volunteer labour, determination and government funding, **The Community Resource Centre** (The Café building) opened in July 2004
- **The Community Resource Centre** includes;
 - Wootton Community Network (WCN) the 'General management' organization for the Centre
 - The Brush Turkey Cafe
 - The Computer Technology Centre (CTC) outreach to Nabitac's main office
 - The Wootton Community Hall (heritage school hall which is adjoining the Centre and can be utilized for all community based activities)
- **Wootton Community Network (WCN)** organizational function includes;

- Community dinners once a month , often catering for 30 - 50 people
- A bi-monthly film night 10 - 20 people
- Various fund raising events & gatherings eg. Mother's Day, senior day, business luncheons, car club annual meetings, Melbourne Cup , Australia day etc.
- A Bi-monthly Newsletter is a free distribution highlighting and advertising local events information, products and businesses. The print run is now at 400 and we have just celebrated our 50th edition!
- Created the "Wootton Sustainability Fair" which has now been handed over to the Winery to host and run.
- Acts as a lobby group to Local, State and Federal Governments to improve facilities and services in the greater area
- *New Work Opportunity Program* for 6 months involving the long term unemployed.
- *The Web site* - www.wootton.org.au
- ***The Brush Turkey Café*** is a vibrant focal point for the community which provides;
 - A full operational café, open for lunch every weekend from 10 -4PM
 - A mid-week venue for local group lunch gatherings, council or business meetings.
 - The organic Kitchen Garden purposely designed beside the cafe using permaculture principals to provide fresh produce for the cafe as an example of sustainable food production
 - A veranda with magnificent sweeping views of the Wootton area
 - A venue to sell local produce etc
 - An active Gallery of local art displayed - bimonthly rotation
 - Catering facilities for the hall, workshops and conference market
 - Acts as a work for the dole host and has employed training in hospitality for youths to gain employment
- ***The CTC (computer technology centre) outreach*** provides;
 - Computer and office Administration facilities for the adjoining Wootton Community Hall and Network(WCN)
 - An Internet access point with 2 computers for the public at a nominal rate
 - The CTC manager is a paid member, spending 2 hours p/week at the Wootton outreach
- ***The Wootton Community Hall*** facility is available to the WCN and provides:
 - A "free space" for any configuration needed
 - Seating for 50 people in an idyllic natural bush setting
 - Excellent clean amenities including an operational kitchen
 - A venue for Yoga and community activities

WHAT ARE OUR STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS?

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity - human & natural • Unique - climate/rainfall/wildlife/people • Seclusion - peaceful • Perfect hinterland location • Artistic culture • Handy tradespeople • Holistic health people • Community network/infrastructure • Facilities • Café • Three hours from Sydney • Soils • Alternate minded people • Strong community groups • Community dinner • Community events - spirit • Passion of the people • Support from Council • Newsletter • Network of contacts • Good image • Location • The journey • Centre of shire • Regionally centre - one hour from lots of places • "Wootton Way" - cycling road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of public transport • Lack of signage • Lack of pubs/clubs/shops • Introspection • Lack of youth provisions • Lack of community provisions • Low population • Losing full-time residence for part-timers • Community division • Low employment (additional) • Road Maintenance (additional)

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wootton Resource Centre • Wootton Way • Tourism - the right type, eg ecotourism • Market • Bus stop • Swap meet/local trading system • Community bulk buy program • Build on short stop visit (cake and coffee) - value add • Semblance of old timber village • Walks - trestle bridge and grandis winery • Brush turkey mascot • Accommodation - variety • Funding opportunities • Show others "the Wootton way" • Model community • Utilisation of community dinners • Skills based - general education • Network with other communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation • Roads • Public transport • Increasing traffic on F3 • The town dies • Apathy • Part-time residents • Community group folding due to lack of volunteers • Ageing population • Loss of biodiversity • Low income of residents (additional)

**PRIORITY PROJECTS IDENTIFIED AT OUR
COMMUNITY WORKSHOP HELD OCTOBER 2008**

Overall priorities:

1. Upgrade Wattle Hill Road
2. Erosion control while maintaining rural roads
3. Increase community participation (WCN, fire brigade)

Other high priority:

- Weed control
- Protection of verge / riparian
- Trestle Bridge – promote and maintain

Summary of strategies and projects (in priority order):**Environment:**

Upgrade Wattle Hill Road	13*
Erosion control while maintaining rural roads	8
Weed control	6
Protection of verge / riparian	6
Feral animal control	3
Reduce random clearing on private property	3
Historic railway walk	2
Maintain fire trails	1
Community fire plan	
DA and land use changes for Wootton area	

Community Needs

Increase community participation (WCN, fire brigade)	8
Trucks on highway – noise from F3 – address with RTA	5
Bring about a more inclusive community – buddy program	4
Defibrillator	3
Representation of local health advisory committee	2
Visiting library	2
More social events	1
Improve community transport	
Improve internet access at café	
Safer roads – 60km in village (??)	

Tourism & Marketing

Improved signage	5
Resource and education centre	4
Branding strategy	3
On-line web presence	2
Visual presence	1
Events	2
Merchanising	
Journey strategy	
Roads & Infrastructure	

History, heritage & culture

Trestle Bridge – promote and maintain	6
Ensure village is neat and tidy including private historic houses	2
Record history of Wootton	2
Improve access to old tram way	1
List Wootton as heritage town	

(* this number indicates number of votes on the night. Each workshop participant had up to five votes and multiple votes were permitted)

WORKSHEETS FROM OUR COMMUNITY WORKSHOP HELD OCTOBER 2008

GROUP: COMMUNITY NEEDS

COMMUNITY NEEDS:					
STRATEGY	ACTION	BY WHOM	COST	WHEN	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Representative on local Health Advisory Committee	Representative to report monthly to community and publish in newsletter	John Smith Julie Richardson		Now	Monthly report
Improve community transport	Contact GLC regarding community transport options	GLC	-	Now	Information received
Increase community participation (WCN and Fire Brigade).	Run a series of workshops to improve living skills (farm, animals, soil etc)	WCN	Minimal	6 months	More active volunteers
Internet Access	Improve café internet access	CTC	?	6 months	
More social events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old men's groups • Craft group • Gardening group 	WCN GLC		6 months	
Visiting library	To Wootton	GLC	?	ASAP	
Defibrillator	Available in Wootton	Hunter New England Area Health Service	?	Lyn	

COMMUNITY NEEDS:					
STRATEGY	ACTION	BY WHOM	COST	WHEN	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Trucks on highway - noise	Raise awareness of noise to health	RTA			
Bring about a more inclusive community	Create a Buddy Program				
Safe road	Improve Wattley Hill Road	GLC	-	Lyn	

GROUP: ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENT:					
STRATEGY	ACTION	BY WHOM	COST	WHEN	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Weed control	Weed education. Involve Council re eradication.	Locals GLC		Medium to long term	Recovery of native plants
Protection of verge/riparian	Educate people on riparian/wildlife corridor	Qualified people		Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthier functioning wildlife corridor • Clean water
Erosion control while maintaining rural roads	Correct road maintenance procedures and drainage	Council		Short term	Cleaner waterways and less run off and road quality
Feral animal control	Poisoning, trapping	Pasture Protection		Short to medium	Drop in numbers
Historic railway walk	Maintenance, signage	CUA Council Locals		Medium term	Usable track, well signposted, well used
Community fire plan	Rural fire strategy	Rural Fire Service		Short term	Safer community

ENVIRONMENT:					
STRATEGY	ACTION	BY WHOM	COST	WHEN	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Maintain fire trails	Forestry and National Parks housework	Forestry and National Parks		Always	Usable and recognizable tracks
Reduce random clearing on private property	More policing and regulation	Council <i>(State Gov Res)</i>			More natural environment
Das and land use changes for Wootton area	Monthly summary of all current Das and land use changes before Council	Council Wootton V. News	Nil	Monthly ASAP	Monthly list circulated
Wattley Hill Road upgrade	Road maintained in a proper manner (graded etc)	Council	?	As necessary	Road improves

GROUP: TOURISM & MARKETING

TOURISM AND MARKETING:					
STRATEGY	ACTION	BY WHOM	COST	WHEN	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Resource and education centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops (arts, crafts, lifestyle) • Targeted improved facilities • Retreats 				
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community markets • Bicycle events 				
Journey strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish common strategies • Unique factors in neighbouring towns • Design tours and day trips 				
Roads and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby Council • State Government lobby • RTA lobby 				
Online web presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web improvement (Wotton site) • GLC link and content 				
Improved and erected signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage audit • Signage strategy • Council liaison • Revamp of existing entry statement 				

TOURISM AND MARKETING:					
STRATEGY	ACTION	BY WHOM	COST	WHEN	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Merchandising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Home tours and artist tours• Create venues for merchandising• Stalls				
Visual presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Street revamp• Art works and sculptures				
Branding strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further development• "Growing the Wootton Way"• Explore the "Wow" factor				

GROUP: HISTORY, HERITAGE AND CULTURE

HISTORY, HERITAGE AND CULTURE:					
STRATEGY	ACTION	BY WHOM	COST	WHEN	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Wattley Hill Road	Tar between stretches at bottom end	Council		ST	Become priority road
Ensure village is neat and tidy	Encourage owners of houses in village to take pride in their properties				
Improve access to old tram way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create walkway along old tramway • Get cooperation of property owners • Signage 				
Record history of Wootton	Record Jack Squires!				
Have Wootton town listed as a heritage town	List and adopt in GL Heritage Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Heritage Committee • Locals 	?	ASAP	Retain and maintain heritage values of town
Trestle Bridge promotion	Prepare information brochure about trestle bridge tracks throughout Wootton		\$10K+		

HISTORY, HERITAGE AND CULTURE:					
STRATEGY	ACTION	BY WHOM	COST	WHEN	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain walk and interpretive signs • Create a friends and action group to achieve this • Plan developed • Replace picnic provisions/infrastructure at Trestle Bridge 	Locals Heritage	?		More use of area

Any amendments made from our follow up meeting after the workshop are listed in red.