

Summary of Council's 25 November 2024 Ordinary Meeting

Report to be compiled regarding road renewal funding

Council endorsed a notice of motion requesting a report be compiled that would outline how much funding would be available for road renewal if every expense in Council's budget, excluding staff costs, were to be reduced by 5 per cent and the funding redirected to road renewal.

The report is to identify any risks to the budget created by this proposal, as well as impacts to service.

NOM-1 Road renewal funding

Advocacy to improve and secure regional air travel in Australia

Council recognises the critical importance of airlines such as Rex in maintaining essential regional air connectivity, which supports the economic, social, and healthcare needs of regional Australians including the Riverina.

Council resolved to write to the Federal Government, encouraging them to investigate all possibilities to improve and secure regional air travel in Australia, and to advocate to Local Government NSW and the Australian Local Government Association calling for broader support among councils to protect affordable regional aviation services.

In addition, Council will request that the federal government collaborate with the state and territory governments to develop a contingency plan for the nationalisation of Rex Airlines, ensuring a unified approach to safeguarding essential regional air services in the event of Rex's collapse.

NOM-2 Proposal to investigate the nationalisation of Rex

Petition received regarding maintenance items at Senior Citizens Centre

Council received a petition from the Wagga Wagga Senior Citizens Club Inc, containing 58 signatories, on 12 November 2024 regarding the Senior Citizens Centre on Tarcutta Street.

The petition requests that Council address five key maintenance items regarding: kitchen facilities, parquet dance floor, built-in audio system synchronisation, laminate in ladies bathroom and fallen roller blinds.

It is noted that Wagga Wagga City Council Facilities Maintenance conduct regular audits of all facilities, including the Senior Citizens Centre, and is continuously investing into the improvement of the facility.

In this financial year, upgrades have been made to the facility's heating and cooling, switch board, and sound system, with improvements to the facility's security proposed in the 2025/26 Financial Year budget.

Council has noted the requests and Council staff have discussed the issues with the facility with the Wagga Wagga Senior Citizens Club representatives.

RP-1 Petition – Ongoing maintenance issues of Seniors Community Centre

Draft Destination Management Plan to go on public exhibition

Council endorsed the draft Wagga Wagga Destination Management Plan to go on public exhibition to allow for feedback from the community.

The Destination Management Plan is a 10-year strategic framework to foster the growth of a robust visitor economy in the Wagga Wagga Local Government Area that also has flow-on benefits to the surrounding region.

The draft Plan has been developed through community and business consultation that was undertaken earlier in 2024, and has a key focus on product development, enabling infrastructure and brand awareness for the city.

The draft Wagga Wagga Destination Management Plan will be placed on public exhibition from Friday 29 November 2024 to Sunday 16 February 2025.

A media release for this will be distributed later in the week and a media opportunity will be held on Friday 29 November at 11am to coincide with the draft Wagga Wagga Destination Management Plan going on public exhibition.

RP-2 Draft Destination Management Plan 2025-2034

2023/2024 Financial Statements presented to Council

Council received the Audited Financial Statements, together with the Auditor's Reports on the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2024

Council resolved to sign the 2023/24 Financial Statements at the 28 October 2024 Ordinary Council Meeting, enabling Council officers to lodge the financial statements with the Office of Local Government (OLG) prior to the 31 October 2024 due date.

Council's external auditors, the NSW Audit Office, have completed their Auditor's Report and provided this to Council for their information.

The public is invited to view the 2023/2024 Financial Statements and can make submissions until Tuesday 3 December 2024.

RP-3 Presentation of the 2023/24 Financial Statements

Financial Performance Report as at 31 October 2024

Council endorsed the Financial Performance Report as at 31 October 2024 and noted the balanced budget position as presented in the report.

It approved the budget variations in the report which were:

- An Australia Day Community Events Grant of \$15,000 from the National Australia Day Council
- Wagga Wagga Art Gallery grant of \$51,600 from ClubGrants to undertake cabinetry work

RP-4 Financial Performance Report as at 31 October 2024

Requests for financial assistance

Council agreed to waive the hire fee for the use of the Duke of Kent Community Centre by the Wagga Wagga Women's Health Centre. The organisation uses the facility for rehearsals of its Wagga Women's Choir.

Council will waive the hire fees from January 2025 until the end of the 2024/25 Financial Year (June 30, 2025).

RP-5 Request for financial assistance – Section 356

Boundary adjustment at Wagga Cricket Ground approved

Council endorsed the proposed plan to adjust the boundaries between the Wagga Cricket Ground Reserve and the Wagga Wagga Racecourse Reserve located on the corner of Kincaid Street and Beckwith Street, Wagga Wagga, which is managed by Council as Crown Land.

The boundary adjustment is required to facilitate a proposed stable-complex development on the eastern side of the racecourse.

Council staff will work with the stakeholders and execute any necessary documentation in relation to this boundary adjustment.

RP-6 Boundary Adjustment - Wagga Cricket Ground - 111 Kincaid Street, Wagga Wagga

Harris Park amenities upgrade

Wagga Rugby League (WRL) received a grant of \$955,000 from the Office of Sport in 2022 through the Greater Cities and Regional Sport Facility Fund.

The funding was to be used to demolish the existing amenities block and the construction of a new facility at Harris Park, but the project was delayed due to post-COVID-19 pandemic worker shortages.

The increase in material and construction costs since 2022 means the budget required to complete the project now significantly exceeds the original grant funding and is estimated by WRL at \$2.6M.

These cost increases have halted the progress of the project and placed WRL at risk of losing the grant funding from the Office of Sport.

At the request of WRL, Council staff, NSW Rugby League and Dr Joe McGirr have had multiple discussions with the Office of Sport regarding the possibility of transferring the grant funding to Council instead of withdrawing the grant funding offer.

In order to avoid losing the grant funding, and complete the project, it is proposed that \$318,790 General Purpose Revenue (GPR) funds be brought forward from future year budget allocations of the Long-Term Financial Plan and allocated to this project.

Council received the report outlining the efforts to gain additional funding for this project and endorsed the transfer of the grant funds of \$955,000 awarded to Wagga Rugby League from NSW Office of Sport to Council, and also approved the budget variation/s as detailed in the Financial Implications section of the report.

RP-7 Harris Park amenities upgrade

Council's submission to the Office of Local Government regarding proposed changes to the Councillor Conduct Framework.

Council endorsed a draft submission to the Office of Local Government (OLG) regarding its Discussion Paper for proposed changes to the Councillor Conduct Framework.

The OLG has identified that the existing Councillor Conduct Framework is not delivering on the need for transparency and has raised concerns that closed Council briefing sessions are being used to make decisions away from the public view.

The OLG has prepared a Discussion Paper to seek the views of the community, key stakeholders and the local government sector about proposed changes to the Councillor Conduct Framework.

RP-8 Draft Submission to Discussion Paper - Councillor Conduct and Meeting Practices

Code of Conduct report

Council received and noted the Reporting Statistics on the Code of Conduct which is to be reported to the Office of Local Government NSW (OLG) within three months of the end of September each year.

This report covers the period of 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 and refers to any complaints received about Councillors and the General Manager.

RP-9 Code of Conduct statistics

Purchase of land for Gregadoo Waste Management Centre

Council endorsed for negotiations to take place for the purchase of land for the Gregadoo Waste Management Centre to replace land acquired by Transgrid.

Transgrid require a section of land that is currently owned by Council as part of the Gregadoo Waste Management Centre, but is not currently being used.

The purchase of the land is to recover the loss of land due to the acquisition, and to secure Wagga Wagga's waste management future.

CONF-1 Gregadoo Waste Management Centre

Review of Lake Albert blue green algae treatment

Council resolved to trial the treatment and management of Blue Green Algae within Lake Albert using Hydro2050 technology.

The Hydro2050 product is a relatively new product in Australia which uses nanobubble and ozone technology to manage Blue Green Algae.

The cost of this trial will be approximately \$300,000. If the trial is successful, Council will consider purchasing the product.

CONF-2 Lake Albert water treatment

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Contact 6926 9190 or media@wagga.nsw.gov.au

About Wagga Wagga City Council

Wagga Wagga City Council serves more than 68,000 residents across an area of 4825 square kilometres with an overall budget of \$240 million.

The organisation manages more than \$2.48 billion in assets, including a 2300km road network, Wagga Wagga Airport, Livestock Marketing Centre, and the Oasis Aquatic Centre.

Council also provides important community facilities such as Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Wagga Wagga City Library, Museum of the Riverina, and Civic Theatre, as well as maintaining countless parks, playgrounds, and sporting facilities to ensure Wagga maintains its reputation as 'the City of Good Sports'.

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