

Shire of Wickepin  
A FORTUNATE PLACE

# 2023 STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN

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# WELCOME

Welcome to the Strategic Community Plan 2023-2033, the guiding document for the Shire of Wickepin over the next 10 years.

I am proud to present the Shire of Wickepin Strategic Community Plan which provides our roadmap to achieving shared goals and aspirations. This Strategic Community Plan outlines the community's priorities and visions for the future, and sets out the key strategies required to implement and achieve these.

This plan continues to share our vision and aspirations for the future and outlines how we will, over the next decade, work towards a positive future for residents in the Shire of Wickepin.

Council needs clear directions to enable it to make tough decisions between many competing priorities, and this direction is given through the Shire of Wickepin's overarching document – The Strategic Community Plan, ensuring that all moves are towards achieving the community's vision for the future.

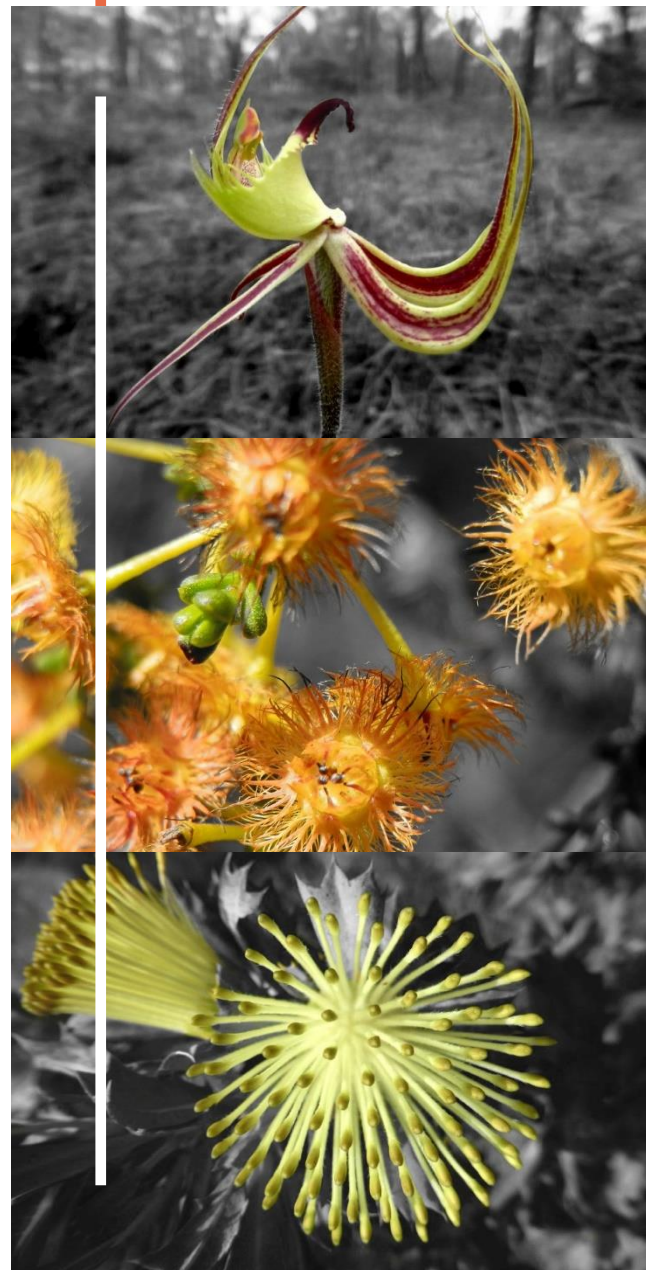
This plan could not have been produced without the involvement of the local community. In 2018 when the current plan was first developed we had excellent input from across the community and this was repeated in 2021 as part of a desktop review of this plan.

I am very grateful to those members of the community who became involved and took the time to provide input for the plan. Your responses gave Council valuable insight towards the priorities and visions for the future of the Shire of Wickepin as a whole, and I thank you very much.

Council now looks forward to working together with you all in bringing this new Strategic Community Plan to life.

**Cr Julie Russell**

**SHIRE PRESIDENT** – March 2023



# YOUR COUNCIL

Councillors have a specific role in relation to developing the local government's vision and long term goal setting. The development and implementation of our community's aspirations and goals will be facilitated by the Shire's Councillors. The Councillors meet regularly to discuss issues and imperative areas arising in the community. Councillors act to ensure that they:

- Represent the interests of electors, ratepayers and residents of the district;
- Facilitate communication between the community and the Shire;
- Participate in the local government decision-making processes at council and committee meetings;
- Provide appropriate services and facilities are efficient, effective, adequate and equitable;
- Properly manage the environment, consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development; and
- Take into account the long-term cumulative effects of the Shire's decisions.

## **PRESIDENT**

**Cr JA (Julie) Russell**  
- retiring 2027

## **DEPUTY PRESIDENT**

**Cr W (Wes) Astbury**  
- retiring 2025

## **COUNCILLORS**

**Cr FM (Fran) Allan**  
- retiring 2027

**Cr LG (Lindsay) Corke**  
- retiring 2025

**Cr JR (John) Mearns**  
- retiring 2027

**Cr TG (Tyron) Miller**  
- retiring 2025

**Cr PD (Peter) Thompson**  
- retiring 2025

# THE PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Community Plan shapes the delivery of Shire services over the next ten years. The Plan was initially developed in 2018. A desktop review of this Plan commenced in 2023 and concluded in March 2024.

The review process included several community engagements that provided the Council with sufficient direction on the aspirations of the community when conducting the desktop review. The Plan has been developed to guide the Council in carrying out its functions as a local government to use its best endeavors to meet the needs of current and future generations through an integration of service delivery, social advancement, infrastructure improvements and economic prosperity.

Under the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996, state government legislated an integrated framework for corporate planning and reporting. This framework requires all local governments in Western Australia to have two key documents: a Strategic Community Plan and a Corporate Business Plan, which are supported by informing strategies including the Workforce Plan, Asset Management Plan and Long Term Financial Plan.

The Strategic Community Plan identifies what the Shire is seeking to achieve and the Corporate Business Plan outlines how it will achieve this.

INFORMING STRATEGIES

FINANCE

ASSETS

WORKFORCE

SERVICES

ISSUES SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

STRATEGIC PLAN

CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN

ANNUAL BUDGET

# SHIRE SNAPSHOT

- Sealed Roads **157 Km**,  
Unsealed Roads **717 Km**
- Rates levied **\$1.69m**,  
Turnover **\$8.8m**
- Number of employees: **28**

Wickepin contains rich agricultural lands that were opened for settlement in 1893. The locality began as a watering point known as Yarling and was used by early sandalwood cutters.

The Shire covers an area of 198,900 hectares and includes the towns of Wickepin, Yealering, Harrismith and Tincurrin. The Avon, Blackwood and Murray Rivers rise in the Shire.

The Shire is a prosperous farming area with excellent wool and lamb production. Cropping is done on a large scale with wheat, oats, barley, lupins and canola grown. Wickepin is also home to the Facey Group, a prominent grower group in Western Australia that is committed to improving the economic, social and environmental sustainability of broad acre farming through research, development and information in the region.

Wickepin is known for being the home of Albert Facey, an Australian Biographer. His house has been moved to the centre of the town as a tourist attraction. The Homestead was built in 1924 and has been fully restored.



The town offers excellent facilities for locals and travellers. Great walks, a BBQ area, children's' playgrounds plus there are two primary schools in the Shire – Yealering and Wickepin – a medical centre, police station, church, and Community Resource Centre in Wickepin, as well as Bushfire Brigades, sporting and community groups across the Shire. St John Ambulance covers the Shire of Wickepin with Ambulances in Wickepin, Harrismith and Yealering.

# CONSIDERED RISKS

Throughout the Strategic Planning process a number of internal and external risks have been discussed and presented to Council for consideration, additionally Council conducted an analysis of the organisations strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The risks identified and being considered in the development of this Strategic Community Plan include:

## **INTERNAL RISKS**

- Resources are split across multiple town sites
- Participation in regional groupings
- Shire is a major employer
- Competitive nature of external funding

## **EXTERNAL RISKS**

- Ageing population
- Demographic profile of the community
- Loss of rail transport for grain
- Lack of business diversity
- Loss of essential services
- No bank in the Shire
- Lack of available, quality accommodation
- Telecommunications - internet and mobile
- Volunteer burnout
- Government red tape
- Close proximity to a regional centre (Narrogin)
- Loss of young people

## **GOING FORWARD WE WILL MANAGE OUR RISKS BY:**

- Adhering to our risk management policies
- Conducting an annual audit and implementing the recommendations
- Adhering to the Integrated Planning Reporting guidelines
- Annually review our risk management processes
- Continually monitor risk at a Council level



## our strengths

### INTERNAL

- Positive financial position of the Shire
- Council demographics and leadership skills
- Plant equipment is in good standard
- Waste management
- Sport and recreation facilities
- We are open to new ideas
- We can react quickly

### EXTERNAL

- Strength of agribusiness
- Access to fuel
- Facey Group
- Health services

### INTERNAL

- Industrial and residential land development
- Caravan Parks

### EXTERNAL

- Regional Organisation of Council / collaboration
- Community Resource Centre
- CBH in Wickiepin
- Drive in and drive out of Narrogin (Wickiepin offers a lifestyle choice)
- Lake Yealering, Toolibin Lake
- Albert Facey Homestead
- Wildflowers
- Heritage trails
- Kaolin Mine
- Facey Group

## our opportunities

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The development of the 2018 Strategic Community Plan was informed by community engagement, including surveys, telephone interviews, community group engagement, business consultation and workshops. An estimated 152 people participated in those engagements, as detailed below:

- **71** survey respondents
- **24** random phone calls to ratepayers across all parts of the Shire answering a series of set questions (had not completed a survey)
- **20** community leaders of local clubs and associations separate to online and hard copy survey (sports, progress, emergency services etc.)
- **16** attendees at the RDA Wheatbelt Enterprising Communities Wickepin workshop and review of Harrismith and Yealering workshops
- **14** business owners across the Shire, separate to any other consultation
- **7** CRC, Medical Centre, Wickepin PS, Yealering PS, Police

The 152 active respondents represented 21% of the 2018 estimated population of the Shire of Wickepin.

For the 2023 review, community engagement was undertaken in March and April 2023. The community engagement process encompassed two formal mechanisms of engagement, being three community workshops and a community survey. A total of 151 persons were recorded as participants in this engagement, being 79 attending the three community workshop evenings, and 72 responding to the community survey.

The total of 151 persons represents a participation rate of almost 22% of the total population and 28% of residents aged 18 years and older. This met the standards articulated in the State Government's 'Integrated Planning and Reporting Advisory Standards'.

SHIRE OF  
**WICKEPIN**

**BRAINSTORMING  
BBQ'S**

What does the future  
of our shire look like  
to you?

YEALERING HALL  
TUESDAY 28 MARCH

HARRISMITH GOLF CLUB  
WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH

WICKEPIN COMMUNITY CENTRE  
THURSDAY 30 MARCH

6.00PM - 8.30PM

Dinner & refreshments provided

Notwithstanding this, the Council is cognisant that some duplication of numbers occurred by persons participating in both the survey and a community workshop. As most surveys were returned anonymously there is no way to determine specific numbers. The Council is satisfied that the feedback provided from the survey and community workshops is an accurate reflection of community perceptions, values, visions and provides good direction for the Council to determine future strategic directions.



The responses provided in the community survey indicate a very proud community, who value sensible funds expenditure towards items considered important. Community spirit and the kind natured people within the community, are highly valued, along with a sense of feeling safe. Having a relatively short distance to travel to the major centres of Perth and Bunbury is also valued. The community is largely optimistic about the future and opportunities within the district.

Respondents expressed that the Shire should focus more on:

- Rural roads (52 respondents)
- Regional development (21)
- Fire mitigation, fire prevention and fire-fighting (19)
- Pest control - mosquitos, mice, foxes, etc. (18)
- Community housing (18)
- Town planning (18)
- Public halls/community centres (17)
- Street verges (17)
- Town gardens (16)
- Animal control (15)
- Area activation – events, event support, etc. (15)
- Town streets (15)

Respondents expressed that the Shire should focus less on:

- Unemployment assistance (17)
- Arts and culture (12)
- Tourism (10)
- Governance over the district (9)
- Libraries (9)
- Building control (8)
- Salt mitigation (7)
- Heritage and history promotion (7)
- Rates collection (6)
- Food premises inspection (6)
- Protection of the environment (5)
- Synthetic turf facilities (5)

Clearly respondents had firmer views on what the Shire should focus more on than less on, with rural road (maintenance and improvements) being a clear focus.

It is noted that some of the matters seen by respondents as less important (less focus) are statutory responsibilities of local government and must continue to be delivered.

The results of the community engagement were used by council when reviewing strategies in the desktop review process.

# GOALS AND STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OUR OUTCOMES

## our vision

A collaborative Council, dedicated to maintaining and developing our community assets for the benefit of our residents whilst supporting a strong community, a vibrant economy, successful businesses and a sound environment

As the representatives of the Wickepin community, the Shire Council and staff are guided by PRIDE:

**PROFESSIONALISM -**

in the standards and ethics of our actions.

**RESPECT -**

through courtesy and honesty in our dealings with all people.

**INTEGRITY -**

that builds community trust.

**DEDICATION -**

of a committed team that works together to provide leadership for the community.

**EXCELLENCE -**

in the service that we provide for the community.

## council priorities

Adding value and impact of Council owned infrastructure and services by:

1. Attracting new populations and retaining our current population
2. Growing our local economy and providing opportunities that benefit local businesses across the Shire
3. Protecting, enhancing and receiving value from our natural environment
4. Ensure positive financial positions in Council's Budget

# OUR PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Goal	Strategy
<i>Infrastructure</i>	
1. Roads are a key economic driver across the Shire	1.1 Improve road safety and connectivity
	1.2 Develop and implement long-term (minimum 5 years) works construction programs
	1.3 Plant and equipment maintenance and replacement is planned
	1.4 Identification of road maintenance and improvements in the Asset Management Plan
2. Improve the amenities and aesthetics of townsites	2.1 Provide attractive and well-maintained parks, playgrounds and garden beds
	2.2 Create vibrant, attractive and welcoming towns
	2.3 Develop, fund and implement a long-term Playground Improvement Plan
3. The Shire of Wickepin Caravan Park amenities are of a high standard	3.1 Prepare, fund and implement improvement plans for the Shire's caravan parks
	3.2 Ensure the management structures and arrangements for the Shire's caravan parks are sufficient to meet user needs and Shire responsibilities
4. Maintain Shire owned facilities in a strategic manner and also to meet community needs	4.1 Ensure currency of the Asset Management Plan; fund and deliver the asset preservation needs for the organisation's assets including roads, buildings, plant and equipment
	4.2 Support the improvement and maintenance of assets in a strategic manner
	4.3 Encourage greater usage of Shire facilities
<i>Economy</i>	
5. We are an agricultural hub, that innovates and leverages opportunities	5.1 Where appropriate support the Facey Group to continue its close links with local growers and key stakeholders
	5.2 Maintain close links with grain handlers and commodity transporters, including rail
	5.3 Collaborate with the Facey Group on strategic projects

Goal	Strategy
6. New businesses are attracted and existing businesses grow	6.1 Support local business to thrive
	6.2 Plan in a Local Planning Strategy and Town Planning Scheme for a diverse range of land, housing and development opportunities for facilitation of growth in residential and industrial land use – to meet current and future needs
	6.3 Budget for future headworks
	6.4 Engage with WA Kaolin to ensure positive impacts from the mine are received within the Shire of Wickepin
	6.5 Investigate a digital or physical incubation space
7. Residents and visitors can access reliable telecommunications services	7.1 Advocate for improved telecommunications solutions
8. Tourism opportunities create value to our communities	8.1 Continue to actively participate in the Living Lakes Project
	8.2 Position and promote Yealering (and Lake Yealering) as a tourist destination
	8.3 Partner with our neighbouring Shires on tourism promotion and initiatives
	8.4 Improve tourism infrastructure and services
	8.5 Promote (and partner where appropriate) festivals and events that showcase the district's natural assets and community
<i>Community</i>	
9. Our communities are engaged, have a healthy lifestyle and are safe	9.1 Advocate for quality health and community services
	9.2 Improve family, children and youth services and facilities to attract and retain families
	9.3 Provide sustainable, compliant and cost-effective waste management infrastructure and services
	9.4 Encourage the adoption of sustainable waste behaviours through waste education and communications
	9.5 Partner in road safety awareness initiatives
	9.6 Connect with local and regional Natural Resource Management organisations to determine how their priorities can benefit our communities and businesses
	9.7 Understand and meet the needs of an ageing population including the benefits of ageing in place

Goal	Strategy
	9.8 Emergency service planning is coordinated and articulated
	9.9 Recruiting volunteers is a partnership approach between the Shire and emergency services
	9.10 Partner with external bodies to protect natural flora and fauna
	9.11 Provide weed and pest management
	9.12 Engage the community (including specific business groups, community organisations and the overall community) in a meaningful and timely way using appropriate communication and consultation/engagement channels
	9.13 Encourage and enforce responsible pet ownership
	9.14 Develop community readiness to cope with natural disasters and emergencies
<i>Governance</i>	
10. Our organisation is well positioned and has capacity for the future	10.1 Attract, train, develop and retain a skilled and effective workforce
	10.2 Periodically review the Workforce Plan to assess employee needs and priorities and to determine whether the organisation has the resources and structure to deliver Council's strategic objectives
	10.3 Identify councillor training needs
11. We are proactive about collaboration and forward planning our future success	11.1 Participate in regional groupings where value to the Shire of Wickepin can be demonstrated
	11.2 Long Term Financial Plan is reviewed on a regular basis
	11.3 Ensure integrated planning documents remain current via regular reviews
12. Our communities are informed via multiple channels at regular intervals	12.1 Provide meaningful communications that deliver information regularly and succinctly
	12.2 Promote Council services and achievements
	12.3 Continue to review our service standards by reviewing community feedback
	12.4 Provide a framework for communicating value for money for rates

# MONITORING AND REPORTING

Annual reporting on implementation of the Strategic Community Plan occurs in the Shire's Annual Report.

Services and facilities provided by the Shire have been linked with the relevant strategies in the following table.

The table provides a connection between the services and facilities and the desired outcomes and community vision for the Shire of Wickepin.

<i>SHIRE SERVICE</i>	<i>STRATEGY</i>
Advocacy	7.1, 9.1
Caravan Park, Camping and Rest Stops	3.1, 3.2,
Community Development	9.1, 9.2
Community Facilities (Halls, Recreation etc.)	4.1, 4.2, 4.3
Council and Executive Leadership	9.12, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 11.2, 11.3, 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4
Early Years Support	9.2
Economic Development	2.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.4, 6.5
Emergency Services	9.8, 9.9, 9.14
Health Services	9.1
Land Development	6.3
Natural Resource Management	9.6, 9.10, 9.11
Ranger Services	9.13
Recreation and Leisure	2.1, 2.2
Regional Participation	9.5, 11.1
Road Construction, Maintenance and Preservation	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 4.1, 5.2, 9.5
Seniors Support and Aged Accommodation	9.7
Tourism	3.1, 3.2, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5
Town Beautification, Parks, Gardens and Reserves	2.1, 2.2, 2.3
Town Planning / Land Development	6.2
Waste Management	9.3, 9.4