



WALGETT ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY WORKING PARTY

HOUSING and ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PLAN

MAY 2022



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**WALGETT ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY
WORKING PARTY**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

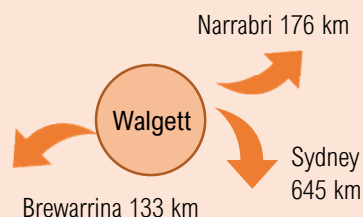


Walgett

Housing and Environmental Health Plan Executive Summary

This Housing and Environmental Health Plan provides a Master Plan for housing, infrastructure and housing-related human services for the Aboriginal community of Walgett. The Master Plan is based on a body of evidence outlined in this Executive Summary. Much community input is drawn from the Household Survey organised by Murdi Paaki Services, and from the Walgett Aboriginal CWP Community Action Plan. This Plan describes the current situation and proposes measures to improve the state and supply of housing, the way it is allocated and managed, and what needs to be done in the future to meet community needs for housing, wrap-around services and economic development. The Executive Summary begins with some facts about the community, looks at the housing situation, then presents the key points of the Master Plan. The Plan belongs to the Aboriginal community of Walgett

Where we are to be found?



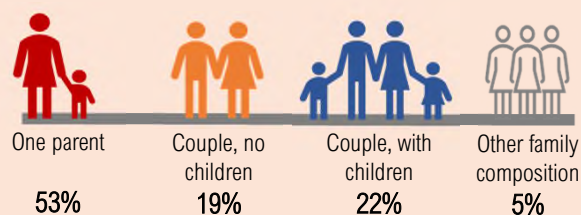
The Walgett climate is hot and dry. The number of days with temperatures $>35^{\circ}\text{C}$, already 69 days, is predicted to increase by 30-40 days each year by 2070

About the community:

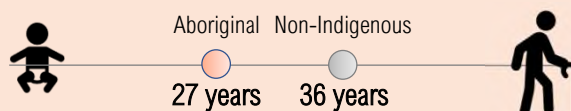


Aboriginal population = 60% of total population of 1,546 persons

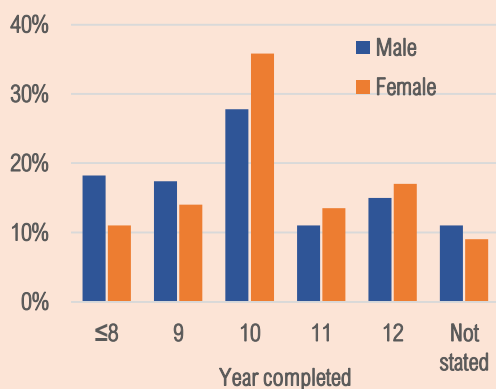
Family household composition



Median age of the population



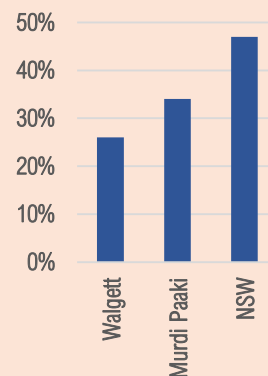
Highest year of schooling, all Aboriginal adults



32% of the Aboriginal population is aged under 15 years



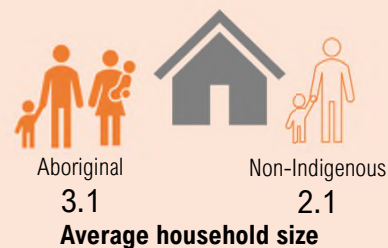
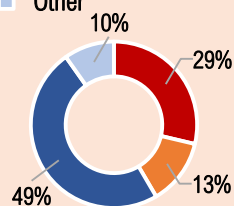
Employment to population ratio



Walgett

Tenure type (from Census)

- Owners
- Private renters
- Social housing renters
- Other

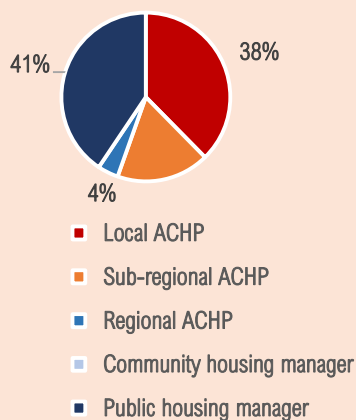


Facts about housing in our community:



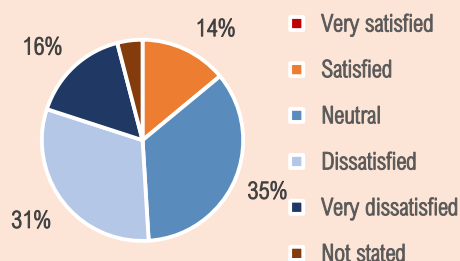
On Census night, 21% of private dwellings were not occupied

Social housing manager(s)

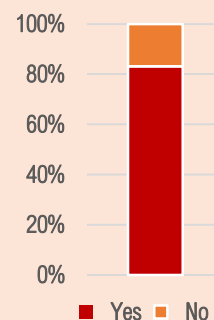


73% of households lived in the same house 5 years before the MRH&BC

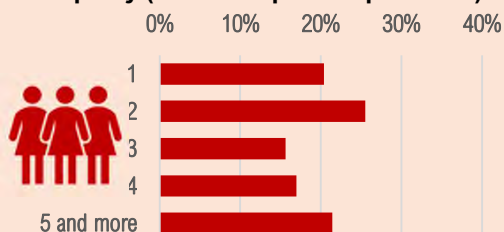
Satisfaction with housing manager



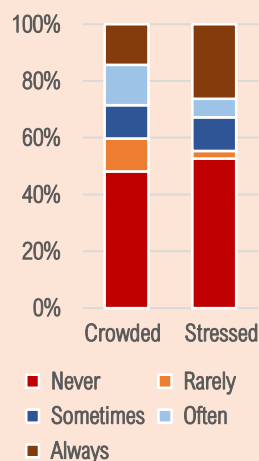
Feeling safe



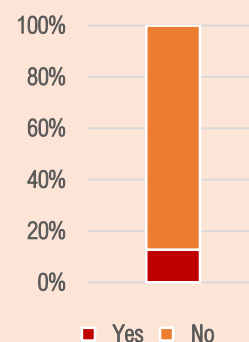
Occupancy (number of persons per house)



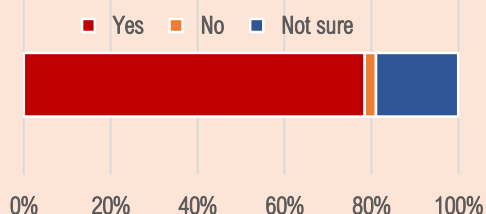
Households feeling



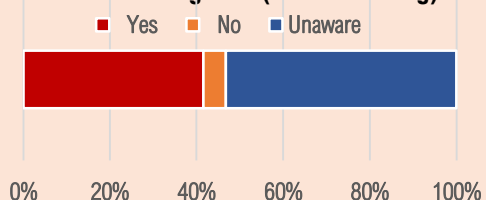
Households giving shelter



Tenants with a tenancy agreement



Tenants claiming CRA (Social housing)



REASONS FOR LIVING IN WALGETT

My family has been here a long time

84%

To be close to family and relations

84%

Because I was born here

72%

MASTER PLAN - HOUSING



ESTIMATE OF HOUSING NEED

Predicted housing need

	Bedrooms			
	2	3	4	5
Families	-	9	2	-
Older persons	13	-	-	-
Young persons	36	-	-	-
Homeless families	5	-	-	-
Total dwellings	54	9	2	0

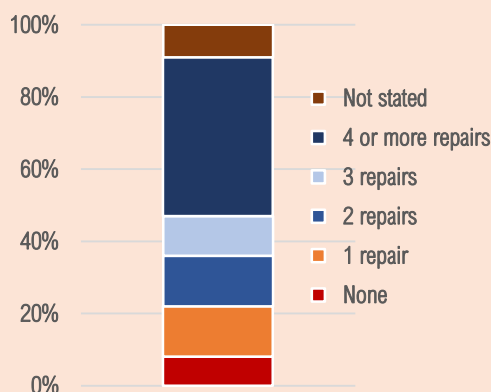
Home modifications

Required	11
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Extra bedrooms

	Bedrooms		
	1	2	3
Estimated	15	4	-

Tenant reported condition



Housing repairs

(Number of properties)

Degree of work	Number
↗	17
↗ ↗	57
↗ ↗ ↗	72
↗ ↗ ↗ ↗	5
↗ ↗ ↗ ↗ ↗	19

- Examine the processes, performance and sustainability of Aboriginal social housing managers to identify the underlying causes for the high level of dissatisfaction expressed by tenants in the MPRH&BC household survey, and solutions which re-establish confidence and close relationships in the sector
- Advocate for a review of rent setting policy and housing application and allocation processes
- Take note of the view of the greater majority of Aboriginal social housing tenants that tenancies should be handed down
- Housing supply and mix does not cater adequately for young individuals, older persons, families and the homeless. Advocate for supply to be increased by the number and mix of properties estimated by the HEHP as a minimum. Consider building several new smaller units for the elderly and disabled to allow existing houses to be reallocated to families. Address the access challenges faced by older residents of Namoi Village. Extend existing houses where judged to be crowded with the addition of bedrooms and bathrooms
- Discuss with Walgett Shire Council options for further residential development, noting the proposal to release a greenfields site on the Come by Chance Road
- Carry out independent property inspections, secure adequate investment, and carry out repairs, upgrades and extensions using only values-aligned contractors with the capacity to carry out work professionally to a high standard. Make properties secure. Address the backlog of home modifications
- Ensure that all homes are equipped with energy efficient air conditioning with sufficient capacity to deal with rising temperatures and with roof mounted-solar PV systems to reduce energy bills
- Train local Aboriginal workers to form the nucleus of a local trades workforce to carry out repairs
- Arrange with AHO and/or IBA to deliver community information workshops in support of home ownership

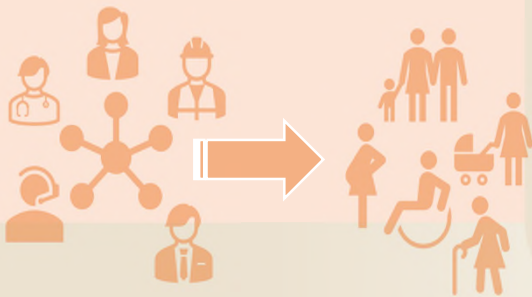
MASTER PLAN - HOUSING (Continued)

- Maintain the role of MP TSEP in supporting tenants at risk of breach to retain tenancies, and to access human and other services necessary to support good physical and mental health and social and economic stability
- Assess the need for emergency accommodation: crisis accommodation, transit housing and/or short-term accommodation, and a safe place for young people; quantify demand, prepare a feasibility study and advocate for building and resourcing

The Master Plan sets out the actions the CWP has adopted to secure a better future for the community. The actions come from the contributions of the community and from analysis of the gaps which prevent people from living healthy, prosperous and comfortable lives in Walgett. The actions written into this Executive Summary are shorthand versions of the actions in the Plan itself

MASTER PLAN - INFRASTRUCTURE

- Advocate with Walgett Shire Council and other responsible agencies for a regular kerbside bulky waste collection service community-wide
- Under Roads2Home, for Gingie and Namoi Villages, negotiate with DPIE and others to upgrade all roads and footpaths, drainage, street lighting, levee, water and sewerage systems, and NBN services, and develop a long-term solution to the transport issue



MASTER PLAN - HUMAN SERVICES

- Engage with MPRA, DCJ and other agencies to advance the actions in the Community Action Plan in conjunction with the Housing and Environmental Health Plan
- Foster a closer relationship between the CWP and all tiers of government to drive improvements in human services including a stronger focus on provider cooperation, service integration, performance and cost-effectiveness. Audit and review the role and operational objectives of all human services providers across all sectors with a view to lifting performance and value for community. Address barriers and fill service gaps
- Develop a transport solution which will allow community members without a vehicle to attend to their daily household tasks and personal business, and to attend health appointments at the AMS and hospital
- Improve the community's ability to access health care services locally and regionally with a focus on mental health services for all age groups
- Work with DCJ and DSS to ensure that appropriate services are available to all community members who need disability care and packaged aged care, that assessments are conducted within a reasonable timeframe, and to design and put in place accountability measures for service providers with regular feedback to MPRA and the CWP
- Noting the low employment participation rate, negotiate with MPS for the creation of a Region-wide employment strategy which centres on the development of a local skills and enterprise base with the capability to deliver health and human services in place of non-Indigenous providers
- Building on the CWP's work already in hand, negotiate a package of initiatives around the NSW Government *Regional NSW Youth Framework: Empowering youth in regional NSW* relating to jobs and pathways to employment, physical and mental health, digital and physical connection, and things to do and places to go

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GLOSSARY

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACDP	Aboriginal Communities Development Programme
ACHP	Aboriginal Community Housing Provider
ACFI	Aged Care Funding Instrument
AEDC	Australian Early Development Census
AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability
AHD	Australian Height Datum
AHIMS	Aboriginal Heritage Management Information System
AHO	NSW Aboriginal Housing Office
AIM	Aborigines Inland Mission
ALRA	Aboriginal Land Rights Act
ALT	Aboriginal Lands Trust
APB	Aborigines Protection Board
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
AWB	Aborigines Welfare Board
CAP	Community Action Plan
CHSP	Commonwealth Home Support Programme
CNOS	Canadian Occupancy Standard
COPD	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
CRA	Commonwealth Rent Assistance
CSP	Community Strategic Plan
CWP	Community Working Party
DCJ	NSW Department of Communities and Justice
DFV	Domestic and Family Violence
DIDO	Drive In, Drive Out
DPIE	NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
FIFO	Fly In, Fly Out
HCP	Home Care Package
HEHP	Housing and Environmental Health Plan
HLP	Healthy Living Practices
IBA	Indigenous Business Australia
IFD	Intensity Frequency Duration
ILOC	Indigenous Location
IRSD	Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LEP	Local Environmental Plan
LHD	Local Health District
LGA	Local Government Area
LSPS	Local Strategic Planning Statement
MPRA	Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly
MPRH&BC	Murdi Paaki Regional Housing and Business Consortium
MPRHC	Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation
MPS	Murdi Paaki Services Limited
MP TSEP	Murdi Paaki Tenant Support and Education Programme
NAHS	National Aboriginal Health Strategy
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NSHS	National Social Housing Survey

N-W NSW IREG	North-West NSW Indigenous Region
NSWALC	New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council
OCHRE	Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility and Empowerment (NSW Government Aboriginal Affairs Plan)
PHN	Primary Health Network
RAHLA	Regional Aboriginal Housing Leadership Assembly
REDI.E	Regional Enterprise Development Institute Ltd
SA1	Statistical Area 1
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SOMIH	State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
WAMS	Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service
WLALC	Walgett Local Aboriginal Land Council

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Housing and Environmental Health Plan has been prepared by the Walgett Aboriginal Community Working Party with the help of Murdi Paaki Services Ltd. The Walgett Aboriginal Community Working Party acknowledges the contributions of all community members and others who participated in the development of this plan through offering their advice, knowledge and encouragement.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We also acknowledge and respect the efforts of those community members seeking to improve the wellbeing of all Aboriginal families and individuals living in our community.

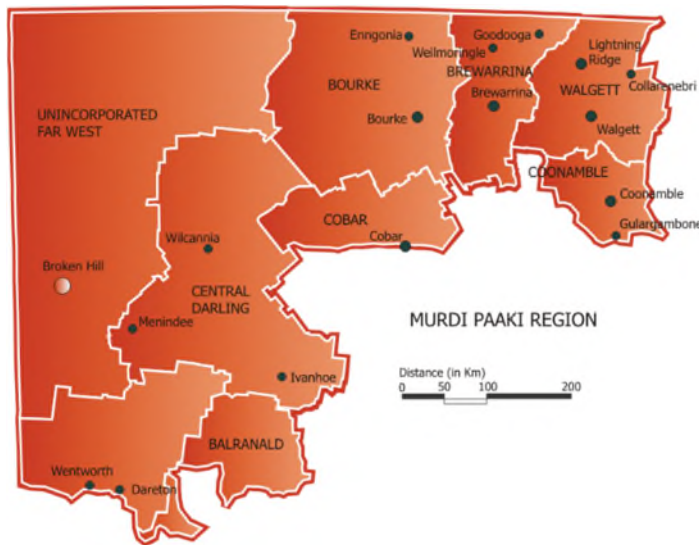
For the purposes of this Plan, an Aboriginal person is a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (person) and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Plan

This Housing and Environmental Health Plan (HEHP) is prepared by the Aboriginal community of Walgett, in north-western NSW. The Walgett community is one of sixteen larger communities within the Murdi Paaki Region shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Murdi Paaki Region



- Contribute to a review of financial wellbeing of the Aboriginal social housing sector;
- Provide an informed basis for planning for future housing need and development, and associated value-adding initiatives; and
- Describe a high-level community-led approach to project master planning to shape the future of Aboriginal housing and related human services in Walgett.

The Plan describes the aspirations of Aboriginal people living in Walgett and outlines a strategic approach to achieving the community's goals. Planning is the necessary first step in a programme aimed at achieving better housing and environmental health outcomes by building and improving housing and environmental health infrastructure, together with related services and amenities in the community.

The Aboriginal community of Walgett will benefit directly through having the foundation of a more strategic, informed and innovative approach to resourcing and managing the Aboriginal social housing sector in the community.

1.2 Governance arrangements

The purpose of the HEHP is to:

- With data collected through the Murdi Paaki Regional Housing and Business Consortium (MPRH&BC) project and described in the Social Housing Providers and Assets Audit Report, establish an evidence-base to guide the way in which housing policy is set and decisions are made in respect of Aboriginal social housing provision and management, and responses to environmental risk;
- Describe the situation in relation to housing Aboriginal individuals and families in Walgett;
- Gauge interest in home ownership;
- To the extent possible, report on the condition of Aboriginal social housing assets;
- Assess 'wrap-around' human services;
- Determine the need for and form of tenant support and education services;

HEHPs are an initiative of the Murdi Paaki Regional Aboriginal Housing Leadership Assembly (RAHLA), a partnership of Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (MPRA) and the NSW Government created through the OCHRE Local Decision-Making policy and directed by the Ministerial Agreement to improve Aboriginal social housing outcomes in the Region.

The RAHLA sees the preparation of HEHPs in all Murdi Paaki communities as a priority project under the Agreement and has authorised Murdi Paaki Services Ltd (MPS) to carry out the project to begin developing the evidence base for regional policy setting and decision making as a vital step in rebuilding the social housing sector and the social and economic capabilities of the Region.

The Agreement sets a framework for the active participation of Murdi Paaki communities, through elected representative peak bodies, in the

development and delivery of better services, and the building of individual and organisational capacity to raise skills, knowledge and competencies. In this regard, the Agreement recognises the status of the Walgett Aboriginal Community Working Party (CWP) as the principal point of contact for conducting business within the Aboriginal community and for leading the development of the HEHP planning process at community level.

1.3 Respecting Land Council autonomy

The roles and functions of Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) are defined in the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1982 (ALRA). Land Councils play a vital role in maintaining cultural practice and conserving Aboriginal heritage within their boundaries. They fulfil a critical function in NSW of restoring to the local Aboriginal population land which has been alienated by European colonisation. This land may be used for cultural or economic purposes; the rationale for each land claim is based upon the aspirations of the relevant LALC. LALCs also provide Community Benefit Schemes which may include Aboriginal social housing provision. In the Murdi Paaki Region, most LALCs are housing owners; some also manage their own housing. Individual LALCs have the inalienable right to make decisions in relation to their assets in accordance with the processes and constraints set out in the ALRA.

Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly policy is not to involve itself in matters of heritage and culture which are rightly the domain of the LALCs. The Assembly recognises the autonomy of LALCs to make their own decisions in relation to their land and property. This Housing and Environmental Health Plan does not in any way impinge on the LALC's autonomy as a sovereign decision-maker in relation to its assets. In the interests of achieving maximum benefit for the community, the CWP invites the LALC to join its voice and hands in unity to advocate for and implement the change agenda set out in the Master Plan.

1.4 The bigger picture

This HEHP is intended to supplement the work undertaken to date through the MPRH&BC project with more detailed and targeted enquiry at community level. Plans have been produced to a similar degree of detail for all communities across the Murdi Paaki Region, providing the opportunity for the MPRA to assess communities' strengths and needs both as individual communities and comparatively, in relation to each other. The Plans acknowledge the reality of the experiences of Aboriginal people living in western NSW and form a resource for intelligent leadership and an integrated, creative response which places communities, to the greatest extent possible, as the principal drivers of sustainable local action.

It is hoped the HEHPs will:

- Reinststate and strengthen the capacity of Murdi Paaki regional and local Aboriginal Community Housing Providers (ACHPs) to ensure that all Aboriginal people living in Aboriginal social housing in the community can receive culturally appropriate, professional and sustainable tenancy and asset management services from ACHPs which themselves are viable and supported;
- Increase access, opportunity and choice in affordable, healthy and safe housing for Aboriginal persons and families living in Murdi Paaki communities through growing the size and mix of the ACHP asset base;
- Work to ensure that assets are maintained in good condition in the long term;
- Ensure that tenants most at risk of a tenancy breach can access the services they need to sustain their tenancies;
- Provide greater opportunity for Aboriginal persons and families to engage with employment and education support that enables housing independence;
- Establish the level of financial investment in respect of capital and recurrent costs to ensure sector viability; and
- Set the foundation for procurement practices and value add initiatives which respond to the 'failed market' environment and benefit the community.

2 BRIEF HISTORY

2.1 Information sources

Material in this chapter is drawn from a variety of sources, including Heather Goodall's doctoral dissertation (*A History of Aboriginal Communities in New South Wales, 1909 – 1939*) and her 1996 publication, *Invasion to Embassy*; Charles Rowley's *Outcasts in White Australia* (1972); JPM Long's *Aboriginal Settlements: A Survey of Institutional Communities in Eastern Australia* (1970); Norman Tindale's *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia* (1974); the *Walgett Shire LGA Aboriginal Heritage Study*, the *Report of the Community Based Heritage Study of Walgett Shire*, and *A Thematic History of Walgett Shire*. Various editions of the *NSW Government Gazette* have been mined for information about Aboriginal reserves; as have the country and parish maps of the Land Registry Service Historical Land Records.

2.2 Snapshot

Walgett is located on the southern side of the Namoi River just upstream of its confluence with the Barwon River, in the Country belonging to the Gamilaroi Nation. Walgett has a long history of racial conflict; segregation and oppression of Aboriginal people and, in response, successful activism.

The Namoi and Barwon Rivers, their tributaries and the wetlands and waterholes which are prominent in the landscape have been central to the life of the Aboriginal people of Walgett for tens of thousands of years. Traditional affiliations were disrupted in the hostile colonisation phase of the mid-1800s by the influx of European pastoralists, and the Aboriginal traditional owners' access to country was increasingly constrained. Grazing runs had reached the Barwon River by the late 1830s; the town of Walgett was first surveyed in 1859, and land sales commenced. During that decade, pastoral employment for Aboriginal people and the creation of camps on pastoral runs, particularly in the Walgett North pastoral district, meant that ties to places of significance could be maintained for the time being. From the 1880s onwards, though, an increasingly draconian regime of 'protection'

policy and practice constrained Aboriginal people's ability to make choices about their lives, and effectively imprisoned and enslaved most Aboriginal people who came within the orbit of first the Aborigines Protection Board (APB) then, from 1940, the Aborigines Welfare Board (AWB). Reserves were gazetted, and increasingly, limitations were placed upon Aboriginal people's rights to choose where they lived. In Walgett, a particular problem presented for Aboriginal families because of school segregation, and this resulted in heartbreaking consequences as children were stolen.

Segregation was a continuing theme through the narrative of Aboriginal/white relations in Walgett through to the 1960s. The 1965 Freedom Ride was a defining event in the struggle for Aboriginal rights in Walgett. In the decades since, the Aboriginal Land Rights movement has led to communal Aboriginal ownership of land and cultural continuity; Aboriginal community-controlled organisations have been established to meet needs within the community, and an enduring representative framework has evolved to amplify Aboriginal people's voices to decision-makers.

2.3 Aboriginal ownership

The town of Walgett is situated within and close to the western boundary of the Gamilaroi Nation, and very close to the eastern boundary of the country belonging to both the Yuwaalaraay and Wayilwan peoples. Tindale described Gamilaroi Country as the "Walgett, N.S.W., to Nindigully, Qld.; near Talwood and Garah; at Moree, Mungindi, Mogil Mogil, Narrabri, Pilliga, Gunnedah, Bingara, Tamworth, Quirindi, Bundella, Barraba, Gwabegar, and Come-by-Chance; on headwaters of the Hunter River". The country of the Wayilwan language group, part of the Ngiyampaa Nation, lies to the west, south-west and south of Walgett, on the southern side of the Barwon River. To the north, incorporating Lightning Ridge, Goodooga and Angledool, is Yuwaalaraay/Euahlayi/Yuwaalayaay country. All three language groups are represented in the contemporary Walgett Aboriginal community.

Traditional Gamilaroi knowledge about Country paints the land around Walgett as rich in creation narratives, often associated with water bodies – for example, in relation to the association of Narran Lake and Cuddie Springs with Baiame, the ancestral creator spirit, who left knee and hand prints at Narran Lake and footprints in the Barwon River. Evidence of pre-contact Aboriginal society indicates that different language groups lived in different ways; either moving through their own country on a path which took them to certain places at particular times, or as fairly settled communities who practised a form of agriculture. Country was divided in such a way that boundaries and localities could be readily identified by the practice of naming of landscape features. Aboriginal language groups had very complex kinship systems which controlled the way people were able to marry, and shaped formal relationships between family members and others.

Alienation of Aboriginal land for pastoral runs occurred at around the same time as European exploration of the area around Walgett. John Oxley travelled through the area to the south of Walgett in 1818; in 1829, Charles Sturt moved through the vicinity and Thomas Mitchell's 1845 expedition passed through the area which became Walgett. Grazing had reached Walgett in the late 1830s, well before Mitchell arrived. Aboriginal resistance to European colonisation continued throughout the 1840s, and white settlement remained sporadic. Traditional life continued into the squatting period, with Aboriginal ways of working adapting to the use of new technology such as steel axes. European incursions, especially the introduction of cattle, destroyed waterholes and other water sources, and the wildlife Aboriginal people depended upon for food, clothing and technology declined in number. Relationships between Aboriginal owners and the early overlanders continued to be characterised by mutual aggression which constituted an ongoing frontier war over alienation of land and resources, and abduction of Aboriginal women by a predominantly male settler population. By about 1850, seizure of land for pastoral purposes was firmly entrenched, and the Aboriginal population had begun to decline. People began to move to camps on large pastoral runs including Dungaleer and Gingie. By 1905, there were nine known

pastoral camps in the Walgett North Pastoral District (Gingie was the second largest of these nine runs). The presence of these camps reflected the labour needs of the properties. Housing was not provided to Aboriginal workers; they constructed their own huts from whatever materials were available; through the early days of the camps, these tended to be traditional shelters built from traditional materials.

In 1882, the Aborigines Protection Act passed through the NSW Parliament, and a Protector of Aborigines was appointed. This had ramifications for Aboriginal people which lasted directly until the 1960s, and which still affects the way Aboriginal families live their lives. The effect of that Act, and particularly of subsequent amendments, was that Aboriginal people were made wards of the state, and lost autonomy to make decisions about the way they lived their lives. Aboriginal people were robbed of the right to decide where to live, whom and when to marry, how to raise their children, what jobs to take, and every other facet of existence which anyone else would take for granted. The ironically named Protector of Aborigines commenced the establishment of reserves and government ration stations for Aboriginal people in the 1880s.

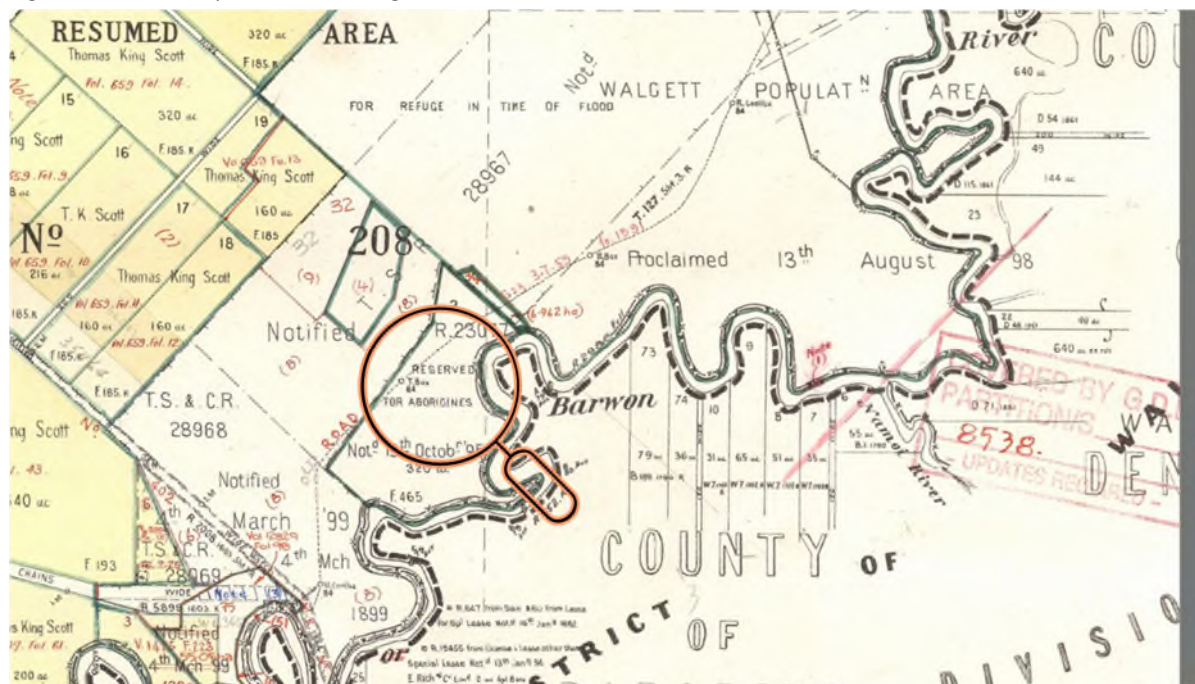
Walgett has seen a succession of Aboriginal reserves. The first of these (R. 9,656) was gazetted on 14th September 1889 just downstream of the section of river known as Montkeila Bend South-West, on a 100-acre (40.5 ha) area of what was then Namoi River frontage (now an oxbow lake) which had been used for some time as an informal camp. This parcel of land had previously been gazetted as water reserve, and was situated on part of the resumed area of the Ulumbie pastoral run. The area known as Nicholls Island incorporates a cemetery associated with this reserve. Only six years after it was gazetted, this reserve was revoked (19th October 1895), as a result of white town residents complaining about Aboriginal people living close to town. The reserve was in force for such a short period that it does not appear as such on any of the charting maps but it is possible to identify the site from the description in the gazettal. On the same date that the reserve was revoked, an area of 320 acres (130 ha) was reserved on the resumed portion of the Gingie run,

10 km from town on the right bank of the Barwon River (R. 23,077). Figure 2.1 refers. Having revoked the Montkeila Bend reserve and then proclaimed one at Gingie (which was not at the site of the station camp), the APB then left the Gingie reserve to its own devices. People continued to live in informal camps at Namoi Bend (where the Namoi community is now – it was not a reserve at the time) as shown in Figure 2.2, Montkeila Bend, at the traditional pastoral camp at Gingie and, for those in pastoral employment, at the other eight pastoral camps in the area. Ceremonies continued to be held without any interference from pastoralists, and language continued to be spoken.

education, and pressed for families to be removed from Walgett altogether to a location where children could attend school. The APB declined to do so, but did steal five children of Gingie families and send them to APB-run institutions. No education was provided on pastoral camps; the AIM school at Namoi Bend served to draw families from station camps to Walgett for fear that their children, too, might be removed.

The problem of educating Aboriginal children simmered until 1923, when some families tried to re-enrol their children at Walgett Public School. The APB then resolved to remove children to the

Figure 2.1: Resumed portion of the Gingie run, R. 23,077

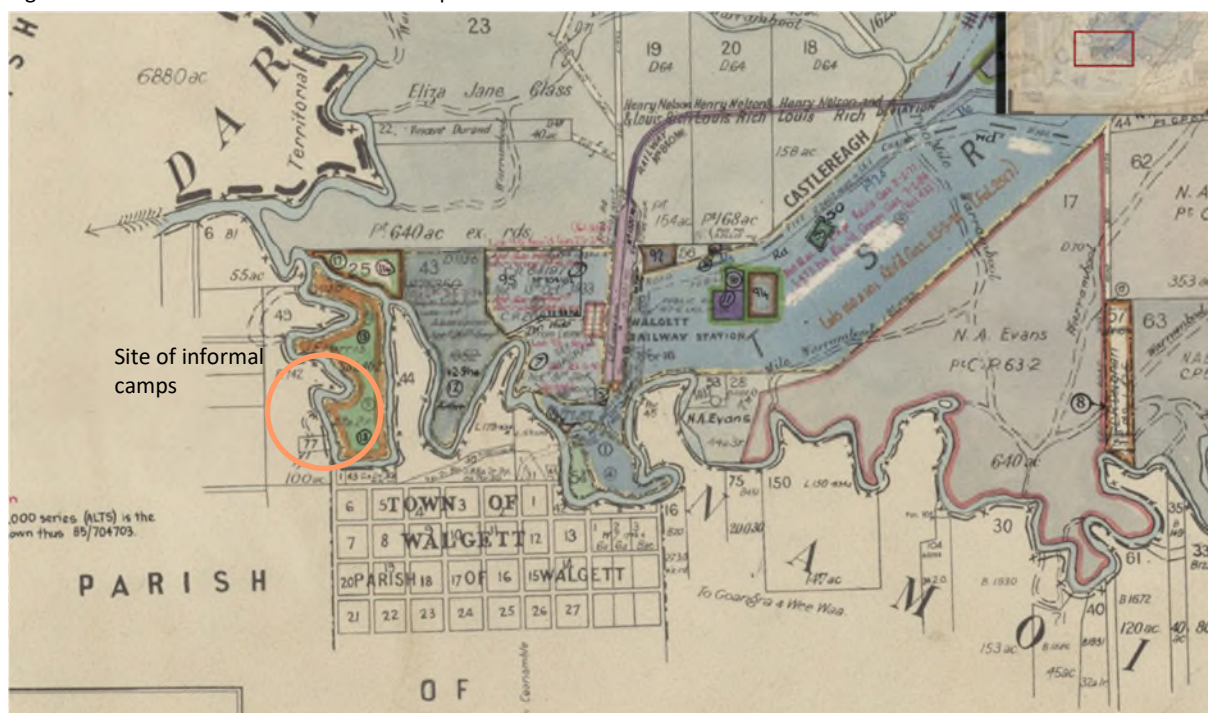


Source: NSW Land Registry Service Parish and Historical Maps

By 1900, Education Department policy was to exclude all Aboriginal children from school on any objection from parents of white children. Walgett Public School continued to be open to Aboriginal children until 1917, when parents objected. The Aborigines Inland Mission (AIM), an evangelical Christian organisation, commenced operating a school in a bag hut at Namoi Bend for Aboriginal children. Having arranged for Aboriginal children to be excluded from Walgett Public School, white parents then expressed concern about the fact that Aboriginal children were not receiving an

dormitory at the Angledool Aboriginal Station, a managed station 116 km to the north. Twenty-one children were removed, and some 60 family members were compelled to follow. Only one family remained at Namoi Bend. Within a year, most families had walked back to Walgett. Some stayed, and were still there in 1936 when the Angledool Station was closed and residents forcibly transported to the Brewarrina Aboriginal Station.

Figure 2.2: Site of Namoi Bend informal camps



Source: NSW Land Registry Service Parish and Historical Maps

By 1925, numbers at Namoi Bend were as high as in 1923. During this period, community members were subject to ongoing harassment by police, and by violent gangs of white men. Continued public pressure led the APB to decide to make the most of the reserve they had established at Gingie thirty years previously, and the Namoi Bend population and their bag hut school were removed to Gingie. Again, families moved back to Namoi Bend and other informal camps and two families were eventually admitted to Walgett Public School but this raised tension again, and calls for wholesale removal recommenced.

Demand for labour had begun to decline as land was withdrawn from pastoral runs in the 1930s and 1940s. The APB resolved to close Angledool Station; residents had been talking about moving to Walgett or Collarenebri but were intimidated by the APB Station Manager Smithers, who had been walking around the Station with a revolver on his hip. At the same time, the APB was considering relocating the Walgett population to the Pilliga Aboriginal Station. On 26th May 1936, the Angledool population was forcibly moved to Brewarrina. They had been promised fine houses;

they arrived to find twelve windowless, doorless, unfinished two-room corrugated iron huts for the entire population. During the following years, several Yuwaalaraay people escaped from the Brewarrina Aboriginal Station, and walked to Walgett.

There had been no permanent APB presence in Walgett. In 1941, though, the newly reconstituted AWB appointed a manager to Gingie which henceforth became a managed station, and houses were built on the site. By the early 1940s, most people who had been employed on the pastoral runs had moved into town but continued to work on rural properties through the 1950s and 60s. A reserve of 106 acres at Namoi Bend was gazetted on 26th September 1952 (R. 75,350), as Goodall observed, because of requests from the white town population to “control and contain its population”.

2.4 Aboriginal people and the town of Walgett

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century and into the second half, life in Walgett was

characterised by rigid, entrenched segregation. Then, early in 1965, the Freedom Ride arrived in Walgett. Led by Charles Perkins, this group of Sydney University students had made it their mission to expose oppression of Aboriginal people throughout regional NSW, and to end segregation. The Freedom Riders successfully broke the colour bar which prevented Aboriginal people from entering the RSL Club and the public swimming pool but were attacked by an angry white horde and were put in real danger when their bus was forced off the road as they were leaving town. Six months later, two Aboriginal woman and four students were arrested for forcing entry to the 'whites only' section of the cinema.

urban lots were reserved in Dewhurst Street (R. 82,141); in 1962, in Hope Street (R. 83,809); and in 1968, in a scattering of streets located mainly in the southern part of the town (R. 86,741). Twelve houses were built in town by the AWB in 1965; these were small houses of timber construction but were well-built, and some survived into the 2000s. At the same time, the houses which had been built in 1941 at Gingie, where about 150 people still lived, were described (by Long) to be in poor condition and very crowded.

When the AWB was abolished in 1969, the NSW Housing Commission took over responsibility for its housing assets; the town reserves were revoked

Figure 2.3: Site of R. 79,550, cnr Duff and Hope Streets



Source: NSW Land Registry Service Parish and Historical Maps

From the late 1950s onwards, the AWB had begun to create reserves 'for use of Aborigines' within the town boundary. In 1957, a parcel of land on the corner of Duff and Hope Streets was reserved (R. 79,550) as indicated in Figure 2.3. This was revoked in 1959 but, at the same time, further

shortly after in 1971. Then, in 1974, following commencement of the Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT), all remaining Aboriginal reserves were revoked, and the land passed to the ALT and, following proclamation of the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act in 1984, to the Walgett Local Aboriginal

Land Council. Aboriginal people have continued to live in Walgett itself, and at Gingie and Namoi Villages since.

During the 1970s and 1980s, following the repeal of the Aborigines Protection Act, positive change was felt in Walgett, as elsewhere in the Region. The focus turned to the development of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to meet the needs of the community. A degree of churn has been experienced in organisations over the 46 years since the first was established, as Table 2.1 shows. The list may not be exhaustive.

Following the creation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) in 1990, Walgett elected representatives first to the ATSIC Wangkumara Regional Council and then, following the amalgamation of ATSIC regions, to the Murdi Paaki Regional Council. Self-determination had become Government policy; at the same time, though, continuing restructuring of the rural sector had put independent employment out of reach of many Aboriginal residents of Walgett. With the destruction of ATSIC in 2005, arrangements for provision of CDEP came to an end, thus eroding the capacity of the community to undertake independent economic development.

Through the late 1980s and the 1990s, Walgett community organisations received programme

funding to address housing and infrastructure problems: first, through the Tripartite Programme to improve housing and infrastructure at Gingie and Namoi Villages and then through the Community Housing and Infrastructure Programme, which allowed for improvements to town housing. Then, in 1997, Walgett was granted funding under the Commonwealth Government's National Aboriginal Health Strategy (NAHS). This project, later supplemented by the NSW Government's Aboriginal Communities Development Programme (ACDP), was the catalyst for establishment of the Walgett Aboriginal Community Working Party (CWP), created to govern the roll-out of NAHS and the other development projects. Preparation of the first Walgett Housing and Environmental Health Plan followed; a multi-million programme of works flowed, supplemented by a training and employment strategy. Housing repairs and maintenance, infrastructure delivery and new housing construction continued into the 2000s. The Walgett Aboriginal CWP emerged from these capital works projects with a highly developed governance capacity; the CWP Chair remains actively involved in regional governance through Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly.

Table 2.1: Aboriginal organisations in Walgett

Organisation name	Registered	Deregistered	Main object
Walgett Aboriginal Community Ltd (formerly Barwon Aboriginal Community Ltd)	1976	2007	Social, economic
Walgett Local Aboriginal Land Council	1983	-	Land, heritage, cultural, housing
Gingie Community Aboriginal Corporation	1985	2000	
Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service Cooperative Ltd	1986	-	Health
Namoi Community Aboriginal Corporation	1988	1996	
Koolyangarra Preschool Aboriginal Corporation	1989	-	Early childhood education
Barwon Aboriginal Corporation Rugby League	1989	1999	Sport
Gamilaroi CDEP Aboriginal Corporation	1991	2009	Economic, community development
Aboriginal Corporation Enterprising Services	2001	2009	Economic, social
Dharriwaa Elders' Group	2005	-	Elders' leadership and wellbeing, cultural
Gamilaroi Giwirrgal Gunu Aboriginal Corporation	2005	2012	Cultural, men's business
Barwon Aboriginal Corporation	2010	-	Social, economic, cultural
Walgett Men's Shed Aboriginal Corporation	2012	2020	Men's business

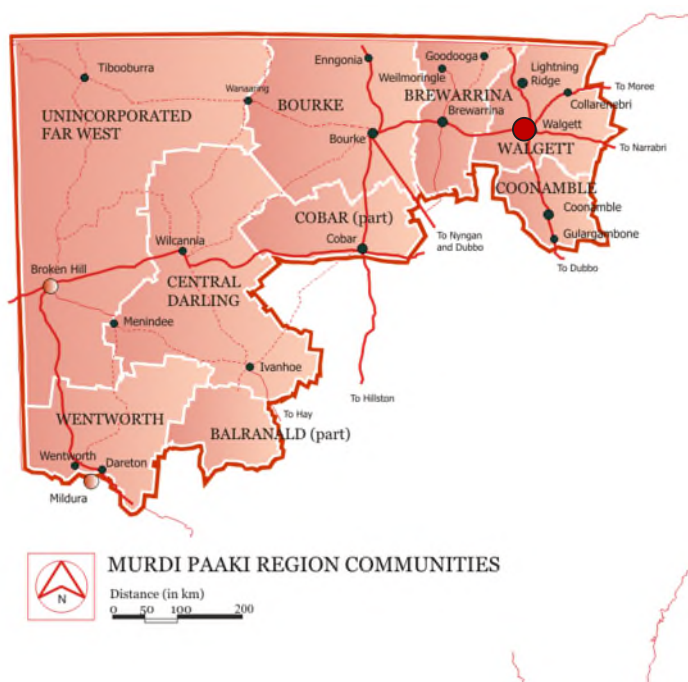


3 GEOGRAPHY

3.1 Location

Walgett is located in the north-west of New South Wales on the Namoi River, 645 km from Sydney. The town is one of two larger towns in Walgett Shire, Lightning Ridge being the other, and is classified as a district centre. The location of Walgett is shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Locality



The regional towns of Narrabri and Moree are within reach to the east while the major regional service centre, Dubbo, is 280 kms to the south.

The discrete Aboriginal settlements of Gingie and Namoi are to the north-west and north of the town respectively, and separated from the town by Barwon River and the Namoi River.

3.2 Access

Walgett is located at the junction of the Gwydir Highway connecting east to Moree, the Kamilaroi Highway linking east to Narrabri, Gunnedah and then to Tamworth, and west to Brewarrina and Bourke, and the Castlereagh Highway, south to

Dubbo and north to Lightning Ridge and St. George across the Queensland border. The town has direct road connection to the metropolitan centres of Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney.

Highways are sealed and suitable for heavy vehicles but can be subject to inundation in times of flooding.

The Mungindi Line to Moree branches from the Main North railway at Werris Creek, passing through Narrabri. A cross country branch leaves the Mungindi Line at Narrabri, to pass through Wee Waa and Burren before terminating at Walgett station. The line is used for wheat haulage, the section between the Walgett wheat terminal and Walgett station having closed in or about 1975.

Walgett Aerodrome (YWLG) to the south-west of the town is a CASA-certified aerodrome with a bitumen runway 1,630 m long, running north-east to south-west, and a shorter natural runway of 1,150 m length designated 18/36. The aerodrome is managed by Walgett Shire Council. Regular passenger transport flights between Walgett and Dubbo operated by Air Link are scheduled three times each week using a 9-seat twin engine aircraft.

A daily public transport service available to Walgett residents is the NSW Trainlink rail service between Sydney and Dubbo, with coach service onward to Walgett and then Lightning Ridge. Total travel time from Sydney is about 11 hours. A twice weekly bus service operates between Dubbo and St George in Queensland via Walgett and Lightning Ridge.

NSW Trainlink also operate a twice weekly bus service mid-week between Walgett and Moree via Collarenebri.

3.3 Natural environment

The country around Walgett has little topographic relief. The country is flat with the Barwon and Namoi River channels, ephemeral tributary

streams and creeks, wetlands and floodplains the primary features. The elevation in the centre of town is approximately 134 m above sea level.

Walgett is located in the centre of the Darling Riverine Plains bioregion on the southern bank of the Namoi River upstream of its confluence with the Barwon River. River floodplains are of grey cracking and non-cracking clays, with some brown soils which exhibit an abrupt change between topsoil and subsoil. Small sandy rises with a relief of 3 m occur in places. There are no distinct hills or ridges within the vicinity of Walgett.

Settlements are on heavier, reactive black clays.

The landscape around Walgett is dominated by agricultural activity, original woodlands having been extensively cleared to large, open paddocks mostly devoid of trees and shrubs. Figure 3.2 refers. Remnants of native vegetation may be characterised by low open coolibah woodland on frequently flooded black and grey clay soil areas, saltbush varieties and grasslands of lignum, mitchell grass, copperburrs and wildflowers. Moderate to dense stands of river red gum woodlands line the river systems to the north of the town with black box woodland on the floodplains near water courses, some brigalow and gidgee and other smaller tree species.

Figure 3.2: Walgett landforms aerial image



Map data: Google, Image © 2021, Maxar Technologies

Habitat loss through clearing for agriculture and encroachment by feral animals have depleted the range of fauna species and numbers supported by these woodland communities. Still, the NPWS

Wildlife Atlas records sightings of a wide range of amphibians and reptiles, ground nesting birds including emu, water birds, nectar- and insect-eating birds, parrots and budgerigars, birds of prey, kangaroo and wallaby species, bats and species of small tree and ground-dwelling mammals in the vicinity of Walgett. The red kangaroo population of the Narrabri Kangaroo Management Zone is estimated by NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) in 2020 to be a quarter of that estimated in 2017 while the grey kangaroo population had halved since 2016, reflecting the effect of drought on native species

3.4 Climate

Walgett's climate may be described as hot, dry semi-arid. Weather data has been recorded continuously at Walgett since 1878. The recording station at Walgett Council Depot (052026) operated until 1993 although some data such as solar exposure is still being recorded. Recording commenced at Walgett Airport (052088) in 1993 although collection of humidity data ceased in 2010. For the purposes of this Plan, climate data for Walgett Airport has been used to generate climate characteristics.

Temperature-related information is shown in Figure 3.3 to Figure 3.5. Mean monthly temperatures range from a low of 4°C to a high of 36°C with the highest temperature recorded being 49.1°C in 2014. Figure 3.4 indicates that temperatures above 30°C are recorded for a mean of 149 days each year and above 35°C for 69 days each year.

Figure 3.5 investigates the trend in highest monthly temperature over the relatively short period of record of Walgett Airport. The graph points to a gradual rise in higher temperatures over the time of record. If this trend continues, the community can expect to live with more extreme temperatures for longer.

In November 2014, the former NSW Office of Environment and Heritage released its *Far West Climate Change Snapshot* which provided predictions based on modelling of changes in climate for the far west of NSW. The projected

impact for residents of Walgett is an increase in the number of days with temperatures over 35°C of 10-20 days in the period 2020–2039, increasing to 30-40 additional days by 2070.

Figure 3.3: Temperatures

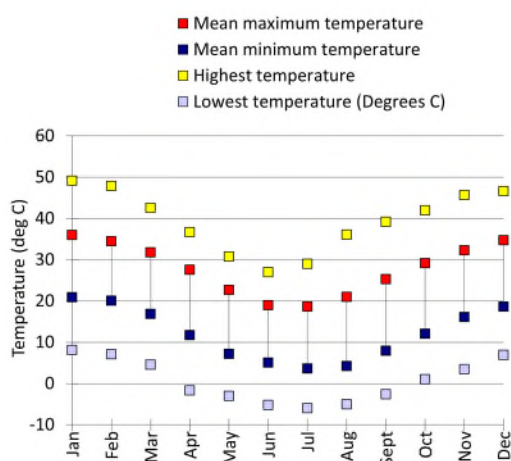


Figure 3.4: Mean number of hot days

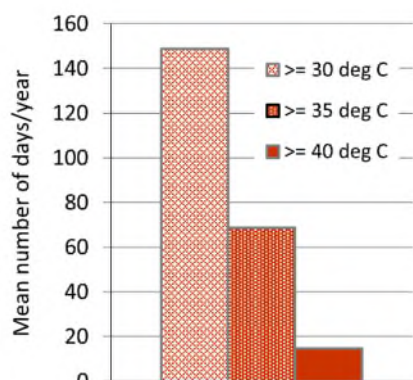
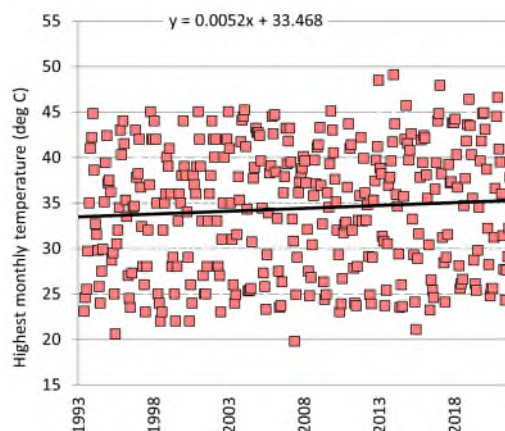
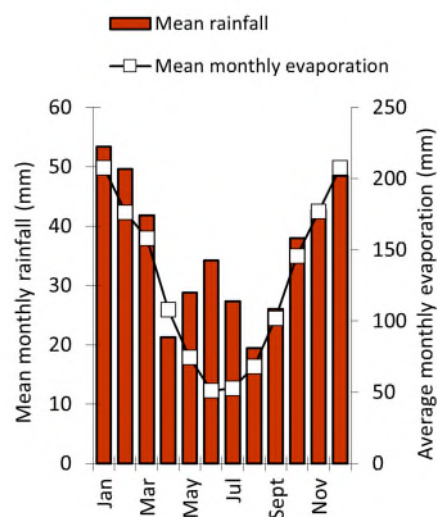


Figure 3.5: Trend in highest monthly temperatures



Mean annual rainfall calculated from 28 years of records at Walgett Airport between 1993 and 2001 is 419.4 mm. Highest rainfall occurs during the summer months. Monthly rainfall distribution and average monthly pan evaporation are shown in Figure 3.6. Average monthly pan evaporation estimated from Bureau of Meteorology mapping is well in excess of the mean monthly rainfall throughout the year.

Figure 3.6: Rainfall and monthly pan evaporation



Change in relative humidity over the year is shown in Figure 3.7. Mean humidity is typically above 40% in the morning, the threshold accepted as ideal for human health and comfort, for all the year, but reduces to below 40% in the afternoon in the summer months.

Prevailing winds are from the north-east in the morning, moving to south-westerlies in the afternoon. Mean morning and afternoon wind speeds are shown in Figure 3.8. Maximum wind gust speed for the years 2003 to 2021 recorded at Walgett Airport is 109 km/hr as indicated by Figure 3.9.

Figure 3.7: Relative humidity

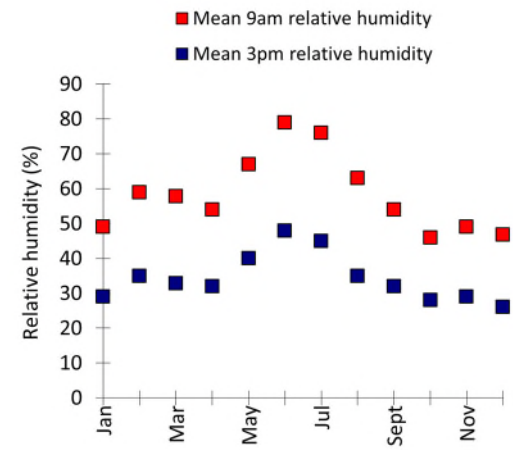


Figure 3.8: Wind speed

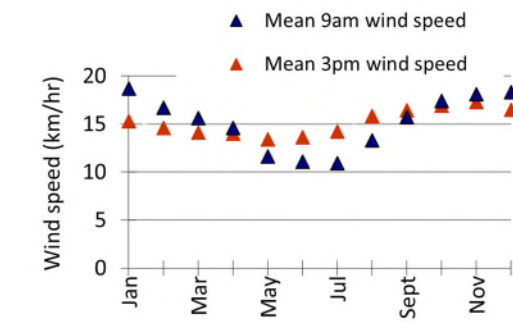


Figure 3.9: Maximum wind gust

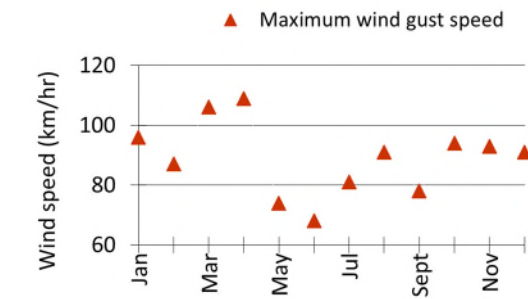
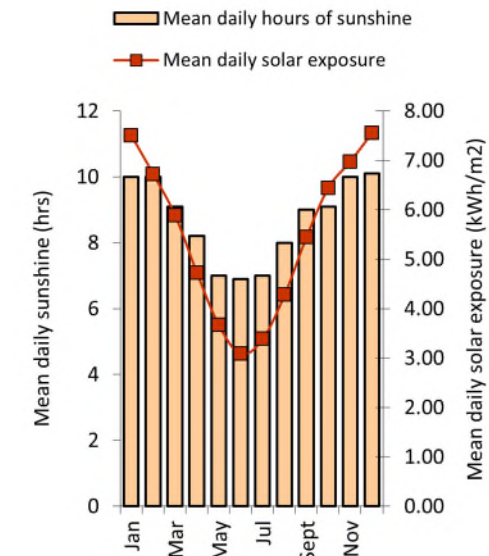


Figure 3.10: Sunshine and solar exposure



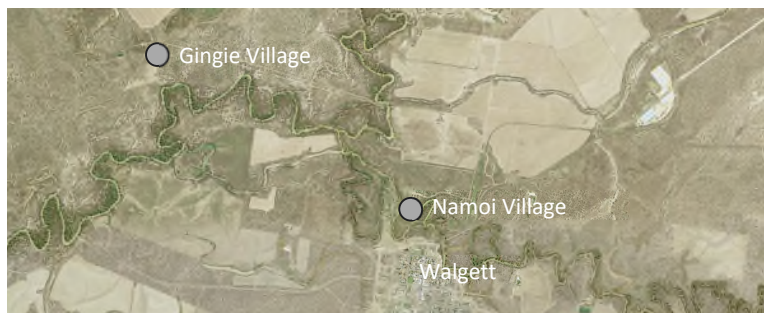
Mean daily hours of sunshine and solar exposure is given by Figure 3.10. Solar energy available to residential solar PV installations varies from a low 3.1 kWh/m² in winter to a high of 7.6 kWh/m² at the height of summer.

3.5 Flooding and drainage

Walgett sits on the Namoi River as shown in Figure 3.2, upstream of its junction with the Barwon River but below the confluence with Pian Creek. The Namoi rises on the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range to the east of Tamworth as one of several major rivers in the upper Murray-Darling system. River systems in the upper Murray-Darling catchment, in conjunction with their tributaries, form a complex network of channel and overbank flow patterns during times of flood, with patterns depending very much on the origins and timing of flow in individual river catchments. Walgett is most likely to experience floods during summer months.

Flood waters are usually slow moving, thereby allowing adequate assessment of flood heights, timing of flood peaks and adequacy of protection measures. The town is protected by a ring levee as is the discrete Aboriginal settlement of Gingie Village but floodwater can isolate both town and discrete settlements for weeks or months at a time. The locations of Gingie Village and Namoi Village relative to the town are shown in Figure 3.11.

Figure 3.11: Gingie and Namoi Villages



Map data: SIX Maps © Spatial Services, NSW Department of Customer Service

Flood levels have been recorded since 1886 following installation of a gauge on Dangar Bridge, 5 km downstream from Walgett. In the time since, over forty major floods have occurred, the largest and most recent being experienced in 1976 when floodwaters reached a gauge height of 13.77 m. Flood classification for Walgett is given by Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Flood classification			
Gauge	Flood classification (Gauge height)		
	Minor	Moderate	Major
Dangar Bridge	11.2	12.0	12.5
Namoi Bridge	7.3	8.2	9.1
Hannafords	11.2	-	12.0

Source: Walgett Shire Local Flood Plan, 2013, NSW State Emergency Service

The flood of record occurred in 1890 when floodwaters reached a gauge height of 13.84 m. The 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) flood level is at a gauge height of 13.85 m or RL 132.40 AHD. By way of definition, a 1% AEP flood is a flood that has a 1% chance of occurring, or being exceeded, in any one year.

Gingie Village is protected by an earth embankment. Access to the village is by way of a sealed rural road from the Kamilaroi Highway west of town which is cut when floodwaters reach a gauge height of 11.60 m. An alternative unsealed route is available but at a gauge height of 12.72 m Gingie Village becomes isolated.

Namoi Village is not protected by a levee; houses are elevated so that floor levels are above the 1976 flood level. The village was evacuated in 1976 but most residents remained in place during the 1998 flood (peak height 13.26 m). Road access into the village is cut at a gauge height of 11.8 m.

The town area is protected by levees with a crest height varying between RL 133.42 m AHD (gauge height of 14.87 m) and RL 134.02 m AHD (gauge height of 15.47 m). Freeboard is generally 0.9 m over the flood of record.

Highways can be closed to light vehicles or for safety reasons at causeways. Most other roads are black soil roads which become impassable to normal vehicles after 10 mm of rain and to emergency 4WD or multi-tyred vehicles when saturated.

Flooding of streets can occur during localised heavy rainfall events. Table 3.2 notes the highest

daily rainfall on record at the Walgett Council Depot station and the year of occurrence for each month.

Table 3.2: Highest daily rainfall (mm), (052026)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
127.5	122.2	91.4	88.8	99.8	78.2
1964	1898	1936	1984	1991	1925
Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
54.1	65.8	59.4	81.8	77.2	103
1897	1893	1903	1933	1983	1991

Rainfall intensity-frequency-duration (IFD) values are shown at Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Rainfall IFD, (-29.9875, 148.1125)

Duration	IFD Design Rainfall Depth (mm)			
	Annual Exceedance Probability			
	10%	5%	2%	1%
1 min	3.89	4.56	5.47	6.19
2 min	6.80	8.05	9.67	10.9
3 min	9.35	11.0	13.2	15.0
4 min	11.6	13.6	16.4	18.5
5 min	13.6	15.9	19.1	21.6
10 min	21.0	24.6	29.5	33.4
20 min	29.8	35.0	42.1	47.7
30 min	35.3	41.5	50.0	56.8
1 hour	44.7	52.8	63.8	72.5
2 hours	54.3	64.2	77.5	88.0
6 hours	71.4	83.7	101	114
12 hours	85.2	99	119	135
18 hours	94.9	110	132	149
24 hours	102	118	142	161
48 hours	122	141	171	194
72 hours	134	155	188	214
96 hours	140	163	198	226
120 hours	144	167	204	233

3.6 Dust

The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage collects data related to dust, including the hours of dust haze and storms and the extent of ground cover, through its DustWatch programme in the

Western Natural Resource Management (NRM) Region. Figure 3.12 highlights the change in the amount of groundcover that is greater than 50% since 2016, capturing the effect of drought years.

Dust storms occurred in the Western NRM Region with record-breaking frequency in 2019. January 2019 was the dustiest month recorded across the Region since measurement commenced but Walgett experienced its highest reading of 236 hours of dust one year later during January 2020. October 2020 was the third dustiest month across the region since 2005.

Figure 3.12: Seasonal variation in the land area with groundcover exceeding 50%, Western NRM

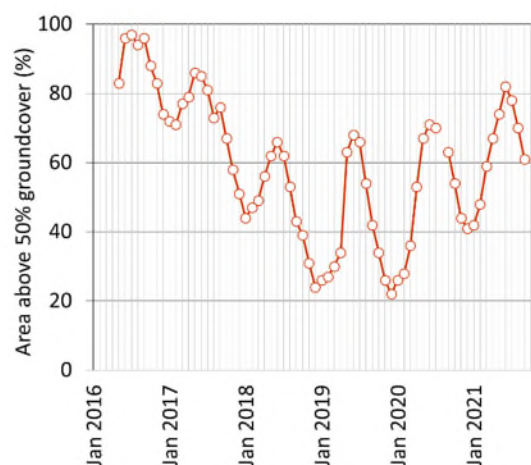
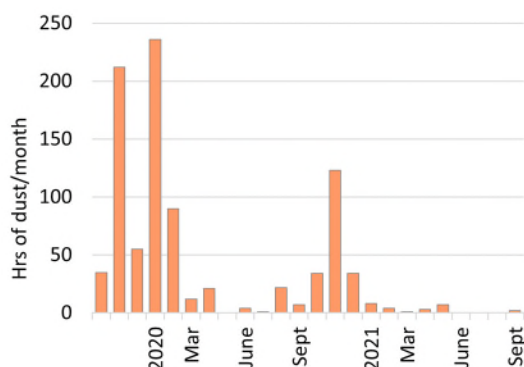


Figure 3.13 shows the prevalence of dust at the Walgett recording station for the two-year period to September 2021. The cause of dust generation is a combination of very low groundcover resulting from prolonged dry conditions (Figure 3.12), high temperatures and increased hours of strong winds (> 40km/h) associated with the passage of cold fronts bringing with them north to north westerly winds.

Figure 3.13: Indicative hours of dust (Oct 2019 to Sept 2021)



Note: One dust hour is achieved if the hourly average concentration of particles up to PM₁₀ size exceeds 25 µg/m³

Dust particles can be harmful to human health: there is strong evidence of long-term exposure to fine particles (PM_{2.5}) in the air contributing to adverse respiratory conditions. Land management practices adopted by farmers have a crucial role in mitigating the risk to health of the broader population.

3.7 Native Title

Gomeri peoples lodged a Native Title claim (NC2011/006) in 2011 over Country extending from the Upper Hunter to the Queensland border, incorporating the New England North West and parts of the Central West, and including the towns of Walgett and Collarenebri. The area of claim is approximately 111,320 km². A determination is yet to be made by the Federal Court.

3.8 Sites of cultural significance

The Namoi/Barwon River corridor is rich with sites of cultural significance. A preliminary search of the Heritage NSW Aboriginal Heritage Management Information System (AHIMS) for sites of cultural significance within the rectangle formed by latitude and longitude -30.0314, 148.0744 and -29.9954, 148.1315 centred on Walgett indicates the existence of many recorded Aboriginal sites in or near the above location. In the interests of sites preservation, and as a condition of accessing the data, no details are

included in this Plan other than to note their existence.

The *Walgett Shire LGA Aboriginal Heritage Study*, 2011, prepared by Australian Museum Business Services, listed several sites including numerous scar trees, stone artefact scatters, middens, camp sites and meeting sites, but the locations of the sites, outside of those sites already identified by the AHIMS database, were not to be made public at the request of the community. Some sites of high sensitivity are located within the town area but, as noted in the Dharriwaa Elders Group response to the study draft final report, "a large proportion of places with Aboriginal Cultural Value remain unsurveyed" so great care is to be taken in carrying out development work.

3.9 Economic geography

Walgett is the largest town and, in consequence, the administrative and commercial centre of Walgett Shire. As such, the town benefits from a range of essential facilities and services, albeit at a basic level. Four major highways intersect in or near to Walgett, providing access to regional centres. The airport is functional in providing passenger services and the railway terminates at the grain silos.

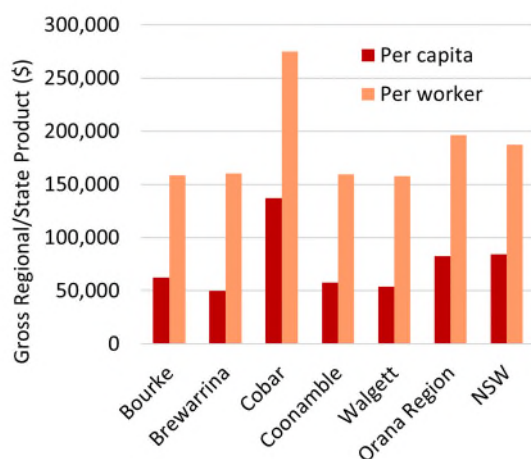
The agriculture industry sub-sector is a major contributor to the economy and to employment. The immediate surrounds of Walgett have been extensively cleared and given over to broadacre farming, mainly wheat, and to cotton growing. Pastoral activity on the rangelands is predominantly cattle, beef and dairy, and sheep. The economics of agricultural production has driven a process of rural property consolidation to form large land holdings using industrial methods of production. The sustainability of current land management practices and water use remains a question.

Much of the volume of agricultural production is exported in unprocessed form so the opportunity exists to value-add in areas of food and beverage manufacturing. Proximity to the Inland Rail infrastructure at Narrabri, the location of the Northern NSW Inland Port, might be of benefit in this regard.

Tourism plays a part in the Shire's economy but this is more focussed on Lightning Ridge with its unique mining-related attractions. The potential for an increased range of high-quality experiences in eco- and cultural tourism is largely untapped at Walgett and is worthy of further exploration.

The region faces several existential challenges in coming years: climate change, population loss, economic restructuring and consolidation, technological change, mechanisation, changes in methods of human services delivery, which will have a major effect upon economic prosperity and wellbeing. Council predict that the population of the Shire could decline by up to 19% by 2036 if existing trends continue. To retain the current level of services and facilities in the face of these threats, Council in its *Local Strategic Planning Statement* (LSPS) adopts a policy of preferencing the economic position of Walgett and Lightning Ridge over other communities. It is suggested by Council that this policy will optimise the sustainable use of resources: physical, human and financial, and the efficient use of infrastructure.

Figure 3.14: Gross Regional Product, per capita and per worker, Murdi Paaki northern LGAs



Data courtesy of Remplan for Regional Development Australia, Orana, NSW

In the context of economic development, it is crucial to note that a significant proportion of the population is dependent upon either a government pension or allowance for income. This characteristic is reflected in the gross regional

product information per capita shown in Figure 3.14.

It is well established that the Murdi Paaki Region suffers the highest level of socio-economic disadvantage in NSW. As indicated in Table 3.4, Walgett Local Government Area (LGA) is ranked the third most disadvantaged LGA in NSW, being ranked 128th out of 130 LGAs on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) ranking. Figure 3.15 shows a worsening in disadvantage since 2001 as the score for the LGA declines from 876 and the scores for the lowest and highest Statistical Area 1 geographies (SA1s) also drop with the most disadvantaged SA1 falling from 681 in 2006 to 621 in 2016.

Figure 3.15: Change in SEIFA (IRSD) score, 2001-2016

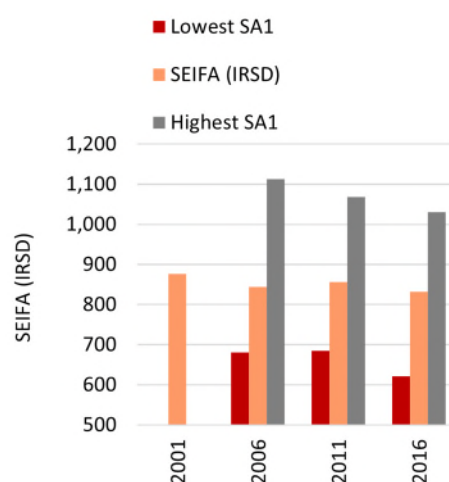


Table 3.4: SEIFA Index of disadvantage (IRSD), Walgett LGA, 2016

SEIFA Index	832
Rank in NSW	128 th of 130
Murdi Paaki Region:	
Highest (Cobar)	968
Lowest (Brewarrina)	757

The Working Together to Close the Gap in Walgett, Remote Service Delivery Local Implementation Plan developed jointly by the Australian and NSW

Governments and the CWP in 2010 identified the challenges the economic environment presented to economic development and proposed several measures to increase the level of engagement by the Aboriginal community. Regrettably, the Plan, while recognising the systemic nature of the barriers and importance of sustained relationships, failed to commit to the long-term support of the community such that the essential skills and experience required for successful economic participation have not eventuated. Ten years and more later, the task of creating a viable Aboriginal economy is that much harder.



4 THE POPULATION

4.1 Population profile

The statistical information set out in this chapter has been derived from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016 Census using data available from ABS TableBuilder. Data used comprises combined data for the Indigenous locations of Walgett and Gingie and the SA1 for Namoi, described in this HEHP collectively as 'Walgett (WGN)'. The Walgett Indigenous location (ILOC) and Local Government Area (A) geographies have been used where combined data are unavailable, as indicated in the table heading.

Table 4.1: Aboriginal population, Walgett (ILOC), Gingie (ILOC) and Namoi (SA1)

Walgett	758
Gingie	60
Namoi	108
Total	926

Table 4.2: Total population, Walgett (WGN)

persons	1,546
Change from 2011 Census	-79
Source: ABS 2016 Census	

Table 4.3: Aboriginal population %, Walgett (WGN)

	n=926
Aboriginal population	60%
Murdi Paaki Region	23%
New South Wales	3%
Source: ABS 2016 Census	

The most accurate count of the population is the Estimated Resident Population (ERP); however, the finest scale at which this is available is by Local Government Area. At the ABS 2016 Census, based on comparison with the ERP, the Aboriginal population of Walgett Shire was undercounted by 23%, and the non-Indigenous population by 10%.

Notional populations based on the ERPs for Walgett are given by Table 4.4.

Figure 4.1: Population change, 2001 to 2016, Walgett (WGN)

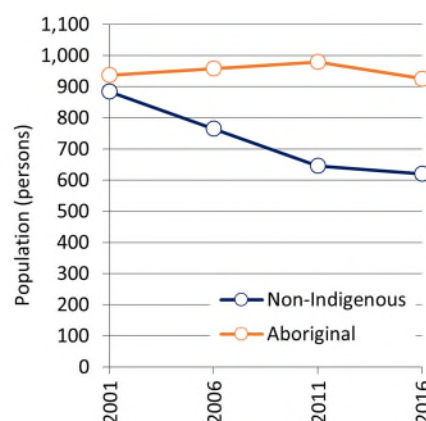


Table 4.4: Notional resident population, 2016, Walgett (WGN)

Aboriginal	1,203
Non-Indigenous	689
Aboriginal population as percentage of total population	63.6%

Data for Walgett indicate that the ABS has imputed populations for 80 dwellings which were thought to be occupied on census night but which returned no census form. Using a standardised statistical process, the ABS imputed a total of 175 persons (83 male and 92 female) to the 80 dwellings. These people form the great majority of the cohort for whom Aboriginality is not stated in the census tables. It is not possible to know how many of these dwellings housed Aboriginal households. Indeed, given the arbitrary nature of the process, any one of the 80 households could equally house the population imputed to it based on the composition of the donor record household, or a group household of 80-year-old pensioners. It is, however, based on the undercount, likely that a greater proportion of these dwellings house Aboriginal households.

Where possible, the Murdi Paaki Region comparison geography used in this Plan is the aggregated 154 SA1s that approximate the Region. For variables where SA1 level data are not

published, either the 8 LGAs approximating the Murdi Paaki Region or the North-West NSW Indigenous Region (N-W NSW IREG) have been adopted.

KEY FINDINGS

- According to the ABS 2016 Census, the Aboriginal population of Walgett on census night was 926 persons or 60% of the total population. Based on the ERPs, the Aboriginal population at the time was closer to 1,203 persons or 64% of the total population;
- Of all those counted in Walgett on the night of the census, 66 people (16 Aboriginal and 50 non-Indigenous people) were in a non-private dwelling including motels, hospital, nursing homes, hostels, aged care accommodation and staff quarters;
- Since 2001, the Aboriginal population in Walgett has been relatively stable, growing initially to 2011 but falling back to the 2001 level thereafter. The non-Indigenous population, on the other hand, is consistently decreasing as reflected by Figure 4.1;
- The median age of the Aboriginal population of the Walgett ILOC, at 27 years, is lower than that of the non-Indigenous population, about the same as the Murdi Paaki Region on average, and higher than the median age for NSW;
- The proportion of Aboriginal population aged under 15 years is about the same as both the Murdi Paaki Region as a whole, and for NSW, and is one and half times the population fraction for the non-Indigenous population of Walgett;
- Non-Indigenous households are twice as likely to comprise a person living alone as an Aboriginal household;
- When compared with a non-Indigenous family, Aboriginal families living together in a household are more than four times more likely to be a single parent family;
- Aboriginal adults are 34% less likely to be in a couple relationship than non-Indigenous adults, perhaps reflecting the population age structure;
- Five percent of Aboriginal households contain multiple families;
- Aboriginal households have a higher proportion of resident non-dependent children than non-Indigenous households. The fraction in Aboriginal Indigenous households exceeded that of both the Murdi Paaki Region and NSW as a whole.

Figure 4.2: Population age distribution, Walgett (WGN)

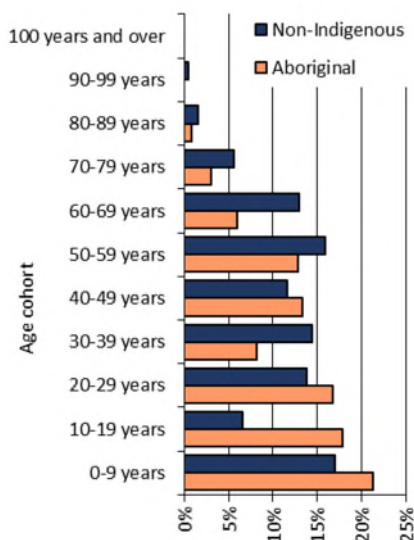
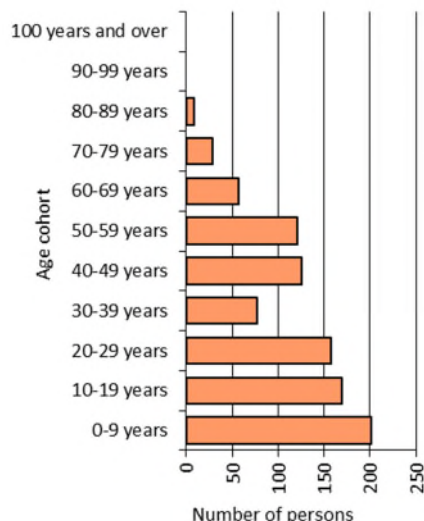


Figure 4.3: Aboriginal population age distribution, Walgett (WGN)



Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.5: Median age of persons (years) (Walgett (ILOC))		
Median age	27	36
Murdi Paaki Region	26	46
New South Wales	22	38
Table 4.6: Population aged under 15 years, Walgett (WGN)		
	n=300	n=250
Of population fraction	32%	21%
Murdi Paaki Region	32%	16%
New South Wales	34%	18%
Table 4.7: Social marital status, Walgett (WGN) (Persons aged 15 years and over)		
Registered marriage	7%	45%
De facto marriage	20%	16%
Not married	73%	39%
Table 4.8: Lone person households, Walgett (WGN)		
	n=50	n=93
Lone person households	19%	39%
Murdi Paaki Region	21%	36%
New South Wales	15%	24%
Table 4.9: Family household family composition, Walgett (WGN)		
One parent	53%	12%
Couple, no children	19%	48%
Couple, with children	22%	38%
Other family	5%	2%
One parent families:		
Murdi Paaki Region	43%	15%
New South Wales	36%	15%

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.10: Multi-family households, Walgett (WGN) (of all family households)		
	n=11	n=0
Multi-family households	5%	-
Murdi Paaki Region	4%	1%
New South Wales	4%	2%
Table 4.11: Families with resident non-dependent children, Walgett and Gingie (ILOC)		
	n=70	n=16
Resident non-dependent children	33%	11%
Murdi Paaki Region	25%	18%
New South Wales	25%	21%
A non-dependent child is a natural, adopted, step or foster child of a couple or lone parent usually resident in the household, who is aged 15 years and over and is not a full-time student aged 15-24 years, and who has no identified partner or child of his/her own usually resident in the household		

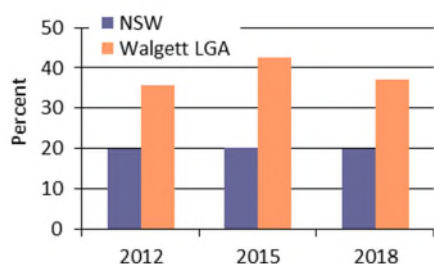
4.2 Educational status

Table 4.12: Educational institution attended by the Aboriginal population, Walgett (WGN)	
	n=302
Preschool	34
Infants/primary – Government	77
Infants/primary – other non-Govt	53
Secondary – Government	44
Secondary – Other Non-Govt	5
University, other Tertiary Institution	12
Other educational institution	3
Not stated	74

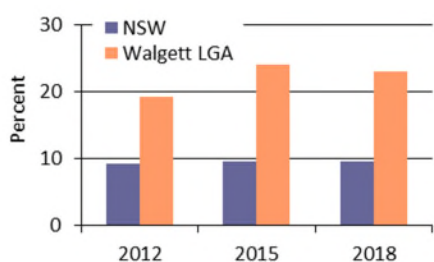
Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.13: Preschool attendance, Walgett (WGN)		
	n=17	n=14
Children 3 years old	35%	71%
Murdi Paaki Region	41%	50%
New South Wales	52%	49%
	n=22	n=21
Children 4 years old	86%	33%
Murdi Paaki Region	82%	79%
New South Wales	72%	72%

Figure 4.4: AEDC summary indicator of developmental vulnerability (all children)

One or more domains:



Two or more domains:



Aboriginal children (n=45 or 56% of 81)

Table 4.14: AEDC vulnerability indicators		
	Vuln 1	Vuln 2
Walgett LGA	37.2%	23.1%

Source: Australian Early Development Census, Community Profile 2018, Walgett LGA

KEY FINDINGS

- More Aboriginal four-year-olds enumerated in the census appeared to attend preschool compared to non-Indigenous children. Conversely, a larger proportion of non-Indigenous three-year-olds attended preschool compared to Aboriginal three-year-old children;
- On Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) indicators, children commencing their first year of full-time schooling at schools in Walgett LGA have not reached the same stage of early childhood development as their counterparts in NSW;
- Student attendance level for children (the proportion of students attending 90% or more of the time) is between 19% at Walgett High School and 39% at St Joseph's Parish School;
- Educational attainment at the three schools in Walgett are mostly well below the average of all Australian students;
- Of young Aboriginal people aged 15-19 years in Walgett who had left school, 10% had completed Year 12. All non-Indigenous 15-19-year-olds had completed year 12;
- Half of Aboriginal persons aged 17 or 18 years were engaged in training or learning;
- Non-Indigenous adults were three times more likely than Aboriginal adults to hold a post-school qualification at any level. The Aboriginal population aged over 15 years in Walgett had a lower proportion with a post-school qualification compared to both the Murdi Paaki Region and NSW.

Figure 4.5: Student attendance level (proportion of students attending 90% or more of the time), Walgett Schools, 2019 Semester 1

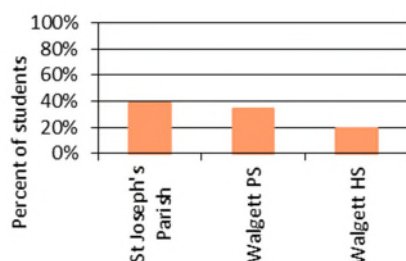


Table 4.15: Educational attainment, NAPLAN, School average when compared with all Australian students

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar	Numeracy
Year 3					
St Joseph's Parish	3	4	3	3	3
Walgett PS	5	5	5	5	5
Year 5					
St Joseph's Parish	5	5	5	5	5
Walgett PS	5	5	5	5	5
Year 7					
Walgett High School	5	5	5	5	5
Year 9					
Walgett High School	5	5	5	5	5
Legend					
Above average	2	Close to		3	
Below average	4	Well below		5	

Source: acara MySchools website

Figure 4.6: Highest year of schooling, all Aboriginal adults, Walgett (WGN)

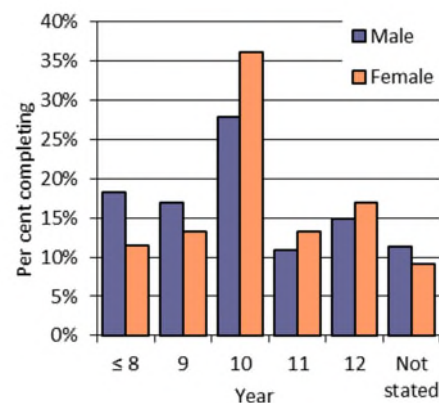


Figure 4.7: Highest year of schooling, all non-Indigenous adults, Walgett (WGN)

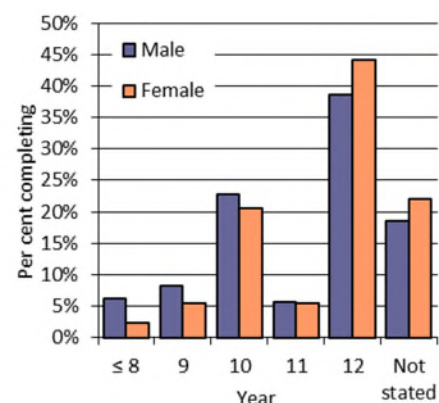


Table 4.16: Percentage of students completed Year 12, Walgett (WGN) (Persons aged 15 to 19 who have completed schooling and are no longer at school)

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
	n=31	n=8
Students completed Year 12	10%	100%
Murdi Paaki Region	20%	48%
New South Wales	33%	51%

Table 4.17: Percentage of persons aged 15 years and over with a vocational qualification, Walgett (WGN)

	n=36	n=146
Cert I-IV	6%	15%

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Murdi Paaki Region	18%	26%
New South Wales	25%	20%
Table 4.18: Percentage of persons aged 15 years and over with an undergraduate diploma, Walgett (WGN)		
	n=21	n=85
Diploma and Advanced Diploma	3%	9%
Murdi Paaki Region	5%	7%
New South Wales	7%	10%
Table 4.19: Percentage of persons aged 15 years and over with a tertiary qualification, Walgett (WGN)		
	n=14	n=136
Degree and higher	2%	14%
Murdi Paaki Region	4%	12%
New South Wales	8%	27%
Table 4.20: Engagement of persons aged 17 and 18 years in employment, education and training, Walgett (WGN)		
Fully engaged	54%	50%
Murdi Paaki Region	49%	74%
New South Wales	62%	84%

4.3 Economic participation

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.21: Labour force status, Walgett (WGN) (Percent of labour force)		
	n=231	n=607
In full-time or part-time work	72%	98%
Unemployed, looking for work	28%	2%

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Murdi Paaki Region	76%	94%
New South Wales	85%	94%
22% of those employed worked part-time		
Table 4.22: Participation in the labour market, Walgett (WGN) (Percent of population aged 15 and over)		
	n=594	n=785
In labour force	39%	77%
Not in labour force	61%	23%
Murdi Paaki Region	44%	61%
New South Wales	56%	64%
Table 4.23: Employment to population ratio, Walgett (WGN) (Percent of population aged 15 and over)		
	n=167	n=594
Employment to population ratio	26%	63%
Murdi Paaki Region	34%	57%
New South Wales	47%	60%

Table 4.24: Industry of employment, Walgett (WGN)

Industry	Aboriginal		Non-Indigenous	
	Number employed	% of total employed	Number employed	% of total employed
Health Care and Social Assistance	35	22%	65	11%
Education and Training	30	19%	62	11%
Public Administration and Safety	20	13%	95	16%
Administrative and Support Services	11	7%	10	2%
Accommodation and Food Services	10	6%	30	5%
Manufacturing	9	6%	8	1%
Construction	7	4%	29	5%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	5	3%	6	1%
Wholesale Trade	5	3%	6	1%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	4	3%	154	27%
Retail Trade	3	2%	37	6%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	0	0%	11	2%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	0	0%	5	1%
Financial and Insurance Services	0	0%	4	1%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	0	0%	4	1%
Arts and Recreation Services	0	0%	0	0%
Information Media and Telecommunications	0	0%	0	0%
Mining	0	0%	0	0%
Other Services	6	4%	15	3%
Inadequately described/not stated	14	9%	36	6%

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.25: Occupation of all persons employed, Walgett (WGN)		
Managers	7%	25%
Professionals	14%	15%
Technician/trades	14%	12%
Community service workers	24%	14%
Clerical/admin workers	10%	9%
Sales workers	4%	7%
Machinery operators	6%	5%
Labourers	20%	14%

Figure 4.8: Hours worked by age group, Walgett (WGN)

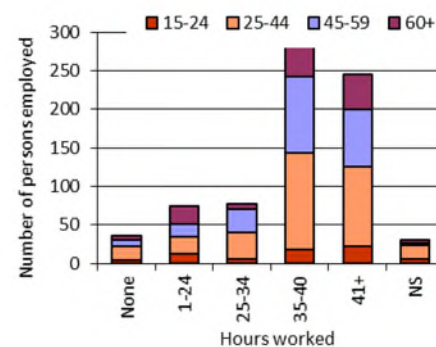


Table 4.26: Number of Aboriginal workers employed in the public and private sectors, Walgett (WGN)

Australian Government	0
NSW Government	25
Local Government	15
Private sector	113
Not stated	7

Table 4.27: Total number of businesses, Walgett LGA, at 30th June 2019

No of employees	No of businesses
Nil	466
1-4	172
5-19	66
20 or more	8

Table 4.28: Business entries and exits, Walgett LGA, at 30th June 2019

Year	Change in number
2015	-
2016	15
2017	26
2018	-2
2019	-16

KEY FINDINGS

- With an unemployment rate fourteen times that of the non-Indigenous population and a poor participation rate, the employment to population ratio for Aboriginal people in Walgett implies that one in four adults are in any form of employment. This ratio is much lower than for the non-Indigenous population fraction;
- Investigation of the age structure of the Aboriginal population through calculation of the dependency ratio (51.9 for Walgett – less than for the Murdi Paaki Region, at 61.6) indicates that Aboriginal people of working age resident in Walgett have low workforce participation;
- The agriculture sector employs the largest proportion of the workforce, followed by public administration and health care;

- Aboriginal workers are more likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to be employed in health care and social assistance or education and training;
- Aboriginal employees are less likely to be employed as a manager than their non-Indigenous counterparts but equally likely to be employed at a professional, technical and trade level;
- Most persons across all adult age cohorts who are employed are working 35 hours a week or more;
- Data for Walgett LGA indicate a decline over time in the number of businesses.

4.4 Income

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 4.29: Median total household income (Walgett (ILOC))		
\$/week	831	1,476
N-W NSW IREG	907	1,013
New South Wales	1,214	1,498

Table 4.30: Estimates of personal income, total population, Walgett LGA, 2017

Median employee income (\$)	37,750
Income share of top 10% of earners (excl. government payments)	44%
FW and Orana SA4	44,418
New South Wales	49,256

Figure 4.9: Average annual growth in median employee income, 2014-2017, Walgett LGA

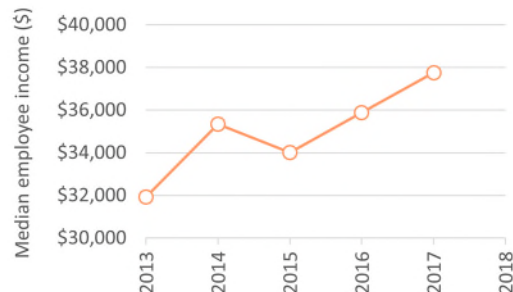


Table 4.31: Sources of income support, Walgett LGA

In 2019, percentage of total population aged 15 and over receiving:

Age pension (n=857)	18%
Carer payment (n=240)	5%
Disability support pension (n=554)	11%
Newstart allowance (n=571)	12%
Parenting payment, single (n=189)	4%
Family tax benefit A (n=569)	12%
Family tax benefit B (n=501)	10%
Commonwealth rent assistance (n=559)	11%

KEY FINDINGS

- The median weekly income for Aboriginal households is much lower (44%) than other households; the Aboriginal median weekly individual income of \$393 (town area only) is 53% lower than for non-Indigenous persons so the relative level of disadvantage is clear;
- Eleven percent of the total population aged 15 years and over were receiving Commonwealth rent assistance (CRA);
- In 2019, the top 10% of earners received 44% of total income excluding Government pensions and allowances.

5 COMMUNITY HOUSING PROFILE

5.1 Housing in Walgett

Census data used in this chapter comprises the combined data for the Indigenous Locations (ILOC) of Walgett, Gingie and the SA1 for Namoi. For the purposes of this Plan, these combined geographies are called 'Walgett (WGN)'. The single Walgett Indigenous Location and Local Government Area (A) geographies have been used where combined data are unavailable, as indicated in the table heading.

Table 5.1: Dwellings by community, Walgett (WGN)

Walgett	652
Gingie	11
Namoi (and surrounds)	300
TOTAL	963

Table 5.2: Dwelling types, Walgett (WGN)

Total number	963	
Separate houses	805	84%
Terraces, town houses	4	0%
Apartments	77	8%
Other dwelling types	77	8%

Table 5.3: Private dwellings unoccupied on census night, Walgett (WGN)

	n=963	
	204	21%
Change since 2011	n=114	+90
Murdi Paaki Region		19%
New South Wales		9%

184 people were counted elsewhere on census night

Table 5.4: Households counted in a dwelling on Census night, Walgett (WGN)

Resident households	682
Visitor households	32
Non-classifiable	76

Table 5.5: Number of bedrooms per dwelling, Walgett (WGN)

0 or 1 bedrooms	62	9%
2 bedrooms	109	16%
3 bedrooms	276	40%
4 bedrooms	189	27%
5 bedrooms and more	52	8%

Figure 5.1: Dwelling size by number of bedrooms, Walgett (WGN)

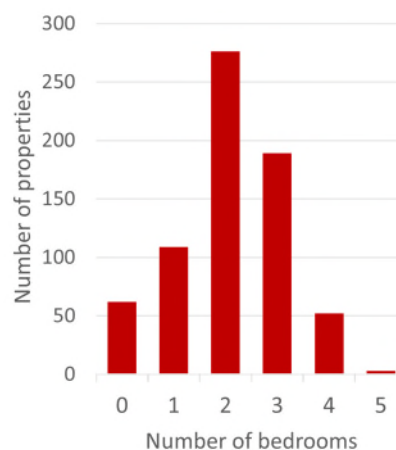


Table 5.6: Average household size, Walgett (ILOC)

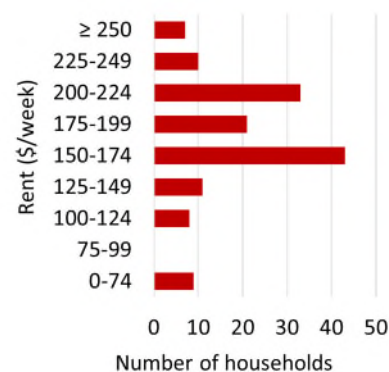
Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Persons	3.1	2.1
N-W NSW IREG	3.0	2.1
New South Wales	3.1	2.6

Table 5.7: Average number of persons per bedroom, Walgett (ILOC)

Persons	0.9	0.8
N-W NSW IREG	0.9	0.7
New South Wales	1.0	0.9

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 5.8: Households enumerated, Walgett (WGN)		
One family household	216	227
Multiple family household	24	4
Non-family household	65	144
Non-classifiable	0	0
Not applicable	0	0
Table 5.9: Occupancy, Walgett (WGN)		
One person	60	135
Two people	75	131
Three people	46	36
Four people	50	43
Five people and greater	63	34
Table 5.10: Proportion of all households renting, Walgett (WGN)		
Proportion of all households	71%	32%
Real estate agent	9%	10%
NSW housing authority	42%	11%
Community housing provider	27%	0%
Other private	9%	21%
Other	14%	58%
Murdi Paaki Region	62%	24%
New South Wales	56%	32%
Table 5.11: Median rent, Walgett (ILOC)		
\$/week	180	81
N-W NSW IREG	160	150
New South Wales	270	390
Table 5.12: Percentage of all households with rent equal to or greater than 30% of household income (2016), Walgett (A)		
Renting	8.2%	

Figure 5.2: Weekly rent payable by Aboriginal households, social housing rentals, Walgett (WGN)



Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 5.13: Home ownership (including owned with a mortgage), Walgett (WGN)		
	n=61	n=220
Proportion of all households	21%	45%
Murdi Paaki Region	38%	76%
New South Wales	44%	68%
Table 5.14: Change in Aboriginal home ownership, Walgett (WGN)		
	2016	2011
Proportion of all Aboriginal households	21%	20%
Table 5.15: Persons accommodated in non-private dwellings, Walgett ILOC and Gingie ILOC		
Hotel and motel	4	30
Staff quarters	0	3
Hospital	3	8
Nursing home	0	6
Aged care accommodation	4	3
Hostel	5	0

Table 5.16: Number of persons homeless in Bourke-Cobar-Coonamble SA3

(After Chamberlain and MacKenzie)

Marginally housed	14
Tertiary homeless	7
Secondary homeless	45
Primary homeless	294
Living in crowded conditions	167

Table 5.17: One-year residential mobility, Walgett (WGN)

Population fraction	Aboriginal n=271	Non-Indigenous n=351
Residents in the household aged one year and over with a different address one year ago		
All residents	9%	13%
Some of the residents	7%	1%
No resident	84%	86%
Residents in the household aged five years and over with a different address five years ago		
All residents	23%	37%
Some of the residents	8%	4%
No resident	69%	59%

Table 5.18: Number of Aboriginal persons with a different address at stated location 1 year ago and five years ago, Walgett (WGN)

Place of residence	1 year ago	5 years ago
Within Walgett LGA	65	56
Elsewhere in the MPR	0	0
Elsewhere in NSW	8	11
Other	0	0

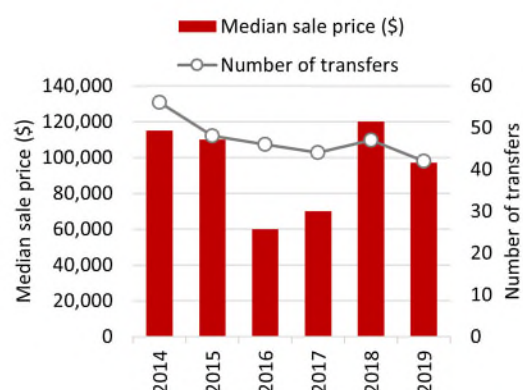
Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 5.19: Access and mobility, Walgett (WGN)		
No motor vehicles	34%	7%
One motor vehicle	32%	28%
Two motor vehicles	16%	27%
Three motor vehicles	8%	11%
Four or more vehicles	3%	8%
Not stated	8%	19%

5.2 Real estate market

House sales in Walgett averaged about ten a year over the period 2017 to 2020. Nine sales occurred in 2020. For the four years to 2020, 47 purchases produced a median price of \$125,000. Lowest price was \$16,000 (2020) for a dilapidated, one bedroom, weatherboard cottage and highest \$405,000 (2017) for a large 4-bedroom, 2-bathroom two-storey home with swimming pool. At the time of writing, eighteen houses were on the market with prices between \$110,000 and \$320,000.

Figure 5.3 indicates a higher level of activity in the real estate market although the number of transactions is for Walgett LGA including Lightning Ridge.

Figure 5.3: Median residential property price (Walgett (A))



Source: ABS, Data by Region, 2011-19, Economy and Industry

New residential building activity in Walgett LGA for FY2020-2021 is summarised at Table 5.20.

Table 5.20: New residential building work, 2020-2021, Walgett (A)

Type	Number	Value
New houses	7	\$1,314,000
New other residential building	2	\$877,000

The average estimated value is \$187,700 per new house.

5.3 Aboriginal social housing assets

Several Aboriginal organisations and NSW Government agencies own land and residential properties in and around Walgett: Walgett Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation (MPRHC) and the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO). Walgett LALC has title to the discrete settlements of Gingie Village and Namoi Village. Aggregated details are shown at Table 5.21 and housing mix at Table 5.22. Housing mix by location is listed at Table 5.23. Full property schedules are included at Table 5.24 to Table 5.26 inclusive and vacant lots are noted at Table 5.27.

Responsibility for Aboriginal social housing management rests with Walgett LALC, Barriekneal Housing and Community Ltd (BHAC), Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation and the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

Table 5.21: Asset portfolios

Asset owner	Housing manager	Number of dwelling units
Walgett LALC	WLALC	69
MPRHC	MPRHC	12
AHO	BHAC	9
AHO	DCJ	78
AHO	MPRHC	2
Total		170

Table 5.22: Housing mix by number of bedrooms

	Bedrooms					
Asset owner	1	2	3	4	5	6
Walgett LALC	-	1	52	14	1	1
MPRHC	-	-	7	4	1	-
AHO	2	12	38	35	2	-
Total	2	13	97	53	4	1

Table 5.23: Number of properties by location

	Bedrooms					
Location	1	2	3	4	5	6
Walgett	2	13	63	53	4	1
Gingie Village	-	-	13	-	-	-
Namoi Village	-	-	21	-	-	-
Total	2	13	97	53	4	1

Locations of properties are shown at Figure 5.4 to Figure 5.6.

Table 5.24: Residential properties owned by Walgett Local Aboriginal Land Council

Lot	Section	DP	Ownership	WLL	Property address	Property type	Bedroom type
Housing manager: Walgett Local Aboriginal Land Council							
2		752697	WLALC		1 Gingie Village	Cottage	3
2		752697	WLALC		2 Gingie Village	Cottage	3
2		752697	WLALC		3 Gingie Village	Cottage	3
2		752697	WLALC		5 Gingie Village	Cottage	3
2		752697	WLALC		7 Gingie Village	Cottage	3
2		752697	WLALC		9 Gingie Village	Cottage	3
2		752697	WLALC		11 Gingie Village	Cottage	3
2		752697	WLALC		12 Gingie Village	Cottage	3
2		752697	WLALC		13 Gingie Village	Cottage	3
2		752697	WLALC		14 Gingie Village	Cottage	3
2		752697	WLALC		15 Gingie Village	Cottage	3
2		752697	WLALC		16 Gingie Village	Cottage	3
2		752697	WLALC		17 Gingie Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		1 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		2 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		3 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		4 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		5 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		6 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		7 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		8 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		9 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		10 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		11 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		12 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		13 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		14 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		15 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		16 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		17 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		18 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		19 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		20 Namoi Village	Cottage	3
43		752271	WLALC		22 Namoi Street	Cottage	3
28		555607	WLALC		87 Fox Street	LALC Office	3
53		750313	WLALC		30 Hope Street	Cottage	2
20		201955	WLALC		74 Pitt Street	Cottage	3
35		587537	WLALC		102 Wee Waa Street	Cottage	3
142		562320	WLALC		100 Arthur Street	Cottage	3
36		230851	WLALC		46 Keepit Street	Cottage	3

Table 5.24: Residential properties owned by Walgett Local Aboriginal Land Council

Lot	Section	DP	Ownership	WLL	Property address	Property type	Bedroom type
53		750313	WLALC		36 Hope Street	Cottage	3
53		750313	WLALC		94 Peel Street	Cottage	3
53		750313	WLALC		92 Peel Street	Cottage	3
53		750313	WLALC		26 Hope Street	Cottage	3
13	38	759036	WLALC		89 Duff Street	Cottage	3
12	38	759036	WLALC		87 Duff Street	Cottage	3
13	38	759036	WLALC		85 Duff Street	Cottage	3
8	39	759036	WLALC		89 Dewhurst Street	Cottage	3
8	39	759036	WLALC		87 Dewhurst Street	Cottage	3
5	39	759036	WLALC		81 Dewhurst Street	Cottage	3
17	46	759036	WLALC		102 Dewhurst Street	Cottage	3
9	31	759036	WLALC		109 Arthur Street	Cottage	3
9	31	759036	WLALC		107 Arthur Street	Cottage	3
14		236733	WLALC		83 Duff Street	Cottage	3
35		230851	WLALC		44 Keepit Street	Cottage	4
15	30	759036	WLALC		8 Sutherland Street	Cottage	4
21		230292	WLALC		77 Warrena Street	Cottage	4
1		234978	WLALC		76 Dewhurst Street	Cottage	4
53		750313	WLALC		96 Peel Street	Cottage	4
53		750313	WLALC		34 Hope Street	Cottage	4
1	46	759036	WLALC		67 Duff Street	Cottage	4
7	31	759036	WLALC		103 Arthur Street	Cottage	4
53		750313	WLALC		32 Hope Street	Cottage	4
53		750313	WLALC		28 Hope Street	Cottage	4
14	38	759036	WLALC		38 Hope Street	Cottage	4
11	31	759036	WLALC		36 Sutherland Street	Cottage	4
5	46	759036	WLALC		31 Sutherland Street	Cottage	4
14	46	759036	WLALC		96 Dewhurst Street	Cottage	4
8	39	759036	WLALC		85 Dewhurst Street	Cottage	5
7		220655	WLALC		28 Arthur Street	Cottage	6

Table 5.25: Residential properties owned by Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation

Lot	Section	DP	Ownership	WLL	Property address	Property type	Bedroom type
Housing manager: Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation							
14	10	759036	MPRHC		69 Neilly Street	Cottage	3
1		367189	MPRHC		114 Fox Street	Cottage	3
382		771076	MPRHC		29 Myall Street	Cottage	3
1		211126	MPRHC		82 Euroka Street	Cottage	3
4		36453	MPRHC		64 Dewhurst Street	Cottage	3
1	47	759036	MPRHC		116 Fox Street	Cottage	3
15	23	759036	MPRHC		83 Cedar Street	Cottage	3

Table 5.25: Residential properties owned by Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation

Lot	Section	DP	Ownership	WLL	Property address	Property type	Bedroom type
24		230292	MPRHC		108 Wee Waa Street	Cottage	4
15	10	759036	MPRHC		104 Wee Waa Street	Cottage	4
15	10	759036	MPRHC		67 Neilly Street	Cottage	4
19	41	759036	MPRHC		55 Dewhurst Street	Cottage	4
12	10	759036	MPRHC		110 Wee Waa Street	Cottage	5

Table 5.26: Residential properties owned by the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office

Lot	Section	DP	Ownership	WLL	Property address	Property type	Bedroom type
Housing manager: Barriekneal Housing and Community Ltd							
22		236733	AHO		2, 88 Peel Street	Villa	2
22		236733	AHO		1, 88 Peel Street	Villa	2
18		668162	AHO		18 Peel Street	Cottage	3
5	30	759036	AHO		79 Arthur Street	Cottage	4
34		30504	AHO		41 Namoi Street	Cottage	4
6		30504	AHO		19 Euroka Street	Cottage	4
36		807917	AHO		74 Euroka Street	Cottage	4
23		236733	AHO		86 Peel Street	Cottage	4
31		253488	AHO		6 Euroka Street	Cottage	4
Housing manager: NSW Department of Communities and Justice							
2		599185	AHO		4, 30 Peel Street	Unit	1
2		599185	AHO		1, 30 Peel Street	Unit	1
100		806098	AHO		38 Sutherland Street	Villa	2
100		806098	AHO		40 Sutherland Street	Villa	2
45		847451	AHO		78 Warrena Street	Villa	2
1		236733	AHO		2, 84 Peel Street	Villa	2
1		236733	AHO		1, 84 Peel Street	Villa	2
572		1015652	AHO		3/73 Namoi Street	Villa	2
572		1015652	AHO		2/73 Namoi Street	Villa	2
572		1015652	AHO		1/73 Namoi Street	Villa	2
28		524092	AHO		29 Duff Street	Cottage	2
47		841667	AHO		92 Warrena Street	Cottage	2
3		850355	AHO		103 Euroka Street	Cottage	3
30		30504	AHO		25 Gilbert Street	Cottage	3
29		261671	AHO		84 Cedar Street	Cottage	3
26		261671	AHO		113 Euroka Street	Cottage	3
19		236733	AHO		10 Araluen Street	Cottage	3
35		238035	AHO		122 Wee Waa Street	Cottage	3
25		524092	AHO		75 Neilly Street	Cottage	3
26		524092	AHO		77 Neilly Street	Cottage	3
1		599185	AHO		61 Neilly Street	Cottage	3

Table 5.26: Residential properties owned by the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office

Lot	Section	DP	Ownership	WLL	Property address	Property type	Bedroom type
31		236165	AHO		72 Neilly Street	Cottage	3
37		238035	AHO		128 Wee Waa Street	Cottage	3
33		238035	AHO		118 Wee Waa Street	Cottage	3
30		236165	AHO		79 Warrena Street	Cottage	3
12		599386	AHO		87 Warrena Street	Cottage	3
122		602470	AHO		82 Warrena Street	Cottage	3
7		239986	AHO		17 Sutherland Street	Cottage	3
16		41947	AHO		19 Sutherland Street	Cottage	3
14		650981	AHO		56 Arthur Street	Cottage	3
2		513882	AHO		57 Namoi Street	Cottage	3
3		513882	AHO		59 Namoi Street	Cottage	3
124		602470	AHO		47 Keepit Street	Cottage	3
33		230851	AHO		40 Keepit Street	Cottage	3
24		261671	AHO		117 Euroka Street	Cottage	3
23		261671	AHO		119 Euroka Street	Cottage	3
5		507646	AHO		6 Dundas Street	Cottage	3
25		231218	AHO		1 Duff Street	Cottage	3
24		231218	AHO		3 Duff Street	Cottage	3
23		231218	AHO		5 Duff Street	Cottage	3
27		524092	AHO		27 Duff Street	Cottage	3
191		601988	AHO		10 Duff Street	Cottage	3
9		236733	AHO		107 Dewhurst Street	Cottage	3
12		239986	AHO		84 Dewhurst Street	Cottage	3
13		239986	AHO		82 Dewhurst Street	Cottage	3
5	41	759036	AHO		10 Coral Avenue	Cottage	3
20		236733	AHO		6 Araluen Street	Cottage	3
20		226373	AHO		12 Albert Street	Cottage	4
22		30504	AHO		5 Gilbert Street	Cottage	4
100		806098	AHO		63 Duff Street	Cottage	4
46		847451	AHO		76 Warrena Street	Cottage	4
46		847451	AHO		43 Keepit Street	Cottage	4
45		847451	AHO		45 Keepit Street	Cottage	4
62		700085	AHO		92 Neilly Street	Cottage	4
14		650981	AHO		62 Pitt Street	Cottage	4
28		238035	AHO		83 Neilly Street	Cottage	4
34		238035	AHO		120 Wee Waa Street	Cottage	4
29		524092	AHO		112 Wee Waa Street	Cottage	4
11		599386	AHO		89 Warrena Street	Cottage	4
61		700085	AHO		99 Warrena Street	Cottage	4
181		607335	AHO		90 Warrena Street	Cottage	4
123		602470	AHO		80 Warrena Street	Cottage	4
4		239986	AHO		11 Sutherland Street	Cottage	4

Table 5.26: Residential properties owned by the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office

Lot	Section	DP	Ownership	WLL	Property address	Property type	Bedroom type
12		517434	AHO		10 Ritchie Street	Cottage	4
1		507687	AHO		70 Pitt Street	Cottage	4
39		238035	AHO		27 Myall Street	Cottage	4
121		602470	AHO		49 Keepit Street	Cottage	4
47		841667	AHO		59 Keepit Street	Cottage	4
34		230851	AHO		42 Keepit Street	Cottage	4
25		261671	AHO		115 Euroka Street	Cottage	4
82		541263	AHO		5 Dundas Street	Cottage	4
2		218674	AHO		11 Dundas Street	Cottage	4
13		236733	AHO		81 Duff Street	Cottage	4
17		41947	AHO		88 Dewhurst Street	Cottage	4
4	41	759036	AHO		8 Coral Avenue	Cottage	4
21		236733	AHO		4 Araluen Street	Cottage	4
6		239986	AHO		15 Sutherland Street	Cottage	5
2		221283	AHO		4 Albert Street	Cottage	5
Housing manager: Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation							
D		414481	AHO		26 Namoi Street	Cottage	3
26		30504	AHO		2 Thomas Street	Cottage	3

Table 5.27: Vacant residential lots (Subject to title check)

Lot	Section	DP	Ownership	WLL	Property address
12		236733	AHO		79 Duff Street
27		261671	AHO		46 Duff Street
192		601988	AHO		12 Duff Street
34		807917	MPRHC		51 Dundas Street
23		230292	MPRHC		71 Neilly Street
41		253850	MPRHC		72 Warrena Street
1		1186583	WLALC		79 Dewhurst
14	10	759036	WLALC		71 Neilly Street
100		806098	WLALC		38 Sutherland Street
1		209706	WLALC		67 Dewhurst Street
D		402585	WLALC		106 Wee Waa Street
31		527943	WLALC		62 Fox Street
7019		1027303	WLALC		34 Dundas Street
11	38	759036	WLALC		86 Duff Street
B		392604	WLALC		26 Peel Street
53		750313	WLALC		90 Peel Street
6	39	759036	WLALC		83 Dewhurst Street
32		226373	WLALC		20 Arthur Street

Figure 5.4: Location of Aboriginal social housing in Walgett



Source: Google Earth, image © 2022 CNES/Airbus

Figure 5.5: Gingie Village



Figure 5.6: Namoi Village



Source: Google Earth, image © 2022 CNES/Airbus

5.4 Forms of housing construction

Residential buildings shown in Figure 5.7 are illustrative of the types of framed housing construction which form the greater part of the Aboriginal social housing portfolio in Walgett. Typically, houses are either of timber frame on suspended floor construction with fibre-cement sheet or Hardiplank style cladding and metal roof, or brick veneer on concrete slab with metal roof.

Figure 5.7: Typical forms of Aboriginal social housing





5.5 MPRH&BC household survey in summary

A major data gathering exercise was undertaken in 2016 and early 2017 under the guidance of the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly to provide the evidence for reform of the Aboriginal social housing sector in the Murdi Paaki Region. Over 1,400 households took part, including 112 households in Walgett. The contribution from Walgett is presented below.

Figure 5.8: Housing mix (All households participating in the survey)

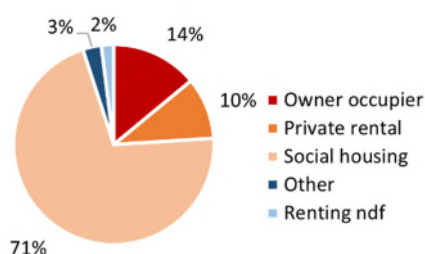


Figure 5.9: Managing organisation (Social housing tenants)

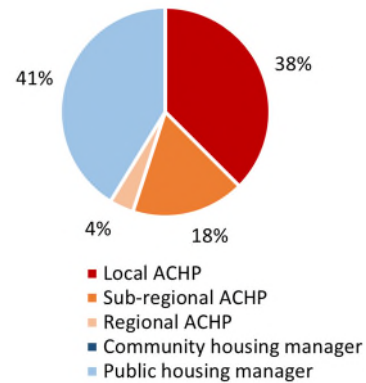


Figure 5.10: Level of satisfaction with housing manager

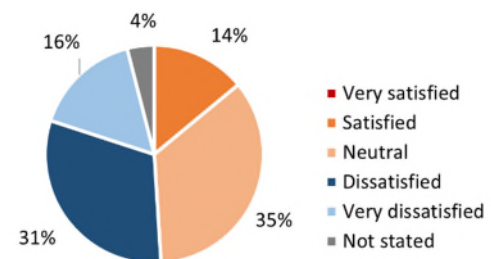


Figure 5.11: Preferred manager of Aboriginal social housing (Social housing tenants)

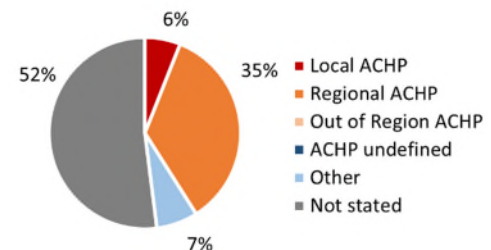


Figure 5.12: Social housing tenants with a tenancy agreement

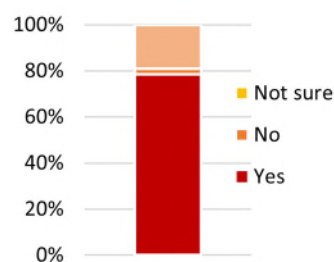


Figure 5.13: Social housing tenants claiming Commonwealth rent assistance

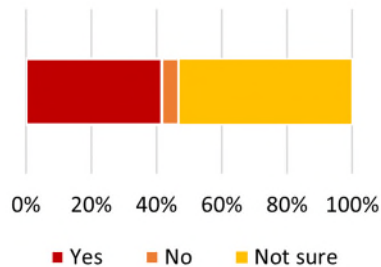


Figure 5.14: Rent levels 2016-2017

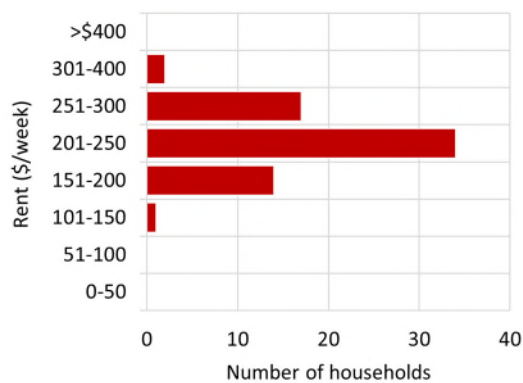


Figure 5.15: Respondents view of a fair rent

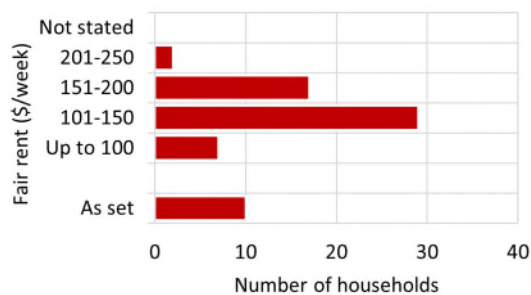


Figure 5.16: Household size range (All households)

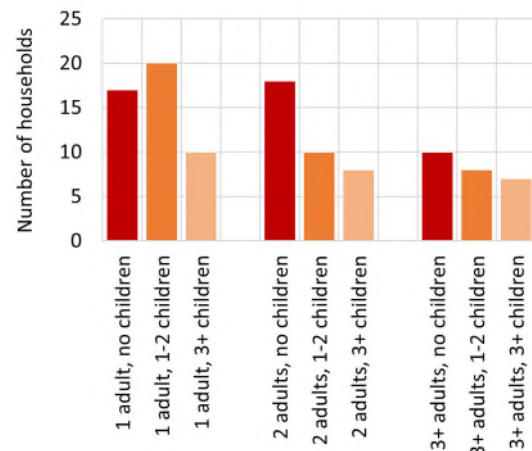


Figure 5.17: Address of household 5 years ago

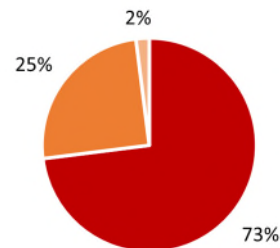


Figure 5.18: Households feeling crowded

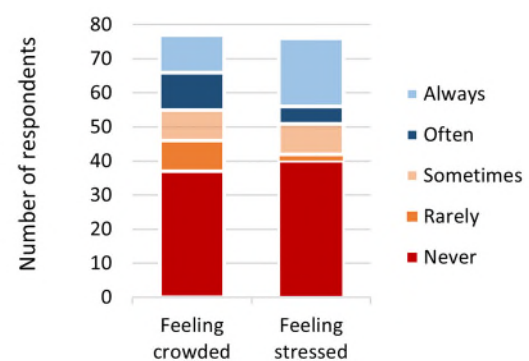


Figure 5.19: Households providing shelter to one or more homeless persons

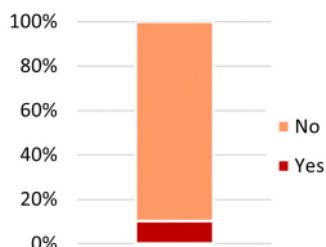


Figure 5.20: Tenants feeling unsafe at home

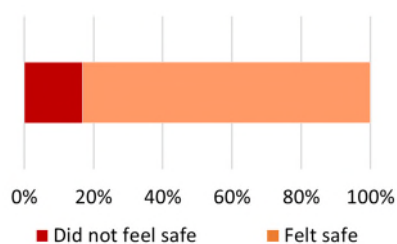
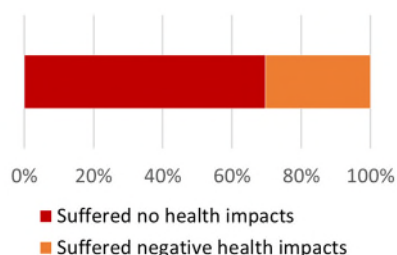


Figure 5.21: Tenants experiencing negative health impacts



KEY FINDINGS

- Over seven out of ten of respondents to the survey were renting social housing, 10% were in private rentals and 14% were homeowners. One respondent reported being homeless and another temporarily in emergency accommodation;
- Of Aboriginal social housing tenants, 41% rented through Walgett LALC and 38% rented through DCJ. Of the remainder, 18% stated their housing manager as Barriekneal Housing and Community;
- The level of satisfaction with housing managers was generally neutral to unfavourable with nearly half dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (47%). Almost all Aboriginal social housing households interviewed offered a view (96%). Of DCJ tenants, just

under half (45%) said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied while Aboriginal social housing tenants of Walgett LALC, mainly tenants living at Gingie and Namoi Villages, were less than complimentary of housing services provided by the local ACHP (70% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied);

- The principal reasons for dissatisfaction appeared to be a lack of urgency on the part of the housing managers to attend to repairs or repairs not being carried out at all, and difficulty tenants had in communicating with the housing managers and that the housing managers were insensitive or displayed a poor attitude;
- Over half of respondents chose not to state a preference for housing manager. Of those that did, the majority favoured a Regional ACHP;
- Of the 75 households that responded to the question, 58 respondents (77%) said that Aboriginal social housing was the only housing available to them. A significant number of respondents (41%) said they were renting Aboriginal social housing because they could not afford to buy their own house. The number of respondents who expressly said they did not wish to purchase was small;
- When asked about their reasons for living in Walgett, most respondents stated that they were either born in the community or their families had been resident for a long time. Most said that being close to family and relations was important. A strong feeling of belonging, wanting to live on Country and/or being part of the community were influential factors. Being able to find work was a minor factor;
- Most social housing renters had entered into a formal tenancy agreement but only a half of respondents reported being aware of the limit on occupancy imposed by the agreement;
- At the time of the MPRH&BC household survey, social housing tenants indicated rent levels to be principally in the range \$201-\$250/week. A small proportion thought this rent to be fair but most respondents felt that rents levels were \$50 to \$100/week too high. The connection between rent and

quality was raised by some tenants in response to the questions relating to satisfaction with housing management services;

- Under one half of respondents reported they were claiming Commonwealth rent assistance;
- Under half of households (42%) stated they were adult households without children;
- Three of five households reported their house never or rarely felt crowded. Of those that indicated feeling crowded at times, five said that crowding was often a cause of stress while twenty (26%) said crowding was always a stressful experience;
- Ten households in Aboriginal social housing were providing shelter at the time of the survey to one or more persons who would otherwise be homeless. No households in private rental accommodation or homeowners reported providing shelter to persons who would otherwise be homeless;
- Little evidence exists of short-term mobility within the community. Four out of 79 Aboriginal social housing respondents were living at a different address 1 year prior to the household survey and 24% had a different address 5 years prior. Median duration of a tenancy was 15 years. Relocation tended to occur within the community. Only 2% of respondents had moved to Walgett and taken up a social housing tenancy in the five years prior to the household survey;
- Most Aboriginal social housing tenants (90%) had no intention of moving if their circumstances changed. The balance of respondents thought they might consider relocating if their needs changed;
- Many social housing tenants (71%) reported trouble meeting their electricity bills;
- Of those tenants who responded to the question (n=72), the overwhelming majority (n=68) indicated a preference for social housing tenancies to be passed down within the family;
- Suggested service improvements concentrated on the need for improved communication pathways between housing manager and tenants and greater

responsiveness to carrying out repair and maintenance work;

- As to additional services in the community, respondents did not offer any suggestions;
- Tenants who responded to open ended questions generally reinforced the criticism already made about the lack of attention by housing managers to housing repairs.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS - OWNERS

- Sixteen homeowners responded to the survey and all were purchasing or had purchased detached houses;
- All bar three of the owners had purchased or were purchasing from their own savings;
- Only one owner was dissatisfied with his/her decision to purchase;
- In most instances, owners had long-standing attachment to Walgett, having a sense of belonging to community and being close to family and relations. One in two quoted a work-related reason for living in the community;
- Tenure was relatively stable. All respondents were living in the same house one year prior to the household survey and five years prior;
- Median period of ownership was 13 years;
- Respondents valued the sense of autonomy and independence that resulted from ownership. Few viewed ownership in terms of a financial investment;
- Disadvantages of ownership, where they existed, were said to be the burden of Council rates and charges and the cost of repairs and maintenance;
- Two in five owners reported trouble in paying power bills;
- Crowding did not appear to be problematic with only two owner respondents saying that their house felt crowded often or always. One household was accommodating one or more persons who would otherwise be homeless. Using the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS) measure, all households were deemed to have the adequate number of bedrooms for permanent occupants disclosed.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS – PRIVATE TENANTS

- Eleven households living in private rental accommodation responded to the survey. All households were single family households, mostly living in 3- and 4-bedroom dwellings;
- Two respondents stated they had been accepted onto a waiting list in another community and one resident said he/she wanted to live independently from the rest of the family;
- One half of private rental households reported having a tenancy agreement and four tenants reported they were receiving Commonwealth rent assistance;
- Rent charged, where disclosed, appeared to be on a par with rents for social housing;
- A pattern of longer-term mobility was drawn by four respondents stating that they lived at the same address five years prior to the household survey and five at the same address one year prior to the survey. One household had moved more than once in the twelve months prior to the household survey. Median duration of tenancy was one year;
- When asked about their reasons for living in Walgett, most respondents stated that they were either born in the community or their families had been resident for a long time. A strong feeling of belonging, wanting to live on Country and/or being part of the community around family and relations were important considerations. Employment was not a significant factor;
- Six private renters had applied for a private rental in the three years prior to the survey. Experiences were mixed with three finding the process difficult and stressful. In the same period, one family of four had been homeless and had slept rough, couch surfed and resorted to emergency accommodation;
- Crowding was said to be present in half of the households renting privately, creating higher levels of stress;
- No private renter felt unsafe or suffered negative health impacts as a result of having to live in the dwelling rented;

- The opportunity to comment on the standard of service received from their housing manager failed to generate any meaningful response.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS – SOCIAL HOUSING TENANTS

- At the time of the household survey, thirty-three young people were seeking their own accommodation, nine had applied and been accepted onto a waiting list for a unit or house in Walgett. Waiting time generally appeared to be more than three years;
- Three older persons were seeking their own accommodation, none had applied and been accepted onto a waiting list for a unit or house;
- Few respondents had tried to rent privately;
- Five households were two family households while four households were reported as three family households;
- Five households had applied for a house or unit in another community;
- Several respondents reported a long wait for assessment and modification of the house for person(s) requiring mobility aids;
- One quarter of respondents said their house failed to meet cultural needs, mainly on the grounds that the design of the house did not create spaces conducive to cultural practice;
- Nearly one third of respondents stated their accommodation impacted negatively upon their health, quoting poor condition of the property, the stress of living in unsatisfactory conditions, and accessibility as the primary reasons;
- About 17% of respondents said they did not feel safe in their accommodation for reasons of property condition, inability to secure the house, and/or being in an unsafe neighbourhood.

5.6 Unmet housing need

From the MPRH&BC household survey, unadjusted responses from households living in private rentals and social housing in Walgett to questions of housing need are summarised in Table 5.28.

Table 5.28: Unadjusted need for new housing as recorded by the MPRH&BC household survey for residents of Aboriginal social housing and persons homeless

	Number
Total number of households renting	170
Number of respondents	80
Young people requesting own housing	33
Older people requesting own housing	3
Multi-family households	13

Refining need shown in Table 5.28 concentrates on households renting Aboriginal social housing, only minimal need being established among families living in owner households and in private rental accommodation. To arrive at a more nuanced and realistic estimate, each individual survey return has been examined and equitable allocation made based on expressed need, existing household composition, crowding, homelessness and potential family formation. The results, as determined against a set of criteria, are shown at Table 5.29.

Table 5.29: Unmet housing need

		From MPRH&BC household survey				Factored for whole community			
		Number of bedrooms				Number of bedrooms			
Tenure type	Ratio	2	3	4	5	2	3	4	5
Owner occupier	85 / 16	1	0	0	0	1	-	-	-
Private rental	38 / 11	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Homeless	294 / 112	2	0	0	0	5	-	-	-
Social housing rental	170 / 79	22	4	1	0	48	9	2	-
Employer	- / -	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Not defined	- / 4	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Total		25	4	1	0	54	9	2	0

The methodology assumed that:

- Young single persons are allocated a 2-bed unit. One-bedroom units are not preferred because of the lack of flexibility in allocation: a 2-bedroom unit can house a couple and two children;
- Younger couples with children identifying as a family unit are allocated a 3-bedroom dwellings as a minimum;

- Older couples are allocated a 2-bedroom unit on the presumption that they will move from the family home. In some instances, older persons or couples have been allocated a new dwelling where it frees a larger house for younger members of an extended family;
- Multi-family households, composed variously of couples only and couples with children, are allocated housing of a size commensurate with family composition in accordance with the Canadian National Occupancy Standard, the methodology for which is included in this chapter;
- Primary and secondary homeless persons as recorded are assigned a 2-bed unit. No homeless families were captured by the MPRH&BC household survey.

Table 5.29 indicates unmet housing need for individuals and families living in Walgett assessed as eligible for housing at the time of the MPRH&BC household survey. The assessment is empirical in nature and requires to be refined with each household at the time of housing becoming available. Total need is derived by factoring the results from the MPRH&BC household survey by

the ratio of the whole population of the tenure type to those households that participated in the survey. The numerator is determined from ABS data for the various types of tenure, and from AHO property data. The denominator is from the MPRH&BC household survey.

In contrast to Table 5.29, the AHO advised in mid-2019 the numbers waiting for AHO and DCJ housing in Walgett to be as Table 5.30.

Table 5.30: Social housing waitlist numbers by bedroom category, AHO and DCJ housing, mid-2019

Studio/1 bedroom	8
2 bedrooms	15
3-bedrooms	-
4+ bedrooms	2
Not specified	2
Total	27

DCJ, in its NSW Housing Register dashboard for June 2021, quotes the combined number of approved Aboriginal and non-Indigenous applicants shown in Table 5.31 which, without the benefit of the detail given by Table 5.30, suggests a sizeable demand exists but further interrogation of more recent data may be required to determine housing mix with a greater degree of precision.

Table 5.31: Applicants approved for social housing, NSW Housing Register as of 30th June 2021

	Applicants	
	General	Priority
Walgett	24	<5
Waiting time for a 2-bedroom house is between 5 and 10 years and is up to 2 years for a 3-bedroom house		

The findings stated in Table 5.29 may underestimate need. Every attempt was made to ascertain actual household composition at the time of the MPRH&BC household survey but household populations may be greater than recorded, and likewise demand. It is a requirement of the tenancy agreement that a tenant notify the housing manager of any change in the number of residents housed. Observing this process is likely to lead to a rent increase which, for obvious reasons, tenants are eager to avoid and so, although this places a tenant in breach, non-disclosure of all occupants is common.

Data obtained from the MPRH&BC household survey in respect of utilisation by permanent residents is summarised in Table 5.32. From the sample, if representative, it would appear that most households would have one bedroom spare, if not two. It is unlikely that many rental properties would become available if attempts were made to rationalise utilisation by relocation

of willing individuals and families but rationalisation of the portfolio should be explored.

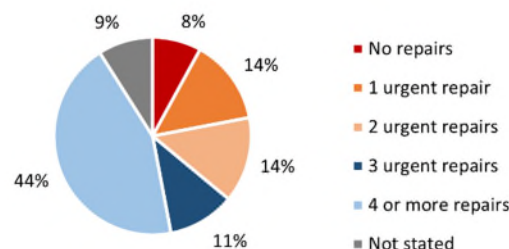
Table 5.32 Number of bedrooms required to accommodate permanent residents only

House size (Number of bedrooms)	Number of households using Bedroom(s)			
	1	2	3	4
2	3			
3	9	14		
4	1	5	8	
5	1		1	-
All	14	19	9	-

5.7 Asset condition

The MPRH&BC household survey invited social housing tenants to advise about the need for urgent repairs as a general indicator of housing manager responsiveness to critical defects and, subsequently in the survey, to provide a more detailed appreciation of condition. Responses from social housing tenants to the first enquiry are shown in Figure 5.22.

Figure 5.22: Respondents reporting need for urgent repairs



A method of analysis similar to that employed by the National Social Housing Survey (NSHS) conducted by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) in 2018 has been used to characterise asset condition based on information self-reported by tenants about dwelling condition, defects and facilities.

The basis of this assessment is the judgment that a house is deemed to be of acceptable standard if it has no more than two major specified structural, electrical and/or plumbing problems and has at least six working facilities. In this context, facilities

are those comprising 'health hardware' in the Housing for Health terminology which characterise safety and nine healthy living practices (HLPs):

- HLP 1: Washing people
- HLP 2: Washing clothes and bedding
- HLP 3: Removing wastewater safely
- HLP 4: Improving nutrition – the ability to store, prepare and cook food
- HLP 5: Reducing the negative impacts of crowding
- HLP 6: Reducing the negative effects of animals, insects and vermin
- HLP 7: Reducing the health impacts of dust
- HLP 8: Controlling the temperature of the living environment
- HLP 9: Reducing hazards that cause trauma

The survey sought to establish observance of the practices using the indicators shown in Table 5.33

Table 5.33: Indicators for meeting safety and HLPs

Practice	Represented by functional:
HLP 1	Bath or shower, and hot water heater
HLP 2	Laundry tub
HLP 3	Toilet and wastewater disposal/septic
HLP 4	Cooking stove and oven, kitchen sink
HLP 6	Flyscreens and site drainage
HLP 7	Glazed windows
HLP 8	Heating and cooling devices
HLP 9	Electrical installations

The single divergence from the NSHS methodology adopted in this project is to increase the number of working specified facilities to seven through the addition of air-conditioning which MPRA and HLP 8 consider to be essential to managing the health of residents at risk from heat, particularly children, older people and those with long term health conditions. A means of heating the home is also included.

Classification of structural and major services faults

Sinking/moving foundations
 Uneven/sagging floors
 Major cracks in wall and/or ceiling
 Termite damage
 Roof leaking inside
 Major electrical faults

Classification of structural and major services faults

Major plumbing faults
 Major air-conditioning problems
 Malfunctioning on-site wastewater treatment system

The results of the evaluation of tenant responses are shown at Table 5.34.

Table 5.34: Social housing condition as expressed by tenants

Condition	
No structural problems, and 7 working facilities	10%
No more than 2 structural problems, and 6 or more working facilities	34%
3 or more structural problems, and 6 or more working facilities	42%
None, 1 or 2 structural problems, and 5 or fewer working facilities	3%
3 or more structural problems, and 5 or fewer working facilities	11%

The principal deficiencies recorded in the quality of social housing are noted in Table 5.35.

Table 5.35: Social housing principal structural, electrical, plumbing and facilities problems (%)

Problem area	Houses affected
Moving foundations	40%
Uneven floors	38%
Cracks in wall and/or ceiling	56%
Termite damage	14%
Roof leaking inside	36%
Major electrical faults	25%
Major plumbing faults	29%
Major air conditioning problems	18%
Septic/sewerage problems outside	19%
Non-functional facilities	
Kitchen stove/oven	17%
Electric hot water heater	6%
Kitchen sink	6%
Shower	10%
Toilet	17%
Laundry tub	7%
Air conditioning	15%

The results of the assessment against the Housing for Health safety and healthy living practices are

reported in Table 5.36. Whereas Table 5.35 indicates the proportion of installed systems, appliances and fixtures which are non-functional, Table 5.36 captures those households which do not have the benefit of some appliances, primarily wood or electric heaters or air conditioners.

Table 5.36: Social housing observance of the HLPs

Practice	Meeting the standard	
HLP 1	Washing people	93%
HLP 2	Washing clothes and bedding	93%
HLP 3	Wastewater disposal	81%
HLP 4	Improving nutrition	83%
HLP 6	Pest control	49%
HLP 7	Reducing impact of dust	75%
HLP 8	Temperature control (heating)	75%
HLP 8	Temperature control (cooling)	44%
HLP 9	Free of electrical hazards	75%

Tenants also reported other minor defects such as broken verandah decking (25%), no working clothesline (18%), missing flyscreens (51%), broken windows (25%) and the like. An inability to secure the house because entry and/or back doors could not be closed or locked was noted by one household in three, contributing to the feeling of insecurity mentioned by some tenants and reflected by Figure 5.20.

In respect of HLP 2 and HLP 4, provision of whitegoods is a tenant responsibility. The percentage of household survey respondents stating access to a working washing machine and fridge were 94% and 96% respectively.

5.8 Asset preservation

As discussed above, and in answer to a series of objective, closed questions, tenants reported a range of structural, building fabric and facilities defects in response to the MPRH&BC household survey. Unlike the original HEHP investigations of the early 2000's, no independent scoping of properties has been carried out to determine the scale of repairs needed to restore properties to a fully serviceable state and develop a schedule of planned maintenance. This Plan relies on the household survey to generate a profile of asset condition.

In the absence of detailed scopes of work, an analysis of previous repair and maintenance projects has been undertaken to derive an 'order of probable cost'. The sample totals 98 properties spread across seven communities in the Region, large and small, and includes properties requiring little or no work to those in need of major refurbishment. The sample is grouped into five bands (quintiles) of increasing scope to generate median values for each band. Band medians are listed in Table 5.37. No adjustment has been made for the average age of properties or type of construction, but values have been revised to account for remoteness as per Rawlinsons cost guide. Costs are to September 2020.

Table 5.37: Median values for property repair and maintenance

Band	Median value (\$)
One	7,980
Two	24,280
Three	37,550
Four	56,130
Five	84,070

The median values for repair and maintenance quoted in Table 5.37 allow for minor routine works or responsive works in the case of Band 1 and Band 2 properties progressing through Band 3 to Bands 4 and 5 which include elements of works categorised as planned: cyclical and life cycle (preventative) maintenance, but which have not been attended to, by and large, under the *Build & Grow* policy regime. Band 4 and Band 5 works would include internal and external repainting; replacement of floor coverings; replacement of kitchens, bathrooms and/or laundries; replacing appliances, fixtures and fittings where these are no longer serviceable; and ensuring roofing, gutters and downpipes are brought to a satisfactory condition.

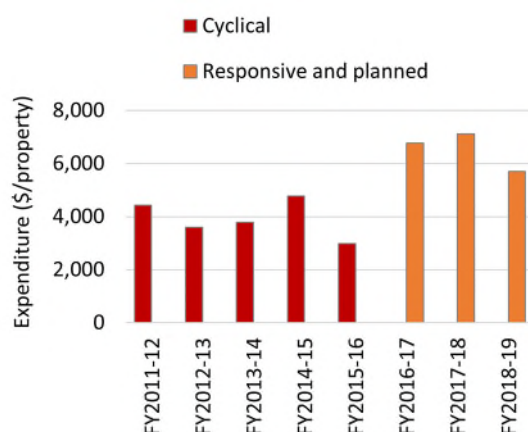
The values quoted in Table 5.37 are median values so it is possible that repairs on the more distressed properties could exceed \$100,000 at which point the value question arises as to whether it is more cost effective to replace rather than refurbish.

Based on tenant response to the questions relating to property condition posed in the MPRH&BC

household survey, the probable order of cost for repairs and maintenance is given by Table 5.38.

The AHO has advised that, between FY2011-12 and FY2018-19, it funded repair and maintenance costs to an average of 90 properties each year in Walgett LGA. Figure 5.23 provides a summary of expenditures. It is not known whether these were AHO, Walgett LALC or MPRHC properties, or in which communities in Walgett LGA expenditure occurred.

Figure 5.23: AHO repair and maintenance expenditures



The higher expenditure occurred after carrying out the MPRH&BC household survey and so is not reflected in tenant responses although, in terms of asset preservation, allocations are nominal.

To derive an order of probable cost for all repairs and maintenance, the number of properties has been factored up in the inverse of the ratio of MPRH&BC household survey respondents providing detailed information on asset condition to the total number of social housing properties in the community; in the case of Walgett, the factor is $(170/71)$ or 2.39. The total number is an aggregate of AHO, Walgett LALC and MPRHC properties. The denominator of 71 is the number of reliable survey returns on which a projection could be based.

Table 5.38: Repair and maintenance, probable order of cost

Band	Number of properties assessed in band from survey	Total number of properties for repair	Probable order of cost (\$)
One	7	17	135,700
Two	24	57	1,384,000
Three	30	72	2,703,600
Four	2	5	280,700
Five	8	19	1,597,300
Total	71	170	6,101,300
Average spend/property = \$35,890			

It is stressed that the cost projections are based on tenant responses to the MPRH&BC household survey and the actual scale of repair and maintenance work will be identified through scoping once regional priorities have been established. From the data analysis and as identified in Table 5.38, 19 of 170 properties would appear to require major refurbishment and some may require replacement.

5.9 Replacement

No properties have been positively identified at this stage for replacement. As noted above, up to nineteen properties are reported to be in poor condition and some may, on scoping, be recommended for replacement. In consequence, no houses are proposed in this Plan at this stage for demolition pending inspection.

5.10 Extension and modification

The presence and scale of crowding, as reflected by the MPRH&BC household survey, was determined against the CNOS threshold criteria shown below. Some responses could not be adequately assessed for want of information so this number is likely to underestimate actual need.

Canadian National Occupancy Standard
CNOS adopts the following criteria to determine the number of bedrooms required by a household:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There should be no more than 2 persons per bedroom; Children less than 5 years of age of different sexes may share a bedroom; Children 5 years of age or older of opposite sex should have separate bedrooms; Children less than 18 years of age and of the same sex may share a bedroom; Single household members 18 years or older should have a separate bedroom: and Couples share a bedroom.

Results of the assessment are shown at Table 5.39.

Table 5.39: Eligibility for additional bedrooms	
Extra bedrooms	Number from MPRH&BC household survey
1	9
2	3
3	3
Not sufficiently defined	13

The assessment shown at Table 5.39 assumes that household composition remains as was at the time of the household survey and no new housing or tenancies are available to address crowding and undersupply. If the number of new dwellings estimated by Table 5.29 is delivered, then the need for extensions drops to the number shown in Table 5.40.

Table 5.40: Eligibility for additional bedrooms as revised		
Extra bedrooms	Number from MPRH&BC household survey	Factored across whole community
1	7	15
2	1	2
3	-	-
Total number of extra bedrooms		19

Need for home modifications for persons with a disability is shown by Table 5.41. The total time waiting for initial assessment and then for work to be carried out would seem to exceed twelve months as the norm.

Table 5.41: Need for home modifications			
	Number of dwellings		
Requiring modification	Modified	Remaining	Factored
14	9	5	11

Subsequent advice from the CWP is that consideration requires to be given to the circumstances of elderly residents living at Namoi Village who find difficulty in climbing steps to the high-set houses. The addition of a form of stairlift is proposed as a solution.

5.11 Entrenched structural inequity

The 2015 report *Demand and Supply of Aboriginal Housing in Remote and Outer Regional NSW*, prepared on behalf of the AHO, sought to explore the “unexpressed demand” for remote Indigenous housing in twenty-two remote, very remote and outer regional communities across central, western and far west NSW. The focus of this study was to gain an understanding of the factors that contributed to homelessness and crowding in these communities and the attitude towards home ownership.

In respect of Walgett, the report found significant levels of homelessness and significant to extreme levels of crowding (8-10 or more persons living in a 3-bedroom house), well in excess of those identified by the ABS census. The social housing waiting list totalled 139 applicants which, although said to be incomplete, appeared to be a fairly accurate indicator. This is much greater than determined by the MPRH&BC household survey. Type of unmet housing was tabulated as given by Table 5.42:

Table 5.42: Housing need by cohort

Cohort	Need	Comment
Young people	✓	
Singles	✓	1-2 bed flats
Couples	-	
Young families	✓	Sole parents
Large families	✓	5-6 bedrooms
Elders	✓	Flats

The report flagged the need for large houses to cater for large or extended families with visitors.

Housing condition is discussed in the context of concerns raised by participants about timeliness of responses to requests for repairs, the quality of repairs undertaken and behaviour of contractors. The points made in the report echo those of §5.7: that in the most serious cases, defects can render houses unliveable and in instances of seemingly minor faults such as dripping taps, the lack of attention can result in very high water use charges to tenants.

A range of policy and practice measures relating to the application process, housing and asset management, human service delivery, and planning, design, implementation and control of works programmes was proposed. Despite the wide-ranging findings and actions recommended in this report to the AHO, the MPRH&BC household survey and subsequent consultation with the Community Working Party in 2021-2022, found little evidence of these actions being implemented or delivered on.

6 ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

6.1 Strategic planning

Walgett Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2017-2027 outlines key challenges confronting the community and Council's aspirations for future growth focused on continuing the ambition of the Shire to "be a great place to live, work and visit". The action areas proposed by the CSP are:

- Access to a greater range of local services and facilities;
- More local jobs and improved education;
- Better transport options and safer roads;
- Protection and improvement of natural places and waterways, and the ability to live a healthy lifestyle in rural surrounds; and
- A safe environment.

These aspirations align with the aspirations of the Aboriginal community although there is little in the way of strategic intent in advancing common interests. The only reference to engagement is to be found in Goal C 1.3: *A diverse and creative culture*, Strategy 1.3.3: *Work in collaboration with agencies and community groups to address existing and emerging issues specific to the Aboriginal youth and ageing communities*.

Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement, which defines land-related medium-term economic, social and environmental development proposals, including guiding change to Council's Local Environmental Plan 2013 (LEP) and Development Control Plan 2016 (DCP), reflects a greater level of engagement and opportunity across areas of common interest. The LSPS, in responding to the Directions in the NSW Government *Far West Regional Plan 2036*, focusses on planning priorities aimed at supporting sustainable living, maintaining natural assets and environment, and strengthening the local economy, this within the context of "a declining population base projected to decrease by about 19% by 2036 if there are no catalyst events or development which would see the trend reversed".

In respect of residential development, Council is keen to consolidate development within the existing urban area and anticipates current zonings and land use controls will facilitate this objective. Current minimum lot sizes are likely to be retained. Being a district centre, Walgett is sufficiently large to support a range of local services. Residents also have the benefit of a high school, multi-purpose health service, recreational facilities and supermarket. Employment growth is weak so there is no pressure currently for additional land releases for commercial purposes.

The LSPS intersects community strategic interests at several points, most directly through Council planning priorities:

- Respect Aboriginal communities through promoting management and ownership of land of which they have a traditional association, or which can assist with their social, cultural and economic development;
- Engage Aboriginal people in employment or education, with an emphasis on workforce participation and opportunities; and
- Encourage sustainable management of natural assets and environmental features, including protecting and enhancing the natural environment, improving biodiversity, and protecting items, places, and areas of natural and cultural heritage.

The opportunity exists for the CWP to engage with Council to give effect to these intentions.

On a broader front, Council has developed a series of strategies and actions aimed at increasing residential housing supply and mix, for example:

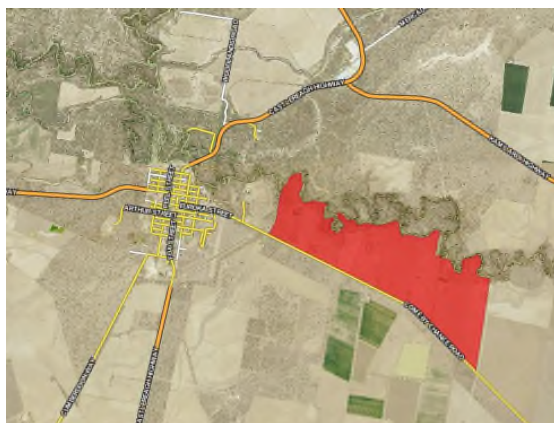
- Encouraging development of a range of housing types in suitable locations to provide for differing needs: particularly rural residential, medium density housing and accommodation for elderly people; and
- Preparing guidelines for strategies that provide direction on achieving greater housing diversity, and planning for social and affordable housing needs.

But within defined planning controls which:

- Retain appropriate minimum lot sizes to avoid environmental impacts of on-site effluent disposal; and
- Encourage alternative and/or additional use of vacant housing stock where residential amenity is not compromised.

Notwithstanding the assessment that the extent of existing urbanisation is adequate for short- and probably medium-term needs, Council is considering the need for large lot residential development. Figure 6.1 illustrates the area on the Come By Chance Road under investigation.

Figure 6.1: Area under investigation for potential future large lot development



Source: Walgett Shire Council, LSPS

The *Walgett Shire Rural Residential Strategy, 2018* by consultants GHD suggests that, of the sites considered, only that shown is potentially suitable for development, subject to further planning, engineering and environmental investigations.

6.2 Planning controls

Walgett Shire Council LEP 2013 sets out the planning controls applicable to residential development in the Shire and the DCP further requirements in relation to planning and design. Key controls are shown at Figure 6.2 which identifies zoning and Figure 6.3 which indicates minimum lots size, generally 700 m² for the General Residential (R1) zone in the urban area. Figure 6.4 and Figure 6.5 define the basic planning controls for the discrete settlements of Gingie Village and Namoi Village.

6.3 Municipal rates and charges

Council is permitted by legislation to levy a different municipal rate across its towns and villages. Rates relating to the residential category and service charges for 2021/22 are shown in Table 6.1 and Table 6.2.

Table 6.1: Ordinary rate, residential (2021/22)

General rate	Base rate	Ordinary rate (\$ in the \$)
Walgett	205.00	0.02075736
Lightning Ridge	205.00	0.01123224
Collarenebri	180.00	0.13910987

Table 6.2: Water and sewer charges (2021/22)

Water	
Filtered water access, 20 mm	\$541.00
Water cost: 0-600 kL	\$1.00/kL
Water cost: over 600 kL	\$1.53/kL
Sewerage	
Sewerage access	\$529.00
Waste management	
Domestic waste management, service	\$62.70
Domestic waste management, collection	\$535.00

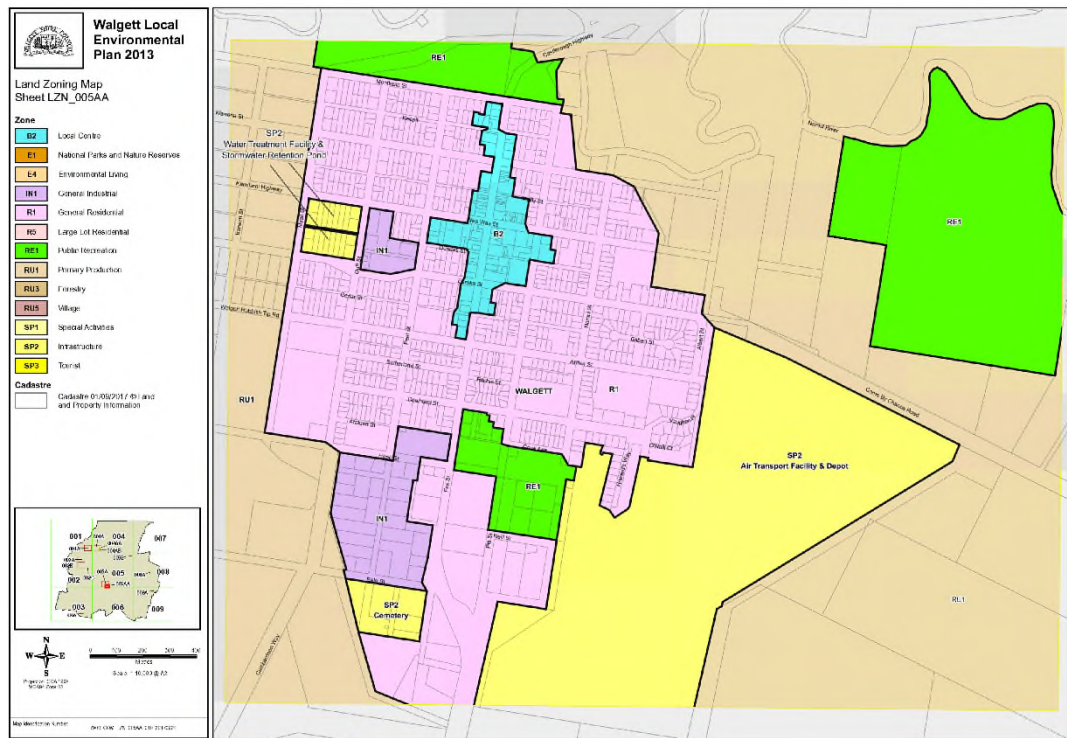
Table 6.3 provides an indication of the spread of unimproved land values across properties owned by the AHO and the Land Council.

Table 6.3: Typical land values

Property	Area (m ²)	Unimproved value (\$)
40 Keepit Street	916.9	2,000
107 Dewhurst Street	803.1	3,000
32 Hope Street	809.4	2,000
36 Sutherland Street	746.1	3,700

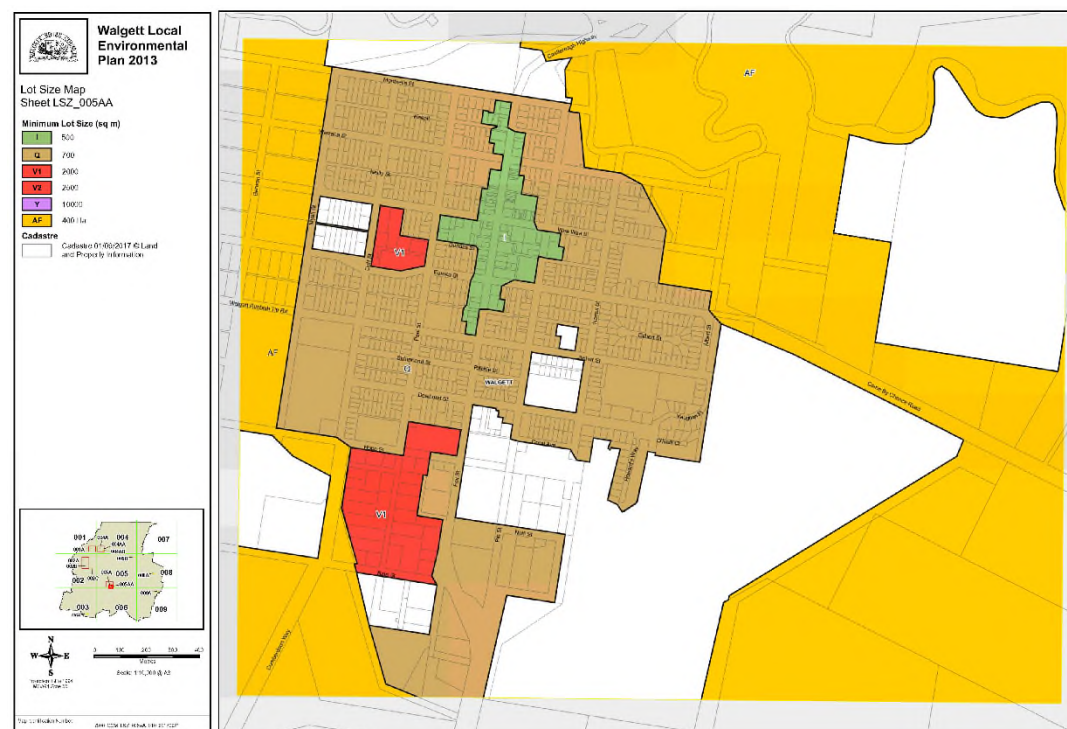
Typically, in 2021/22, residential lots of about 900 m² in Walgett will incur an annual rate charge of between say \$240 and \$290 and service charges totalling in the order of \$2,590, for a total annual bill of between \$2,800 and \$2,900, depending upon individual circumstances. Water use, normally charged to the tenant, is assumed to be 800L/person/day applied to the average household size stated at Table 5.6.

Figure 6.2: Land zoning map



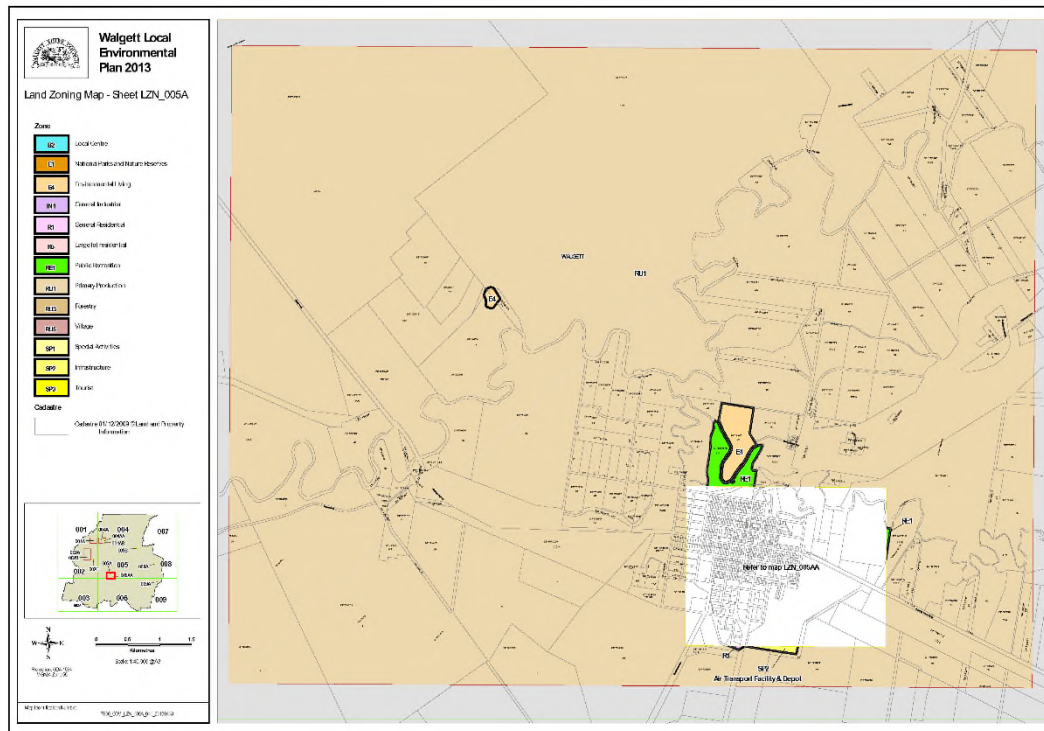
Source: Walgett LEP 2013, 7900_COM_LZN_005AA_010_20170921

Figure 6.3: Lot size



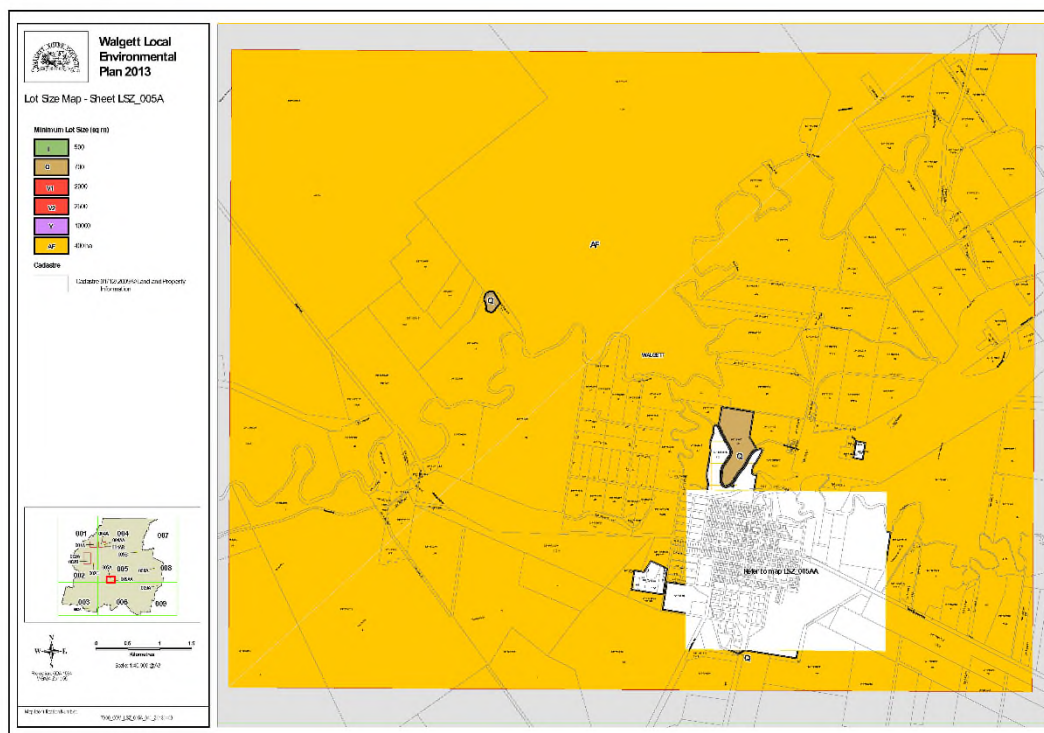
Source: Walgett LEP 2013, 7900 COM LSZ 005AA 010 20170921

Figure 6.4: Land zoning map – Discrete settlements



Source: Walgett LEP 2013, 7900_COM_LZN_005A_040_20130408

Figure 6.5: Lot size – Discrete settlements



7 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

7.1 Infrastructure accessibility

Residents of Walgett have access to a range of municipal and other services as summarised in Table 7.1 but, as utilities including Council face the challenges common to most small regional and remote communities, these may only be provided to a minimum functional standard.

Walgett Shire Council does not provide municipal services to the discrete communities at Gingie and Namoi Villages so residents of these communities are reliant upon Walgett LALC for water supply and wastewater infrastructure, and for roads, stormwater drainage and general environmental amenity. Solid waste disposal is the responsibility of residents. Through an arrangement with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Walgett Shire Council is contracted to operate and maintain water and wastewater services at Gingie and Namoi Villages under the NSW Government and New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) Aboriginal Water and Sewerage Programme.

7.2 Infrastructure improvements

Gingie and Namoi Villages are included in the NSW Government Roads To Home Programme which is designed around the engineering works associated with improving access and safety of discrete communities by upgrading road surfaces, footpaths, street lighting, and providing and/or repairing guttering and drainage. Options for the subdivision of both settlements will be explored to allow services to be provided and maintained to the same standard as enjoyed by town residents.

Inevitably, specific areas of concern remain which the CWP flags at Table 7.2 in the hope that Council and other services providers can acknowledge and address the infrastructure deficiencies with permanent technical and operational improvements.

Table 7.1: Service accessibility

Service	Responsibility	Availability	Service level	Walgett	Gingie	Namoi
				To community expectations		
Reticulated potable water supply	Walgett Shire Council	✓	-	■	■	■
Reticulated raw water supply	Walgett Shire Council	-	-	■	■	■
Reticulated sewerage	Walgett Shire Council	✓	-	■	■	■
On-site wastewater management	Walgett Shire Council	-	-	■	■	■
Stormwater	Walgett Shire Council	✓	-	■	■	■
Roads and drainage	Walgett Shire Council	✓	-	■	■	■
Solid waste disposal – bulky items	Walgett Shire Council	✓	-	■	■	■
Solid waste disposal – kerb collection	Walgett Shire Council	✓	-	■	■	■
Animal control	Walgett Shire Council	✓	-	■	■	■
Electrical power	Essential Energy	✓	-	■	■	■
Streetlighting	Essential Energy	✓	-	■	■	■

Table 7.1: Service accessibility

Service	Responsibility	Availability	Service level	Walgett	Gingie	Namoi
				To community expectations		
Mobile telephone	Telstra	✓	4G			
	Optus	✓	4G			
NBN	(Satellite for Gingie and Namoi)	✓	FTTC			
TV satellite	Viewer Access Satellite TV (VAST)	✓	-			
Fire fighting	NSW Fire and Rescue	✓	-			
	NSW Rural Fire Service	✓	-			

Table 7.2: Community expressed service improvements

Service	Improvement
Reticulated potable water supply	Water quality at Gingie to be improved through provision of a new water treatment plant to provide a supply which consistently meets Australian Drinking Water Guidelines
Solid waste disposal	A four monthly kerbside collection of bulky items to assist residents without vehicles to keep yards and surrounds clear and clean
Stormwater	Audit of the Gingie Village levee to verify adequacy to withstand a 1% AEP flood
Roads and drainage	Upgrading of road infrastructure, footpaths and drainage at Gingie and Namoi Villages through the Roads To Home programme
Streetlighting	Upgrading of streetlighting at Gingie and Namoi Villages, and in town, to comply with the relevant Australian Standard
Communications	Greater capacity in the NBN at Gingie and Namoi Villages
Environmental amenity	Slashing of vacant residential lots in town to minimise the risk of fire to health

8 COMMUNITY HEALTH PROFILE

8.1 Community health profile summary

Walgett is the largest community in the Walgett Local Government Area. Walgett Shire is considered remote on all remoteness scales. It is one of twenty-three local government areas in the Western NSW Local Health District (LHD).

Quantitative data for the Walgett community is not available due to its small size so a mixed-methods approach has been used to describe the health of the community. Aboriginal residents of Walgett have poorer health compared to the NSW and Australian population. Overall, the underlying risks of poorer health are evident: risky birth outcomes, historically poorer access to educational opportunities, higher rates of admission to hospital, poorer health behaviours, low health literacy, and a greater likelihood of chronic conditions leading to death.

In 2019, 77.8% of Western NSW LHD residents who participated in the annual NSW Population Health Survey reported excellent, very good, or good health¹ but this assessment relates to an estimated resident population of approximately 276,000 people in the Western NSW LHD area of operations. Local anomalies can be hidden by the regional perspective.

8.2 Health status – qualitative assessment

Qualitative evidence was gathered by interviewing local health care providers to assess the perceived health status of the Walgett community. Evidence indicates that the health of the Aboriginal population is poor. There are some infectious diseases which are thought to be directly related to the state of the environment. The incidence of chronic disease is high and there is a burden on the health system due to mental health and drug and alcohol issues. There are gaps in health services that impact the entire community and interviewees made the following observations:

- Infectious diseases such as skin disease are incident in the community. It is also thought that unregistered dogs are transferring hookworm to the human population;
- The incidence of head lice is high and tends to be treated traditionally, by combing or hand, rather than chemically. The entire household is seldom treated or linen washed;
- The quality of treated water is fair: water is consumed and used for washing but is said to have a slimy feel to it because of high mineralisation;
- Priorities for care are chronic disease management, respiratory diseases, heart disease, smoking, diabetes, renal disease, mental health, and alcohol and other drugs;
- The nearest birthing facility is in Dubbo. Pregnant women tend to delay travel so their baby is born in Walgett on Country. In consequence, the birth is treated as an emergency presentation managed by health practitioners, not necessarily midwives. Inevitably, women get flown to Dubbo with their newborns in any event;
- Access to aged care services and palliative care is excellent;
- Mental health and drug and alcohol are the greatest health concerns. Methamphetamines and marijuana are the most used drugs. There is no local service so crisis care falls to the hospital ED staff and police. Assessments are carried out via video link but the patient can only be given short-term treatment and returned to the family and community;
- Increased welfare (and Covid) payments over the past year have been used not only to fuel increased access to illicit drugs but also gambling;
- Nutrition and exercise programmes are available through the health services but community interest is weak;
- Moving around town is facilitated by bus services operated by various community groups. The daily TrainLink service to Dubbo and Sydney provides access to health services not available in town;
- Housing is reported as of reasonable quality but supply is inadequate;
- Homelessness has never been seriously addressed resulting in crowding or sleeping rough;

- Permanent and seasonal employment opportunities exist to underpin initiatives to move unemployed persons into the labour market.

8.3 Health status – quantitative assessment

Data is presented for Walgett Shire, Western NSW LHD and NSW as a whole.

8.3.1 Mother and baby health

- The proportion of babies born to teenage mothers in Western NSW LHD is 2.5 times higher than in NSW²;
- Almost two-thirds of Aboriginal mothers in Western NSW LHD had their first antenatal visit before 14 weeks gestation (65.4%) compared to all NSW Aboriginal mothers (75.3%) and all NSW mothers (79.6%)³;
- By comparison, 71.3% of all women in Walgett Shire had their first antenatal visit before 14 weeks, significantly lower than the proportion of all women in NSW⁴;
- Aboriginal women in Western NSW LHD are almost 6 times more likely to smoke during pregnancy (49.5% compared to 8.8%)⁵;
- Compared to all Aboriginal women in Australia, Aboriginal women in the Walgett Shire are also more likely to smoke during pregnancy (59.1% compared to 47.3%)⁶;
- Women in Walgett Shire are significantly more likely to smoke during pregnancy compared to women in NSW generally (40.3%)⁷;
- Aboriginal women in the Western NSW LHD are almost 2 times more likely to have a baby with a low birthweight (<2,500g)⁸;
- Aboriginal women in the Western NSW LHD are 1.5 times more likely to have a baby prematurely (<37 weeks gestation)⁹.

8.3.2 Growth and development of children and young people

- Compared to all NSW 1-year olds, Aboriginal 1-year olds are slightly more likely to be fully vaccinated in the Western NSW LHD (95.2% compared to 94.2%)¹⁰;
- Children in Western NSW LHD had significantly more decayed, missing and filled deciduous

(baby) teeth (dmft) compared to all NSW children (average of 2.4 dmft in Western NSW LHD children and 1.53 dmft in NSW children). The average number of decayed, missing and filled permanent (adult) teeth (DMFT) in Western NSW LHD children is about the same as all NSW children (average of 0.87 DMFT in Western NSW LHD children and 0.74 DMFT in NSW children)¹¹;

- The average number of dmft and DMFT for all Aboriginal children in NSW are both significantly higher than the NSW comparison (3.04 average dmft and 1.17 average DMFT)¹²;
- Children in Western NSW LHD are significantly less likely to have no caries in their baby teeth compared to all NSW children (47.7% of children in Western NSW LHD and 61.2% of NSW children);
- The proportion of Western NSW LHD children with no caries in their adult teeth is not significantly different to the proportion in NSW (58.4% of children in Western NSW LHD with DMFT=0 and 65.4% in NSW children)¹³;
- The proportions of Aboriginal children who are caries free in their baby and adult teeth (dmft=0, DMFT=0) are both significantly lower than the NSW comparison (35.2% with dmft=0 and 53.6% with DMFT=0)¹⁴;
- Children in the Western NSW LHD are significantly less likely to eat the recommended number of serves of vegetables compared to all NSW children (2.8% of Western NSW LHD children and 5.5% in NSW);
- The proportion of children in Western NSW LHD eating the recommended number of serves of fruit is not significantly different to the proportion in NSW (67.7% of Western NSW LHD children and 62.7% in NSW)¹⁵.

8.3.3 Morbidity

- Compared to all Aboriginal people in Australia, Aboriginal people in the Shire are significantly more likely to present to the Emergency Department for all reasons. Overall, Aboriginal people in Walgett Shire are 2 times more likely to present to the Emergency Department compared to all Aboriginal people in Australia (133,017.9 per 100,000 people compared to 62,109.4 per 100,000 people)⁶;
- In 2016/17, admissions to hospital by Western NSW LHD residents numbered more than

110,000, of whom 14% were Aboriginal people, who form 13% of the total LHD population¹⁶;

- The leading cause of admission for Aboriginal people in the Western NSW LHD is dialysis (27%) then maternal health, childbirth and neonatal issues (9%), and symptoms and signs of illness (8%)¹⁶;
- The proportion of Aboriginal people in the Western NSW LHD admitted to hospital for dialysis is more than twice that of the proportion expected based on comparison with the NSW (total) population¹⁶;
- Compared to all Aboriginal people in Australia, Aboriginal people in Walgett Shire are significantly more likely to be admitted to hospital for diabetes, mood affective disorders, ischaemic heart disease, respiratory system diseases, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, digestive system diseases, skin diseases and injury or poisonings. There are significantly fewer admissions for cancers⁶;
- Similarly, the admission rate for all people in the Western NSW LHD for skin infections is significantly higher than the rate in NSW (493.4 per 100,000 people compared to 355.3 per 100,000 people)¹⁷;
- The rate of potentially preventable hospitalisations in Walgett Shire is significantly higher than for NSW as a whole (3,495.0 per 100,000 admissions compared to 2,160.7 per 100,000 admissions)¹⁸;
- The leading cause of potentially preventable hospitalisation in the Western NSW LHD is cellulitis followed by dental conditions and ear nose and throat infections¹⁹;
- Aboriginal people in Walgett Shire are significantly more likely to be admitted to hospital for a potentially preventable condition compared to all Aboriginal Australians (6,465.6 per 100,000 people compared to 5,395.2 per 100,000 people)⁶.

8.3.4 Mortality

- In 2018, there were 2,467 deaths of people who lived in the Western NSW LHD. For people who lived in the Western NSW LHD, the all causes death rate was significantly higher than the rate for all of NSW (610.1 per

100,000 people compared to 506.4 per 100,000 people)²⁰;

- For all Aboriginal people in Walgett Shire, the median age at death is 61.0 years, the same as for NSW as a whole⁶. By comparison, the median age at death for all people who live in Walgett Shire is 73.0 years compared to 82.0 years for all NSW residents²¹;
- The leading age-adjusted cause of death for all Aboriginal people in NSW is circulatory disease (189.0 per 100,000 population) which is significantly higher than the rate of circulatory disease death in all of NSW (144.6 per 100,000 population)²²;
- Similarly, in the Western NSW LHD the leading cause of death is also circulatory disease (28.1% of all deaths)²³;
- In the Shire in 2016-2018, the death rate from injury and poisoning was significantly higher than in NSW (53.0 per 100,000 population compared to 35.6 per 100,000 population)²⁴;
- In NSW, 6.9% of all deaths in outer regional and remote areas are due to injury and poisoning and 1.5% are due to infectious and parasitic diseases²⁵;
- The rate of potentially avoidable deaths in Walgett Shire is higher than the rate in NSW (129.0 per 100,000 population compared to 99.4 per 100,000 population)²⁶;
- Aboriginal people in the Shire are significantly more likely to die prematurely from circulatory systems diseases compared to all Aboriginal people in Australia (131.4 per 100,000 people compared to 69.8 per 100,000 people)⁶.

8.3.5 Health risk factors

- In NSW, 26.4% of the Aboriginal population smoked cigarettes daily²⁷. In the Western NSW LHD, 12.4% of the total population aged 16 years and over smoked daily: the proportion of smokers in NSW was 11.2%²⁸;
- In NSW, 48.7% of the Aboriginal population drank alcohol at levels that posed a long-term risk to health²⁹. In the Western NSW LHD, 35.9% of the total population aged 16 years and over drank alcohol at levels that posed a long-term risk to health: the proportion of at-risk drinkers in NSW was 32.8%³⁰.

Tables 8.1 to 8.5 and Figure 8.1 provide detailed health statistics for the broad community.

Table 8.1: Cause of presentation to Emergency Departments, all Aboriginal people, rate per 100,000, Walgett Shire, NSW and Australia 2015/16-2017/18

	Walgett Shire	NSW	Australia
All causes	133,017.9*	71,135.8	62,109.4
Infectious and parasitic disease	4,739.4*	3,393.1	3,293.9
Mental health and related conditions	5,258.0*	3,649.3	3,636.7
Circulatory system diseases	2,247.0*	1,274.2	1,570.1
Respiratory system diseases	8,991.4*	7,153.7	6,340.7
Digestive system diseases	9,061.6*	3,972.5	3,500.8
Musculoskeletal system diseases	8,131.5*	3,936.2	2,910.1
Urinary system diseases	3,781.5*	2,364.4	2,263.4
Injury, poisoning and external causes	29,734.1*	16,420.0	14,458.8
Other factors requiring contact with the health system	5,343.7*	5,889.1	4,664.0
Other reasons	55,407.1*	23,097.0	19,471.0
* Significantly higher than the rate for Australia			
Data source: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Health Atlas of Australia. Public Health Information Development Unit, Torrens University Australia			

Table 8.2: Leading cause of admission for Aboriginal people, Western NSW LHD, 2016-17

	% admissions		
	Aboriginal people in Western NSW LHD	All NSW Aboriginal	All NSW
Dialysis	27%	27%	13%
Maternal, neonatal & congenital disorders	9%	10%	7%
Symptoms & abnormal findings	8%	7%	8%
Respiratory diseases	8%	7%	5%
Digestive system diseases	7%	7%	10%
Injury & poisoning	7%	7%	7%
Other factors infl. health	6%	7%	11%
Nervous & sense disorders	4%	4%	7%
Circulatory diseases	4%	3%	5%
Genitourinary diseases	4%	4%	5%
Mental disorders	4%	5%	5%
Musculoskeletal diseases	3%	3%	5%
Skin diseases	2%	2%	2%
Infectious diseases	2%	2%	2%
Malignant neoplasms	2%	2%	4%
Endocrine diseases	2%	2%	2%
Blood & immune diseases	1%	1%	1%
Other neoplasms	1%	1%	2%
Data source: NSW CAPED, ABS (SAPHaRI). Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence, NSW Ministry of Health			

Table 8.3: Cause of admission, all Aboriginal people, rate per 100,000, Walgett Shire, NSW and Australia 2015/16-2017/18

	Walgett Shire	NSW	Australia
Infectious and parasitic disease	936.9	759.9	1,093.5
All cancers	516.7 [#]	926.1	983.8
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases	1,205.8	704.9	1,101.0
Diabetes	665.3 [*]	319.0	420.9
Mental health and related conditions	2,585.8	2,515.3	2,626.5
Mood affective disorders	147.7 [*]	351.3	355.6
Nervous system diseases	991.9	807.1	916.5
Eye and adnexa diseases	437.1	465.4	531.6
Ear and mastoid process diseases	405.1	336.1	423.4
Circulatory system diseases	2,001.8	1,389.5	1,822.7
Ischaemic heart disease	872.2 [*]	473.7	652.8
Heart failure	187.6	163.4	238.4
Respiratory system diseases	4,358.7 [*]	2,659.0	3,373.8
Asthma	364.3	280.6	300.4
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)	1,173.4 [*]	548.3	594.9
Digestive system diseases	4,302.2 [*]	2,843.6	3,099.5
Skin diseases	1,057.9 [*]	821.0	1,370.0
Musculoskeletal system diseases	1,240.7	1,415.0	1,446.0
Urinary system diseases	1,833.2	1,460.8	1,696.2
Chronic kidney disease	499.5	252.7	387.3
Pregnancy and childbirth	16,022.6	12,749.2	14,700.7
Congenital conditions	263.9	215.0	210.3
Injury, poisoning and external causes	4,895.9 [*]	3,305.9	4,364.1
* Significantly higher than the rate for Australia			
[#] Significantly lower than the rate for Australia			
Data source: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Health Atlas of Australia. Public Health Information Development Unit, Torrens University Australia			

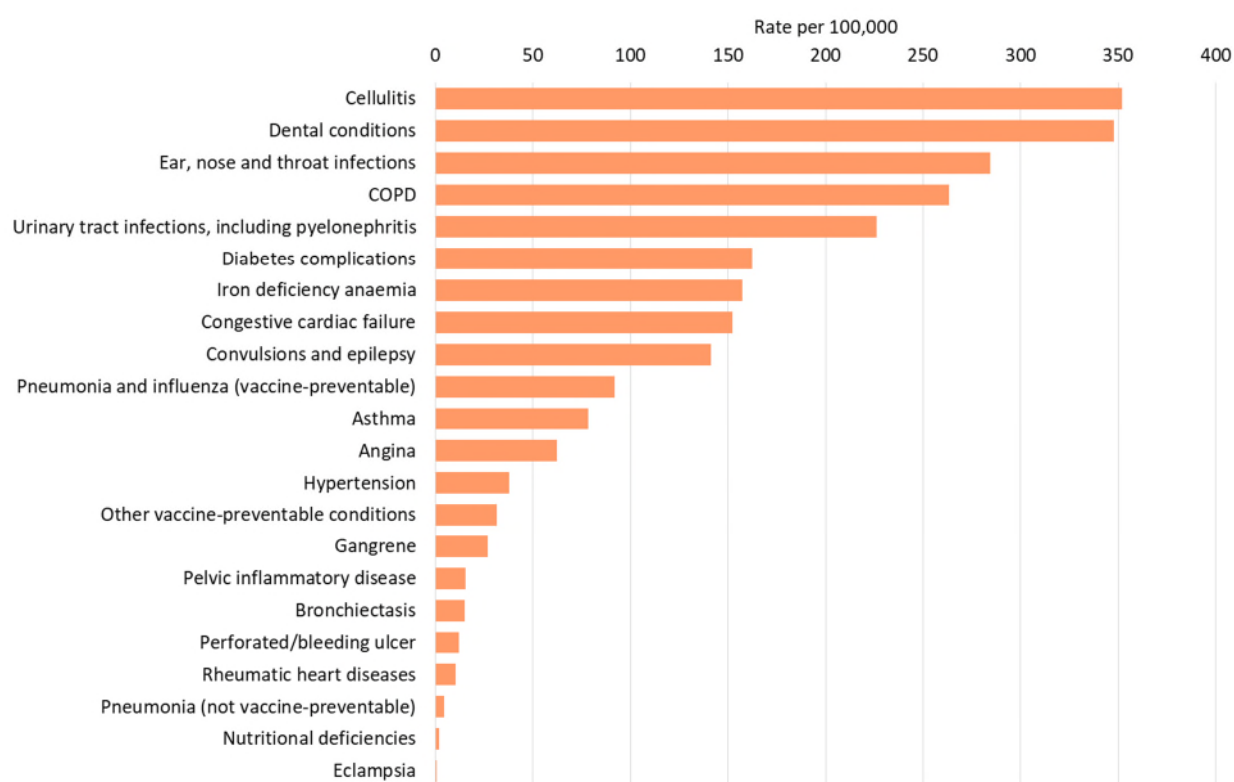
Table 8.4: Leading cause of death, Western NSW LHD and NSW, 2018-19

	Western NSW LHD			NSW	
	Ave # deaths per year	Rate per 100,000	% deaths	Aboriginal % deaths	Total % deaths
Circulatory diseases	714.5	169.2	28.1	21.8	27.6
Malignant cancers	659.5	167.9	26.0	25.3	28.3
Respiratory diseases	305.5	73.9	12.0	11.6	9.8
Injury and poisoning	147.0	47.5	5.8	13.6	5.9
Mental and behavioural disorders	147.0	33.6	5.8	6.7	6.9
All other causes	567.5	142.2	22.3	21.0	21.5
All causes	2541	634.2			
Data source: NSW COC URF, ABS (SAPHaRI). Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence, NSW Ministry of Health					

Table 8.5: Premature deaths, Aboriginal people aged 0-74 years, rate per 100,000, Walgett Shire, NSW and Australia 2013-2017

	Walgett Shire	NSW	Australia
Deaths from cancer	81.4	56.3	72.1
Deaths from diabetes	27.1	10.0	23.4
Deaths from circulatory system diseases	131.4*	46.1	69.8
Deaths from respiratory system diseases	44.0	22.4	26.9
Deaths from external causes	100.5	41.5	58.1
* Significantly higher than the rate for Australia			
Data source: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Health Atlas of Australia. Public Health Information Development Unit, Torrens University Australia			

Figure 8.1: Potentially preventable hospitalisations (rate per 100,000), total population Western NSW LHD, 2018-19



Data source: NSW CAPED, ABS (SAPHaRI). Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence, NSW Ministry of Health

8.4 Available health services

Walgett Multi-Purpose Health Service is a small rural health service offering primary health care on weekdays as well as providing an emergency service with 24-hour on call general practitioner services. The facility has eight acute care beds, eight aged care beds and four dialysis chairs.

The Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service (WAMS) was opened in 1986 to specifically address the needs of the local Aboriginal people.

Services in Walgett are provided by the Western NSW LHD, the Western NSW Primary Health Network (PHN), Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service, and some private service providers.

The Western NSW LHD provides (but is not limited to):

- Visiting medical officer
- Registered nurses
- Aboriginal health practitioners
- Administration support
- Security and domestic services
- Visiting dermatologist
- Child health
- Women's health
- Physiotherapist
- Mental health, drug and alcohol and sexual assault services (from Lightning Ridge)
- Access to Dubbo palliative care team and fracture clinic (via video)
- Access to medical specialists (in Lightning Ridge and Dubbo)

Ambulance Service of NSW provides emergency retrievals.

Walgett AMS provides:

- General practitioners
- Registered nurses
- Aboriginal health practitioners
- Community midwife
- Child and family health
- Eye health (including an optometrist)
- Ear health (including an audiologist)
- Allied health (diabetes educator, psychologist, physiotherapist, speech pathologist, exercise physiologist, dietitian, podiatrist)
- Social and emotional wellbeing workers
- Drug and alcohol counsellors
- Dentist and dental therapist
- Medical specialists (cardiologist, gynaecologist/obstetrician, dermatologist, respiratory physician)
- Administration support
- Transport

The Western NSW PHN provides:

- Allied health (OT, speech pathologist, dietitian)

Other providers include:

- General practitioners at the Walgett Multi-purpose Centre through Ochre Health and the Rural and Remote Doctor Service
- Pharmacist
- Physiotherapist
- Outback Therapy Services delivering allied health services

9 HUMAN SERVICES

9.1 Human services target population

The sectors of the Aboriginal population which should be the target of human services are identified in Table 9.1 together with the corresponding population numbers. Figures are for 2016.

Table 9.1: Service age groups, 2016					
Total persons (Usual residence)	Aboriginal		Non-Indigenous		
Service age group (years)	Number	%	Number	%	Ratio
Babies and pre-schoolers (0-4)	105	9.0	144	5.6	1.6
Primary schoolers (5-11)	188	16.2	222	8.6	1.9
Secondary schoolers (12-17)	116	10.0	91	3.5	2.9
Tertiary education and independence (18-24)	126	10.8	131	5.1	2.1
Young workforce (25-34)	149	12.8	309	12.0	1.1
Parents and homebuilders (35-49)	196	16.9	462	17.9	0.9
Older workers and pre-retirees (50-59)	151	13.0	433	16.8	0.8
Empty nesters and retirees (60-69)	77	6.6	447	17.3	0.4
Seniors (70-84)	50	4.3	297	11.5	0.4
Elderly aged (85 and over)	5	0.4	44	1.7	0.2
Total	1,163	100.0	2,580	100.0	0

Source: ABS Tablebuilder with age classifications as .id Consultants

Population fraction	Aboriginal	Non-Indigenous
Table 9.2: Core activity need for assistance		
	n=1,081	n=2,510
Of cohort population	5.9%	6.3%
Murdi Paaki Region	7%	7%
New South Wales	8%	6%

The proportion of the Aboriginal population requiring assistance in the core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication because of disability, long term health condition or old age is identified at Table 9.2, together with the non-Indigenous population for comparison. The age range of the Aboriginal population fraction requiring assistance is given at Table 9.3.

9.2 Human services in the community

Human services available to the Aboriginal community to cater for a range of needs are shown at Table 9.4 and the features of home care services are described at Table 9.5. Table 9.6 lists the NSW government principal agencies providing services to Walgett. There is no Australian Government presence.

Table 9.3: Core activity need for assistance by age group, Aboriginal population	
Age range	Number of persons
0-9 years	0
10-19 years	0
20-29 years	5
30-39 years	4
40-49 years	8
50-59 years	14
60-69 years	16
70-79 years	12
80-89 years	0
90+ years	0
Total	59

The NDIS is funding a total of 45 NDIS packages across Walgett LGA as a whole. Total Aboriginal population requiring assistance across Walgett LGA is 104 persons

Table 9.4: Human service providers, service mix and programmes

Sector	Provider	Principal services	Resident office	Target population	Funding agency
Health services	Royal Flying Doctor Service	Primary health care, retrieval plus visiting specialists	Broken Hill	General population	-
	Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service	Primary health care clinic and dental	Walgett	Aboriginal community	-
	Western NSW Local Health District (LHD)	Walgett Multi-Purpose Service	Dubbo	General population	-
	Ochre Health	Primary health care	Walgett	General population	DCJ
	NSW Outback Division of General Practice	General practice	Bourke	General population	-
	Orana Haven Aboriginal Corporation	Drug and Alcohol service	Gongolgon	Aboriginal community	-
	Wellways	Mental health services	Walgett	General population	-
Aboriginal social housing services	Dreamtime Housing	Aboriginal social housing	Coonamble	Aboriginal community	-
	Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation	Aboriginal social housing	Broken Hill	Aboriginal community	-
	Walgett Local Aboriginal Land Council	Aboriginal social housing	Walgett	Aboriginal community	NSWALC
Tenant support	Murdi Paaki Services Ltd	Tenant education and support programme	Cobar	Aboriginal community	DPIE/AHO
	Western Aboriginal Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service	Tenant advocacy and representation	Dubbo	Aboriginal community	Fair Trading
Homelessness services	CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes	Youth at risk of homelessness	Walgett	Youth population	DCJ
	Mission Australia	Homelessness and Housing Support/ Women's Safe House	Walgett	General population	DCJ
	Veritas House	Premiers Youth Initiative	Dubbo	Youth population	DCJ
	Mackillop Family Services Ltd	Reconnect program	Walgett	Youth population	-
Early childhood	Koolyangarra Preschool Aboriginal Corporation	Early childhood projects	Walgett	Young Aboriginal children	NIAA
	Mission Australia	Parent Next program	Walgett	Young Aboriginal children	DCJ

Table 9.4: Human service providers, service mix and programmes

Sector	Provider	Principal services	Resident office	Target population	Funding agency
services	Mackillop Family Services Ltd	Indigenous Parenting Support Service	Walgett	Young Aboriginal children	NIAA
	Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service	Goonimoo Mobile Children Services	Walgett	Young children	NIAA
Student support	Regional Enterprise Development Institute	Remote School Attendance Strategy	Walgett	School-age children	NIAA
Family support services	NSW Outback Division of General Practice	Did Ya Know program	Bourke	General population	-
	CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes Ltd	FamilyCare Service	Walgett	General population	DCJ
	Mackillop Family Services Ltd	Family Strengthening Service	Walgett	General population	DCJ
	Mission Australia	Family Preservation Service, Upper Western Community DFV Project, Keeping woman safe in their homes	Walgett	General population	DCJ
Employment services	REDI.E	Community Development Program	Walgett	Aboriginal community	NIAA
	REDI.E	Jobactive employment service	Walgett	Aboriginal community	DESE
Social support	REDI.E	Centrelink service	Walgett	General population	-
Residential aged care services	Walgett Multi-Purpose Service	Residential aged care, respite high and low care	Walgett	General population	ACFI/HCP
	Australia Unity	Aged care	Walgett	General population	-
	Live Better Services Ltd	Intensive Residential Care Transition	Walgett	General population	-
Home care and home support services	Australian Unity Home Care – Aboriginal Home Care	Home care packages community services	Lightning Ridge	Aboriginal community	HCP/CHSP
	Live Better Services Ltd	Aboriginal home care services	Lightning Ridge	General population	NDIS

Table 9.4: Human service providers, service mix and programmes

Sector	Provider	Principal services	Resident office	Target population	Funding agency
Cultural services and knowledge keepers	Dharriwaa Elders	Murray Darling Basin Indigenous Rangers	Walgett	Aboriginal community	NIAA
	Walgett Local Aboriginal Land Council	Culture and heritage, land management	Walgett	Aboriginal community	NSWALC
Legal services	Legal Aid NSW	Legal services to disadvantaged people	Walgett	General population	Australian Government
	Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT)	Criminal, family, care and protection law, and tenancy services	Walgett	Aboriginal population	
Disability services	Lifestyle Solutions (Aust) Ltd	Plan development, support coordination and support services	Bourke	General population	NDIS
	Flourish Australia		Walgett	General population	NDIS
	Live Better		Lightning Ridge	Aboriginal population	NDIS
	Wellways		Walgett	General population	NDIS

Table 9.5: Home care and home support services

Services	Transport	Meals	Other food services	Home maintenance	Home modifications	Social support individual	Flexible respite	Personal care	Domestic assistance	Social support group	Nursing	Centre-based respite	Specialised support services	Allied health and therapy services	Assistance with care and housing	Transition care
	Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y		Y	
Australian Unity Home Care – Ngangana Community Options						Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					Y	
Live Better Services Ltd	Y				Y	Y		Y		Y					Y	Y

Table 9.6: NSW Government agency representation in Walgett

Cluster	Principal department and agencies	Responsibilities	Service access
Stronger Communities	Department of Communities and Justice	Families, communities and disability services; public housing and homelessness services; law and justice; child protection; sport, seniors and veterans	Walgett
Customer Service	Department of Customer Service	Customer services; primary access point to government services; registration and licencing; payment of fines	Walgett
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Office of Fair Trading 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue NSW 		
Planning, Industry and Environment	Department of Planning, Industry and Environment	Urban and regional planning; water and natural resources; industry; environment, energy and science; Aboriginal and social housing; and Aboriginal heritage and land use	Dubbo
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Parks and Wildlife Service 		

10 COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

10.1 Authority for change

The way Aboriginal social housing is managed has changed markedly since the first Murdi Paaki HEHPs were produced; that change being very much to the detriment of the Region. There has been a sustained centralisation of decision-making and depreciated scope of authority and autonomy within Regional and locally managed ACHPs. This has adversely impacted management services, enfranchisement of tenants, and asset condition and preservation.

The integrity of physical infrastructure on former reserves such as Gingie and Namoi Villages has declined and self-determination has been compromised because of changes in Aboriginal social housing policy and funding arrangements. Across the Murdi Paaki Region, housing management services have generally moved from local ACHPs and LALCs to third party, out-of-Region ACHPs without adequate provision for recurrent expenditure. The situation in Walgett is somewhat different: Aboriginal social housing is managed by the Walgett LALC (also the asset owner), DCJ or MPRHC on behalf of the AHO, or by MPRHC on its own behalf; however, the policy has led to dysfunction in housing funding and management. The relative contribution of the AHO *Build and Grow* policy within Murdi Paaki has been the increased fragility of local services, marked decline in the condition of community housing assets, and feeble tenancy support from out-of-Region ACHPs. Aboriginal social housing tenants in Walgett have experienced poor service from their housing managers: telephone calls go unanswered, housing inspections are not undertaken, repairs and maintenance, including urgent repairs, are not carried out or, if they are, are unduly delayed, and promises are broken. As a result, nearly half of tenants in both State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing (SOMIH) and Aboriginal community-owned housing who responded to the MPRH&BC household survey expressed some level of dissatisfaction with their housing manager.

The CWP is firm in its view that housing management services be undertaken by Regional

and local ACHPs, supported by Region-specific policy and practice, clear accountability and compliance measures, and adequate levels of funding, as this is the only way in which service design can reflect the needs and be driven primarily by the best interests of the community, taking account of cultural norms and desire to become self-reliant.

10.2 Community priorities

The Walgett Aboriginal CWP has set out its aspirations and priorities for improved community wellbeing in its Community Action Plan (CAP), advocating for improved service delivery across the full spectrum of cultural, economic, governance, youth, health, education, housing, safety and wellbeing. The CAP priorities and key actions which relate to this Plan are set out in Table 10.2 and the issues which give rise to the action areas are summarised in Table 10.3 and Table 10.4. The CWP has already achieved progress against several objectives including improvements in youth infrastructure and programmes, cultural programmes at the Walgett Community College High School campus, assisting the WLALC in improving road infrastructure at the Namoi and Gingie Village, and in the return of title to the Foundation Hall from MPRHC. Possible uses for the Foundation Hall are under discussion in the community.

10.3 Community observations

Critical housing and human service issues covered in this HEHP continue to be at the forefront of planning and advocacy by the Walgett Aboriginal CWP. Issues related to housing management and condition were raised by the CWP during engagement for this HEHP, and frequently by tenants who participated in the MPRH&BC household survey.

The quality of housing is described by the CWP as 'extremely poor'. Repairs are of a low standard in terms of materials and workmanship and may be signed off incomplete without inspection. A consequence is that properties, when vacated, sit empty for longer, waiting for more extensive maintenance, unable to be tenanted. That, in turn,

contributes to the acute housing shortage experienced by applicants. Some properties, with Duff Street and Wee Waa Street properties being quoted as examples, need to be demolished because of the presence of asbestos-containing material. The quality of electrical wiring and plumbing is generally regarded as poor; this has obvious safety implications for tenants. Property security is an issue and all social housing should be provided with fencing and closable gates, where practical. The community would prefer to see work carried out by a local qualified Aboriginal workforce but, in any event, work should only be carried out by qualified tradespeople. Hot water systems were said to have insufficient capacity to supply larger households and this is one equipment item which should be sized more generously.

Tenants of AHO and Walgett LALC were equally dissatisfied with the standard of housing provided, with management practices and with rent-setting. AHO tenants:

"I have been waiting for a new bathroom for over 12 months. A contractor came and informed me I need a new bathroom as water is leaking through my roof and caused a lot of damage. Still waiting!"

"I'm dissatisfied with the rent, dissatisfied with the maintenance, dissatisfied with housing manager contact. Let us pay a decent amount of rent, act on urgent repairs, and visit tenants to see what maintenance needs to be done."

AHO tenants under DCJ management generally aspired to have MPRHC manage their housing; Barriekneal tenants were happy with the quality of service they were receiving.

External policy setting does not take account of the realities of living in a remote town where services are few and service delivery unreliable. The policy of transferring NSW Housing Register approved applicants into Walgett is discriminating against housing local people. Service providers have cited instances of priority applicants having to wait for 19 months to be allocated a dwelling, and then a further five months for repairs and maintenance to be carried out. In another instance, a house became available; the service provider supporting

an applicant at the top of the waiting list for priority housing was then informed that the house was not available and it was allocated to an applicant from another town. Rent policy is demanding high levels of rent for sub-standard accommodation. In practice, housing managers are charging variable rents; some tenants are paying too much and others too little. For those households with high power bills (one service provider reported having three clients with combined quarterly bills totalling \$20,000), high rents are crippling. The housing situation is dire; housing managers must act ethically in their dealings with prospective and existing tenants.

Walgett LALC tenants expressed similar concerns: at the time of the survey, several tenants reported being required to pay rent arrears accumulated by a previous tenant in order to have housing allocated to them. Rents were reported to increase frequently, and tenants were unable to understand why, even though they were consistently paying rent via Centrelink deductions, they were being pressured by the housing manager about arrears:

"I don't understand why I've got to pay arrears. This is my ex-de facto's home. I moved into his house when he moved out. I had to agree to pay his arrears money owing for me and the children to move in."

"The rent goes up every two to three months; I can't get repairs done. It's difficult to contact the landlord."

"The housing manager lives out of town, doesn't answer phone calls, is not in the office. There's a problem with rental arrears."

"My home is falling apart, they say I am behind in the rent all the time, and my rent comes out of my Centrelink each week."

WLALC tenants were anxious to have their housing manager attend a meeting to answer questions.

Inaccessibility and/or inappropriateness of housing is depriving households of choice: for example, young couples are not able to move out to start their own families, people leaving custody are

forced into homelessness and back to incarceration, some families have outgrown the size of their house, and Elders are struggling in homes not adapted to their needs. The CWP does not wish to push people out of homes but notes there are several larger homes with only one occupant. If smaller housing were available, tenants might be encouraged to move, improving overall portfolio utilisation. However, service providers have indicated that studio flats are not suitable for long-term accommodation.

Dwelling design is poorly adapted to the needs of tenants. Existing homes are reported to be a poor cultural fit with the way tenants desire to use their interior and exterior domestic space. Some dwellings, particularly the high-set houses at Namoi Village, come with access problems for less mobile tenants. The CWP has suggested that options such as chair lifts be trialled in homes which have too many steps for older tenants to navigate safely. It has also been suggested that houses at Namoi Village be built on mounds to raise them above flood level. WLALC tenants living at Namoi report having been unable to arrange with their landlord to have home modifications carried out. Even if these dwellings are retrofitted with mobility aids, though, problems are still likely to occur when, for example, the Ambulance Service is required to retrieve patients safely from their homes.

Few concerns have been aired about infrastructure and municipal services in town. Solid waste disposal is an issue: the CWP has requested that Walgett Shire Council provide a recycling service and a kerbside bulky goods collection throughout the community.

The future of housing at Gingie and Namoi Villages has been a matter for discussion by the CWP. It was observed that funding agencies are no longer making provision for new residential development on these landholdings. The quality infrastructure on former reserves is reported to be substandard: potable water supply is poor; the CWP sees provision of water tanks and filtration systems as potentially addressing in some measure the water quality problem. Roads are degraded and stormwater drainage is inadequate, leading to gullies filling with water in heavy rain, and

residents walk in and out because of the poor access arrangements. Better footpaths and street lighting are needed. Access to telecommunications is also regarded as poor; NBN services are problematic.

Survey responses from tenants living at Namoi and Gingie Villages reported issues specific to the former reserves. Residents feel unsafe when river levels are high, and parents are concerned about drowning risks to children owing to the village's proximity to the river. Gingie tenants identified extensive defects, including electrical and plumbing related safety hazards. Crowding is problematic for some households, and homeless survey participants reported having to live in caravans because of lack of housing.

Crowding of homes at Gingie Village is symptomatic of a wider housing shortage in Walgett. In addition to provision of extra dwellings to meet need within the community for permanent housing, short term accommodation is required to meet the needs of homeless people and households whose dwellings are unable to be used. Need has been identified by the CWP and by Mission Australia for greater provision of supported accommodation for men and women; for youth in the 16-to-18-year age cohort; and for a youth refuge. Service providers report that lack of emergency accommodation results in Link2Home being unable to deliver a service in Walgett. Mission Australia is funded to provide Specialist Homelessness Service case management, among other programmes, but finds its ability to support clients is compromised by lack of access to emergency housing. This is particularly problematic for homeless men, and men who have children in their care. The CWP, though, is adamant that the community lacks knowledge about the extent of services available, and potential client eligibility:

"We need to know what the services provide – a homeless client with no services, the services ... don't provide assistance. A lot of youth homelessness, men and boys."

"What support services are in Walgett that can help clients who have exhausted all avenues in finding a place to stay? They are couch surfing etc."

Details of emergency accommodation available in Walgett is listed in Table 10.1.

Table 10.1: Emergency accommodation - current

Function	Type	No	Bedrooms
Transitional units	-	2	2
Women's safe house	Share house	1	5

DCJ is currently constructing a women's refuge complex in Walgett; it will incorporate two 3- and two 2-bedroom residences and will be managed by Mission Australia. Once it has been commissioned, the existing women's safe house will be used as a men's safe house; at present, there is no emergency accommodation available for men. There is one registered boarding house in Walgett, the Pink House. This facility also operates as tourist accommodation and as temporary housing for seasonal workers; people leaving prison and residential rehabilitation services present there but only people in employment are accepted. In addition, the Oasis Hotel was reported to be providing unregulated boarding house accommodation on an informal basis. The emergency and short-term accommodation provided in Walgett is also used to provide temporary relief for people living in smaller communities such as Collarenebri who are in crisis. The concept of relocatable temporary housing has been suggested as a possible response to housing crisis. Mission Australia has also expressed an interest in securing Kookaburra Court (aged care facility) for short-term housing.

Service providers engaged in the social housing support sector have indicated that most clients who engage with homelessness services and programmes exit without obtaining permanent housing:

"We have a problem when people we engage with immediately want a house. There is no incentive to keep them engaging – the incentive is a roof over their head. We can't keep them on our case load while waiting for a house. We can keep offering them other things – food, for example – but it affects the whole community."

The private rental market in Walgett was reported to be difficult to negotiate because of racism.

Survey participants who had applied for private tenancies had negative experiences:

"Bad – they don't like renting homes to Aboriginals."

"They took me off the list."

Aboriginal tenants in private sector rentals have been reported to be subject to exploitation: such is the housing shortage that tenants are forced to accept poor quality properties at high rents, without the benefit of a residential tenancy agreement.

Service providers have indicated that the requirement for applicants to Housing Pathways to prove that they have applied for housing in the private sector is nonsensical in housing markets such as Walgett where access to private sector housing is limited and real estate agents are few. This compounds the barriers to access to Aboriginal social housing created by such requirements as having to obtain a Certificate of Aboriginality, particularly in communities where factionalism exists in organisations.

Owner occupiers felt a sense of pride and achievement in purchasing their homes, and were mostly happy with their decisions to purchase. One respondent noted that it was cheaper to pay a mortgage than to rent:

"You can do anything to your home – building, fixing it, making it bigger or smaller"

"You don't have any trouble worrying about the housing manager."

Some, though, have found the need to meet costs of rates and maintenance a burden; this suggests that they may have needed to be provided with more information prior to purchase:

"I didn't think buying a home would be so stressful. Wish I would have thought about it a bit longer."

"Paying water rates and land rates, paying for my own maintenance ..."

A few owner occupiers had bought into more 'edgy' areas of town, and felt a sense of threat owing to their proximity to 'party houses' or to perceptions about crime:

"When I'm alone I am scared of intruders. I have been the victim of home invasion in the past."

The potential of subdividing Gingie and Namoi Villages may be the subject of investigation under the Roads To Home project. Four of the 10 discrete communities chosen for the initial programme have obtained development consent for subdivision through the Subdivision Project, so the legal and practical implications and processes of any change from single title to multiple lots are becoming clearer. At this stage, it is too early to know how residents of Gingie and Namoi Villages might benefit from this work.

Ensuring access to high quality housing for the Walgett community is linked to increasing local employment in the building trades and expanding the option for tenants to own their own home, including at Namoi, Dewhurst and Gingie Villages.

Deficiencies at a broader scale than just the construction sector exist with social and economic infrastructure in the community. The town is undersupplied with retail; community members must leave town to purchase clothing or buy online.

Barriers to access to human services are widespread in the community. The CWP expressed concern that some service providers who are funded at a regional scale to provide services within Walgett do not know the community, and potential clients are, in return, uncomfortable about trying to use these services. Where programmes are successful, the community, based on prior experience, fear that they will be withdrawn. For example, Walgett had a programme to improve literacy and numeracy among adults for twelve months which was then withdrawn:

"When things are working in our community, they take it away."

Better preparation of personnel is required to allow culturally safe delivery of quality services to Aboriginal people in Walgett, and better coordination of services is needed to ensure that wrap-around support is available to community members as and when required.

Service providers working in Walgett expressed concern in relation to several service gaps which impact on their ability to meet the needs of the community. These included lack of transport, absence of emergency housing, limited youth services and facilities, poor access to clinical mental health services, and non-availability of NDIS services. The issue of poor service access is reinforced by the CWP: regardless of providers being funded to deliver services, some service providers are reported only to visit Walgett if more than one client is eligible for a service.

Arrangements for access around town generally are reported to be inadequate, particularly for a community with a relatively low level of vehicle ownership, and this has a disproportionate impact on residents of Gingie and Namoi Villages. There is no taxi service in town, and community transport is poorly co-ordinated. It has been suggested that service providers which own buses might collaborate to set up a schedule bus run. A daily Trainlink bus service operating between Lightning Ridge and Dubbo stops at Walgett and there is a thrice-weekly air service to and from Dubbo with discounted fares for residents (\$150 each way) but travel to access medical services and transact personal business out of town is still expensive and difficult to access; during the COVID pandemic, limitations on the number of seats available caused difficulties for Walgett residents.

Opportunities for young people to participate in structured sporting and recreational opportunities after school hours are unavailable. The CWP has established a community-run youth organisation in collaboration with the PCYC and is working towards co-ordinated delivery of youth activities, including through the community hub located at the high school campus of Walgett Community College. Support for youth health and wellbeing is ongoing across the community. However, the CWP has indicated that costs to participate in PCYC-sponsored activities are prohibitive:

“Families can’t afford the \$10 fee per class per child.”

The CWP expressed concern about the eligibility of community members with mental health issues for access to services:

“Some clients have extreme issues, they’re not medicated. We need help for these people.”

Service providers, too, cite serious problems in the community in access to clinical mental health services and associated support. Patients with high level needs are unable to obtain services within the community: the waiting list for the visiting psychiatrist who provides outreach services via Community Health is lengthy. Duplication in risk assessment and preparation of health plans between referring organisations and the psychiatrist is time-wasting and stressful for the client. There is only one mental health nurse in the area to support patients with acute mental illness, and the position is contracted for three months at a time, so continuity of care is problematic. Providers report that a substantial proportion of clients are high-need mental health patients who require assisted living services, but these services are not available. Youth mental health services are reported by service providers to be “non-existent”: the nearest Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service is based in Dubbo. There are three staff to cover the entire region but the closest worker is based in Dubbo, so outreach visits are rare. RFDS provides a mental health counsellor on an outreach basis but is not funded to provide child and adolescent mental health services.

Access to NDIS service, too, is reported to be extremely challenging. Service providers report that all NDIS packages currently allocated are full. Even when a client is allocated a package, the services they need cannot be delivered in Walgett due to lack of availability. Many services are not community based but are fly in, fly out (FIFO) or drive in, drive out (DIDO).

Table 10.2: Community Action Plan objectives and actions		
Goal	Objective	
1	Build skills training and employment opportunities to build participation of Aboriginal community members	
	1.1	Ensure development and availability of skills training and employment for local organisations
	1.3	Establish training tailored to industry standards and requirements to lead to employment opportunities
	1.4	Develop enterprise opportunities
2	Support economic development projects to secure a future for the Walgett Aboriginal community	
	2.1	Ongoing support for the Dharriwaa Elders Group (DEG)
	2.2	Establish and support a housing maintenance and repairs business to full the current demand
3	Facilitate upgrades to key community buildings and infrastructure	
	3.1	Upgrade and refurbish the Foundation Hall as a culturally significant building for the Walgett Aboriginal community
	3.2	Upgrade the roads within Namoi and Gingie Villages to support safe passage of school bus after rain and no longer pose a health risk as a breeding ground for mosquitoes
	3.3	Finalise subdivision of Dewhurst, Namoi and Gingie villages to allow for home ownership opportunities
	3.4	Construct a community hall and conference centre for 500 people
	3.5	Construct a new youth centre to address inadequacies of current one
4	Ensure youth have access to a variety of services and programmes and are supported in their health and wellbeing	
	4.2	Establish and support a community hub with youth development activities located at the Walgett High School
5	Coordinate and support health services across community	
	5.1	Support co-ordination of Walgett services in health, education and early childhood
	5.2	Ensure provision of specialist health services in Walgett
6	Sustain, educate and empower both the Aboriginal community and service providers through understanding of culture	
	6.1	Support the delivery of a cultural programme for service providers
7	Ensure our community is safe and protected	
	7.1	Build formal partnerships with Walgett Shire Council and service providers
	7.2	Clean up reserves so they are safe and healthy environments to live in

Table 10.3: Summary of housing and housing-related issues	
Issue	Description
Housing management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing managers fail to respond to tenant attempts to make contact, do not adequately deal with request for R&M, and do not spend time in the community Housing managers must be based in Walgett Local access to housing managers is needed for improved communication, services and accountability Regular meetings between housing managers and tenants, including at Gingie and Namoi Villages, are a priority for tenants Housing management practice must be shaped to account for community aspirations and cultural norms Simpler, transparent and culturally relevant processes are required for housing application and allocation Processes for rent setting, rent arrears and related financial matters between the WLALC and tenants are far from clear, and are causing difficulties for tenants TSEP services are highly regarded and ongoing access by tenants to the service is viewed as important to maintaining stability and optimum ACHP operations. All

Table 10.3: Summary of housing and housing-related issues

Issue	Description
	eligible tenants should be supported to receive CRA while service objectives could be extended to include support to applicants for private housing
Housing repair and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The condition of some housing is extremely poor. Routine inspections by property managers do not take place but are essential to determine the extent of all work necessary to restore and maintain structural soundness, functionality, amenity and safety Most houses are in need of R&M but processes for actioning requests are poorly designed, and timeframes are excessive Vacant houses need to be repaired and tenanted quickly Houses require a regular programme of pest control to deal with cockroach infestations Security measures to houses and yards are insufficient – functioning, lockable doors and windows and fencing are required Training and employment of a local Aboriginal workforce and establishment of a business to undertake housing and infrastructure repair and maintenance works is required; ongoing funding will be needed to ensure that repairs and maintenance, especially to the former Reserves, can be undertaken on a continuing basis Air conditioning is to be provided to all houses
Housing affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many people struggle to pay power bills due to high energy consumption, especially in the hotter months Rents are felt to be excessive given the size and condition of housing and the limited facilities available; equity in rent setting, too, is regarded as questionable A substantial minority of households are not accessing CRA
Housing need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for additional housing arises mainly from the needs of young people at the stage of household formation, families, and larger households with a need for additional bedrooms Crowding is common, and leads to stress, health impacts, and excessive wear and tear Provision of new housing should take into account tenant requirements relating to cultural preferences and practices, as well as household size, family relationships and any tenant disabilities with the relevant requirements also applying to housing extensions Some replacement housing may be required to replace severely dilapidated properties containing asbestos Access to emergency housing and short-term transitional housing is required to assist households whose homes have been destroyed or are being repaired, for homeless persons, and persons leaving custody Access to supported accommodation is required to meet the needs of those community members with an impairment but able to live independently with the aid of support options ranging from drop-in support to full-time assistance with more intensive support A need exists for a safe place for vulnerable children and young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and experiencing a period of crisis to receive assistance to remain housed and intensive support
Home ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some home owners find it difficult to meet the costs of council rates and R&M Information sessions for households aspiring to home ownership should be provided Subdivision of Dewhurst, Namoi and Gingie Villages is required to permit residents to purchase their homes
Specific housing needs of Elders and people with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of access to the Home Modifications and Maintenance Service access has mobility and safety implications for older community members High-set houses at Namoi Village are inaccessible for people with mobility

Table 10.3: Summary of housing and housing-related issues

Issue	Description
	problems
Safe and healthy communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrading of roads and guttering at Gingie Village is required Water and sewerage works are required at Namoi Village Formal footpaths and street lighting are required at both Gingie and Namoi, and between both villages and town Clean-up and environmental amenity programmes are required for Namoi and Gingie Villages to ensure safe and healthy living environments

Table 10.4: Summary of human services-related issues

Issue	Description
Accountability and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CWP requires greater accountability from service providers, and seeks closer relationships to ensure community engagement in service planning, better awareness of services and improved understanding of provider roles and capabilities. Programmes and services which are operating successfully should not be withdrawn Visiting services are poorly coordinated, are not integrated and are challenging to access. The community is poorly informed about service provider visits and referral pathways The community particularly wishes to see better co-ordination of services in health, education and early childhood Service providers require a localised programme for cultural induction and training; this Cultural Appreciation programme is to be designed and delivered by Aboriginal community controlled organisations working together Better formal partnerships are required with Walgett Shire Council and service providers around specific projects, including youth diversionary programmes, support services for survivors of domestic violence, AoD programmes and services, youth development, crime prevention, and municipal services including recycling and bulky waste collection Assistance is required for community members who are not digitally literate to access support to complete online forms, liaise with Service NSW and deal with myGov sign-in, and the like
Elders' services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care and support services for older people are inadequate Home care and other aged care community-based programmes should be established locally
Service needs for people with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to NDIS services, even for eligible potential clients, is very difficult
Children's services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An advocacy group on child protection is a CWP priority, together with establishment of a children's safe house
Youth services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further development of co-ordinated youth activities in the community is required The community wishes to build on youth development activities provided through the Community Hub at the Walgett Community College high school campus

Table 10.4: Summary of human services-related issues

Issue	Description
Training, employment and enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local skills audit is required to identify people with qualifications in the community and match to community priorities for employment, and jobs available The literacy and numeracy training programme previously operating in Walgett should be restored TAFE-supported packages are required for Aboriginal community members to lead to employment opportunities in construction A feasibility study is requested for establishing a housing and civil works repair and maintenance business in Walgett The CWP is seeking a commitment to creation of employment opportunities for local Aboriginal people in housing capital works programmes, including repairs and maintenance and new housing construction The CWP wishes to use rural properties in community ownership as the basis for environmental and rural industries training and employment programmes Human services agencies and organisations are to be targeted to provide training and employment for local Aboriginal people in areas such as aged care, physical and mental health, child care, hospitality, tourism, environmental protection and local government service Retail business in Walgett are insufficient to meet community needs
Community facilities and social infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEG wishes to develop a cultural learning hub to incorporate a keeping place, cultural exhibitions, heritage information and management, learning programmes and Elders' support The historically and culturally significant Foundation Hall requires upgrading and refurbishment for community use The community wishes to secure funding for, and manage construction of, a large capacity (≈500 people) community hall and conference centre
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need has been identified for better access to specialist health services including by allied health clinicians such as speech pathologists Better strategies are required to address recruitment and retention difficulties in the health sector
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport services, especially to meet the needs of older people and people with a disability, are inadequate Services which own buses are requested to collaborate to provide a scheduled bus run

11 MASTER PLAN

11.1 Aspiration

Development of this HEHP ends the second round of MPRA's approach to sector strategic planning at community scale. The HEHP makes transparent the core demand drivers that are affecting the sector; documents an evidence base of the community's housing and infrastructure needs; and estimates the magnitude of sector investment. The lead time and long lifetime of housing infrastructure requires a long-term view so identifying, planning and prioritising a package of measures to ensure the sector delivers sustainable long-term outcomes for the community is vital.

Interdependencies between the housing and human services sectors add to complexity and uncertainty in the strategic planning process, particularly in a cultural context. Learning lessons is a central part of any project so with the RAHLA now firmly established and evidence provided, the community expects informed policy-setting and decision-making to lead to positive change.

11.2 Cultural influences on decision-making

The *NSW Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Programmes Implementation Manual* was an initiative of MPRA and the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs (as was) flowing from the successful Australian Government National Aboriginal Health Strategy projects. Written in 1999, the manual placed the concept of effective community management of capital works and associated housing and infrastructure projects into a more practical local context. Working with a community-selected professional Project Manager, CWP's demonstrated ample capacity to set community objectives, and to control and co-ordinate overall programme delivery on behalf of, and in the best interests of, their communities. The agreed negotiated system of rules governing projects roll out was formal acknowledgement of the ongoing position of CWP's as the local decision-making body. The Regional and local governance structures remain in place and CWP's remain uniquely positioned to bring their local knowledge

and cultural perspectives to inform the shape and configuration of housing and infrastructure developments. This Master Plan evidences this decision-making in practice.

11.3 Master plan

The master planning process adopted by this HEHP aims to create an integrated process of change at community level, arching across the built environment, and social and economic issues within a cultural context. The Plan is about taking the initiative in terms of planning for, and design of, improvements to the living environment, job creation, and coordination and integration of a raft of human services. It aims also to give renewed life to the principles of self-determination and self-management. This approach challenges stakeholders to be open and willing to change the way business with the community is conducted.

The Walgett Aboriginal CWP Master Plan is set out at Table 11.1. It brings together the relevant aspirations as documented in the CAP and the views of the community as derived from a structured survey and direct consultation. The proposed actions are those which matter to people.

Implementation will take time. Ongoing engagement between the community through the CWP, stakeholders and decision makers is vital to ensure the strategic focus is maintained throughout the course of the project. Change will happen and, with this expectation, there is a need to foster a strong collaboration between all parties to ensure that the ultimate objective of bringing about positive improvement in the lived experiences of Aboriginal people is achieved.

Table 11.1: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Strategy	Justification
		HOUSING and ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	
1		Sector governance and management	
WAL-1.1	5.5 10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the processes, performance and sustainability of Aboriginal social housing managers to identify the underlying causes for the high level of dissatisfaction expressed by tenants in the MPRH&BC household survey, and solutions which re-establish confidence in the sector and preserve the asset base 	Community members indicate that existing arrangements for housing management are producing poor outcomes; managers are reported to be unresponsive and communications are difficult. Lack of response to repair and maintenance issues puts the housing asset base at risk and unnecessarily increases the cost of remediation.
WAL-1.2	5.5 T10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a communication strategy with managers of Aboriginal social housing to ensure the efficient and timely flow of information through regular in-person reporting to the CWP on matters relating to housing management including actions taken to maintain and upgrade asset condition 	The CWP requires reliable, formal channels of communication to be put in place with ACHP(s) to ensure accountability for service provision and responsive decision-making. At present, four housing managers are responsible for management of Aboriginal social housing in Walgett; fragmentation in the sector has been a recipe for lack of accountability across the sector.
WAL-1.3	T5.11 T5.12 5.5 10.3 T10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the MPRH&BC project, co-design application and allocation processes which are straightforward and consistent, and rent setting policies which prescribe fair and affordable rents. Restructure DCJ Housing Pathways housing allocation and transfer processes to ensure preference is given to locally based applicants 	Housing applicants find the application process opaque, intrusive, difficult to negotiate, and culturally alienating. Waiting times are excessive. Walgett residents have limited access to private sector rental housing. The community has expressed concern that rent setting does not take account of the community's relative isolation, housing condition, opportunities for employment and inadequate human services availability. Cost of living pressures are higher than in regional centres and far higher than in metropolitan areas
WAL-1.4	5.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take note of the view of the greater majority of Aboriginal social housing tenants that tenancies should be handed down in the family 	Inheritance of tenancies is culturally normative in the community; development of culturally safe Aboriginal social housing policy will recognise and respond to this expectation
2		Housing need	
WAL-2.1	10.3 T10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve the CWP in the planning and design of new houses to ensure location and mix is adequate to provide choice, designs meet cultural ways of living, and advantage is taken of the investment to support the growth of a local skills base 	CWP involvement in planning for new and replacement houses is essential because of the CWP's detailed knowledge of the characteristics and needs of the community, the importance of cultural 'fit' of assets, and expectations around spatial relationships between households, suitable layout, inclusions, form of construction, and optimisation of opportunities for training, employment and enterprise
WAL-2.2	5.6 5.11 10.3 T10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase supply to meet demand arising from young persons wishing to live independently, young couples at family formation stage, individuals and families living in crowded households, older persons wishing to move to accessible housing for health-related reasons, and individuals and families who would otherwise be homeless 	The Aboriginal population of Walgett is experiencing structural ageing – the median age increased from 22 to 27 over the fifteen years to 2016. Demand exists for purpose-built smaller dwellings to accommodate young people at the point of household formation, larger families, and older people for whom living in the family home is no longer desirable for and access and mobility reasons. Crowding in existing houses causes ill-health and stress, increases the

Table 11.1: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Strategy	Justification
WAL-2.3	5.10 T10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the needs of older tenants at Namoi Village who have difficulty in climbing the steps to the high-set housing 	<p>maintenance burden for property managers, and contributes to homelessness. The private sector rental market does not provide a practical alternative</p> <p>Properties at Namoi Village are high-set because the Village is flood-labile; however, access is very challenging for less-mobile older people and other people with disabilities. Options may include offering affected tenants the opportunity to relocate, and investigation of mechanical devices such as outdoor lifts to aid with access.</p>
3	Land acquisition		
WAL-3.1	6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with Walgett Shire Council options for further residential development, noting the proposal to release a greenfields site on the Come by Chance Road 	Supply of land suitable for development in Walgett is highly constrained. Availability of additional services blocks will be essential if need for Aboriginal social housing is to be met on the scale envisaged
4	Asset condition and serviceability		
WAL-4.1	5.5 5.6 5.7 10.3 T10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify property condition for all Aboriginal social housing, secure funding for repair, maintenance and upgrades, and undertake works to restore structural soundness, functionality, amenity, safety and security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include boundary fencing and gates of adequate height, and quality door and window hardware sufficiently robust to ensure property security under normal operating conditions 	Properties have become dilapidated as a result of time elapsed since the most recent major R&M programme; and issues with quality of workmanship, materials and inclusions arising from management of earlier R&M programme. Assets are ageing; a comprehensive R&M programme is required to provide for tenant health, safety and amenity and to preserve asset value. Of tenants who participated in the survey, 17% felt unsafe in their home, and this was largely due to inadequate provisions for security. The presence of asbestos is an issue in some older houses in which case serious consideration should be given to knockdown and rebuild
WAL-4.2	5.5 10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stress with the housing manager(s) CWP expectations that repair and maintenance work will be carried of professionally, without delay and will be inspected before signing off 	Delayed responses and non-responses to R&M requests, and poor quality of work, are putting both the health and safety of tenants and the condition of assets at risk. Housing managers are legally obliged to keep properties maintained to an acceptable standard
WAL-4.3	T10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that pest management is carried out at least six monthly on the full Aboriginal social housing portfolio 	Cockroach infestation is an issue of concern in the community. Regular, compliant pest management is essential to protect the health of tenants
WAL-4.4	5.5 5.7 10.3 T10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide all Aboriginal social housing with adequate heating and energy efficient cooling appliances where absent, obsolete and/or non-functional, ensure all houses are sufficiently insulated to maximise thermal benefits, and are equipped with residential rooftop solar PV systems to reduce power costs 	Almost all household survey participants indicated that they had trouble paying their electricity bills. With longer periods of excessive heat during summer, affordable climate control is essential to tenant health, wellbeing and amenity
WAL-4.5	5.5 5.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange with the housing manager(s) to negotiate with the ACAT, registered Home Modifications providers, and funding body where necessary, to 	Access to home modifications is challenging for community members with mobility issues and other disabilities and for their families. Delays are

Table 11.1: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Strategy	Justification
	T10.3	expedite home modification work on houses occupied by a household with a resident member with a disability	experienced in securing ACAT and OT assessments and in arranging for prescribed home modifications to be carried out. Availability of funding to ACHPs is a further challenge.
WAL-4.6	5.5 5.10 10.3 T10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where crowding is identified and it is practical to do so, add bedrooms and bathrooms to satisfy CNOS 	Crowding in existing houses causes ill-health and stress, increases the maintenance burden for property managers, and contributes to homelessness. Where practicable, in instances where it suits tenant need, extension may provide a cost-effective alternative to new build
5	Infrastructure		
WAL-5.1	T7.2 10.3 10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate with Walgett Shire Council and other responsible agencies for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A regular kerbside bulky waste collection service community-wide 	Accumulation of rubbish around dwellings is hazardous, and impacts on tenant safety, health and amenity. Tenants often do not have access to a vehicle and trailer to take rubbish to the tip
WAL-5.2	T7.2 10.1 T10.3 T10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate with NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and other responsible agencies for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the Roads To Home programme, full provision and/or restoration of condition and function of roads and footpaths, drainage, street lighting, levee, water, sewerage and NBN services, and transport options, at Gingie Village and Namoi Village 	Walgett has been allocated funding under the Roads To Home programme for improvements at Gingie Village and Namoi Village. No major infrastructure R&M has been undertaken since ACDP, twenty years ago. The degraded condition of existing infrastructure has been exacerbated by the absence of financial provision for upgrades over the period during which housing has been head leased to AHO. Scoping of Roads To Home-funded works requires to be targeted to the needs identified by WLALC and the CWP.
6	Tenant support		
WAL-6.1	5.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise the number of Aboriginal social housing tenants claiming CRA to a defined benchmark 	Say 95% in view of tenancies being stable and of long duration. If no arrangements are in place for claiming CRA, then eligible tenants' incomes are adversely impacted
WAL-6.2	T10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request MPS TSEP consider supporting applicants for private rentals through the application and negotiation process to lift the number of tenants housed 	Potential tenants find the application process for private rentals difficult to negotiate; greater access to the private rental market would ease pressure on Aboriginal social housing
7	Emergency accommodation		
WAL-7.1	10.3 T10.3 T10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an analysis of the true demand for homelessness services in the Walgett community which accounts for the many poorly defined factors that contribute to and constitute a person being homeless: access to affordable housing, joblessness, domestic and family violence, mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, financial distress, exiting the justice system and discrimination 	One in ten survey respondents was either homeless or sheltering a person or persons who would otherwise have been homeless at the time. Particularly. The CWP is particularly concerned by lack of homelessness resources available to support homeless men and men who have children in their care. Inadequate emergency housing coupled with permanent housing shortage means that such homelessness services that are available in the community are usually unable to support clients into a permanent tenancy.
WAL-7.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In light of the findings of the analysis, develop a strategic response that 	An evidence-based, coherent response which connects support services,

Table 11.1: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Strategy	Justification
		delivers the infrastructure and resources required to keep individuals and families protected from harm	infrastructure and resources is required to meet the needs of identifiable groups within the community who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
8	Home ownership		
WAL-8.1	5.5 T5.13 T5.14 10.2 10.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange with AHO and/or IBA to deliver community information workshops in support of home ownership 	The MPRH&BC household survey indicated that tenants rented Aboriginal social housing because ownership was not affordable. Providing the community with a full briefing on options, processes, advantages and pitfalls will allow community members to make an informed judgement as to whether purchase is a possibility for them
9	HEALTH and HUMAN SERVICES		
WAL-9.1	10.3 T10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster a closer relationship between the CWP and all tiers of government to drive improvements in human services including a tighter focus on provider cooperation and coordination, service integration, performance and cost-effectiveness 	This HEHP sits alongside the community's Community Action Plan in identifying the pathway to increased wellbeing for Aboriginal residents of Walgett. While the HEHP focuses on housing and housing-related aspects, the CAP sets out the community's agenda for broader cultural, social and economic development. As access to human services is fundamental in maintaining a healthy, informed and cohesive community, this HEHP has formed an overview of community attitudes to health and human services.
WAL-9.2	10.3 T10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate and review the role, operational objectives and performance of human services providers across all sectors. Rationalise service delivery where value is not being received by the community and clients. Where found to occur, eliminate duplication, address barriers and fill service gaps. Make it a condition of any provider contract that the service has a fully staffed office in Walgett 	<p>Identification and quantification of service gaps and overlaps and formulation of strategy require a collaborative approach between the CWP and all tiers of government, and the CWP would welcome a closer working relationship with governments in respect of decision-making, monitoring and performance evaluation of human services. It is the view of the CWP that a community contribution in this space would assist in rationalising and guiding service implementation. Need for human services within the community is not currently met, and barriers to service access are challenging to negotiate. In particular, unmet need exists for better co-ordination of services in health, education and early childhood. Procurement processes are remote and do not necessarily reflect community aspirations or lead to efficient service delivery. There is a history of successful programmes and services being withdrawn without consultation. Many services are provided via online and digital platforms that many people do not have the digital literacy or access to computers and internet connections to be able to effectively interact. A formal analysis of service gaps is needed to ensure that individuals and families can have their needs identified and adequately responded to. Protocols for service providers to engage the</p>

Table 11.1: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Strategy	Justification
WAL-9.3	10.3 T10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a transport solution which will allow community members without a vehicle, or who are unable to afford fares, to attend to their daily household tasks and personal business, and to health appointments locally and at regional centres 	community in service design and planning, in development and promotion of culturally relevant referral pathways, and to report meaningful measures of service delivery and outcomes to the CWP, are required to satisfy community expectations around service integration and co-ordination and provider accountability. Firm views are held on the performance of providers; the CWP would recommend one, in particular, be defunded. Cultural safety is best addressed by delivery of locally specific cross-cultural competency training by Aboriginal community-controlled organisations acting together, by continuity of service provision by locally based personnel, and by engagement of Aboriginal community members in human services employment
10	Employment and training		The CWP has suggested that community organisations which have buses might collaborate to deliver a timetable service for affordable, regular access in and around Walgett. Should this not be possible, a different solution should be researched, planned and implemented. Over one third of Aboriginal households do not have access to a vehicle. This is particularly problematic for people living at Gingie Village. Transport to medical appointments away from Walgett is problematic. TrainLink coach schedules do not allow patients to travel to meet appointment times; patients cannot afford an overnight stay in Dubbo or Orange, and often need to be home the same day to care for children, so a solution to unmet need for regional transport arrangements is required.
WAL-10.1	8.1 10.3 T10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of the literacy and numeracy programme funded and available in 2017-2018 is essential to provide the basic skills necessary for community members to participate in the workforce and in social and community life 	The CWP expressed frustration at the withdrawal of this programme, which was regarded as successful.
WAL-10.2	10.3 T10.3 10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noting the difficulty in obtaining building trades capable of producing work to the standard expected, negotiate with MPS for a skills audit followed by development of a Region-wide employment strategy which centres on building a local skills base and enterprise with the capacity and capability to carry out housing-related projects 	The unemployment rate for Aboriginal people in Walgett is fourteen times that of the non-Indigenous population, and with a labour force participation rate just over half that for non-Indigenous adults, the employment to population ratio for Aboriginal people in Walgett indicates that just over one in four adults are in any form of employment. This employment to population ratio is well below that for the Murdi Paaki Region as a whole. The housing construction programme recommended in this HEHP, together with a comprehensive process of redesign of human services, provide the ideal opportunity to deliver training, employment and business opportunities for community members while improving access and quality in the human services sector
WAL-10.3	4.3 6.1 T10.2 T10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the level of employment of Aboriginal community members in the health and human services sectors to improve cultural safety service quality and accessibility 	
11	Physical and mental health services		
WAL-11.1	8.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the community's ability to access health care services locally and 	Need has been identified for better access to specialist health services including

Table 11.1: Master Plan

Strategy	Chapter reference	Strategy	Justification
	10.3 T10.4	regionally	by allied health clinicians such as speech pathologists. Access to services is compromised by recruitment and retention challenges
WAL-11.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to the community's advice of the absence of adequate mental health services: clinical, counselling and SEWB, for all ages with the infrastructure and resources to offer timely professional care 	Service providers have reported a severe lack of clinical mental health services, particularly for children and young people. Psychiatrist, mental health nurse, and CAMHS services are all underprovided; as are supported living services
12	Youth services		
WAL-12.1	10.2 T10.2 10.3 T10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on the CWP's work already in hand, negotiate a package of initiatives around the NSW Government <i>Regional NSW Youth Framework: Empowering youth in regional NSW</i> relating to jobs and pathways to employment, physical and mental health, digital and physical connection, and things to do and places to go 	Limited opportunities exist for young people to participate in structured sporting and recreational opportunities after school hours. The CWP aspires to expanded arrangements for youth engagement, leadership and health and wellbeing, and will continue to progress collaborative initiatives in this area
13	Aged and disability care services		
WAL-13.1	T9.3 10.3 T10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the presence and capabilities of funded NDIS registered providers, the level of care delivered against clients' funded package, and package availability and inequalities of care of Aboriginal people with disability 	The CWP has indicated that care and support services for older people are inadequate. There is a preference for home care and other aged care community-based programmes to be established locally. Equitable access to NDIS services for eligible community members is a human rights issue and should be prioritised

11.4 Defining need for growth

The total number of Aboriginal social housing dwellings in Walgett was 190 in June 2020 as detailed in the AHO property schedule, having reduced by six from a total of 196 as of June 2018.

At the time of the MPRH&BC household survey, there was a waiting list for Aboriginal social housing across all adult age groups. The estimate of housing need shown at Table 5.29 and Table 11.2 is derived by extrapolating the findings of the MPRH&BC household survey across all Aboriginal households and tenure types to

estimate need arising from those that did not participate.

The number of new dwellings enumerated in Table 11.2 is more than the number of approved applicants shown on the DCJ Housing Register for the total population: 24 general applicants and fewer than five priority applicants. No indication of the size is given.

The age profile of the community is such that the majority of those in search of their own housing are young single people or couples without children.

Table 11.2: Housing need

		From MPRH&BC household survey				Factored for whole community			
		Number of bedrooms				Number of bedrooms			
Tenure type	Ratio	2	3	4	5	2	3	4	5
Owner occupier	85 / 16	1	0	0	0	1	-	-	-
Private rental	38 / 11	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Homeless	294 / 112	2	0	0	0	5	-	-	-
Social housing rental	170 / 79	22	4	1	0	48	10	2	-
Employer	- / -	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Not defined	- / 3	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Total		25	4	1		54	9	2	0

A breakdown of social housing waiting list by bedroom capacity as of June 2018 provided by the AHO is shown at Table 11.3 for comparison purposes.

Table 11.3: Waiting list, number of dwellings by bedroom size, mid-2019

	Number of bedrooms					
	1	2	3	4+	NK	Σ
Waiting list	8	15	-	2	2	27

Feedback received from the community summarised in Chapter 10 reinforces the need for additional housing on the scale and with the mix proposed.

Table 11.4 puts an order of cost against increased supply based on new builds and suggests that given the costs for new builds, and land, that

purchasing mainstream housing is an option to be considered.

Table 11.4: Estimated cost of new builds (GST excl)

Number of bedrooms	GFA (m2)	Unit cost (\$/m2)	No	Estimate (\$)
2	120	3,470	54	22,485,600
3	160	2,850	9	4,104,000
4	185	2,850	2	1,054,500
5 and more	200	2,850	-	-
Total				27,644,100

11.5 Replacement housing

No dwellings are recommended for replacement at this stage. The MPRH&BC household survey did not record any social housing respondents describing their properties as 'condemned' or 'unliveable'. This HEHP takes the position that

scoping of properties is unlikely to reveal any houses beyond economic repair that will require a decision on serviceability. Note should be taken of \$5.9 which flags the possibility of up to nineteen dwellings being in poor condition.

11.6 Housing extensions and modifications

Expressed need for extensions projected on the same basis as Table 11.2, is stated in Table 11.5. A budget of \$35,000/extension is allowed for extension and \$3,000 for each home modification.

Table 11.5: Requirement for housing extensions and modifications

Extensions (Factor: 170/79)	Number of bedrooms		
	1	2	3
Number of extensions	15	2	-
Total number of bedrooms	15	4	0
Modifications			
Number of dwellings	11		

Estimated budget to attend to extensions and modifications listed in Table 11.5 is given in Table 11.6.

Table 11.6: Estimated budget for housing extensions and modifications

	Estimate (\$)
Extensions	665,000
Modifications	33,000
Total	698,000

11.7 Asset preservation

Estimated costs for routine repair and maintenance including planned maintenance, and for any particular works such as roof replacement, foundation packing and releveling if any, required to attend to immediate restoration and asset preservation are summarised in Table 11.7. Average unit expenditure is approximately \$35,890 per property.

Table 11.7: Repair and maintenance, probable order of cost

	Cost (\$)
Property repair, maintenance and upgrade (Table 5.38)	6,101,300
Particular works	-
Total	6,101,300

All properties are, or should be, subject to regular and planned inspection and, where under head lease, as per an AHO housing management agreement. Barriekneal has secured funding through the AHO Aboriginal Community Housing Investment Fund (ACHIF) programme for property repair and maintenance. Table 11.8 details the AHO allocations for upgrades totalling \$3,099,991.

Table 11.8: Aboriginal Community Housing Investment Fund allocation

Allocation for:	Estimate (\$)
Barriekneal Housing and Community	
New supply	984,777
Upgrades	1,716,414
Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation	
New supply	-
Upgrades	398,800

It is not known whether all of this amount will be committed to Barriekneal-owned properties in Lightning Ridge or some will be directed to repair and maintenance work on managed properties in Walgett. While the total amount is substantial, it does not benefit the sixty-nine households of Walgett LALC houses which are most in need of repair and maintenance.

11.8 Infrastructure

Table 7.2 and Table 10.2 itemise infrastructure elements of concern to the CWP. Of these, improvements at Gingie and Namoi Villages are the responsibility of the Land Council. Both communities have been added to the NSW Government Roads To Home programme which focusses on engineering works associated with:

- Stormwater and other drainage
- Kerb, guttering and footpaths

- Street and public space lighting
- Upgraded road surfaces
- Telecommunications
- Power

These are very much the type of improvements requested by the CWP and the Land Council is encouraged to ensure the maximum benefit is achieved from the works. On the assumption the Roads2Home programme will meet all costs, no allowance has been made in the estimated costs at Table 11.9 for works at Gingie and Namoi Villages. Works of a similar nature are required by town residents as identified at Table 7.2 but, being the responsibility of Council, do not have a budget attached.

Water supply and sewerage infrastructure at Gingie and Namoi Villages is also owned, operated and maintained by Walgett Local Aboriginal Land Council with the assistance of Walgett Shire Council contracted under the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment *Aboriginal Communities Water and Sewerage Programme*. Costs are met by the NSW Government.

11.9 Probable order of cost

Probable orders of cost for each strategy are summarised in Table 11.9. The estimates were prepared on the following basis:

- Costs for building-related work are derived from industry standard cost information and/or for project costs for similar work in the Murdi Paaki Region;
- Building prices are current to September 2020;
- An index appropriate to the Region is applied;
- Building costs assume that construction takes place in accordance with MPS procurement practice. Projections may need to be re-evaluated if training schemes are integrated;
- Additional land purchases are required to permit development to proceed and these lots will require to be serviced;
- Allowance for project management has been assumed to be generally between 10% and 15% of the construction budget depending upon the nature of the work involved and the degree of investigative work required; and

- Estimates are stated as GST exclusive.

Table 11.9: Probable orders of cost, housing and environmental health infrastructure

Description	Order of cost (\$)
Council development charges	195,000
Land acquisition	1,770,000
Site services (nominal)	295,000
New housing supply	27,644,100
Replacement housing	0
Housing extensions	665,000
Housing modifications	33,000
Repair and maintenance	6,101,300
Infrastructure	-
Sub-total	36,703,400
Unquantified risk allowance (5%)	1,722,200
Project management (12.5%)	4,305,400
Programme admin (3%)	1,033,300
Total	43,764,300

No costs have been assigned to improvement in and extension of human services because these services are already the subject of government programme planning and resource allocation processes. Performance monitoring of government services is a key area of focus under the OCHRE Murdi Paaki LDM Accord II and Accord processes should be brought to bear on areas of underperformance. With consistent themes emerging across the Murdi Paaki Region, many recommendations will have regional application and universal application locally.

11.10 Funding sources

Funding for works and measures proposed by Table 11.1 and Table 11.9 will need to be negotiated through the RAHLA as the principal decision-maker on matters of Aboriginal social housing in the Region. No ACHP is in a financial position to contribute to these extraordinary costs from revenue derived from property rents and subsidies so realising a solution is dependent upon grant funding from governments.

11.11 Staging of works

There are no priorities attached to the improvements listed in Table 11.9. All works may be classified as immediate. Repair and maintenance work should be programmed to proceed as a package of contracts following scoping in view of the scale so that tenants are not subject to a lengthy wait for work to be carried out. Programming may be subject to building sector capacity which can be mobilised locally and/or using the work as a vehicle for an Aboriginal apprentice training scheme. Building extensions should be included within the scope of any repair and maintenance contracts.

Previous housing upgrade programmes have been the subject of significant community feedback to the CWP, focussing on dissatisfaction with the quality and management of these works as evidenced at §5.9. In any future housing construction or upgrade programmes, the CWP has made it clear that it must be involved in the decision-making process to ensure these mistakes and poor outcomes are not repeated. To respond to the CWP proposal for development of an Aboriginal trades capacity, the construction of new housing and maintenance of existing properties, should provide opportunities for integrating training and economic development activities aligned to the construction industry.

Such initiatives have been successfully implemented in the Region in the past at scale in conjunction with Technical and Further Education (TAFE) providers. Murdi Paaki Services Ltd has the capacity to work with the CWP and providers to develop a suitable employment and training framework and negotiate its implementation.

11.12 Tenant support and education

The MP Tenant Support and Education Programme (MP TSEP) has become an essential and valued support service in the social housing space in all communities across the Region. Team members play a key role in supporting community members to establish and maintain tenancies, negotiate application and compliance processes and leverage partnerships to deliver wrap-around services as

required by the principal objectives of the programme:

- Increase community knowledge of the Aboriginal housing sector among both tenants and service providers;
- Increase awareness and accessibility of services for vulnerable groups who may be at risk of homelessness or living in overcrowded situations;
- Increase the number of tenants engaged with support services;
- Increase knowledge of housing application processes; and
- Increase housing stability through case management.

Relationships have been established with all Community Working Parties, many community organisations and human services support providers, and through this network, MP TSEP is gaining further valuable insights into the internal dynamics of each community. This knowledge allows MP TSEP to step beyond local politics and mechanisms of control to play an increasingly strategic role in supporting CWPs and MPRA initiatives. Given the complexity of the housing and related human services landscape from a community perspective, the role of MP TSEP is critical to ensuring equity to tenants in service delivery.

A MP TSEP client will often require several case management interventions before housing-related assistance can begin. Typically, these external supports delivered through partner organisations might include:

- Arranging a repayment plan for rental arrears, power bill arrears, and fines and debts with State Debt Recovery Office;
- Referral to health and wellbeing services, mental health and addiction services;
- Assistance to obtain childcare; and
- Referral to DCJ in relation to child and family matters, help to negotiate the justice system, and support for victims of domestic and family violence.

In respect of housing, MP TSEP provides direct assistance to the community through:

- Arranging for identification documents and working with an applicant through the Housing Pathways process;
- Helping tenants to apply for Commonwealth rent assistance and/or are receiving this assistance through Centrelink;
- Intervening when tenants are in danger of breaching their tenancy agreements and, as above, arranging a repayment plan when tenants fall behind with their rent; and
- Generally supporting tenants at risk to sustain tenancies and reduce the risk of homelessness.

This Master Plan acknowledges the valuable contribution of MP TSEP to help maintain stability in the Aboriginal social housing sector and acting as the link between tenants in need of support and the human services responsible for providing that support.

11.13 Emergency, short term and transitional accommodation

Emergency accommodation exists in Walgett to the extent of the Women's Safe House which is managed by Mission Australia along with the Walgett Homeless and Housing Support Service. This service provides support to young people and adults; however, the only accommodation it has available to it pending the building of a purpose-built facility by DCJ is the Women's Safe House. The community has identified a pressing need to deal with homelessness among adult men of all ages. Emergency housing in the form of a dedicated men's refuge is seen as an essential response to primary homelessness in the community. The community has also expressed a desire for supported local temporary accommodation for young people removed from their families pending court action. The cost of provision is subject to further discussion between the CWP and DCJ.

11.14 Home ownership

Sixteen respondents to the MPRH&BC household survey were owners and all except three were satisfied with their decision to purchase. This cohort provides a local example of the benefits of home ownership compared with renting. Most valued benefit of ownership was the autonomy and independence to make decisions about the way the asset is used. Financial gains arising from investment in the property market were not of great significance. Noting that 41% of Aboriginal social housing tenants gave the reason for renting as not being able to buy their own house, it may be that a demand exists within the community for a higher level of ownership. Discussion with the AHO and/or Indigenous Business Australia about options would be a useful starting point.

12 REFERENCES

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