



# WINGHAM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



A Strategy  
for a  
Changing  
Environment



May 1999



## Our Cover...

On our cover, we have illustrations of two widely known and easily recognisable aspects of Wingham. The montage on the right-hand side is representative of 'The Brush', one of the few remaining remnants of subtropical floodplain rainforest in NSW. This 'national treasure' was originally dedicated for preservation and recreation in 1909. It has had a chequered history, having been logged and grazed during early European settlement, and then threatened with part-destruction in the 1960s due to the unpopularity of its most conspicuous resident, the grey-headed flying fox. Invasion and smothering by exotic weeds also threatened its existence, until the dedicated Wingham Brush Regeneration Team commenced its battle to save the Brush in the 1980s. Once again, the people of Wingham gave their support to its preservation by backing the team in their fight on several fronts. As a result, today we enjoy a rejuvenated rainforest and reserve, inspirational both locally and nationally not only as an item of natural beauty, but also for the techniques and methods used for its regeneration.

The theme in the other montage is of the built environment of Wingham. It depicts scenes from the early prosperous part of the twentieth century, through Wingham as it is today, to a 'vision' of how Wingham may develop in the next century. This town and its community have also had high and low points during their history.

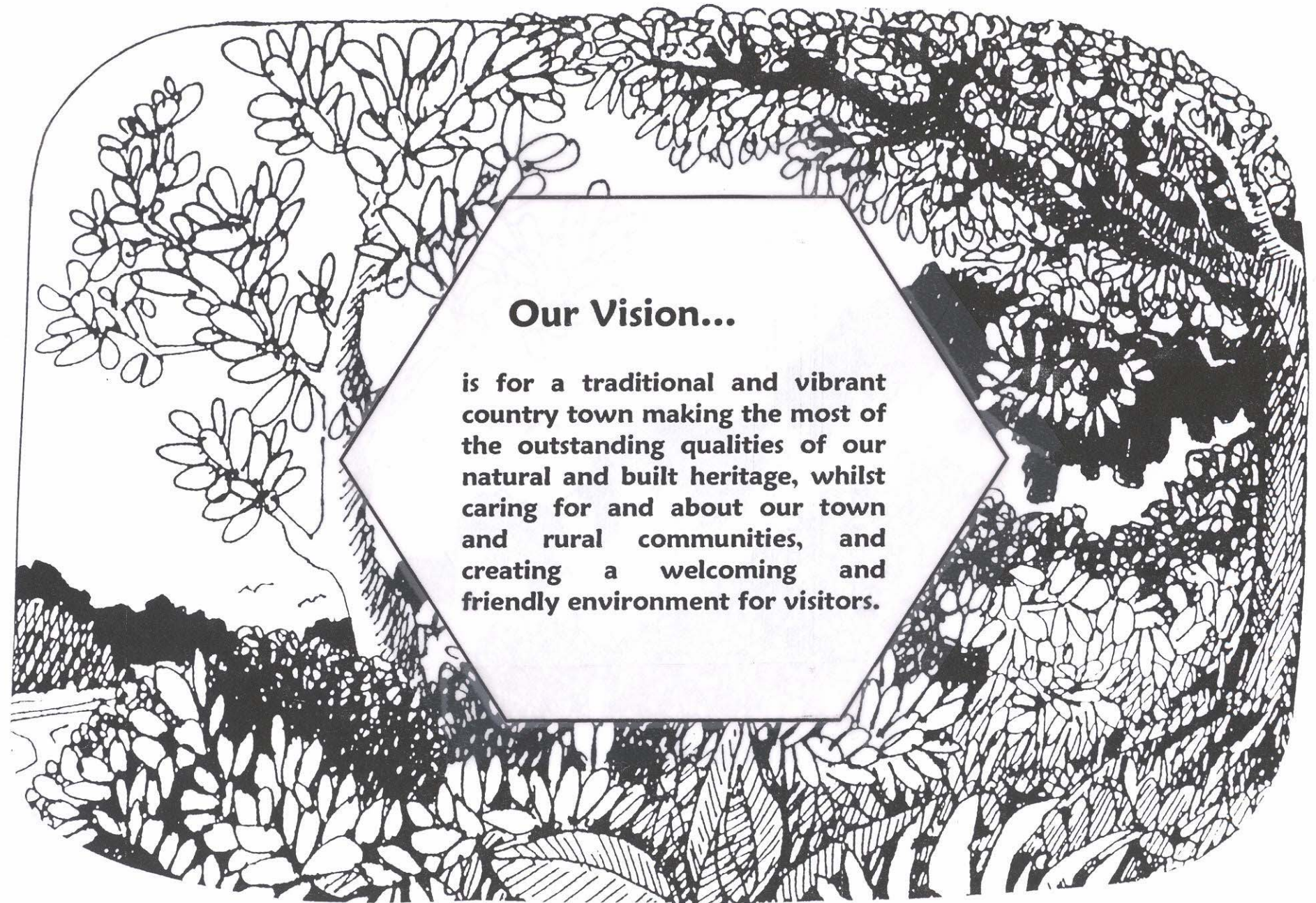
Low points in the town's development can be compared with unwanted gaps which sometimes form in the canopy of a rainforest. Small scale natural disturbance that caused these gaps may be regarded as catastrophic at the time. However, they are essential for the long-term health and character of the forest. They let in the light and provide space for growth, allowing the germination, establishment and development of new vegetation.

Just as 'gaps in the canopy' are essential for the regeneration of many rainforest trees, perhaps unforeseen gaps resulting from unwanted disturbances to a town's economy may become opportunities to promote development and concepts of a different type or scale. For illustrative purposes, the regeneration of Wingham Brush is the theme we have chosen for comparison with the revitalisation of Wingham Town. It will often be returned to throughout this document.



Text and layout  
Original artwork  
Children's drawings

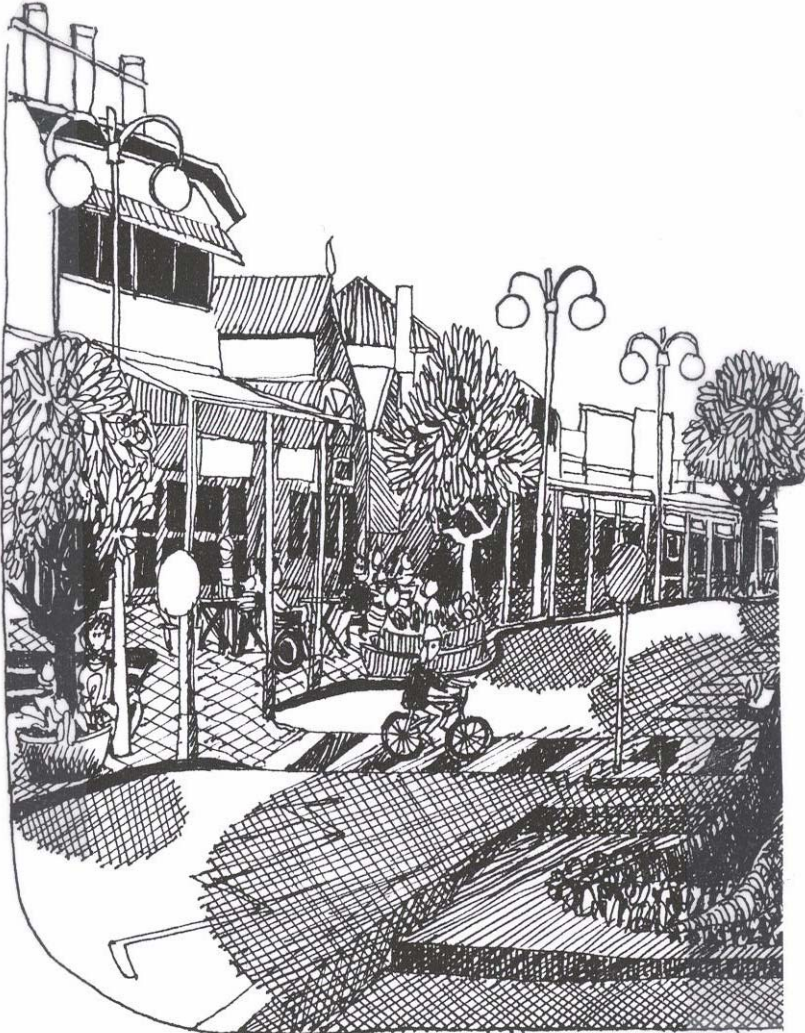
Carla Rogers & Alison McIntosh  
Cate MacGowan  
Pupils of Wingham Public School



## **Our Vision...**

**is for a traditional and vibrant country town making the most of the outstanding qualities of our natural and built heritage, whilst caring for and about our town and rural communities, and creating a welcoming and friendly environment for visitors.**

## Our goals...



### **Town Centre Revitalisation and Central Park**

To encourage the enhancement of this central part of the town through projects aimed at beautification and restoration that result in an aesthetically pleasing and commercially rewarding environment.

### **Heritage and Tourism**

To understand and protect the natural and cultural heritage values of our scenic landscape, to promote Wingham as 'The Historic Town', and to provide attractive tourist opportunities that are beneficial to the local communities as well as visitors.

### **Open Space and Recreation**

To provide recreational opportunities, particularly for youth, that benefit and respect the values and needs of people within the community.

### **Community and Transport Facilities**

To recognise and provide those basic facilities which are essential to the well-being of members of the community, particularly those who are physically, economically and locationally disadvantaged.

### **Land Use and Development**

To provide opportunities for 'country' urban and rural residential living, and industrial development, which reflect the demands of the market but also respect the traditional values and scenic qualities of our town.

## Mayor's Message

Greater Taree City Council is pleased to have been able to work with the people of Wingham in the formulation of this draft Development Strategy.

Wingham is fortunate in having an attractive and healthy environment. However, no community can operate in isolation, unaffected by the impact of social, economic and political factors of the region, the state, the nation and even the world. This document presents a vision for the future of Wingham in this changing environment and identifies ways that the community of Wingham and Greater Taree City Council may work together to achieve a positive future for this community.

The Development Strategy tells the reader of Wingham's many past achievements and describes an attractive, caring and dynamic heritage town and district, with many outstanding features in both the natural and built environment. This is the Wingham of today. This document will be used not only as a strategic planning and marketing tool, but also as a way of promoting the town and its rural hinterland to a wider audience.

Congratulations, Wingham and district, on what you have already achieved, including the preparation of this draft Wingham Development Strategy. I commend this strategy to all residents of the town and its rural hinterland, and encourage you to respond by making a submission of support, or to suggest improvements, during the two months whilst it is on public exhibition. May it contribute towards an even better Wingham of the future.

**Councillor Les Brown, OAM**  
**Mayor, City of Greater Taree**

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## Summary

This development strategy for Wingham is described as being for ‘a changing environment’. Wingham is fortunate to have a ‘good’ environment in terms of both its natural and built amenities. It has an attractive setting and has retained many of its historically significant buildings and design features as an early river port and a prosperous town serving its rural hinterland. However, it cannot operate in isolation from the changing social, economic and political realities of the region, the state, the nation and the world.

This development strategy describes the framework within which the community of Wingham and Greater Taree City Council may operate to implement projects as a way of achieving a shared vision for its future. The document may be used to market this vision to capture financial support for implementation of aspects of the strategy, and also as a promotional tool for Wingham town and district. It provides background information about Wingham – the town, the people and the economy - and identifies specific projects aimed at contributing towards future vitality. It proposes a cooperative approach between Greater Taree City Council and the community, with the endorsement of a ‘charter’ by both parties to encourage the promotion and pursuance of action plans developed under this strategy.

A number of specific projects have been identified and described under five theme headings. These projects were formulated initially by members of the strategy task force, and subsequently refined and ratified at a community workshop held in Wingham. They are a guide for future direction, for the preparation of project-specific action plans. It is recommended that this part of the strategy is revised and updated biannually.

## How to use the strategy document

The strategy is divided into three parts. **Part 1**, the first section of the document, outlines the purpose of this strategy and provides background information about Wingham - its history, its natural and built environment and its people - to give an appreciation of where it has come from and what forces have helped to build the town. It also discusses the advantages of anticipating and providing a framework for change, and identifies approaches that may contribute towards successful implementation of the strategy.

**Part 2** proposes the approach to be used by a representative community group (in this document referred to as the ‘Wingham Action Group’) to initiate and perhaps in some cases, implement and even seek funding towards, ‘Strategy Action Plans’. Specific projects have been identified in this section, formulated in consultation with the people of Wingham, for which individual action plans will need to be prepared. It proposes a ‘charter’ between Greater Taree City Council (GTCC or Council) and the Wingham Action Group which will give recognition to this group.

**Part 3** is the ‘Strategy Archives’ and is maintained as a separate document. This contains copies of background papers prepared for discussion by the task force, and reports on proceedings of, and results from, public meetings and workshops. It also includes comments resulting from public exhibition of the draft strategy document. This part is available for inspection at Council offices. The Strategy Archives are not needed to understand the strategy or to make it work, but basically is a history of the development of the strategy.

## Part 1

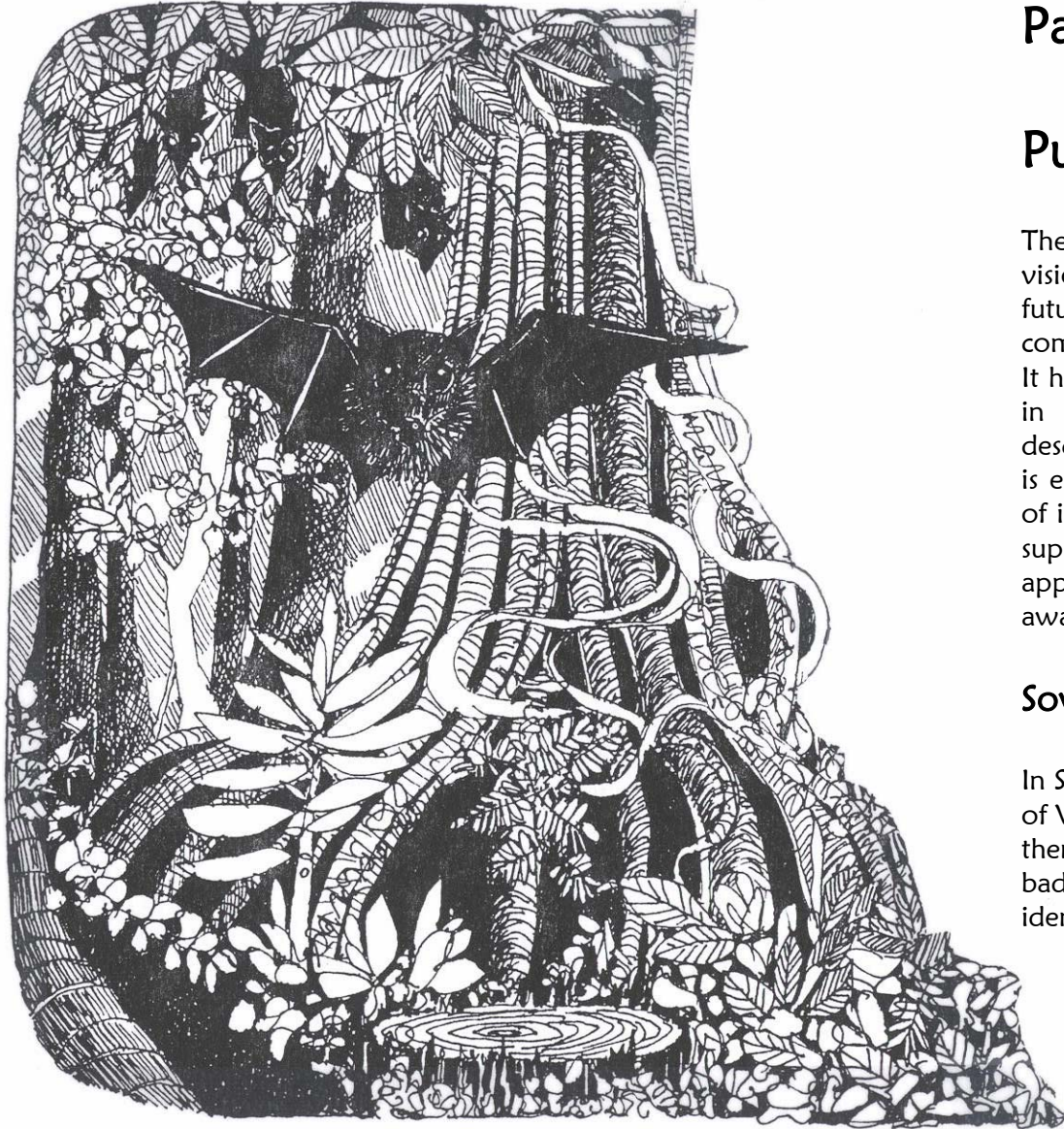
### Purpose of the Strategy

The purpose of the Wingham Development Strategy is to define the vision that its urban and hinterland rural community has for the future of the town. It provides a framework within which the community, with support from Council, can implement this vision. It has also been considered necessary to help prevent further decline in services provided within the town. This document, which describes the preferred strategic approach and the background to it, is essentially a marketing document, to 'sell' this vision to a variety of institutions and organisations, in an effort to gain outside funding support for the town in addition to its own contributions. This approach is directed towards encouraging ongoing community awareness and involvement.

### Sowing the Seed

In September 1997, Councillors from GTCC met with the community of Wingham to talk about Wingham's future. At this public meeting, there was general and frank discussion, and Wingham's good and bad aspects, as well as its constraints and opportunities, were identified.

It was decided that a vision for Wingham's future needed to be produced as a combined effort between Council and the community. This document would set directions and detail ways of achieving this vision, through the preparation of a Development Strategy by a Community Task Force.



Eleven members of the community were nominated for this task force. Not all were able to continue for the full duration, due to unforeseeable events. The members and the length of time they were able to serve with the task force are:

Colin Banks	Jun 98
Carol Clarke	Ongoing
Marcelle Clarke	Ongoing
Peter Colless	Ongoing
John Dorrington	Ongoing
Sue Druce	Feb 98
Bryce Hawkins	Ongoing
Gavin Hawkins	Ongoing
Stuart Jacobs	Ongoing
Allan Skinner	Ongoing
Tony Walton	Ongoing

Other task force participants:

Carla Rogers (GTCC)	Chairperson and facilitator
Alison McIntosh (GTCC)	Project Officer

This group met regularly with the Council officers, who were responsible for the preparation of background papers for discussion on a number of issues. These papers formed part of the information supplied by Council to the task force on the status of current projects, issues and key players. Council also facilitated task force discussion in developing goals, strategies and responsibilities, with all issues linked to one or more of the following five themes:

- Town Centre Revitalisation and Central Park
- Heritage and Tourism
- Open Space and Recreation
- Community and Transport Facilities
- Land Use and Development

In November 1998, a workshop was held in Wingham to which all members of the Wingham and hinterland community were invited. Many community organisations chose to be represented at this workshop, which was conducted under the direction of the task force facilitator with support from others, including task force members. Common ground and direction on many issues were reached during this workshop, and a number of matters requiring resolution were identified.

This document represents the end of the first phase of the strategy for Wingham. This phase involved community consultation, and analysis and definition of what is important to the people of Wingham in terms of future direction. As well as providing



Councillors and task force members at a 'workshop' session: Cllr Mal Marks, Allan Skinner, Peter Colless, Graham Gardner (Director, Planning & Building, GTCC), Gavin Hawkins, Cllr Wendy McKeough, John Dorrington, Carol Clarke.



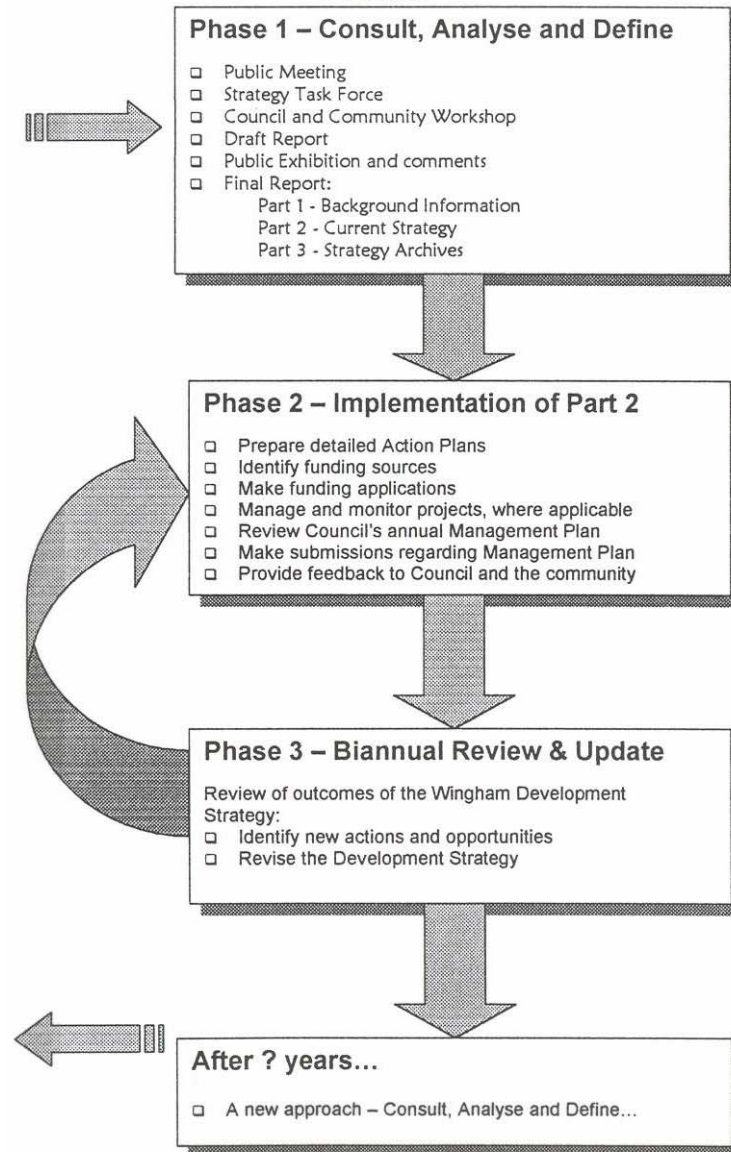


At the same session: Bryce Hawkins, Clr Mick Tuck, Clr Harold Cowan, Clr John Byrne, Carla Rogers (Manager, Environmental & Strategic Planning, GTCC), Alison McIntosh (Strategic Planner, GTCC), Clr Ralph Metcalfe. Task force members not photographed were Marcelle Clarke, Stuart Jacobs and Tony Walton.

background information about Wingham, the document proposes a cooperative approach between the Wingham community and Council and identifies specific projects which may contribute to the future vitality of the town.

The Wingham community recognises that it is vital to continue working together as it moves from this phase to the next phases, as various projects are initiated, funded, managed, implemented and monitored. It is recommended that the third phase will be visited biannually, where progress over the previous two years will be assessed, and goals and priorities revised and adjusted as necessary.

## Flow Chart of the Development Strategy Process



## Where is Wingham?

The adjacent map shows Wingham's location within the local government area (LGA) of Greater Taree City Council on the mid north coast of NSW. It is the urban centre of a predominantly rural area where dairy and beef production, timber and meat processing, have historically been important industries. The Wingham Social Area occupies approximately two-thirds of the LGA which totals 5735 square kilometres. The town, with a population of 4,446 in 1996<sup>1</sup>, is the second largest within the LGA after Taree (population of 15,700). The balance of the population of this social area is estimated at around 5000 and live in 9 rural villages and the surrounding rural area.

Wingham is located only 15 kilometres west of Taree. This geographic proximity has contributed towards its changing emphasis in recent times. This is an often repeated phenomenon in rural Australia where regional centres have tended to grow in size and services offered, to the detriment of nearby smaller towns. This is in part a response to modern methods of communication, which have served to heighten the dominance of larger places, and a concurrent reduction in farm prosperity. On the other hand, the success of Taree as a regional centre may encourage the residential development of Wingham.

Wingham's proximity to Taree may have both positive and negative impacts on future growth. This may be manifested in a variety of ways in the years to come. The attractiveness of its natural environment, the heritage character of the older part of the town and its closeness to a larger centre offering a full range of services are some features that make it appealing to many new residents from both within the district and further afield. At the same time, the recent depletion of some services within the town is viewed

with concern by business houses and residents, and is one of the driving forces behind the community's desire to plan a vision for the future. The restructuring of the long-term industries (beef, dairy and timber), essential to adjust to changing local, state-wide, national and global policies and trends, has made the people of Wingham aware of its interdependency and integration with other economies. It cannot operate in isolation and it can feel the effect of events in distant locations.

Roads are recognised as key elements in facilitating activity throughout the district. In the early part of the area's development, Wingham became the hub of the regional road network. The roads from Port Macquarie, Comboyne, Nowendoc, Gloucester and Tinonee all linked together at Wingham. These routes were established before the Pacific Highway was developed through Taree. Since then, these routes have reduced status and are now classified as local roads, with the exception of the Bucketts Way (from Gloucester, through Wingham and on to Taree) which is designated a regional road.

Allocation of resources for on-going management and development of new projects for Wingham is primarily the responsibility of the Council. Wingham's rural status does not include any special consideration for funding through separate State or Federal government programs. However, various funding grants are currently in place or being sought through different State and Federal government and private grant schemes. These are directed towards specific identified projects, such as a tourism grant for elevated walkways within Wingham Brush and heritage grants for the part-restoration of Wingham Town Hall and the original wharf.



Nowendoc



**GREATER TAREE CITY COUNCIL  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA**

Wingham Social Planning Area.....- - - -

# Evolution of Wingham

## The historical development of the town

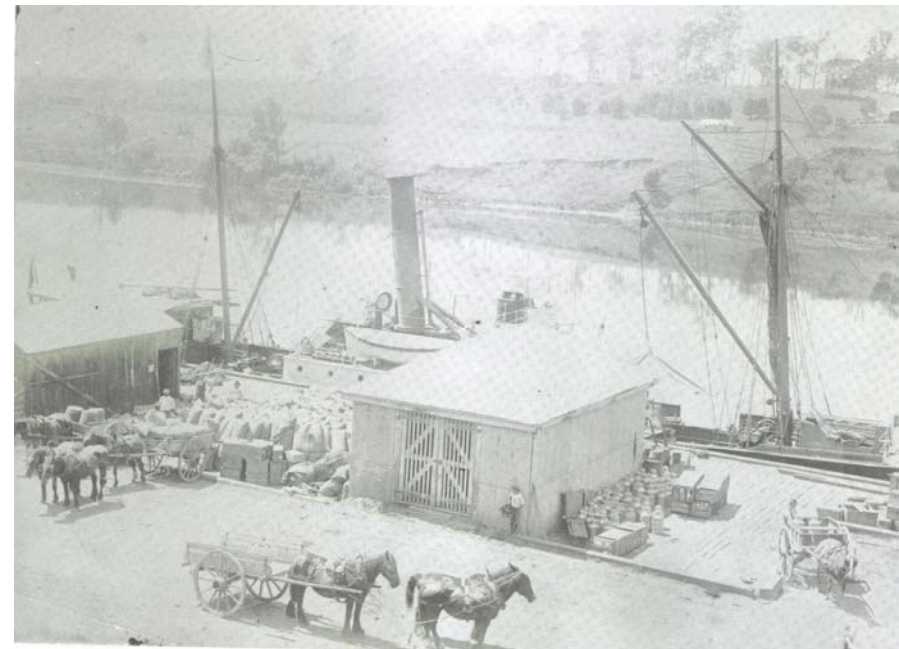
### Evolution of a rainforest –

*Species do not evolve in isolation; they evolve in company with other species.*

The first European settlement near present day Wingham was at 'Bungay', where cedar was stockpiled for shipping downstream on the Manning River, and where a magistrate and constable were located. The town of Wingham had its origins when a site near Wingham Brush was surveyed in 1843 as a government town. This was selected as the most appropriate location for the wharf (currently being restored), because it marked the upper limit of navigation on the river. The settlement developed as a focal point of community interest long before Wingham was proclaimed as a town in 1885. It had begun its role as a service centre for its agricultural hinterland. This extended to smaller centres along the Manning River and as far west as Nowendoc, and it soon became the centre of activity. The town evolved from these early beginnings to become the focus of social, business and community facilities as it is today<sup>1</sup>.

With the advent of road and rail links through the Manning Valley, Taree adopted a more pronounced role as a service town, particularly for the coastal sector, with Wingham retaining a strong agricultural service function.

The original Municipality of Wingham was formed in 1889 and operated autonomously for 91 years. Its area was restricted, in general terms, to what is known as urban Wingham today. The Municipality of Taree was the local government for the Taree urban area, with the remaining rural component of the current LGA known as the Shire of Manning. These three councils were amalgamated in 1981 to form the Greater Taree City Council. Amalgamation was vigorously opposed by Wingham Council and its residents throughout the twelve years of government debate on the issue, right up to amalgamation<sup>2</sup>.



The 'Coraki' loading goods at Wingham Wharf during the 1880s<sup>3</sup>

# Wingham Now

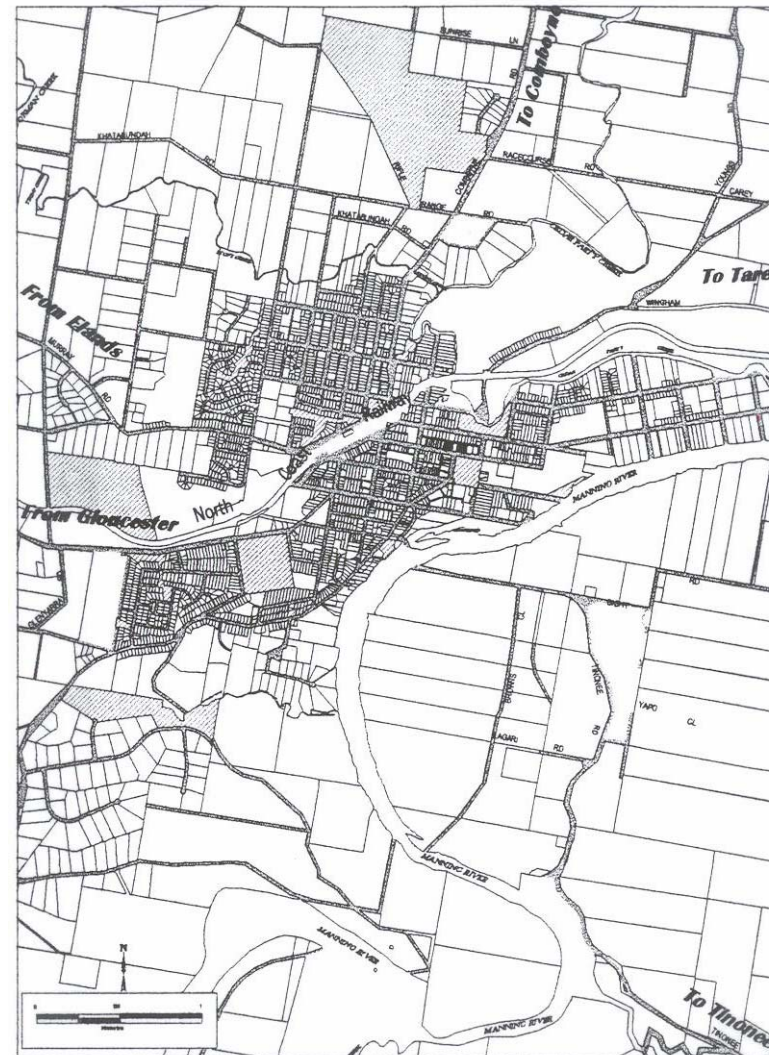
*All vegetation is undergoing internal fluctuations over short periods of time (up to a few years). Virtually all vegetation types are also changing directionally into different vegetation, due to new ecological impacts.*

The residential part of Wingham is, in general terms, restricted to the area of the former Municipality of Wingham. Four rural residential estates have developed over the past three decades, adjacent to the town to the south and west. These estates have proved popular with both local people and newcomers to the area, with only a handful of vacant lots remaining in the three estates released prior to 1998.

The town centre contains most of the commercial development, which is concentrated to the north and west of Central Park. The setting of this ‘village green’ is regarded as being unique within rural NSW and is an important visual and social element.

The town is relatively compact, with few vacant tracts of land. Development on the southern side of the railway line is restricted between it and the Manning River. Future urban development is targeted for the area to the west of existing residential estates on the northern side of the line.

An outstanding element of present day Wingham is the extent of buildings and other items (such as Wingham Brush) of heritage value. Most of these items are concentrated in one central precinct, around Central Park, and are contained within a defined Urban Conservation Area (refer to Appendix A). Many are civic and commercial buildings, whilst a distinct older residential district also contributes to the heritage value of the town.



Map of the township of Wingham  
(open spaces shown as shaded areas)

# The People of Wingham

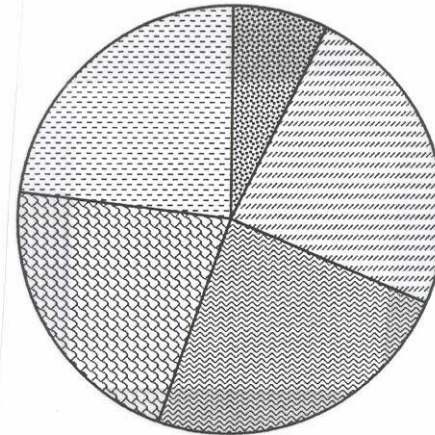
The residents of Wingham have a strong sense of community. An element of this may be due to its early pioneering beginnings and past dependence on growth and prosperity to rural-related industries. It may also result from a feeling of loyalty to the town that has long been a part of its psyche, possibly a legacy of its history as an autonomous area. This shared 'loyalty to place' appears to be infectious to new residents also, and may be an important component for the successful revitalisation of the town.

Whilst the people of Wingham do have a strong sense of local identity, it also has important relationships with Taree, relying on this centre to a considerable extent for employment, services and community facilities. It has even stronger affiliations with its rural hinterland, particularly to the north and west, which continue to use Wingham as its main service and supply centre.

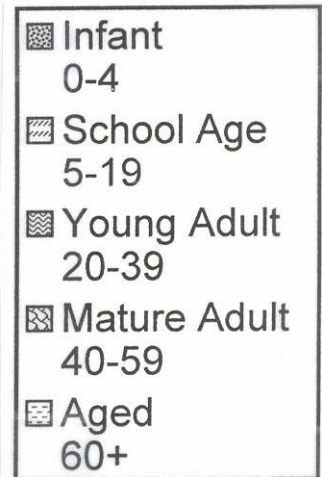
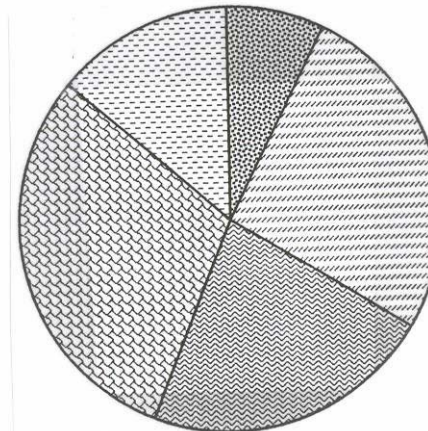
The people of Wingham have demonstrated a preference for a continuation of 'the traditional rural way of life'. However, there is an acknowledged need for change in order to at least maintain its level of services and activities, shadowed as it is by a growing regional centre. Whether or not there is a preparedness to accept change and even to help promote it will depend in part on the effectiveness of this development strategy. The community needs to be encouraged towards ongoing awareness and involvement.

Selected ABS Census characteristics from the last three periods (that is, 1996<sup>4</sup>, 1991<sup>5</sup> and 1986<sup>6</sup>) have been presented here. It is interesting to note that the population of Wingham urban area has remained relatively constant over the past ten years, with a total increase in

**Wingham Town Area - 1996**



**Wingham Rural Area - 1996**



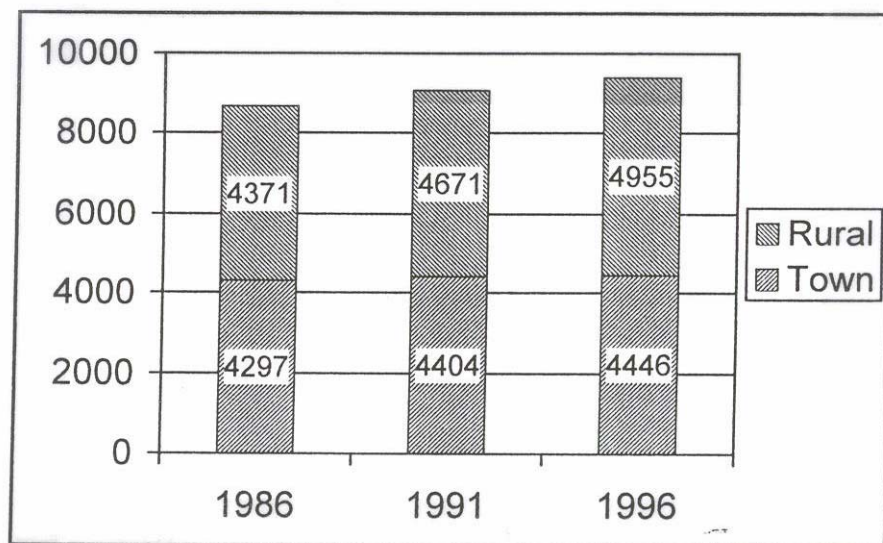
### Wingham Town Area– Selected Characteristics

	1986	1991	1996
Total persons	4297	4404	4446
Females	2212	2308	2365
Males	2085	2096	2081
Speaks language other than English and aged 5 years and over	48	37	46
Employed	1406	1455	1427
In labour force and aged 15 years and over	1630	1669	1641
Not in labour force and aged 15 years and over	1539	1607	1699
Unemployed	224	214	214
Unemployment rate %	13.7	12.8	13.0
Lived at same address 5 years ago	2175	2289	2290

### Wingham Rural Area– Selected Characteristics

	1986	1991	1996
Total persons	4371	4671	4955
Females	2166	2299	2448
Males	2205	2372	2507
Speaks language other than English and aged 5 years and over	78	86	71
Employed	1538	1608	1690
In labour force and aged 15 years and over	1899	1935	2022
Not in labour force and aged 15 years and over	1169	1292	1443
Unemployed	361	327	332
Unemployment rate %	19.0	16.9	16.4
Lived at same address 5 years ago	1974	2336	2775

### Wingham Social Area – Population Movements



numbers during this time of 127 people. Although the town has been affected by a number of mechanisms which can trigger settlement decline, this has not resulted in population reduction.

Unemployment rates remain high, at around 13 per cent. This is slightly below the rate for the entire LGA. Prospects for youth employment remain a cause for concern. Many young people chose to leave the district for tertiary education and employment opportunities. This is reflected in the figures by the comparatively lower proportion of young adults compared with the NSW average. In contrast, a higher proportion of the population is in the aged category. This may demonstrate the attractiveness of the area as a retirement location. This is in line with other areas within the LGA and elsewhere on the North Coast of NSW. Some retirees moving to the area have little or no extended family. These factors place considerable pressure on support services, many of which are dependent on the generosity of volunteers and donations for their ability to continue stretching limited resources.

# The Changing Economy

*There is nothing inherently regrettable about vegetation change itself. Change is inevitable, universal and fascinating.*

The economic base of Wingham has been, and continues to be, predominantly rural-related. The beef, dairy and timber industries have been the most obvious generators of income and employment within the area, both directly (as in 'processing plants') and indirectly, such as sales and service of land, plant and equipment, and transport-related activities. Retail outlets for consumer items and durables also provide employment opportunities (BiLo Supermarket has approximately 100 employees, including casual staff). The largest manufacturing company is Southcott Pty Ltd with 45 employees. It is involved in the manufacture of hydraulic hose fittings.

By far the largest employer in Wingham is Wingham Abattoirs with between 250-280 employees. This is an export-registered abattoir, with around 75 per cent of its product directed towards export markets. Volume of output at any time is dependent on a number of factors. Local variables include weather conditions and livestock markets. Its operations are also influenced by national and global variations, such as exchange rates and production levels in other countries.

The retirement village of Wingham Court is another large employer. It provides four levels of accommodation for the aged, ranging from self-care units through serviced units and hostel accommodation to nursing care. It has around 90 employees as well as casual staff.

Changing conditions within the timber industry throughout the past decade in particular, have influenced the closure of Duncan's, an important timber processing plant operated by Boral in Wingham, together with a major sawmill operating in the rural village of Mount George, which, with around 40 employees, was the main source of employment in that locality. These industry changes have also stimulated diversification at Machin's sawmill by way of value-added processing installation, aided by industry development assistance for upgrading equipment.

With the passing in early 1999 of State legislation adopting the Lower North East Coast Forest Agreement, a degree of long-term stability and potential for growth within the timber industry has been achieved. It has also resulted in a substantial increase in nature conservation reserves within the Wingham area. Three new national parks to the north-west total over 14,000 hectares, with over half of the 23,809 hectare Doyles River National Park also within the upper Manning. The agreement has also resulted in about 3,500 hectares of State Forest north of Wingham being set aside as nature reserves. As a result, additional employment opportunities may eventuate. These new reserves are also potentially a major draw card for the local tourist industry.

The adjacent table shows industry employment in the major categories over the past ten years to 1996<sup>1,2,3</sup>. Whilst there are limited employment opportunities within Wingham in some areas (such as Government Administration), many residents find employment in this and other categories in nearby Taree. During the past decade, there have been some major changes in employment opportunities within the Wingham area, such as in businesses involved in manufacturing. The fact that the table shows only minor fluctuations in the various classifications reflects the view that many local residents find employment outside Wingham.



Prospects for future growth of the Wingham economy may not only be dependent on diversification and new initiatives within existing industries but also on the area's ability to attract new industries. There is a strong relationship between economic activity and the farming and natural environment. There is also an increasing dependence on other organisations, industries and places, at local, national and global scales. The ability of Wingham to adapt to the conditions presented by a constantly changing environment will be one of the main determinants of the extent of future growth.



**Table 1 - Wingham Town Area Industry Employment (%)**

Industry	1986	1991	1996
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	4.8	2.6	2.7
Mining	-	-	0.2
Manufacturing	19.6	21.6	23.0
Electricity, Gas & Water Supply	1.9	2.0	0.9
Construction	6.5	6.2	5.6
Wholesale & Retail Trade	21.9	19.2	27.7
Transport & Storage	8.6	6.6	3.7
Communication Services	1.9	1.4	1.1
Finance, Insurance & Services	8.3	7.4	6.9
Government Admin & Education	4.2	3.8	7.8
Health & Community Services	14.6	17.2	13.1
Recreational & Personal Services	5.2	6.0	4.0
Non-classifiable	0.4	0.4	1.3
Not stated	2.2	5.5	1.7
No. of people employed	1390	1523	1417

**Table 2 - Wingham Rural Area Industry Employment (%)**

Industry	1986	1991	1996
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	36.6	27.8	24.0
Mining	0.3	-	0.2
Manufacturing	9.5	12.1	11.9
Electricity, Gas & Water Supply	0.8	0.6	1.0
Construction	4.6	5.2	7.3
Wholesale & Retail Trade	13.5	12.6	19.7
Transport & Storage	4.3	3.9	2.9
Communication Services	0.9	0.9	0.9
Finance, Insurance & Services	3.1	3.8	5.4
Government Admin & Education	3.1	2.6	9.5
Health & Community Services	13.9	16.0	10.5
Recreational & Personal Services	3.9	4.5	2.6
Non-classifiable	1.2	0.2	0.9
Not stated	4.3	9.9	3.1
No. of people employed	1537	1581	1735

# Response to Changing Processes

*Vegetation is dynamic, always changing in small or large ways, in immediate or delayed response to a wide range of environmental change, both natural and people-induced.*

There are a number of acknowledged processes affecting the growth or decline of places. It is suggested that once a centre's growth or decline is triggered by some event, the process will be self-sustaining<sup>6</sup>. Events that are often identified as being responsible for triggering settlement decline are summarised below.

- The withdrawal of public services
- Closure of branch establishments operated by private companies
- Economic stress in the rural sector
- A loss of hinterland served through its 'capture' by a larger place
- Inferior local entrepreneurship or leadership arising from (a) council amalgamation; (b) demise of local businesses and (c) out-migration of energetic individuals
- Closure of locally owned and managed businesses as demand sinks below the threshold to sustain them
- Mortality of an aging population
- A richer regional centre continuing to grow as a result of the decline of smaller more remote localities, thus reinforcing the latter's peripheral status

Settlement decline events<sup>7</sup>

No doubt different people will have different views as to the extent that perhaps some or even all of these events apply in Wingham's case, and how various events have contributed to problems now being experienced.

## Other indicators of the need for change

These 'trigger' events result in, or contribute towards, additional weaknesses in the appearance and operation of a place. These may include:

- Vacant shops in the town centre
- Gaps in products and services offered
- Negative views about the future
- Population decline
- Lack of employment opportunities
- Visitor and customer decline
- Disjointed efforts at addressing the difficulties
- Poor town presentation
- Lack of facilities for youth.

Whilst most of the above may be attributed to Wingham in varying degrees, we have already noted that its population has not declined over the past ten years, indicating a certain resilience in the face of stressful conditions. Wingham also has a number of obvious strengths which have offset those factors contributing to settlement decline. These include:

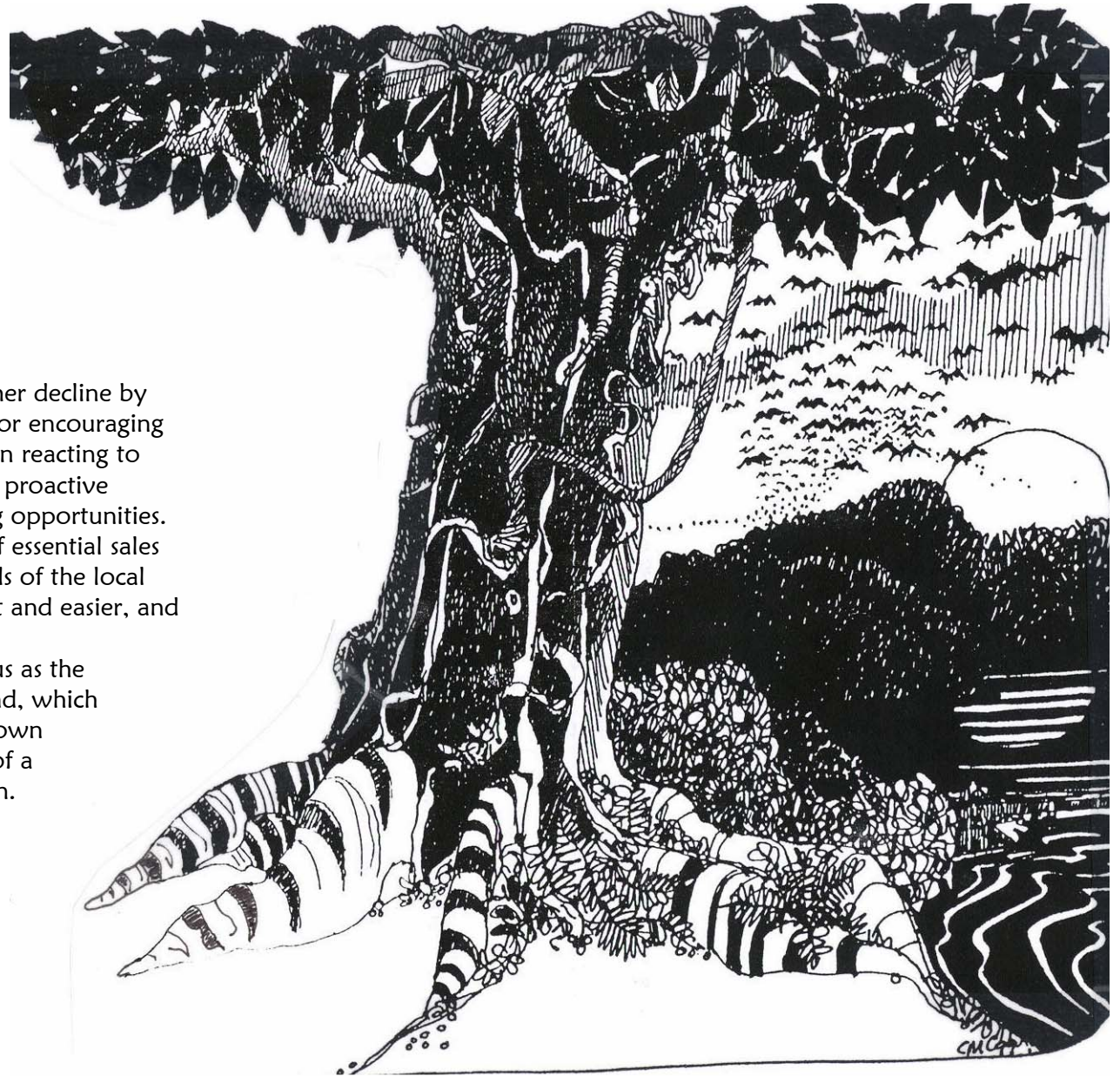
- Its natural and built environment, such as a scenic rural setting for the town, Wingham Brush, the Manning River, a 'clean' environment, and Central Park, not to mention its many heritage civic, commercial and residential buildings.
- An advantageous location on the North Coast of NSW
- Community pride and involvement
- Well known annual events and attractions which continue to draw people to the town (such as Beef Week and rodeos)

- Size and scale of town
- Recent large increases in national parks and nature reserves in the hinterland resulting from the Lower North East Coast Forest Agreement.

### **Why we need a development strategy**

The main purpose is the desire to help prevent further decline by providing a vision for the future and a framework for encouraging positive response to anticipated change. Rather than reacting to change after it happens, the strategy should allow a proactive approach, in which change can be seen as providing opportunities. Wingham cannot compete with Taree in all fields of essential sales and services but it does need to meet the daily needs of the local community. Most residents find it more convenient and easier, and would prefer, to shop and conduct business locally.

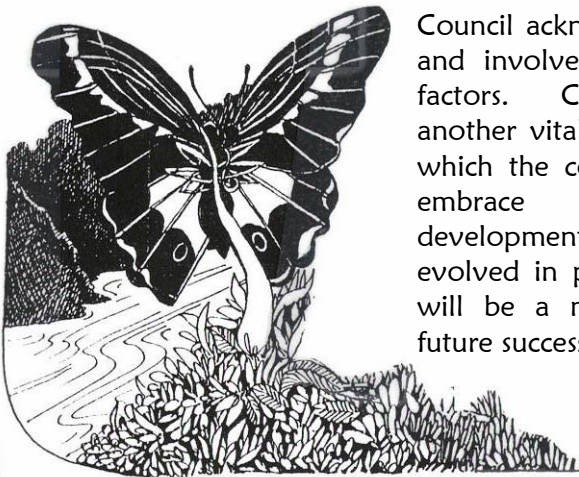
It is also important that Wingham maintains its status as the preferred service and supply centre for the hinterland, which has a population similar in numbers to that of the town itself. If it does not target this market, the magnet of a larger regional centre may prove a greater attraction.



## Criteria for Success

What is needed for a development strategy to succeed? Of course there is no single factor that can be nominated. Success will be conditional on a number of factors, both large and small, but all to some extent are dependent on, and interrelated with, each other.

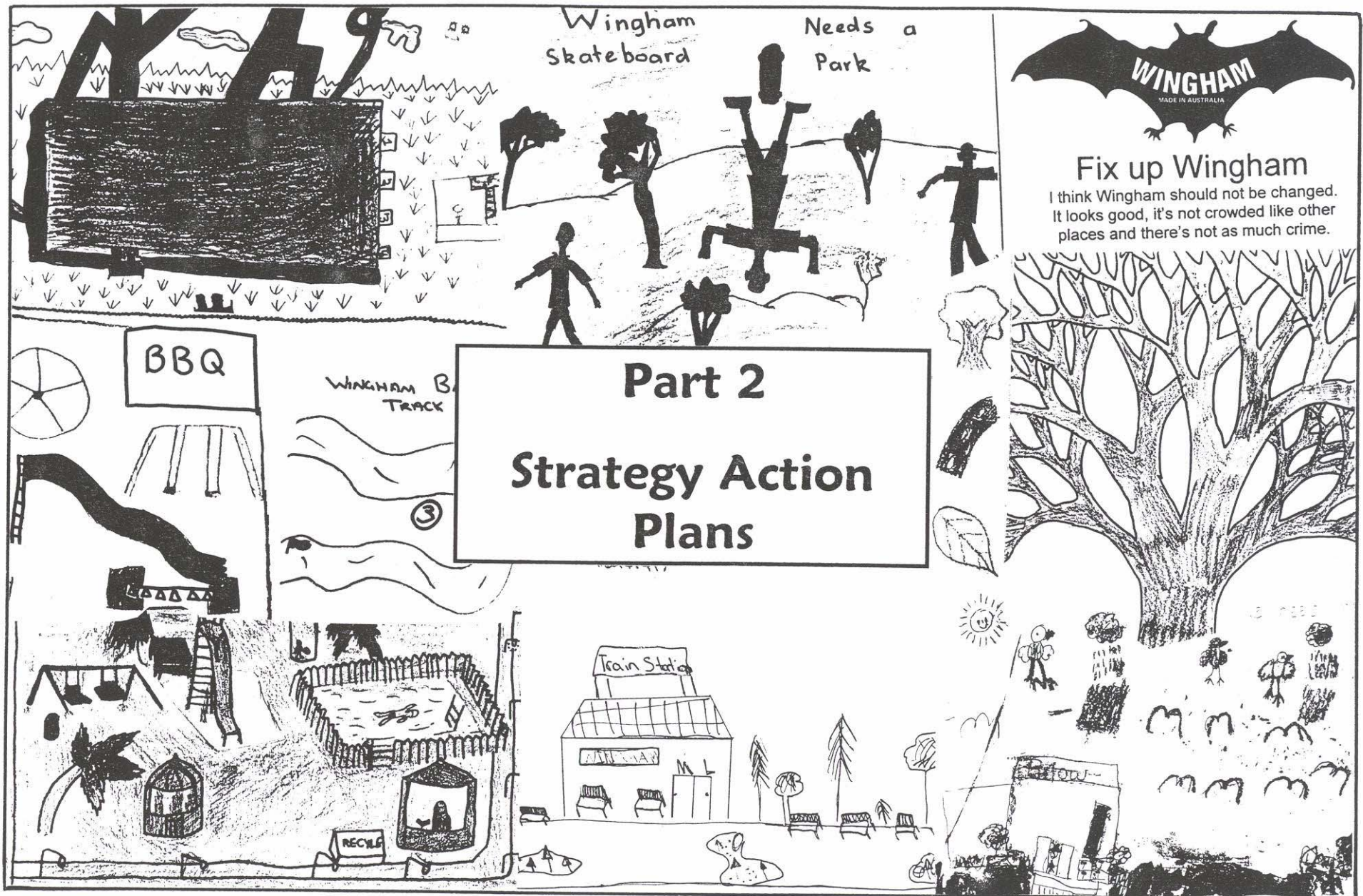
The Wingham task force is aware of the activities of the NSW Department of State and Regional Development with its 'Main Street/Small Towns Program'. Representation was made by Wingham Our Town 2000 to this organisation in 1996. Their current brochure includes a checklist of key factors to a successful local program which has been used as a basis for the listing on this page. This checklist seems relevant whether it is applied to a main street program or any other strategy nominated by the community.



Council acknowledges that its support and involvement is one of the key factors. Community ownership is another vital element. The extent to which the community is prepared to embrace and support this development strategy, which has evolved in part through their efforts, will be a major determinant of its future success.

- Community ownership
- Commitment to working in partnership with Council and other local organisations
- Council support and involvement
- Commitment to funding some of the projects through local fund raising
- Active 'committee' with broad representation (business and community groups)
- Local leadership
- Broad community support
- Knowledge of local community
- Focusing on retention and expansion of existing strengths/businesses (rather than attempting to attract large employers)
- A realistic development strategy arrived at through a public consultation process
- Detailed action plans
- A human resource commitment to implementing the strategy (for example, a coordinator)
- Monitoring of progress and ongoing evaluation
- Keeping people informed
- Acknowledging and celebrating success (media role)

Key factors to a successful program<sup>8</sup>



## Part 2

### Strategy Action Plans

This part of the development strategy describes the approach to be used by a Wingham Action Group to initiate and perhaps in some cases, implement and even seek funding for, strategy action plans. Specific projects identified in consultation with the people of Wingham are outlined. It proposes that a Charter be adopted by Council and this Action Group. The Charter will define the role and obligations of both organisations in respect to each other and their consideration of this strategy in future planning.

### The need for a 'Wingham Action Group' (WAG)

One of the matters which needs early resolution by the Wingham community is which organisation will be the voice of the town to be recognised by Council, and how it will operate. We have already acknowledged that key factors for success include community ownership of the strategy and broad community support. It is important that the community becomes involved in the process for it to gain the momentum essential for achieving results .

Options presented at the public workshop in November 1998 for this community organisation and its structure were:

#### Official voice of the towns needs to:

- Have broad-based support
- Be active
- Have a good relationship with Council

- Consider Wingham 2000 Landcare/Chamber of Commerce as a framework
- Consider including existing task force members

#### How it would function:

- Consider retaining issue groups formed for task force discussions – one sub-group for each Strategy Action Sheet
- Coordinating group to define role of each sub-group and to be responsible for monitoring projects and progress
- Communication between all groups very important
- Coordinating group to be responsible for communicating between Wingham community, Council and other organisations.

A public meeting will be required to form and endorse a WAG as the representative voice of Wingham with regards to implementation of this strategy. This group may be responsible for managing funding grants, and hence will need to be incorporated and have an elected executive. The public meeting should be well publicised and call for expressions of interest and nominations from the community for office bearers. All residents and rate payers should be encouraged to be actively involved, and to have membership with this group.

### The Proposed Charter

The Wingham Action Group will become a signatory with Council to the proposed charter, which defines the roles and obligations with respect to each other and their consideration of this strategy in future planning. The intent of this charter is indicated on the adjacent page. The final wording for the document will need concurrence from both Council and the Action Group.

## COMMUNITY WINGHAM ACTION GROUP (WAG) PROPOSED CHARTER

### ROLE

To actively promote and pursue implementation of the Wingham Development Strategy (WDS) in liaison with the Greater Taree City Council Wingham Advisory Group.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership is to be open to residents and ratepayers within the Wingham Social Area. There is to be an elected executive. The group needs to be an incorporated body.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To review the WDS biannually and identify ways of implementing Strategy Actions. To prepare detailed Action Plans where appropriate.
2. To identify funding opportunities and make funding applications.
3. To review projects nominated in Council's Annual Management Plan and make a submission to this plan.
4. To review budget allocations nominated in Council's Annual Management Plan and make submissions where appropriate.
5. To provide general feedback to Council on the content of the Wingham Development Strategy.
6. To inform and update the general Wingham Community on activities of the WAG (copy to be provided to Council Liaison Group).

### MEETINGS

A minimum of four (4) meetings is to be held annually.  
Meeting date and time are to be advertised in the local newspaper at least two weeks in advance.  
Minutes to be kept.

## GTCC WINGHAM ADVISORY GROUP PROPOSED CHARTER

### ROLE

To liaise with and respond to the WAG and to incorporate recommendations of the Wingham Development Strategy into Council's Annual Management Plan where possible.

### MEMBERSHIP

Membership will include managers (or their nominated alternate) from Engineering (Operations), (Investigation and Design), Environmental and Strategic Planning and Finance. Directors and Councillors may be invited to attend.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To review the WDS biannually and identify any Strategy Actions that Council can prepare a detailed Action Plan for. To prepare detailed Action Plans where appropriate.
2. To ensure that a copy of the Easy Grants Newsletter is referred to WAG.
3. To consider the WDS when nominating projects for Council's Annual Management Plan.
4. To consider the WDS when making budget requests for Council's Annual Management Plan.
5. To review and update the "WDS Action Sheets" annually, considering comments from WAG.
6. To inform the Councillors of activities of the WAG.

### MEETINGS

Minimum of four (4) annually.

# The Strategy Web

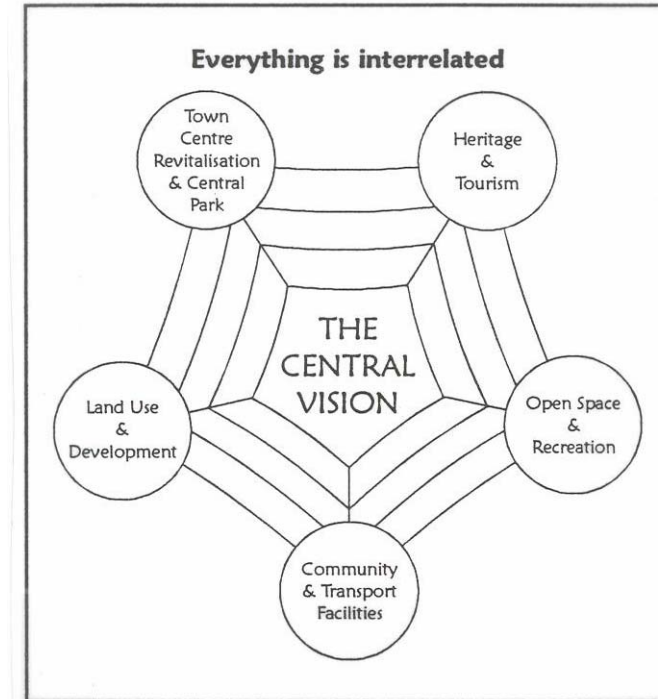
*Wingham Brush evolved as a community of plants and animals. The web of interrelationships is complex; some species may play a key role in the survival of particular communities.*

Discussion of strategy specifics has been presented under the five theme headings of:

- Town Centre Revitalisation and Central Park
- Heritage and Tourism
- Open Space and Recreation
- Community and Transport Facilities
- Land Use and Development

These classifications have been used to give structure to the report. In many cases, issues discussed under one heading may also be relevant in terms of one of the other themes. Hence, all factors will in some way, impact on, or influence, some other facet of the strategy. Everything is interrelated.

The image selected to illustrate this interrelationship is the spider's web. The hub of the web represents the central vision, connected by radial strands to the outer perimeter. These strands divide the web into a number of different sectors, each one relating to one of the five main themes listed above. Projects or tasks associated with each theme impact upon, and are connected to, the rest the web, woven together by difficult-to-distinguish but strong fibres. Vibrations felt in any one part of the web will be transmitted to all other sections. A break in any part of the web weakens the entire structure.



How to interpret the strategy

For each theme, Strategy Action Sheets have been prepared. These provide a description of what is already there and identifies perceived gaps. It lists specific projects aimed at 'filling' these gaps and shows the priority nominated for each task at the public workshop. The organisations responsible for initiating, managing, implementing and monitoring the strategy and for identifying possible funding sources will be determined for each project as appropriate.



## How to fund the development strategy

Possible funding sources will vary depending on the particular characteristics of each project. Availability of appropriate funding will in many cases, determine the operational timeframe. Funding sources may include:

### Greater Taree City Council –

- Inclusion of a project in its annual Management Plan (budget)
- Inclusion within the 10 year Finance Plan (Council's strategic plan) with the intention of eventual elevation to a Management Plan
- Promotion for funding at Federal and State government levels
- Applying for other grants

### Various grant schemes –

- These are offered by State and Federal governments as well as some private organisations and are described in the "*Easy Grants*" newsletter subscribed to by Council. A copy of this can be made available to the nominated community organisation.

### Community service clubs or organisations –

- These have contributed in the past through various projects, provision of facilities and fund-raising activities.

### Sponsorship by private enterprise or individuals.

The workshop recommended that priority should be given to funding a project coordinator who would be responsible for assessing and accessing funding options, preparing submissions and monitoring progress of projects.

## List of recent achievements: projects completed or initiated.

A variety of projects have been considered and implemented in recent years directed towards enhancing the town and its environs. These have been promoted by a number of different organisations, including Council, Wingham Chamber of Commerce, Wingham 2000 Landcare, service clubs and interested community members. Some of these projects have been successfully completed, whilst others are ongoing, or are yet to be implemented. These projects include:

- Town entrance beautification commenced
- Green Corps project – Cedar Party Creek
- Raised board walk at Wingham Brush
- Town centre tree planting project initiated
- Wingham Town Hall – restoration project
- Wingham Wharf – restoration project
- Old Stables behind Australia Hotel – restoration (Rotary Club project)
- Wingham Brush regeneration/maintenance
- Wall mural in Primrose Street
- Tidy Towns projects
- Central Park information sign
- Central Park shading project
- Central Park toilets – replacement or renovation
- 'Wish List' signage
- Tourist brochures
- Heritage clock for town centre (Rotary Club project)
- Artificial wetland (with majority funding from EPA grant)

# 1. Town Centre Revitalisation & Central Park

The issue of revitalisation of the town centre has been addressed by two prior studies; the Strategic Plan for the township of Wingham prepared by the Wingham Chamber of Commerce in about 1996, and an earlier study, the Wingham Environmental Study 1987. In addition, Council prepared landscape concept plans for the town centre streets in 1993.

Central Park is due to have a Plan of Management prepared by Council during the 1998/99 financial year. This will introduce a framework for the effective management of the park. Its purpose is to provide the community and Council staff with management policies, directions and priorities, and identify responsibilities for the implementation of the plan. It also allows community involvement throughout the preparation of the plan.

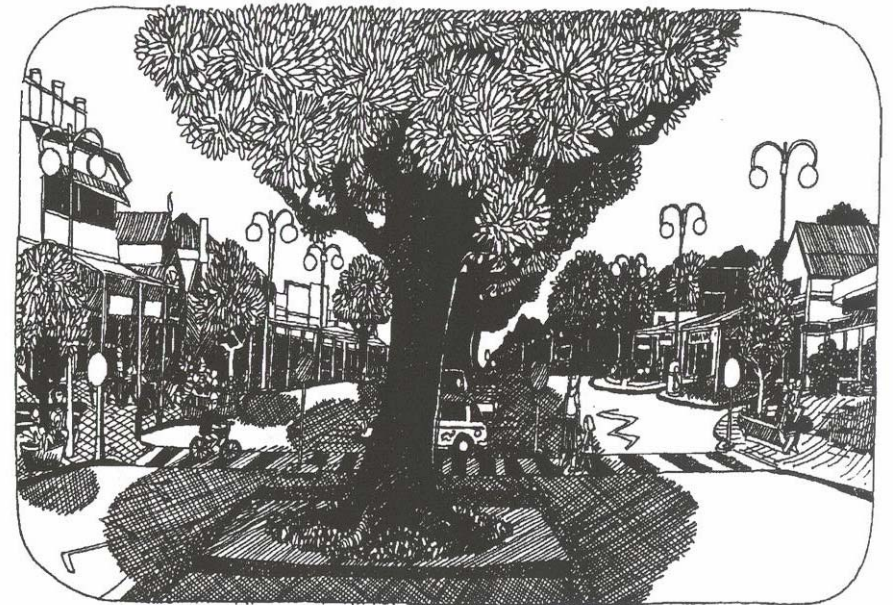
## What is already there or happening

- The Rotary Club of Wingham has proposed to fund and install a 'Pioneers' Clock' to be located in a significant position in the main street.
- An artificial shade structure has been proposed for Central Park. This is estimated to cost \$12,000 and is to be resubmitted for inclusion in Council's Management Plan for the 1999/2000 year.
- New or upgraded toilets (including disabled facilities) have been proposed for Central Park, to be funded by Council. Wingham Chamber of Commerce has indicated a preference for refurbishment of the existing facilities rather than a proposal for a new structure that not only appeared out of character with the heritage quality of the town, but replaced six units with one.

## Where are the gaps?

- Central Park needs not only to be enhanced aesthetically but also functionally, including the following considerations:
  - More shade trees around the perimeter;
  - More overhead and security lighting;
  - Additional picnic seating and tables;
  - Increased spectator seating for sporting events;
  - Improved toilet facilities (current ones are inadequate and poorly located).
- Trees for shade (to benefit pedestrians and parking) are needed as soon as possible within the town centre. A coordinated program involving Council and members of the Wingham Development Strategy Task Force, Wingham Chamber of Commerce and Wingham 2000 Landcare involves planting street trees within the central business district.
- Ramps to shops would enable access for the aged and disabled.
- A number of buildings within the town centre are poorly presented or have features added that are considered out of step with what is the preferred character to be projected.
- The streetscape is unattractive and sterile, and lacks appropriate 'floor coverings, furniture and fittings' (paving, seating, market umbrellas, tables and chairs, signs, lights, flower and plant beds) which could enhance the town centre.
- There is a lack of attractive pedestrian space. It has been suggested that an increase in footpath width at the expense of road width could be considered without loss of parking spaces (that is, a narrowing of the vehicular traffic movement lanes only).

Project		Suggested Initiator	Potential Players	Possible Funding Sources
<b>Town centre revitalisation:</b>				
1	Tree planting			
2	Customer service training			
3	Entrance to town			
4	McCullagh's car park restoration			
5	Painting facades of buildings			
6	Shopping centre directional signage			
7	Paving and street furniture			
8	Vacant shop window displays			
9	Enhance the appearance of business backyards			
<b>Central Park:</b>				
1	Toilet facilities (including provision for disabled people) to be remodelled; possibly relocated			
2	Proposed new structure to serve a number of purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grandstand for sporting events</li> <li>▪ Stage for public events</li> <li>▪ Stage for musical events</li> <li>▪ Replacement facility for existing amenity block</li> <li>▪ Tourist Information/Visitors Centre</li> </ul>			
3	Improvements to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More trees</li> <li>▪ More overhead and security lighting</li> <li>▪ Additional picnic tables</li> </ul>			



## 2. Heritage and Tourism

Wingham has a large number of outstanding items of heritage significance worthy of conservation. This refers not only to the built environment but also the natural environment. Many of these features are concentrated within one central precinct. These heritage elements contribute to the tourist potential of the town. The recent designation of additional conservation reserves in the nearby hinterland should prove to be important additions to the many natural attractions already present.

A number of programs have been or are in the process of being implemented or investigated with the aim of conserving or restoring heritage items in the both public and private domain, and promoting and enhancing tourism within Wingham and its environs. Current projects are summarised below.

### What is already there or happening

#### Heritage related:

- The Adoption by Council of a Heritage Conservation Area to maintain the integrity of heritage items within the central area of Wingham.
- The Manning Valley Historical Society Museum is located within the Heritage Conservation Area in Wingham. This organisation is responsible for the archiving and displaying of a large collection of heritage records and memorabilia.
- Establishment of a Local Heritage Assistance Fund to enable the community to benefit through financial assistance for restoration, preservation and painting projects.
- Successful application to the Heritage 2001 Program for the funding of Stage 1 of Town Hall Restoration. This initial grant of around \$22,000 is to be matched dollar for dollar by Council. Total cost of all three stages is \$165,000.

- Successful application to the National Estates Grants Program for \$20,000 for Stage 2 of the restoration of Wingham Wharf. DLaWC's Waterways and Infrastructure Development Fund have agreed to contribute \$30,000, with Council funding the remaining \$10,000 needed for this stage. The \$30,000 cost of Stage 1 which has already been completed was shared by DLaWC and Council.
- Application through the Federal Community Projects Program for additional funding for refurbishment of Wingham Town Hall (between \$30-40,000 with matching Council funding to be assessed).
- Access to a Heritage Adviser each month funded jointly by the NSW Heritage Council and this Council.
- Restoration of the old stables behind the Australian Hotel has been carried out by the Rotary Club of Wingham, with assistance from Council.
- Wingham Rotary Club is awaiting the approval of various authorities to fund and erect a 'Pioneers' Clock' in Isabella Street (the main street).
- Ongoing maintenance of Wingham Brush by the Regeneration Team has been funded by Council. In April 1999, the Brush became a Nature Reserve under the control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

#### Tourism related:

- The award of a \$50,000 National Tourism Grant, to be equally matched by Council, for an elevated walkway at Wingham Brush.
- Town entrance beautification project is being carried out by the Wingham community with the support of Council.
- Green Corps project around Cedar Party Creek was instigated by Wingham 2000 Landcare in 1998. Additional funding for ongoing maintenance and project extension is being sought.
- Updated tourist brochures for the Manning Valley are currently

- An attractive wall mural reflecting the local environment and funded by the property owners, Wingham Our Town 2000 and Wingham Chamber of Commerce, enhances Primrose Street.
- A tourist information sign within Central Park is to be installed.
- The matter of preferred signage has been actively pursued by the Wingham Chamber of Commerce with Council, and through them, the RTA. As a result, 'Historic Wingham' tourist signs are to be located on the Pacific Highway bypass near Taree.

## Where are the gaps?

### Heritage related:

- There is only limited information available for visitors on the heritage aspect of our environment.
- None of the heritage-significant residential districts are currently included within the Heritage Conservation Area.
- The central business area streetscape is unattractive and lacks many features which could enhance its heritage quality.

### Tourism related:

- Directional signs for tourists and visitors are inadequate, both within the town and at appropriate locations (close to and distant from the town) on the five major routes linking at Wingham.
- Wingham lacks a suitable Tourist Information/Visitors Centre.
- Promotional material specifically relating directly to Wingham and its hinterland needs updating and, in some instances, upgrading.
- Appropriate year-round caravan park accommodation is desirable, but not available. Bed & Breakfast-style facilities within the district are very limited.
- A uniform catch phrase, which reflects the historic nature of the town, and to be used for all promotional activities and signs, is preferred.

Project		Suggested Initiator	Potential Players	Possible Funding Sources
<b>Heritage related:</b>				
1	Paint shop facades in heritage (or other appropriate) colour schemes			
2	Support restoration of Town Hall			
3	Streetscape enhancement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tree planting</li> <li>▪ Street furniture including seats, lights, rubbish bins etc.</li> </ul>			
4	Heritage walk: Prepare brochures, interpretive plaques, information boards etc			
5	Extend Heritage Conservation Area to include relevant residential areas			
6	Enhance vacant railway land on southern side of railway station			
<b>Tourism related:</b>				
1	Signage at Happy Valley, Burrell Creek turn-off, Tinonee turn-off, Purfleet roundabout			
2	Signage within Wingham & also on outlet/approach routes			
3	Dedicated Tourist Information/Visitors Centre			
4	Appointment of a Promotional Events Officer			
5	Updating /upgrading of Promotional material			
6	Adoption of 'Historic Wingham' as the uniform catchphrase			
7	Caravan Park – identification of potential locations			

### 3. Open Space and Recreation

There is a range of settings within the classification of ‘open space’. It includes outdoor sporting facilities, parkland, bushland, playgrounds, corridors and under-developed parks. Public open space is essential for both sporting and recreational activities, as well as for social and cultural gatherings. In assessing the adequacy of supply of open space, areas of a private nature (such as golf courses, bowling greens and indoor facilities) are not included.

The quantity and quality of existing open space within the Wingham urban area generally meet criteria set for standards for local government areas in NSW. Hence, it appears that there is currently an adequate provision of local parks in Wingham. However, this does not mean that it will necessarily be an easy matter to locate the most preferred type of site for a new activity with specific needs. The most obvious constraint will be a limited range of available vacant open space from which to choose.

#### What is already there

Council’s 1998/99 Management Plan includes an allocation of \$10,000 towards the Wingham Skatepark. Public comment is to be sought on alternative sites being considered for its location. The additional cost of the facility will be contributed by the community, through fund-raising activities and donations.

#### Outdoor sporting facilities

Name	Location
Wingham Tennis Courts	Bungay Road
Central Park	Isabella Street
Wingham Sporting Complex	Coghlan Avenue
Cedar Party Creek Reserve	Comboyne Road

#### Small parks/playgrounds

Name	Location
Bahanas Close Reserve	Bahanas Close
Coroma Place Reserve	Coroma Place
Reserve Dennes Crescent	Dennes Street
Jacaranda Avenue Reserve	Jacaranda Avenue
Hillcrest Avenue Reserve	Hillcrest Avenue
Kerrydell Place Reserve	Kerrydell Place
Clover Street Reserve	Clover Street
Kundibakh Close Reserve	Rouse Street
Apex Park	Bungay Road
Allan Street Reserve	Lambert Street
Dennes Street Reserve	Dennes Street

#### Parkland/formal gardens

Name	Location
Wingham Brush	Farquhar Street
Gloucester Road Reserve	Gloucester Road
Sunset Avenue Reserve	Sunset Avenue
Reserve	Farquhar Street

## Corridors/Linear reserves

Name	Location
Union Street Reserve	Blue Gum Avenue
Hereford Close Reserve No.1	Hereford Close
Price Street Reserve	Price Street
Wingham Mun. Pound	Queen Street

## Bushland/Beach/Foreshore

Name	Location
Bungay Road Reserve	Bungay
Wingham Brush Riverbank	Farquhar Street
The Bight Reserve	Wingham-Tinonee Road

## Undeveloped

Name	Location
Farquhar Street Reserve	Farquhar Street
Industrial Close Reserve	Industrial Close

## Where are the gaps?

Additional facilities may be required for some sporting activities; basketball, cricket and hockey have been suggested.

Project		Suggested Initiator	Potential Players	Possible Funding Sources
1	<p>Network of paths to link the various small parks and playgrounds. The proposed Heritage Walk could form part of these combined cycleways and walking and jogging trails. This <i>promenade pathway</i> could eventually include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seats</li> <li>▪ Lighting for night safety</li> <li>▪ Landscaping (along with trees for shade)</li> <li>▪ Drinking fountains</li> <li>▪ Exercise areas</li> <li>▪ Outdoor chessboards</li> <li>▪ Play equipment</li> <li>▪ interpretive plaques</li> <li>▪ Community information boards</li> </ul>			
2	<p>Replacement of playground equipment at the Alan Street Reserve (Lambert Street) previously removed by Council for safety reason.</p>			
3	<p>Multi-purpose centre to include: Skateboard &amp; roller blade ramp Basketball half court BMX mounds/freestyle area</p>			

## 4. Community and Transport Facilities

A range of community and transport facilities is essential for the day-to-day functioning and the general well-being of the communities they serve. However, because of its proximity to the larger regional centre of Taree, a number of facilities for the people of Wingham and district are to be found there. Most commonly and regularly used facilities are available within the Wingham urban area.

### What is already there

#### Community related:

##### Health services:

- Professional services are offered by six medical practitioners, a dental surgery and prosthetist, a physiotherapist, three pharmacies (equipped with 'Easy Claim' machines to facilitate Medicare claims), an optometrist, a radiologist and a visiting podiatrist
- Home & Community Care services
- Early Childhood Clinic
- Manning Base Hospital (Taree)
- Mayo Private Hospital (Taree)
- Wingham & District Memorial Hospital provides geriatric and aged care services for the wider district as well as assessment and rehabilitation services.

##### Education/Child Care:

- Secondary school, three primary schools and two pre-schools and long day-care centres
- Four small primary schools operate in rural villages
- Technical and Further Education is available at the Taree campus although one class is conducted locally at Wingham

- Adult Education classes are conducted locally with a wider range of subjects offered within Taree

**Meeting places** are many and varied and appear to suit most requirements.

**Services for the frail and aged** include Meals on Wheels, RSL Day Care and Books for the Housebound.

##### Youth services:

- Information services operated by Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services
- Drop-in centre operating on Friday and Saturday nights
- Youth groups such as Boy Scouts and Girl Guides

##### Emergency services

- Town fire brigade and 11 Volunteer Rural Fire Service brigades
- State Emergency Services
- Ambulance service is based in Taree

##### Other services:

- Wingham branch of the Council library
- Cultural organisations catering for interests such as local history, dance, music and genealogy
- Various sporting facilities and organisations
- Playgrounds, picnic grounds, barbecues and public toilets within urban Wingham, some rural villages and also at places of interest throughout the hinterland.

### Transport related:

Ability to access transport is a key element in facilitating private and commercial activity throughout the area. Privately owned motor vehicles provide the bulk of this requirement. Other types of transport are outlined below.

- Buses and coaches. Two private companies are based in Wingham providing local services. A Taree operator offers a service between the two towns. Council operates a community bus targeted for the use of frail aged and disabled persons and



their carers throughout the LGA.

- Taxi services are supplied by four independent operators.
- Trains. Each alternative XPT North Coast service stops at the unmanned Wingham Station (one daily service each way).
- Manning Valley Area Community Transport Group operates from its main office in Wingham and caters for a wider area including the Manning Valley. It provides some services to the most disadvantaged groups within the community.
- Ease of parking has often been identified as an important feature for shoppers and visitors to Wingham.
- Cycleways and pedestrian ways. Walking and cycling are most common ways for many to move around, particularly the young. There is an off-road shared bicycle and pedestrian path provided for the 'outer' route to the Wingham Sporting Complex.

## Where are the gaps?

### Community related:

In general terms, Wingham is adequately serviced by community facilities, with most gaps capable of being filled by facilities offered in nearby Taree. Volunteer organisations provide essential support required for the continued and successful operation of many services. Identified gaps include:

- A shortage in available funding for RSL Day Care transport may curtail future activities of this service.
- Public toilet facilities in Central Park are inadequate and poorly located.
- Multi-purpose centre for youth activities is needed, including a skateboard ramp and half-size basketball court.

### Transport related:

- Disabled parking is inadequate (require level ground and shade).

- Cycleways are needed, either dedicated, or shared with pedestrians or parking, with the bridges from Taree (Cedar Party Creek) and Comboyne (Stony Creek) as well as other named commonly-used routes specifically identified.
- Bus services should allow set-down at the Mayo Private Hospital in Taree.
- Off-street parking in the town centre needs improvement, in particular, McCullagh's car park.
- Lack of public transport virtually isolates the younger people of Wingham.
- Upgrading of out-of-area roads is overdue, namely Wingham Road (to Taree), Comboyne Road (to the north) and Nowendoc Road (the route leading to the west, including Tamworth).

	Project	Suggested Initiator	Potential Players	Possible Funding Sources
1	Public transport (community bus?) to service TAFE and Sporting Complex, also Mayo Hospital			
2	Cycle and pedestrian ways to be built, with priority to be given to Cedar Party Bridge (Taree outlet) and Stony Creek Bridge (Sporting Complex outlet)			
3	Central Park toilets: Upgrade of existing facilities Location of facilities closer to town centre shops			
4	Campaign to recruit additional funding and volunteers for services to the aged (for example, Meals on Wheels)			
5	Parking for the disabled needs to be allocated in a shaded area where the ground is level.			

## 5. Land Use and Development

Two major studies (in 1991 and 1994) have been conducted by Council into land use and development within the Wingham area. These have been aimed at identifying potential urban expansion areas. Modest changes in population have meant limited demand in recent years for new residential land.

A conservative estimate of population increase in the 20 years from 1996 (last census year) is 180 people. This 'converts' to around 65 new residential lots. On this basis, there appears to be adequate zoned land (that is, currently zoned residential, enabling development to proceed) for anticipated population growth. Available land for industrial use also appears to be adequate.

### What is already available

#### Vacant lots:

- *Residential* – Around 32 lots are concentrated within the general vicinity of the Wingham Golf Course. These have been available for around 3 years. Another 57 lots are scattered throughout the urban area (based on lots with no current garbage service). However, only 19 of these lots were listed for sale in early February 1999.
- *Rural residential* – In the three older estates (developed since 1984), only 16 lots (less than 10 per cent of original offering) remain vacant. The latest area to be released, towards the western end of Marchfield Road, has 12 lots, none of which have been developed to date. These lots were placed on the market in 1998.
- *Industrial* – There are around 12 vacant lots within the two industrial estates ranging in size from 1371m<sup>2</sup> to 7928m<sup>2</sup>. There are no seweraged industrial lots.

#### Undeveloped (that is, zoned but not subdivided):

- *Residential* – There is the potential for around 382 lots to be developed to the west of the existing residential area on the northern side of the town. At this stage, this area is not seweraged.
- *Rural Residential and Industrial* – There is no existing land zoned (but not subdivided) for these types of development.

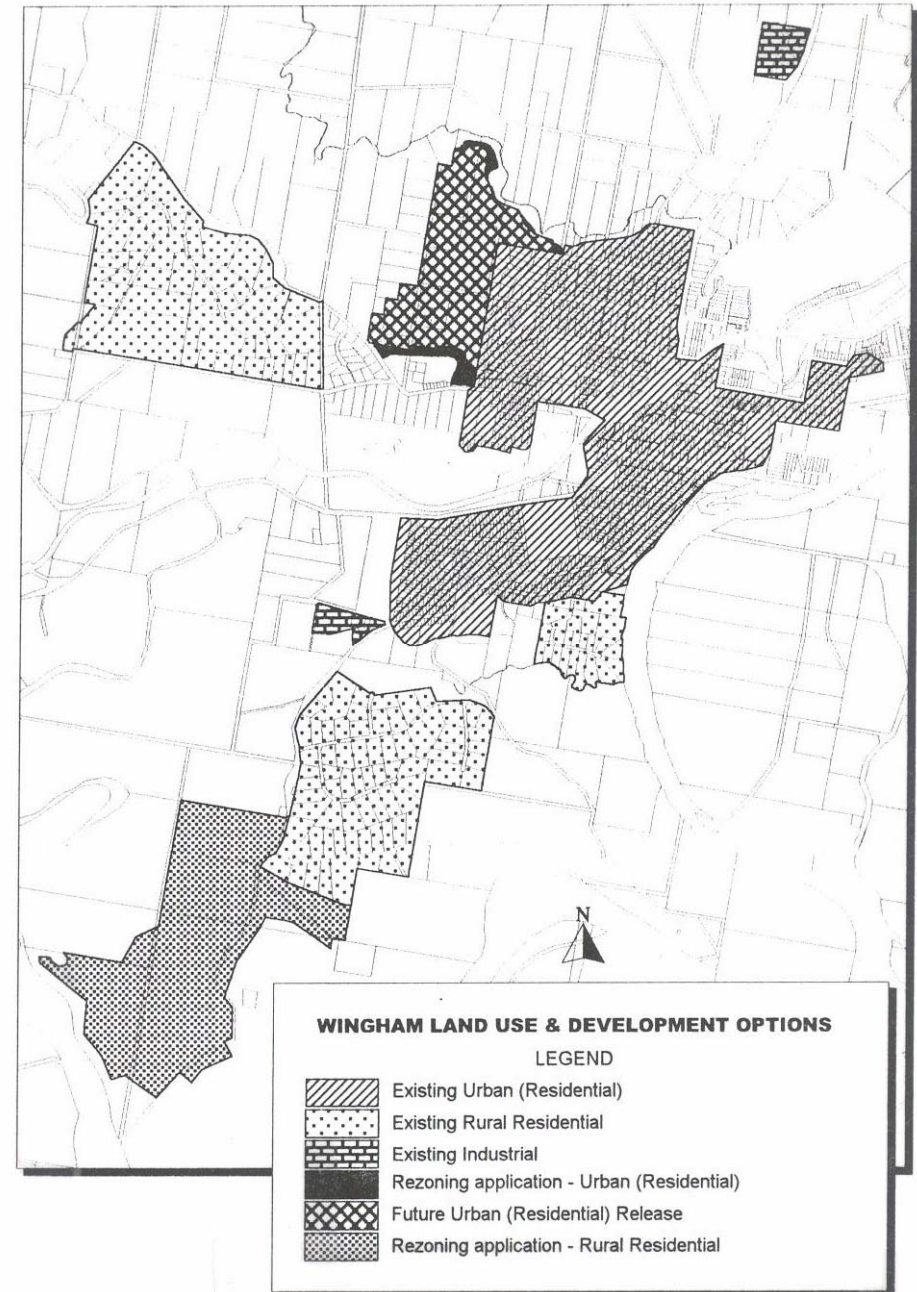
#### Proposed:

- *Residential* – 'Cells' to the west of the town identified as being suitable for future residential development have the potential to be subdivided into 137 lots.
- *Rural residential* – There is a current rezoning proposal for an additional 103 lots on land to the south of the town, including part of the original 'Bungay' selection. It includes provision for continued farming operations on the surrounding agricultural land adjacent to the Manning River. Another area to the west of Youngs Road (130 lots) has been identified in a previous study as being suitable for future rural residential.

### Where are the gaps?

- *Residential* – There is a view that insufficient vacant land is available, in that what exists is not attractive to the market.
- *Rural Residential* – It has been suggested that the minimum size of 4000m<sup>2</sup> for rural residential blocks may warrant reassessment. Whilst 'space' is an important factor to owners of such blocks, some problems are being experienced with the suitable management of the less accessible parts (such as noxious weed eradication). Alternative approaches may offer other solutions.
- *Industrial* – It is a view that the absence of seweraged industrial land in Wingham has been responsible for potential new businesses choosing another location within the LGA.

Project		Suggested Initiator	Potential Players	Possible Funding Sources
<b>Residential:</b>				
1	Establish process for additional urban expansion with owners of land zoned residential.			
2	Consult with Mid Coast Water re provision of sewer to existing residential area to the west of Richardson Street			
3	Plan for more attractive land to be made available			
4	Plan for, and then provide, small commercial centre in expanding area to the west of Wingham			
<b>Rural residential:</b>				
5	Do not allow placement of rural residential development to prohibit urban expansion. Provide a sufficiently large buffer around residential areas to allow for its expansion			
<b>Industrial:</b>				
6	Plan and then provide better water supply and also sewerage to lots. Investigate preferred size for lots.			



## Where to from here?

There has been a considerable time lapse since September 1997 when Councillors and members of the community gathered to talk about Wingham's future. Since then, members of the task force have examined many issues in detail, and public involvement through workshops has been encouraged. In early May 1999, the taskforce met with Councillors to review and discuss the draft Strategy. Council formally considered the document at its May 1999 meeting, when it resolved to exhibit the draft Strategy.

The Strategy contains many suggestions for a positive response to a changing environment. It presents a framework for achieving the vision for Wingham's future shared by the community and Council.

It is evident that the community will play a pivotal role in the Strategy's successful implementation. It is important that as many people as possible from both within the town and from its rural hinterland are aware of the Strategy and support the adopted approach.

The current stage involves local public exhibition of the Strategy for a period of two months, during which public comment in writing is invited. It is important that individuals and community groups provide feedback on the draft Strategy, either in the form of constructive criticism and/or support for the document, during this period.

At the end of the exhibition period, the task force will review the comments received and appropriate changes will be made to the development strategy. It will then be directed back to Council, accompanied by a report which will include a summary of the context and source of public comment. If the direction and content

of the document has been substantially altered, it will be re-exhibited.

If Council adopts the Wingham Development Strategy in its final form, then steps will need to be put in place for the formation of the Wingham Action Group and the Greater Taree City Council Wingham Advisory Group so that the proposed charter may be adopted. Members of the community will be invited to join the Action Group and nominations will be called for office bearers before elections are held. It is not too early for individuals to consider what role they may wish to play in Wingham's future through this group, and how best they can support their local town and community.

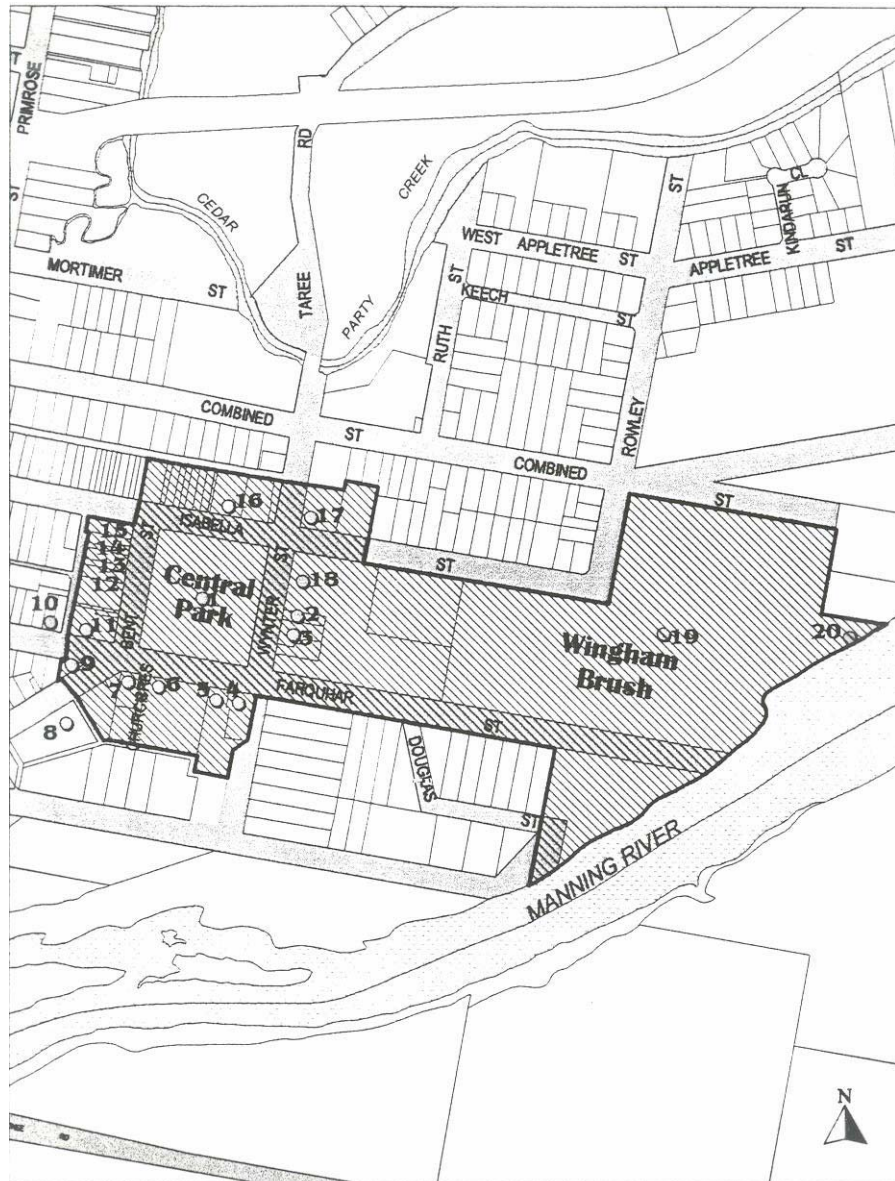


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## Notes

# WINGHAM HERITAGE Appendix A



## 1. *Central Park*

The 'village green' forms a focus for commercial uses and public buildings. This formal 'square' provides a transition between Wingham Brush and the commercial centre.

## 2. *Wingham School of Arts*

Built in 1907 in late Victorian design, it is a good example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century design with detail intact.

## 3. *Wingham Post Office*

This imposing two-storey brick building was built in 1884 and together with the School of Arts, contributes to the balance of the buildings around Central Park.

## 4. *Wingham Craft House (Old Court House)*

Although a later (1938) addition to the Wingham townscape, this modest single storey building in Georgian revival style complements the adjoining earlier Police Station.

## 5. *Wingham Police Station*

This single storey Federation building with generous timber verandahs is believed to have been built around 1882. It is in excellent condition.

## 6. *Wingham Catholic Church*

The scale and detailing of this large church and adjacent iron belltower help establish the importance of the parish.

## 7. *Manning Valley Historical Society Museum*

This former general store was opened as the museum in 1968. The building, in original condition, is also important due to its strategic location.

## 8. *Anglican Church*

This is a good example of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and forms a group with the bungalow style rectory.

### ***9. Gibson & Skinner Butcher Shop***

This unusual corner-site building was built in 1911 and retains its original function. Interesting detail includes the awning shopfront and the parapet featuring a cow's head in relief-work.

### ***10. Shed, Former Stables to Australian Hotel***

The building is a survivor of the timber vernacular, and is an element of the period when the hotel and saleyards were one of the town's important functions. Large round columns support an extensive roof structure.

### ***11. Australian Hotel***

Built during the 1890's, this imposing two-storey brick hotel was at that time credited with being the largest and leading hotel on the North Coast, with excellent stabling accommodation. The architectural feature is the two-storey timber verandah which addresses both street frontages framing its corner location.'

### ***12. Wingham Chronicle Building***

Constructed in 1929, this building exemplifies small commercial buildings of the time. Important detailing includes the parapet with naming panels, and the original shopfronts.

### ***13. Westpac Bank***

This two-storey imposing brick and stucco building was erected in 1928/29. The neo-classical detailing features a bracketed cornice, stucco work in imitation of ashlar, two-storey window mouldings and decorative panels between windows.

### ***14. Maitland's Building***

This building was a very elaborate commercial building when constructed in 1931, and appears to have borrowed some of the neo-classical detailing of the neighbouring Westpac Bank.

### ***15. The Wingham Arcade***

The parapet to this single storey brick and stucco shop is a copy of the detail of the neighbouring Maitlands Building next door, which in turn was inspired by the Westpac Bank building.

### ***16. National Bank***

This single storey brick bank and residence was built in 1885. Important details include the neo-classic gable, decoration, bracketed cornices over openings, and parapet cornice.

### ***17. Wingham Hotel & Stables***

This large two-storey timber hotel is believed to have been built in the 1890's. The returning timber verandah is the main feature of the building. The large timber and iron roof shed located to the rear was previously the stables associated with the horse and saleyard period.

### ***18. Wingham Brush Public School***

The earliest remaining part of the school is a single storey brick section with a steeply pitched iron gable roof and tall chimneys built in 1879. The second main building is the large two-storey brick and tile building constructed in 1933.

### ***19. Wingham Brush***

This is a tiny remnant of the vast riverine rainforest which stretched unbroken along the Manning floodplain from Mount George to the river's mouth. It was originally dedicated in 1909 for the 'Preservation of Native Flora and Public Recreation' and added to in 1916. The Brush is a major maternity site for the Grey-headed Flying Fox. The mature fig trees form part of a diverse floristic community.

### ***20. Wingham Wharf***

The wharf is one of the few remaining remnants of the Manning River's historic past. It was constructed from turpentine in the 1830s and became a major shipping port in 1835. It was used for the transportation of farming and agricultural produce, at first via punt and then by sailing vessel, to Sydney. Later, steamers and other vessels used the river.

### ***21. Wingham Memorial Town Hall***

This building was constructed in 1924 as a memorial to World War 1. It is located on a high vantage point in the town. With its Californian Bungalow style and clock tower, it is a rare example of architectural style and building type.