

Wagin

Community Development Action Plan



July 2023

Foreword

In Wagin the interpersonal ties count for everything. We know that people matter, connections matter, belonging matters. Our town is FOR its people. For, in the sense that it is people-friendly, safe, courteous, intergenerational, and caring. For, also in the sense that we actively and curiously pursue joy, happiness, pleasure, adventure, art. Wagin's ability to pull together, to dream big, and to rise are defining characteristics.

With a natural, understated beauty, Wagin is an easy place to live, work, and play. A reliable agricultural area, we are rarely tested by climatic extremes or the proverbial 'droughts and flooding rains'. Farmers daily exercise vulnerability and courage, an attitude that energises us all in positive and hope-filled ways.

The good can always be made better. This Community Development Action Plan was born out of a deep yearning to celebrate all that has been inherited and achieved and to strive for prosperity into the future. It is an expression of what we comfortably acknowledge as the best in us while admitting it's time for a re-set. Keeping in balance the rich heritage entrusted to us by previous generations with making way for innovative change for social vibrancy and greater well-being has been the intention.

Committed to improving mental health in rural communities, Rural Aid saw the need for preventative intervention. Strong Communities make for strong, resilient citizens. They had to wisdom to engage Peter Kenyon, a WA local and world expert in stimulating small country towns towards empowerment and enterprising renewal. This man is legendary for his enthusiasm, storytelling, facilitation, and challenge to creative new beginnings. Contributions from the community eager for refreshed branding, after listening and laughing, collaborating and caring, has given birth to this valuable document.

The superficial redecorating, shifting furniture, or paint job of our hometown would have been relatively easy. The deeper work of realigned values, affirming innovation, and daring greatly in expressions of passion and purpose is more precious. It is the greater work to a richer, more content, and healthier us.

Just as people grow and embrace change, so too our town chooses in these pages to grown in dynamic and purposeful ways to express hospitality, share beauty, offer welcome, create opportunity, and celebrate endeavour. Wagin is our place of belonging and of being – our home – where, as before, we commit ourselves to join together with heart and hand to secure a beautiful future.

Wendy Pederick

Acknowledgements



The formulation of this Community Developed Action Plan was initiated and coordinated by the Wagin Community Builders Team – Londa Finlayson, Wendy Pederick, Clancy White and Xavier White. It was funded by Rural Aid as part of their commitment to supporting Australia's small rural towns. The formulation of the Plan was undertaken by Peter Kenyon from the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. and Jen Curnow-Trotter from Rural Aid.

Special thanks to so many passionate community members and organisations who generously shared their time, wisdom and experiences.

Our Story



Our proactive and historically attractive community is located 228 kilometres south-east of Perth in the Central South Wheatbelt. We are the centre of thriving merino stud and grain industries. We are proud to be the home of three nationally recognised iconic creations- the Giant Ram- 'Bart' the world's largest anatomically correct ram), the Wagin Historical Village (WA's largest regional historic complex) and Woolorama (WA's largest country agricultural show) which attracts up to 30,000 visitors.

The name of our town is derived from Wagin Lake, a usually dry salt lake south of the town. The lake's name is of Noongar origin - 'Waitjen' and was first recorded by a surveyor in 1869-72. There is some debate about its meaning - either "place of emu" or "site of the foot tracks from when the emu sat down" or "emu's watering place."

Noongar people occupied the district for thousands of years. Initial non-Indigenous settlers arrived in the mid 1830's as sandalwood cutters. Of the 14 Noongar tribes in the southwest, Wagin is the traditional areas of the Wilman people.

Land was granted to pastoralists in the Wagin area from the late 1870s. The town itself came into existence after the construction of the Great Southern Railway, completed in 1889. Wagin was proclaimed a town in 1898.

Today our progressive community of 1800 people services a strong farming community engaged in sheep, cattle and the cultivation of wheat, barley, oats, canola and lupins. Outside of agriculture, Wagin is home to a number of industries and service providers, largely based around its primary agricultural sector.



Our Vision

A proactive, vibrant and family-friendly community, embracing our traditions and innovative ideas in order to create progressive and community-led opportunities for all generations to live, work, play and age well.

Our Goals

Below are the six community goals which guide our community aspirations, namely –

- To retain families in our community by continually strengthening our enjoyable rural lifestyle, local employment opportunities and the necessary support to enable our Seniors to age locally.
- To actively promote and showcase our community as a great place to stop, stay, experience, and reside, especially through a vibrant and welcoming town centre.
- To provide a safe and attractive living environment.
- To build the population base with people, community spirit, and energy.
- To create an environment where our young people feel involved, supported, empowered and encouraged to stay for work, business, family, and lifestyle opportunities.
- To retain, maintain and strengthen our community services.



Our Guiding Values

The following five guiding values and attitudes provide the context for our community's identified actions and initiatives, namely:

- **Sense of Community** - ensuring all our community members experience a deep sense of connection, inclusion and contribution.
- **Collaboration** - appreciating community and stakeholder involvement, partnerships, collective action, volunteerism and active citizenship.
- **Intergenerational solidarity** - creating opportunities for all ages to share, support and learn from each other.
- **Safety** - maintaining high levels of wellbeing, community safety and a low crime rate.
- **Embracing new opportunities** - building upon local assets, capacities and creativity; and facilitating opportunities that enable all our residents to see and experience their community as a place of opportunity.



Our Challenges

Like many small inland rural communities, our community needs to respond creatively to multiple demographic, social, economic and environmental challenges; including:

- Ageing and declining population.
- Volunteer fatigue.
- Lack of rental accommodation.
- Lack of sufficient childcare and after school care.
- Physical appearance of the main streets.
- Tourism appeal.
- Attraction and retention of suitable staff.
- Lack of communication between some businesses and services.
- Lack of collaboration and integration within the aged care sector.
- Freight costs.
- Proximity to the larger towns of Narrogin and Katanning.
- On-line shopping.
- Evening and weekend dining and cafe options.



Our Assets

People

- Community of 1800 people
- Keen volunteers
- Gardeners
- Strong sporting community
- Diversity of skills
- Farmers, shearers
- Teachers, police, celebrants, employers
- Sporting stars
- Doctor, nurses, dentist, carers
- Tradespeople, professionals, retailers, engineers
- Emergency personnel
- Artists, musicians, jewelers, craftspeople, oral historians, film maker
- School chaplain, childcare
- Language skills, Indigenous residents, School Cultural Liaison Officer, Landcare, Care and Share
- Toy library, Wagin Club, 2 Wheels 2 Wagon-Wagin

Social Networks

- Cultural groups - craft groups, dance group, model aircraft, photography/camera club,
- Sporting groups - bowls, tennis, cricket, football, darts, golf, swimming, hockey, netball, gun, trotting, aero, go cart, Wagin Burnouts, Westjet, Gymkanarama
- Churches - Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Uniting, Vineyard
- Social groups - chair exercises, stay on your feet, dance, water walkers, book club, WIFE, tai chi, palliative care, yoga, cards, music club, exercise
- Youth initiatives - Pony Club, Youth Centre, Jess' ballet
- Service Groups - Rotary, WAGS, Lions, Freemasons, CWA, RSL
 - School P & C, School Council
 - CommuniTEA Hub, Davo's Shed
 - Calendar of events

Physical

- Geographic location and proximity to major population centres
- Heritage main streets, heritage buildings
- Rural landscapes, farming lands
- Recreational facilities Recreation Centre, - skate park, playgrounds, pool, gym, grassed oval, motor bike track, town square, community centre, town hall, golf course, tennis courts, netball courts, trotting track, fun club, go kart track
- Historic pubs, convent
- Parks – Ram Park, Wetlands Park, Ninja Park, Hornsby Park, Christmas Tree Park, Stubbs Park, First Nations Park, Piesse Park
- Lakes - Wagin, Norring, Parkerring, Dumblebung. Lake trails
- Puntapin Rock, Badjarning
- Airfield, airspace
- Night sky, wildflowers
- Spaces for potential murals
- Caravan Park, RV park
- War memorial, Historical Village
- Safe and friendly town
- Silos

Our Assets

Culture, Stories & Sources of Pride

- Aboriginal culture and contribution
- Maori culture and contribution
- Special events
- Heritage – award winning Historical Village, heritage trails, heritage main street, buildings (banks, town hall, courthouse, churches, railway station, rail heritage, farming heritage, war memorial)
- Betty Terry Theatre
- Themed road signage, town colour palette
- Cemetery
- Giant Ram - Bart
 - Famous football families - Materas and Riseboroughs
 - The reserves and parks

Institutions

- Shire of Wagin
- Library
- Emergency services- SES, Bushfire Brigade, St Johns Ambulance
- Community Resource Centre
- Wagin School and kindergarten, P&C, playgroup
- Health Services - Hospital, medical centre, home care, Waratah Lodge
- Visiting Services - breast check, skin check, dentist, chiropractor, vet, osteopath, osteoporosis, hearing
- WAPOL
- Red Cross, food relief, Centrelink
- Care and Share, Cottage Homes
- Post Office

Economic

- Businesses - Coop, bank, shearing contractors x 3, mechanic, plumber, electrician, cafés x 2, pharmacy, tyre shop, hairdressers, Elders, butcher, Post Office, transport x3, photographer, hardware, giftware, engineering, IGA, farm and agricultural supplies, lawn mower repairs, dog grooming, lawyer, firewood, Big Bale Co, earthmoving, seed works, Unigrain, Grainfeeds, Gilmac Hay, panel beater, Cresswells, CSBP, auto electrician, Dave Long, Tony Daghish, Steel works, Nutrien, beauticians, fuel stations, vet, school buses, car detailer, ag spraying, ag spreading, bakery, Aurizon, roadhouse, truck centre, real estate, laundromat
- Woolorama, Agricultural Society, Top Crop, farming community, ram sales, duck farm
- Community Resource Centre
- Chamber of Commerce
- Health services - hospital, dentist, doctor
- Accommodation – hotels, caravan park, motel, RV sites
- Monthly markets
- Local Facebook pages, Radio Station
- Bottle refund depot, tip shop
- Tourism assets





Our Strategies & Actions

Priority Project One

Enhancement of Main Streets

ACTIONS

1

1. Form Mainstreet Revitalization Task Team from interested business operators, property owners and local community.
2. Affiliate with the Town Teams Movement.
3. With BOI tools, instigate a Business Expansion and Retention (B.E.A.R.) Visitation Program with all businesses in mainstreets to ascertain what helps and hinders, and ideas to improve the business environment. Liaise and work with other groups committed to business and tourism development.
4. With information from Visitation Program, develop a Mainstreets' Revitalisation Action Plan including actions related to physical appearance, public art, joint promotions, enhanced customer service and a calendar of events.
5. Implement projects from the Action Plan.
6. Instigate regulate pressure cleaning of pavements.
7. Enter KAB annual awards program.

Timeframe: Immediate & Ongoing

LEAD GROUP

**Mainstreet Revitalisation Task Team
Shire of Wagin
WCC**

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

**Wagin Tourism Development Group
Wagin Business Strategy Task Team
Town Team Movement
WCRC
Rural Aid
WDC
BOI
WDC
RDAW
RAC Regional Connected Connected Grants
Regional Arts funding**

Our Strategies & Actions

Priority Project Two

Retention of Waratah Lodge Facility

ACTIONS

1. Explore all options to retain the facility in Wagin for local residents.
2. Enter into discussions with potential providers to manage facility.
3. Research alternative option to create a Multipurpose site with WACHS.
4. Research alternative option to create a comprehensive 'ageing in Wagin' community initiative.
5. Continually communicate and engage with wider community for support.

Timeframe: Immediate & Ongoing

LEAD GROUP

Waratah Lodge Board
Shire of Wagin

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

WACHS and Wagin Hospital
WDC
Wagin CommuniTEA Hub
Aged Care workers



Our Strategies & Actions

Priority Project Three

Keeping Our Elderly Residents Independent and at Home

ACTIONS



1. Form 'Hometown Advantage/Staying in Place' Task Team comprised of representatives of all groups and interested residents committed to supporting seniors.
2. Research options working well in other small towns and potential support related to the Virtual Hub and 'Care together' models.
3. Hold information sessions on possible Wagin model.
4. Develop Wagin model.
5. Develop a virtual Village for implementation.
6. Review office location options.
7. Seek funding support.
8. Launch initiative.

Timeframe: Immediate & Ongoing

LEAD GROUP

Hometown Advantage/Staying in Place Task Team
Wagin CommuniTEA Hub
Home Care
Wagin Cottage Homes
Waratah Lodge
WACHS and Wagin Hospital

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Wagin Seniors
Wagin Doctor
Shire of Wagin
BCCM and their 'Care Together' Strategy
Pingelly Sommerset Alliance
Mable Aged Care Services
Trilogy Care
In Casa Country Aged Care and Community Services
Rural Aid
Co-Operative Bulk Handling Investment Fund
Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal
Lotterywest
Department of Communities

Our Strategies & Actions

Priority Project Four

Construction of a Wagin Pump Track

ACTIONS

1. Form the Pump Track Posse as coordinating group.
2. Engage with Shire on developing concept plans and location.
3. Examine other small town models e.g. Kulin
4. Develop Action Plan and obtain quotes.
5. Raise necessary finance.
6. Construct.

Timeframe: Immediate to medium term

LEAD GROUP

Wagin Pump Track Posse
Shire of Wagin
WAGS

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Local Businesses
Co-Operative Bulk Handling Investment Fund
Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal
Lotterywest
Healthways
DoC youth grants

WDHS
Wagin Youth
Centre
DLGSCI
Rural Aid

Priority Project Five

Instigation of Regular Musical Gatherings

ACTIONS

1. Form 'Musical Gathering' Task Group to plan and organise fortnightly gatherings with changing themes.
2. Identify suitable venue.
3. Advertise and recruit participants.
4. Implement.

Timeframe: Immediate & Ongoing

LEAD GROUP

'Musical Gathering' Task Team

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Local radio station
Uniting Church
Town cultural groups

Our Strategies & Actions

Priority Project Six

Development of Wagin's Tourism Opportunities

ACTIONS

1. Form Wagin Tourism Development Group.
2. Undertake tourism audit of the shire.
3. Formulate a tourism plan.
4. Develop slogan for Wagin.
5. Raise resources for a permanent tourism promotion officer and tourism office.

Timeframe: Immediate & ongoing

LEAD GROUP

Wagin Tourism Development Group
Shire of Wagin
WCC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Local Businesses
Australia's Golden Outback Regional Tourism Organisation
WDC
RDAW
Astrotourism WA
KAB



Our Strategies & Actions

Priority Project Seven

Development of a Wagin Small Business Strategy

ACTIONS



1. Form Wagin Business Strategy Task Team.
2. Liaise with the Mainstreet Revitalization Task Team and Wagin Tourism Development Group in implementation of a Business Expansion and Retention (B.E.A.R.). Visitation to identify what helps and hinders, and ideas to improve the business environment.
3. Instigate regular business networking events.
4. Develop an active Facebook site.
5. Explore the option of opening a co-working space in Wagin.

Timeframe: Immediate & Ongoing

LEAD GROUP

Wagin Business Strategy Task Team
WCC

OTHER PARTNERS

Local businesses
Mainstreet Revitalization Task Team
Wagin Tourism Development Group
Shire of Wagin

WBN
WDC
RDAW
CBHIF

Abbreviations:

BOI	Bank of I.D.E.A.S.
CBHIF	CHB Investment Fund
DLGSCI	WA Department of Plocal Government, Sport & Cultural Industries
DoC	WA Department of Communities
FRRR	Foundation for Rural and Regional Development
HACC	Home and Community Care
KAB	Keep Australia Beautiful
RAC	Royal Automobile Club
RDAW	Rural Development Australia Wheatbelt
WACHS	WA Country Health Service
WAGS	Wagin Action Group
WBN	Wheatbelt Business Network
WCC	Wagin Chamber of Commerce
WCRC	Wagin Community Resource Centre
WDC	Wheatbelt Development Commission
WDHS	Wagin District High School

Wagin

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

