

Goulburn Mulwaree Council – Water Management Strategy

Goulburn Mulwaree Council is currently in the process of developing a Water Management Strategy to provide a long term sustainable solution to water issues in the Local Government Area (LGA). The strategy will be developed in partnership with the community, key stakeholders and a range government agencies, so that potential management options reflect the needs and concerns of these groups.

1.1 What is the Water Management Strategy?

- The strategy is for the Goulburn, Marulan and Tarago urban areas. The work will result in detailed proposals to Council and other funding agencies for initiatives to solve the water crisis in the Goulburn Mulwaree Shire
- The strategy will include the prioritisation of a capital works program, organisational changes to promote efficiencies and the proposals to attract funding for the outcomes
- The Water Management Strategy has two main aspects, technical studies and community consultation. Both of these aspects will run in parallel, with information flowing between the two at various points during the project
- Extensive community engagement will be conducted to ensure that the development of the strategy responds closely to community needs. Council requires the consultation strategy to consider the three urban areas as separate entities, yet the overall strategy will be developed as an overarching scheme
- Goulburn Mulwaree Council demands more than a reactionary response to the water shortages and drought situation. Council is focussed upon forming a progressive, viable, long term solution, which allows for sustainable water use in the future
- Reaching this goal will significantly enhance the lifestyle of the community, the environmental quality of the area, and development potential of the whole LGA

1.2 Why does Goulburn Mulwaree need a Water Management Strategy?

- Goulburn has been experiencing an ongoing water crisis caused by a combination of urban growth, severe drought and increasing demands for water.
 - Water shortages have a significant impact on the quality of people's lives, and limit the opportunities for the community.
 - The Council has responded to the water supply crisis by implementing several management strategies. This has included Level 5 water restrictions, developing an Emergency Supply Contingency Plan, permitting grey water re-use during drought, promoting rainwater tanks, raising community education, and investigating management actions such as indirect potable reuse.
 - The Council is now looking to develop a sustainable, long term solution to the water crisis with the cooperation and support of the local community.
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1.3 Why are we undertaking a community consultation strategy?

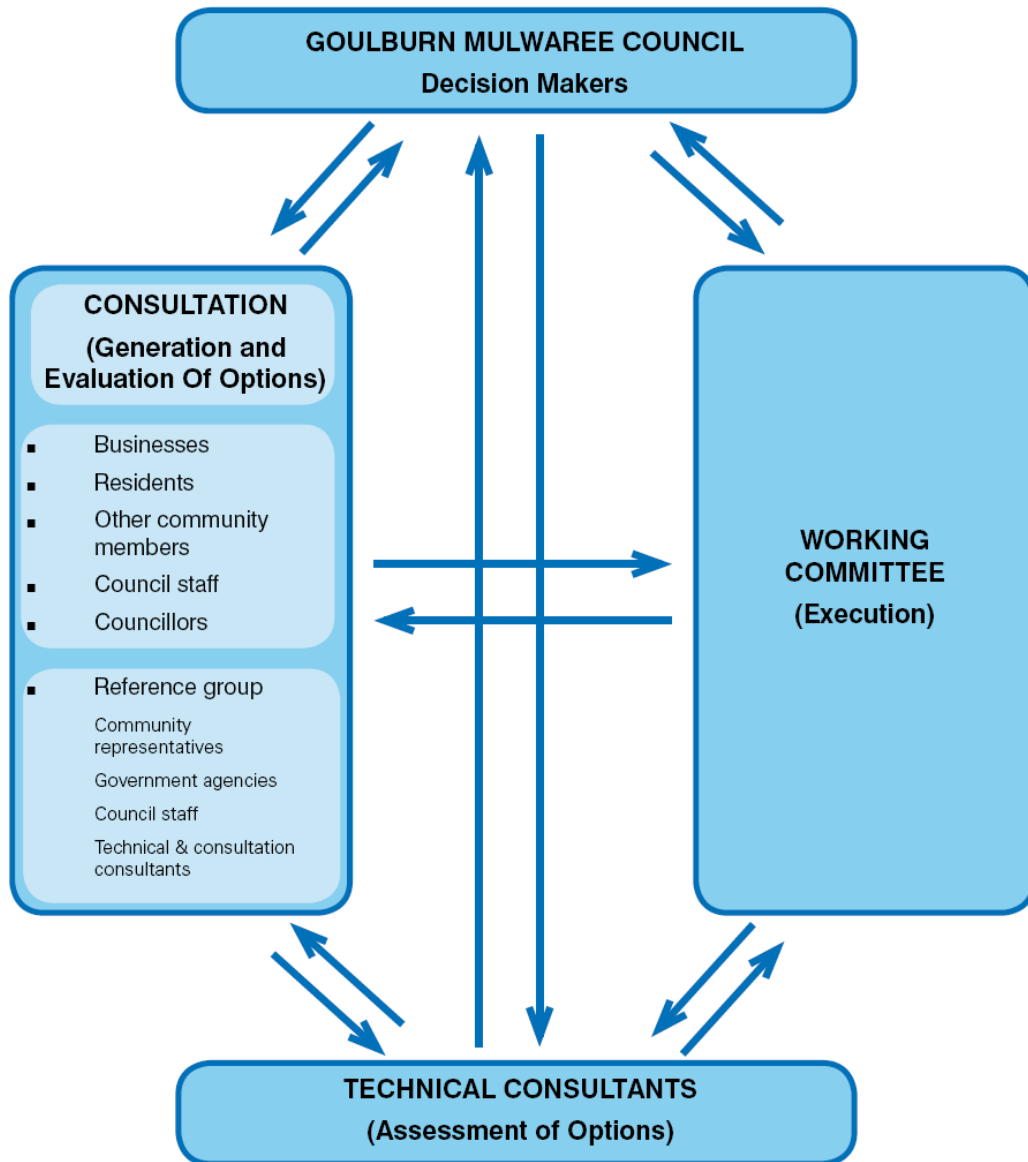
- You have told us clearly that long term water management is a key issue. It has been recognised from other consultation exercises that water is one of the key issues of concern for the Goulburn Mulwaree community.
- The Council seeks to understand the needs and concerns of both the public, key stakeholders and a range of water-user groups so that technical options are developed in partnership with the local community.
- The process for consultation seeks to get a range of community views about what would be the best long term management options for water.
- This consultation process will include groups who do not normally participate in community lobbying and will be underpinned by statistically representative surveys.

1.4 What are the water management options?

- Options are the types of actions which might be put into place to solve the water shortage for the Goulburn Mulwaree community in the long term.
- Options can be anything from physical works to increase storage capacity, to organisational and management arrangements to improve efficiencies, techniques to increase the availability of water or demand management programs to use water more efficiently.
- It is unlikely that consultation will result in a 'silver bullet' solution to the water crisis and it is anticipated that a combination of different options, implemented by different groups, will lead us to more sustainable water use.
- Council has not yet decided upon any options. The consultation process will begin with identifying what options people think are worth considering, and by identifying what the principles are for deciding between various options.
- The options that are identified by the community will then be subject to a technical review. The results of this technical review will then be made available for the community to review and discuss.
- The option to reuse effluent has been subject to a funding application to the National Water Commission. This preliminary proposal is necessary in case there is a requirement to seek their support for funding at a later date. This does not mean that this is an option that is favoured by Council. All options must be supported by the community if they are to proceed.

1.5 The roles of different participants

The diagram below highlights the relationships between the different components of the strategy.



Broadly, the roles of the different participant groups are as follows:

Working Group. The role of the Working Group is to manage the development of the strategy and make decisions about what procedures should occur. This group includes senior Council staff and representatives from the technical and consultation consultants

Community. The role of the community (including local residents, business owners, workers or anyone else that feels they are part of the Goulburn, Marulan or Tarago communities) is to get involved in the consultation so that their views, needs and opinions are known and informed decisions can be made

Project Reference Group. The Reference Group is made up of local community members, industry representatives, government agency representatives and Council staff

members. The Reference Group will assist Council by providing a forum with a range of expertise to further discuss key issues

UrbisJHD (community consultation). UrbisJHD are the community consultation consultants employed by Council to assist with the project. UrbisJHD will conduct the consultation component of the strategy development

Parsons Brinkerhoff (technical review). Parsons Brinkerhoff are the technical consultants employed by Council to assist with the project. They will be developing technical options for water management that reflect the findings of community consultation. The options developed by Parsons Brinkerhoff will be assessed and reviewed by the community prior, to final submission to Council

Council. Council is the water manager and regulator for Goulburn Mulwaree LGA. It is the responsibility of Council to adhere to the statutory requirements of other government agencies and assist the development of water management strategies, in partnership with the community and those agencies

Councillors. As the democratically elected community representatives, Councillors are responsible for the final decisions made on issues affecting the Local Government Area. The findings of the technical review and community consultation will be presented to Councillors, who will then make the final decisions as to what steps will be taken to manage water in the future

1.6 How will the consultation be conducted?

- UrbisJHD are conducting the consultation process on behalf of the Council. They are experts in consultation processes but do not have any views on what the outcomes of the consultation should be or what options should be considered
- UrbisJHD will be carrying out a series of surveys, community and stakeholder workshops, and interviews with a range of stakeholders over the next few months. This will be reported to Council and they will make the final decision on any recommendations made by the community
- At each stage of the process what people have said will be reported for everyone to read. We will be using – Council’s web site, specific project newsletters, community newsletters, press releases and newspaper advertisements

1.7 What consultation has occurred to date?

There was significant planning and research that occurred prior to consultation beginning, this included:

- Initial consultations with staff and key informants
- Presentation to Councillors and Council staff
- Review of existing data and documentation
- Strategic planning and development of a consultation plan
- Stakeholder identification and analysis
- Community profiling
- Review of previous community responses to water related issues in the Goulburn Mulwaree Local Government Area

- A review of consultation techniques relating to water management
- Liaison with Council and other government agencies

Consultation activities to date have included:

- Regular meetings and reviews with the project working group
- Two meetings with the project Reference Group
- Community Vox Pop video, where local people were asked for their views about issues facing the area. The 10 minute video was shown to the project Working Group and the Reference Group and will be shown in community workshops and to Councillors
- Community phone survey, where 581 community members were contacted by phone and asked a range of questions relating to water usage and management
- Business survey conducted in Goulburn, Marulan and Tarago, where businesses were approached in person and offered a survey with similar questions to the phone survey. Over 300 surveys were distributed. UrbisJHD and Council want to hear from as many businesses as possible and we invite anyone to contact us with your comments. Contact details provided on this page
- Community workshops are currently in progress

1.8 The next steps

- The results of the community and business surveys are currently being compiled and will be available through this site shortly
- A series of community workshops will commence in November and continue into December. Those who registered interest through the surveys will be contacted shortly and others can get involved by contacting UrbisJHD through the details available on this page
- A community liaison forum will be conducted by Council, with the Water Management Strategy as a key priority
- Meetings with the project Working Group and Reference Group will take place at regular intervals

1.9 How can I get involved?

For more information on the Community Consultation process and to send us your comments, contact:

UrbisJHD

Email: gmcwater@urbisjhd.com

Free Call Number: 1800 244 863

Fax: 02 8233 9966

Reply paid address: Ms Jill Yeomans, UrbisJHD, Reply Paid 1013

Level 18, 60 Castlereagh Street, Sydney NSW 2000

You can also contact Greg Finlayson, Manager Water Services at Goulburn Mulwaree Council on Ph: 02 4823 4809 or gmcwater@goulburn.nsw.gov.au