



BUSINESS PAPER

Supplementary Reports Ordinary Council Meeting Wednesday, 14 February 2024

Date: Wednesday, 14 February 2024

Time: 3.00 PM

**Location: Shire Chamber
Coonamble**

**Tim Horan
Mayor**

Order Of Business

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10 REPORTS TO COUNCIL

10.22 ENDORSEMENT OF 'REAL COUNTRY' TOURISM DESTINATION STRATEGIC PLAN AND SUITE OF BUSINESS CASES

File Number: G5

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Annexures: 1. Responses to the Real Country Business Case and Strategy Development project [↓](#) 

PURPOSE

To accept and consider submissions received during the public exhibition of the draft Real Country Destination Strategic Plan and the suite of Business Cases for priority projects.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Three deliverables were finalised under the 'Real Country' Business Case and Strategy Development collaborative project between Coonamble, Gilgandra and Warrumbungle Shires:

- Community Engagement Report (explaining how the community was engaged and what was learnt from that engagement, for the information of Council and the community).
- Draft Real Country Destination Strategic Plan (detailing the strategy and key points of focus for the development of a regional tourism industry).
- Draft Business Case documents for a priority project in each of the three Shires (giving detailed proposals, costings and ongoing operational costs – with Coonamble's being development of the Warrena Creek Reserve).

The draft Destination Strategic Plan and draft Business Cases were publicly exhibited during January and early February 2024.

The three Councils are now required to consider the submissions (tabled as a separate report), endorse the Strategic Plan and business cases (having taken the submissions into consideration) and implement the Strategic Plan and projects proposed in the business cases.

The tabling of submissions to Coonamble Shire Council is required to finalise the project's documentation in line with the funding deadlines set by the State Government, noting that three Councils are involved, with varying meeting schedules.

BACKGROUND

During the past three years Coonamble, Gilgandra and Warrumbungle Shire Councils have collaborated on the development of a regional tourism industry, using the branding of 'Real Country'.

The partnership was successful in attracting funding, under the Business Case and Strategic Development Fund, and engaged *People, Place and Partnership* to develop the required documentation.

The consultant visited each of the three regions and, in Coonamble, consulted the community in general and the Local Aboriginal Lands Council, accommodation and tourism providers.

This Real Country project is strategically aligned with State and local strategic plans and community priorities and vision for the future, particularly:

- The NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030
- Destination Country and Outback – Destination Management Plan 2022-2030.
- Castlereagh and Western Plains Regional Economic Development Strategies.
- Individual Council's Community Strategic Plans and relevant strategy documents.

The infrastructure projects prioritised for the Business Cases centre on the natural beauty of the Castlereagh River and other waterways flowing through the Real Country region, with the stunning backdrop of the Warrumbungle Mountains. They also celebrate cultural diversity and recognise Wailwan, Gamilaraay and Wiradjuri Country.

The vision for the Real Country region is one of building economic resilience by lessening reliance on agriculture as the sole economic driver for local economies, which in times of drought, has significant negative impact on all sectors of the community. By developing the Real Country region as a destination for tourists, their spending will contribute to sustaining local businesses during such times. The Destination Strategic Plan sets out how to accomplish this.

The Business Cases offer investment-ready projects for future funding opportunities.

It was agreed among the three participating Councils that the value of each of the catalyst Business Case projects would each be of some \$5 million.

It should be noted that the initial project site in Coonamble was at Smith Park, however, following community consultation with accommodation providers, service organisations and clubs and the general community, this focus was shifted to the Warrena Creek Reserve that was identified as a site giving greater recreational value to both locals and visitors. A two-stage development is now proposed for Warrena Weir, with the first stage being costed for the Business Case.

(a) Relevance to Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

- ED1.2 Develop our economy, including the visitor economy.
- I1.5 Adopt successful strategies that maximise our community's access to quality infrastructure and assets.

(b) Financial Considerations

- None at this stage. The grant is being managed by Gilgandra Shire Council. The recommendation is to accept the documents for future funding opportunities as they arise.

COMMENTARY

The three documents – the Community Engagement Report, the draft Real Country Destination Strategic Plan and the draft Business Cases – were publicly exhibited from 20 December 2023 to 9 February 2024.

Media coverage included print, radio and television with coverage across:

- Prime7 News
- 2DU radio
- Sunday Telegraph
- Western Plains Media
- Daily Liberal
- Gilgandra Weekly
- The Coonamble Times
- Coonabarabran Time

Information was provided on the three Councils' social media platforms, as well as via email distribution to businesses, community groups and economic development committees and Chambers of Commerce.

Community submissions received to date include questions and concerns regarding flood management, river health, water security and funding. Supportive comments speak to tourism spend, beautification and local pride. The number of submissions is inversely proportional to the participation in the community consultation meetings. Where there was significant engagement by the community in these meetings, such as in Coonamble and Coonabarabran, few submissions questioned the proposed projects; where only a handful of people engaged in the community consultation meetings in Gilgandra, many submissions have been received.

People, Place and Partnership, the consultant engaged for the project, has also provide commentary in response to the submissions.

Funding is due for acquittal with the NSW Government by 31 March 2024.



Coonamble Shire Council
 January 30 at 11:21 AM · 🌐

Have Your Say – Warrena Weir Reserve development
 Coonamble, Gilgandra and Warrumbungle Shire Councils have placed on public exhibition the draft Strategy documen... [See more](#)

ire Council
 January 16 at 1:10 PM · 🌐

REAL COUNTRY STRATEGIC PROJECT

ra and Warrumbungle Shire Councils are thrilled to announce the Real Country Strategic Project and present the Draft Strategy and concepts of Infrastructure elements. The Real Country Project is a collaborative project councils focusing on enhancing our visitor experience, promoting the Real and supporting economic initiatives an... [See more](#)



👤 Xanthe Kew, Behn Monley and 26 others
 18 comments 8 shares



The Daily Telegraph



'The outback beach': Triple tourism treats proposed along bush river

Three sister councils in the state's west have teamed together to attract tourism with a "town beach". Here's what else is included in the plans.



The concept design for a potential beach in Gilgandra. (Supplied)

The rise of the inland beach

Laura Williams
23 January 2024, 5:40 PM

Wagga Wagga's beach on the edge of the Murrumbidgee River has long made top 10 lists for best beaches across Australia. Now, it looks like towns in the Western Plains are striving for a piece of the prize.

The business case for Real Country - a tourism collaboration between Gilgandra, Coonamble and Warrumbungle shires - has been released, with

None of the submissions received from any of the Council areas addressed the Strategy document. Council officers involved in the project across all three Shires find the document adequate for the twin aims of marketing the region and in supporting future grant applications.

Two submissions addressed the proposed Business Case for the development of the Warrena Weir Reserve, one from an individual (Submission 10) and one from the Coonamble Aquatic Club (Submission 25). Both are in favour of the project, in principle, with the Aquatic Club raising some concerns about future management of the site.

Given this support, it is recommended Council accept the submissions and endorse the Strategic Plan and Business Cases, anticipating that significant future development at the Warrena Weir Reserve would be funded through grant monies.

When adopted, the proposed two-stage development at the Weir will be incorporated into the draft Warrena Creek Reserve Plan of Management. The operational concerns of the Coonamble Aquatic Club can be addressed during public exhibition of this draft Plan of Management and any modifications to the proposed development considered at that time.

Once accepted by Council and forwarded to Crown Lands for its endorsement, it is likely that only those proposed works and operations included in the Plan of Management will be approved by Crown Lands, thus the importance of capturing and including all possible development and operational concerns now, rather than request approval for a usage not within the Plan of Management.

(a) Governance/Policy Implications

A Plan of Management for the proposed Warrena Creek Reserve will need to be finalised and endorsed by Crown Lands to allow the developments proposed for this site. New policies may also be needed to manage public utilisation of the site.

(b) Legal Implications

There are no legal implications in relation to the endorsement of the documents.

(c) Social Implications

A particular focus has been on not only developing projects that have appeal to tourists but that also increase local community usage of key sites, such as Warrena Creek Reserve in Coonamble.

(d) Environmental Implications

The proposed Warrena Creek Reserve development continues existing usage.

(e) Economic/Asset Management Implications

External funding will need to be pursued to realise the proposed Warrena Creek Reserve development, with the possibility of a co-contribution from Council being required. Asset management plans will need to be developed and implemented for any built infrastructure.

(f) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications at this time in endorsing the documentation.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Note the community submissions received, along with the commentary provided by the consultant, *People, Place and Partnership*.
2. Formally endorse the Real Country Destination Strategic Plan and the Business Case for the Warrena Creek Reserve, incorporating any amendments following consideration of relevant submissions.
3. Note the learning captured in the Community Engagement Report, from *People, Place and Partnership* and incorporate this into future community engagement initiatives where appropriate.
4. Authorise the General Manager to pursue opportunities to fund the implementation of the endorsed business case for the Warrena Creek Reserve development and the marketing initiatives detailed in the Real Country Destination Strategic Plan.
5. Consider allocating funding in the 2024-25 Budget to begin implementation of marketing strategies identified in the Real Country Destination Strategic Plan.
6. Finalise the draft Plan of Management of the Warrena Creek Reserve to guide future development at the site.

Public Exhibition Submissions Feedback

The Real Country Project has elicited a broad spectrum of community feedback, with a total of 25 submissions being received during the exhibition process, reflecting a dynamic balance of enthusiasm and concern. While there is strong support for the vision to enhance tourism and recreational amenities, apprehensions about sustainability, safety, and resource allocation underscore the importance of responsive and adaptive planning.

With specific feedback falling under three key areas:

Feedback and Acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy

The community sentiment is mixed, with some expressing strong support for the project's potential to enhance tourism and local recreation, while others are concerned about the practicality and sustainability amidst flood risks. Considerations include ensuring thorough planning that accounts for environmental and safety considerations, and leveraging local expertise to ensure infrastructure resilience. The Real Country Destination Strategic Plan has been updated to ensure river activations are safe during flood events, with each Council responsible for monitoring. Additionally, digital signage installed in town centres will provide operational updates and advise during weather-related events, ensuring visitor and community safety and informed decision-making.

Additional Ideas for Future Consideration in Tourism Infrastructure for Real Country

Community feedback suggests interest in diversifying recreational offerings, such as splash parks and adventure playgrounds, which are considered safe and appealing for families. There's a call for investment in local infrastructure that directly benefits residents and has the potential to attract visitors sustainably. Considerations focus on incorporating community-supported amenities and ensuring maintenance and safety are integral to the project designs. The community's feedback will be instrumental for the Real Country Councils in shaping future planning and strategic endeavors. This engagement process's insights will guide the enhancement and development of initiatives and catalyst projects within the Real Country Destination Strategic Plan, ensuring that community preferences and ideas are central to evolving recreational and infrastructural offerings.

This collective feedback underscores the necessity for a collaborative approach, ensuring that the projects not only captivate the unique spirit and needs of the Real Country region but also stand as testaments to the community's shared aspirations and concerns. As we move forward, integrating these insights will be crucial in sculpting projects that are both visionary and grounded, promising a future where every initiative enriches the community's fabric and resilience.

Submission #	Have Your Say	Response from PP&P
Submission 1	This looks like it's already a done deal as every strategy and initiative thought up by the Council or their expensive consultants always is - you do not listen to residents and state you carry out consultation but it's merely a tick in the box exercise as nothing ever changes as a result of resident feedback - most people now don't even bother giving feedback! The signs as you enter the Gil region are in a font that you cannot read whilst driving and do not suit Gilgandra to passing trade as they have no idea what the town has to offer - even our own residents don't get the signs rainbow colours and why have the Councils tag line on signs that are aimed at getting people into our town? The beach idea will end up being another dog toilet like the windmill walk and not too sure the lack of water in the river has been thought through? However, crossings over the river providing a robust circular river walk and cycle track would be a good addition as there is really nowhere to have a decent walk or bike ride. Interactive signage along the walk/cycle track would add value and make the walk more interesting. I think the windmill and cooee marcher themes should be strongly represented throughout any improvements as that is what Gil is known for and pays respect to those that made a difference to how we are able to live today. I think there needs to be a draw card in Gil like other towns have silo artwork (I know it is challenging whilst operational) or we could be known for the big Why don't we have the biggest windmill in Australia or the biggest cooee marcher in Gil? Not sure having the library in the main street is a draw card, if anything a waste of an opportunity and the time it has taken to refurbish the Target store is a joke - as was how long the visitors centre refurb look. The new building looks pretty ordinary and does not stand out in any way. I don't have confidence the projects will be delivered efficiently or on time, it'll probably be a big mess for ages and then celebrated by the Council as a great success - people are not stupid. The pool is in dire need of replacement with a much more functional and fun space with classes e.g. aqua aerobics - could this be the focus or outdoor gatherings rather than a beach which will become a health hazard.	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Supports the development of river crossings to facilitate a circular river walk and cycle track, offering residents and visitors a quality outdoor activity option. Supports the introduction of interactive signage along the walk/cycle track to make the experience more engaging and educational, featuring themes like the windmill and Coe-ee March.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Establish a unique drawcard for Gilgandra, such as having the biggest windmill or Coe-ee marcher in Australia, to attract visitors and celebrate local heritage.</p>
Submission 2	Why is there no garages along Warren road even at the front, and no beach need to Eastend, the swimming pool with waves and sand that would be the best idea. If it floods of everything gets washed away. I've just moved up from Newcastle six months ago and would be great to see this in the community and Support. Thank you Daniel Robertson	<p>Feedback on general council matters outside of the Real Country scope of works</p> <p>This submission advocates for enhancing the existing swimming pool with beach-like features such as waves and sand as an alternative to flooding risks associated with the river location of the proposed river activation.</p>
Submission 3	This aspirational and coordinated vision defined by the Castlereagh River is long overdue, for example walking along the windmill walk and seeing the Macquarie Marshes signage has caused consternation among many of us in this region who would like the natural beauty and amenity of the region to be highlighted alongside existing Warrumbungle tourism beacons and the small villages and town centres of the three councils. Secondly, local destinations need to be innovative and vibrant hubs with their own character when promoting Real Country economic hubs as a drawcard to Outback, Rural and Regional visitors or those driving North to South on-route so investment in grants/programs to promote town beautification and shopfront signage, irrigated trees and green spaces will enhance this vision - no one enjoys vacant shopfronts with rental signs or property banking on the main street front. Regional tapestry (Exemplar Gilgandra) should be inclusive and interwoven with the stories of how people live, enjoy and grow in a place so the strategy should utilise existing clubs and hubs for example Cooee Heritage Centre, Gilgandra Museum, Gilgandra Community Garden, Gilgandra Garden Club, Gilgandra Walking Group, The Yarning Circle, The Windmill Walk, Cactus World, Sporting Clubs and other clubs, the Gilgandra Library as a hub for connections, innovations to grow and technological outreach alongside the economic hub will enhance visitor experience and connection. However one thing which annoys me more often is a silo mindset, the lack of information for visitors regarding health, education and college, safe campus offerings - lets assume we are trying to induce travellers and tourists to stay and settle and grow our regions from the outset so I think - adding the following - Page 14. 6/ Advocate	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Appreciation for integrating natural and cultural assets with tourism strategies promoted in the Strategy Supports the emphasis on showcasing the region's beauty alongside existing attractions.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Enhance local destinations into vibrant hubs with unique characters. Recommendations for town beautification, shopfront signage, and green spaces. Leverage local clubs and community infrastructure for enhanced visitor experiences.</p>

	<p>Migration & Relocation Stewardship - Develop and facilitate a package to enhance the potential for regional relocation by offering snapshots on local employment , local accommodation offerings, regional migration & relocation and support offerings for families, enable community preparedness for new residents, provide strong leadership in the region, ensure potential residents are well prepared and assist their decision making with health, education and college, safe offerings and ensure cultural inclusion is highlighted for ALL residents to ensure efforts are made to facilitate ONGOING connections. I have a lot of ideas for this space, so please reach out if you want to discuss this in greater detail. Please start by addressing the narratives of who are REAL Coonamble, Gilgandra and Warumbungle residents- we can't all have third generation precedence. I am in support of the business case projects and the vision and improvements explored, especially the vision to build on existing paths and community infrastructure, including strategic masterplanning and reopening dormant or languishing community, rail, education, health infrastructure to reactivate these precincts.</p>	
Submission 4	<p>I would like to congratulate the three councils on their vision and collaboration for this transformational project. During this difficult fiscal period for all governments, it is critical to undertake the work to be govt investment ready for when economic conditions improve. I also applaud the intention to work with First Nations as long as the initiatives are part of their self determination objectives and Journey. Given the poor BCR which is under 0.5, are there opportunities to stage the project or parts thereof, particularly those which may have a stronger BCR (ie over 1.0) to help leverage support from Treasury. Potentially tap into the Fed RPPP program to undertake this work. In terms of events, you should also consider beach volleyball. Shepparton in Victoria hosted national beach volleyball champs and had to bring in the sand, this something that could be accommodated within the Castlereagh river system and would add to economic outcomes. I think another area to consider is private sector activation and business investment to grow yield even more. While some people will focus on rates, roads a rubbish; this project will be important to grow and diversify the region's economic base. Well done on this transformational initiative.</p>	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Commends the councils' collaborative vision and the project's transformational potential. Highlights the importance of being government investment-ready and working with First Nations on self-determination objectives.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Suggests staging parts of the project with stronger Benefit-Cost Ratios (BCR) to leverage support. Recommends considering beach volleyball events within the Castlereagh River system and private sector activation to enhance economic outcomes.</p>
Submission 5	<p>Hi. Great idea but....it's hard to support the river improvements when it floods so frequently. What happens to all that work after a flood? Wouldn't all those millions just be washed down the river with every flood? What a complete waste of time and money. Seriously?! What about the plans for the pool? The pool improvements would bring just as much joy to visitors and way more tourists to our town. Also, if you are inviting people to a volatile waterway, will they be safe? How can you guarantee this? I wish you could see how much money a pool upgrade would bring to Gil. A proper olympic pool would accommodate hundreds of visitors at any given time. It would become a venue for western and state events where hundreds of visitors (and their families) would have no choice but to come to Gil. They will stay in our motels and caravan parks. They will spend money in our local stores. They will tell others about our town. Anything "touristy" you create will only ever be a choice for visitors and will never guarantee those numbers. Please please please, pull your head out and actually realise that a new pool will far outway a "beach" on the river. Put your money where it counts. You could always build a pedestrian bridge over the highway, from the pool to the river.</p>	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Concerns about the feasibility and resilience of river improvements due to frequent flooding.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Strong advocacy for pool improvements, suggesting an Olympic pool could attract visitors and host events, thereby boosting local tourism and economy.</p>
Submission 6	<p>I believe that the main industry and the reason Gilgandra exist is to service the Agriculture sector As such rural rate payers contribute a large amount of the shires budget but at the current time the roads in the shire are in a terrible state of repair and need a lot of money spent to improve them to an acceptable level to service the rural business that keep Gilgandra alive spending this much money on this project shows how out of touch the councillors and general manager are to the rate payers of the shire</p>	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Highlights the perceived disconnect between the council's priorities and the needs of rural ratepayers, emphasising agriculture as Gilgandra's main industry.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>No specific suggestions for tourism infrastructure were provided in the comment.</p>
Submission 7	<p>Hi As owners of the Gilgandra Caravan Park business we support and commend Council for their efforts to attract more tourism to the town. We do have some concerns about the proposed "beach" which is planned to be immediately adjacent to our business and home. The imagery and information provided is inconsistent and unclear in relation to the location of the proposed beach. We are concerned in particular about the following: 1. There is major inconsistency in the level and the quality of the water in the river at the proposed location. Should a dam be built to provide a more consistent, above ground water supply this would have a potential detrimental effect on our business when there is a surfeit of water upstream, creating a flood risk. 2. There is a lack of toilets at the site which would probably mean that instead of walking across the bridge to the public conveniences, patrons of the beach would attempt to access our toilets. This would not be acceptable. 3. The map shows a P for parking sign in our Caravan Park. We would not expect anyone attending the beach to access our Park in any event unless they are already a paying customer. 4. We are concerned about the risk of the site attracting antisocial behaviour, particularly at night, given the proximity to our Caravan Park where our customers are sleeping. The town isn't policed at night and we feel that the risk is too great to ignore. We would like to ask how the Council proposes to deal with any potential poor behaviour, particularly with reference to Drugs and Alcohol. Has any consideration been made to locate the beach on the other side of the river which is where the facilities are and would give easier access to the town and retail opportunities for visitors. The photo montage provided appears to show the view with the beach on the town side of the river and adjacent to the bridge rather than the location which is indicated on the map. We would like to be involved in the development of the detailed design in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts to our customers, our business and our home. Thank you Tracy</p>	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Support for council efforts to attract tourism but concerns about the proposed "beach" adjacent to local businesses and residents.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Concerns regarding water level consistency, flood risk, lack of toilets, potential misuse of caravan park facilities, parking misrepresentation, and risks of antisocial behaviour. Suggestion to consider relocating the beach for better access and to mitigate potential negative impacts.</p>
Submission 8	<p>This is a great opportunity for all Councils working together as one for our Communities</p>	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p>

		Expresses positive recognition for the collaborative efforts of all councils working together for the benefit of their communities.
Submission 9	To have a country beach located in Gilgandra is beyond ridiculous. The river can be a dangerous place for swimming, will there be lifeguards to moderate and ensure everyone's safety. Gilgandra council can't even keep the pool open for the whole day due to their inability to pay staff to work there. Yet you want to waste money on creating a beach. Seriously fix the pool first or design a water park it would be much safer for kids and families. As a person who lost a family member in a drowning in this Castlereagh river, I am disappointed and appalled that Gilgandra Council thinks this is a great idea. I hope you start listening to your town rather than just your "council" to facilitate projects and needs in the future.	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Expresses strong concerns about the practicality and safety of creating a beach in Gilgandra, highlighting the river's potential dangers.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Suggests prioritising the repair and enhancement of the existing pool or designing a water park as safer alternatives for kids and families.</p>
Submission 10	I love the idea of the pontoon going out into the river. I think the swimming area at the weir is fantastic along with the beach. I have taken my kayak there and we are thinking of forming a club for kayaking and paddle boarding. A shed to house these would be fantastic too. It is a beautiful area and it would be great to utilise it more. Tourists would visit these also. I totally agree with Tim Horan, that we need to develop agri tourism. I do farm tours on my property, give people samples of grain etc and they love it.	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Positive feedback on the idea of a pontoon and the creation of a swimming area at the weir, along with support for the beach concept.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Suggests forming a kayaking and paddle boarding club with a shed to house equipment, highlighting the area's beauty and potential for increased tourist activity. Advocates for developing agri-tourism, sharing personal experiences of conducting farm tours and providing samples, indicating a strong interest from visitors.</p>
Submission 11	The plan is very extensive with lots of reading. I like most of the ideas presented. The concrete walking bridge would be washed away in the first flood/flow by the flow of water and debris.	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Expresses general approval of the ideas presented within the extensive plan.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>No additional ideas provided; the feedback focuses on a concern within the existing plan.</p>
Submission 12	I'm really excited by the concepts presented by council. Creating more access to the river frontage is really important for increasing locals and visitors appreciation for the environment encompassing our town. It will also be nice for kids/young people to have a free and inviting place to swim/walk/relax close to the CBD. I use the windmill walk almost everyday and am thrilled by council's concept for increased pedestrian access across town. Weed management along the river system is welcome news as well.	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Expresses excitement about the council's concepts, especially valuing increased access to the river frontage and its potential to enhance local and visitor engagement with the environment.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Appreciates the efforts to create a free and inviting space for recreational activities like swimming, walking, and relaxing close to the CBD, highlighting the importance of connecting people with natural surroundings.</p>
Submission 13	Dear Gilgandra Shire Council, I hope this email finds you well. I wanted to express my appreciation for Katherine's efforts in the Real Country project and acknowledge the challenges she's facing. However, I would like to bring attention to Tooraweenah, which seems overlooked in the development stages. Despite contributing stunning photos to your campaigns, the village appears to be left out in the plans. It's disheartening to see Gilgandra receiving more attention and grants while Tooraweenah seems to be used solely for its scenic beauty. Which is sad when other shires have addressed their little villages. I suggest providing clarity on the benefits Tooraweenah will receive from the project, aligning with the picturesque images used in your promotional material. Furthermore, I recommend that the council simplifies and explains the plans to the general public. This transparency could foster understanding and support, ultimately reducing complaints and ensuring a smoother implementation. Thank you for your time and consideration.	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Expresses appreciation for the efforts in the Real Country project while highlighting the oversight of Tooraweenah in the development stages and acknowledging the challenges faced.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Suggests ensuring Tooraweenah receives clear benefits from the project, in line with its contribution of picturesque imagery to promotional campaigns, and advocates for addressing the village's inclusion more effectively.</p>

Submission 14	I think a beach replica in the area is honestly a waste of funding and no one would use it	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Questions the value and anticipated usage of the proposed beach replica, suggesting it may be an inefficient use of funds.</p>
Submission 15	Why not have a splash pool for the littler kids or one like lightning Ridge has	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Proposes an alternative to the beach replica, suggesting a splash pool for younger children as a more practical and appealing feature.</p> <p>Additional Ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Recommends considering the implementation of a splash pool similar to the one in Lightning Ridge, indicating a preference for amenities that cater specifically to families with young children.</p>
Submission 16	Looks good. The river will not allow you to build a structure across it, the walk way would have to be in pieces one rise in river level and sand would destroy and cover it.	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Acknowledges the plan's ambition but raises practical concerns about constructing structures across the river due to natural dynamics.</p> <p>Additional Ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Suggests the need for modular or adaptable designs for any walkway to mitigate the impacts of rising river levels and sediment accumulation.</p>
Submission 17	The concept of these ideas would be a good one so long as continued maintenance is done to ensure a clean and safe environment for the ongoing future, depending on the location of some of these plans along the river, thought May also have to be take into consideration about flooding and what that would do to some of the plans if executed specifically the "Gilgandra Beach" which would become a mess from moving logs, grass and possible rubbish swept up by the river, as well as the walk way over the river in one of the supporting photos, depending on the placement this would become covered if the river is to rise unless filtering or draining options are put in for these occasions.	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Recognises the potential value of the proposed ideas, emphasising the importance of sustained maintenance for cleanliness and safety.</p> <p>Additional Ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Stresses the need for considering flood impacts, especially on features like the "Gilgandra Beach" and walkways, suggesting the integration of filtering or draining solutions to mitigate debris and water level issues.</p>
Submission 18	I am for everything but the Gilgandra Beach, for the reason that rivers can be and are dangerous. I remember in my early teens that a small child lost their life in our section of the castlereagh river. I just thing maybe more consideration around this area of the project should be taken.	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Supports the overall strategy but expresses concerns specifically about the "Gilgandra Beach" due to the inherent dangers associated with river environments.</p> <p>Additional Ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Recommends thorough consideration and possibly revising the beach aspect of the project to ensure safety, drawing from personal memories of past tragedies in the river.</p>
Submission 19	It would be great if we could link the walking track from the top of Chelmsford Avenue through to Federation street, especially with the establishment of the aerodrome residential precinct. Currently the amount of heavy vehicle movement on Federation St makes it very dangerous for walking and bike riding. An adventure playground at the CHC would also be a wonderful addition encouraging families and visitors to have a good walk along the river and giving the kids something to be excited about. The boardwalk across the river and the bridge beach sound wonderful, my concern would be the upkeep and maintenance of the additional green spaces.	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Appreciates the strategy but emphasises the need for connectivity enhancements, such as linking walking tracks for improved safety and accessibility, particularly with the development of new residential areas.</p> <p>Additional Ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Suggests extending the walking track from Chelmsford Avenue to Federation Street to mitigate risks from heavy vehicle traffic.</p> <p>Proposes the creation of an adventure playground at the Community Health Centre to attract families and visitors, enhancing the recreational appeal along the river.</p>

Submission 20	<p>Whilst I am broadly supportive of the beautification of the Castlereagh River and the proposal that this will improve tourism I do have some concerns or questions regarding the project- Will this project take resources away from council's main operations. Example being lack of staff currently available to undertake maintenance of Council's assets now (parks, sporting fields, Anzac garden watering system) how does council propose to undertake such a large construction project without it negatively affecting the day to day operations of which are a struggle now? Whilst it is noted that funding will be sought from State Govt - who will be liable to cover any overspend on budget and/or works required outside the project contract and scope which will undoubtable happen along the way? There appears to be a very large portion of the budget allocated to consultants - what is the scope of works for the consultants? What outcome predictions or calculations have been used for the return on this investment to our local residents and businesses (increased foot traffic, additional visitors etc)?</p>	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Broad support for the Castlereagh River beautification and its potential to enhance tourism, with concerns about the impact on council resources.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Questions about the allocation of the project's budget towards consultants and seeks clarity on the expected outcomes and benefits for local residents and businesses.</p>
Submission 21	<p>I do not agree with this project. As soon as there is a flood it will be washed away. It is a complete waste of money. It would be better off spending the money on a free splash water park similar to the one in dubbo that would be safer for families and kids or maybe more things for families to use at the park?. How will you manage sharp objects under the water at the "beach" how will you manage rubbish thats disposed of at the river? How will you deal with people that frequent under the bridge for illegal activities? To all those that live in Gilgandra, Gular and Coonamble know that this is a stupid idea and will be an epic waste of money during the first flood!</p>	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Expresses strong opposition to the project due to concerns about its sustainability in the event of a flood, labelling it as a potential waste of resources.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Suggests investing in alternative family-friendly recreational facilities like a free splash water park, similar to the one in Dubbo, which would be safer and more resilient to flooding.</p>
Submission 22	<p>The concept of access to the Castlereagh is great. My concerns are The engineers really know the Castlereagh River and its quirky ways so that the walkways are accessible. In the Gilgandra Weekly on Tuesday 5 February David Reeves said that Council is aware of community concerns about management of green spaces, but continues to ignore the concerns. The plans need to include an ongoing maintenance program otherwise it will deteriorate into a neglected eyesore similar to the riverbank behind the shops and under the bridge.</p>	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Positive feedback on the concept of improving access to the Castlereagh River, highlighting the importance of leveraging local knowledge for the effective design of walkways.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Emphasises the need for an ongoing maintenance program to ensure the new developments do not become neglected, referencing community concerns about current green space management.</p>
Submission 23	<p>Disagree with these. Money needs to be spent to fix things the basics e.g water n reception first.</p>	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Not supportive of the Real Country program if local council money is invested in the initiatives</p>
Submission 24	<p>This all looks great on paper however the public perception is that the rate payer's money is being spent on this and not roads and other vital things for the rate payers. Perhaps a bit of a publicity campaign to let people know that it isn't the case would be worth while. It will be a great for tourists and locals alike if everyone is on board. It is disappointing that the Warrumbungle Shire is celebrating the Coonabarabran as the northern gateway to the Warrumbungles but the Gilgandra Shire is not celebrating Tooraweenah as the southern gateway, especially as you get a really great view for many kilometres when you enter the park from the south.</p>	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>Concerns about public perception regarding ratepayer funds usage; suggests increased transparency and communication.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p> <p>Opportunity to promote Tooraweenah as the southern gateway to the Warrumbungle, enhancing tourism and local identity.</p>
Submission 25	<p>Letter attached to submission</p>	<p>Feedback and acknowledgement of Real Country Strategy</p> <p>The Coonamble Aquatic Club expresses support for the Warrena Weir Recreation Precinct project, recognising its potential yet highlighting historical underutilisation due to inadequate consultation and resources.</p> <p>Additional ideas for future consideration in tourism infrastructure for Real Country</p>

Suggestions include ensuring the availability of a boat ramp with controlled access, maintaining a fenced area for club members, clarifying the future of the toilet block, replacing non-functional flood gates, ensuring sufficient shelters and seating, and addressing parking adequacy around the ski area. The club also raises concerns about the need for additional accommodation given existing options and queries the management of new visitors bringing boats.

08.02.2024

Coonamble Shire Council
80 Castlereagh St
Coonamble NSW 2829

RE: Warrena Weir Recreation Precinct

To whom it may concern,

The Coonamble Aquatic Club would like to show their support towards this project, we feel the Warrena Weir has always been a fantastic facility for our community that hasn't been used to its full potential due to lack of consultation and assistance physically & financially.

The plans (5.3) page 32-38 look amazing. The committee held a meeting on Monday the 5th of February and would like to put some minor concerns / suggestions forward. We feel that if we can work together, we can achieve an outcome that will be beneficial for the club and local community.

Club concerns / suggestions:

- **BOAT RAMP:** The map on Page 34 of the business case project does not include the boat ramp. Will a boat ramp still be available to members, and will our committee still be able to have this boat ramp locked to control what boats are and aren't on the water?
- **FENCED AREA:** As per previous meetings with Council it was suggested that there would still be some type of fenced area for club members? Will this be the case, or will it be one open area?
- **TOILET BLOCK:** Will the current toilet block stay and be used by the members, or will a new toilet block be built that will service the campers? At a previous meeting with council, we discussed splitting the toilet block.?
- **WEIR FLOOD GATES:** As we all know the flood gates have not been maintained and are not currently in working order, will the flood gates be replaced as part of this project? We feel this is crucial in keeping your new infrastructure flood safe.
- **SHELTERS/SEATING AREA:** In the pictures it looks as though all shelters will be replaced so they all look the same all the way around which we are in favour of but we ask that they be replaced with the same amount of seating, hot summer days when the weir is full we struggle to have enough seating areas around the boating area.
- **PARKING:** Will there be adequate parking around the ski area for cars and boat trailers?
- **PONTOONS:** Is there a legal depth that the water must be around the swimming pontoons? The designated swimming area is in the shallowest part of the weir, is it possible to be cleaned out? Is there a requirement for lifesavers to be in operation when the pontoons are in use?
- **ACCOMODATION:** We question if there is a need for more RV camping and cabins within our community. With the local caravan park, the showground, Nakkadoo, local airbnb's, motels and the potential camping that will be available at the new bore bath facility we feel there isn't a need for extra accommodation options, use maintain and support the options we already have available.

With people using the accommodation that may bring boats with them how do you propose that memberships to the club would be controlled? We are a volunteer committee that aren't available to open the boat ramp at all hours, this would have to be pre organised with the committee and the boat owner would have to provide the committee with paperwork to ensure we are abiding by our insurance policy. If this becomes a popular spot to ski will locals

get priority? At Nyngan caravan park they only allow a small amount of skier to stay as the local ski club is quite busy and it becomes too dangerous on the water.

- WALKING TRACK: All members at the meeting were in agreeance that the best place for the walking track would be along the top of the existing levy bank. Some of the concerns that come from members were:
 - Will the track be fully fenced to keep motorbikes off the track?
 - How will the track hold up in a flood?
 - Will there be disability access to the track?
 - Will there be emergency access to the track? There are quite a few points of access for emergency crews along the top of the levy.
- MAINTNANCE: Our biggest concern is the maintenance that will be involved in this, and the other projects proposed. Most businesses in town are struggling when it comes to employing staff, the community is at an all time low when it comes to recruitment options. Currently volunteers maintain the weir grounds, when they are extended to the proposed plans that will not be possible.

As we have said we are in favour of a revamp of this area, we believe we need it. Keep it SIMPLE, SIMPLE works in the bush and it's been proven by other councils.

Members have been and used other ski and water recreational areas around and we urge you all to take the time to go look at them for yourselves. Forbes, Goondiwindi and the Bogan shires are all great examples of these.



Paul Wheelhouse
Club President



Tessa Pennell
Club Secretary