
Walgett District Historical Society Strategic Plan



Prepared by the Walgett District Historical Society in
association with Museum Planning Services Australia
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1. BACKGROUND

The Walgett and District Historical Society Museum is located in the former Walgett Shire Council Chambers in the town's main street. It is a significant public building in close proximity to the current council headquarters and Visitor Information centre.

Over several years the Society has worked with the Shire Heritage Advisor, Mr Richard Wesley, of Museum Planning Services Australia to prepare a strategic plan to guide the future direction of the museum and more generally, the society. This desire to devise a plan had been prompted by a number of outstanding and un resolved issues including:

- Concerns about the condition of the museum building
- The acquisition of the Masonic Lodge and a requirement to manage it successfully over the long-term
- A desire to explore opportunities to expand the contribution of the society to the community
- A long-term desire to strengthen community interest in the town's history
- A recognition that the Society needs to significantly increase its membership if it is to remain viable
- A need to place individual initiatives undertaken over the last three years within a coherent context.

A series of formal and informal meetings have been held over the last two years and the following plan is the result of this work.

2. THE MISSION OF THE WALGETT DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

“The mission of the Walgett District Historical Society Museum is to collect and interpret evidence of the history of Walgett Shire, and in so doing, inspire public support for the protection of the Shires heritage.”

3. STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE MISSION

Five strategies have been identified to implement the mission of the WDHS. They are;

- Undertake activities designed to **popularise** community interest in local history. Target groups include schools, the recently retired, elected officials and families.

- **Publicise** threats to heritage in the Shire and **support** individuals and groups seeking to preserve historic buildings, traditions and landscapes.
- Effectively **manage** and **develop** the WDHS Museum and the Barwon Lodge Historic Site as important community assets where collections are preserved and interpreted for the benefit of shire residents and the visiting public.
- **Strengthen** the Society by expanding its membership and increasing opportunities for community involvement in special projects.
- Maximise **links** and **partnerships** with external organisations with similar aims and objectives to the WDHS

4. PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGIES

The WDHS has devised eight programs designed to support and implement the five strategies. A number of these programs have been operating for many years, some have been recently commenced and others are in the planning stage. All are designed to be interlinked and tied back to achieving the organisations mission.

A. Fundraising Program

It is recognised that the Society has to commit itself to a fundraising campaign to support its activities and contribute to the upkeep of the Museum building. Currently the Society is accessing grants from the Commonwealth and State Government for major upgrades. The rental of a room in the museum generates sufficient funds to cover day to day operating expenses while protecting reserve funds.

The objective of this work is to raise on average \$10,000 per year in grant funds.

B. Temporary exhibition program

The purpose of the Temporary Exhibition program is to maximise opportunities for the community to become involved with the museum through a specific project that they have a close association with. The WDHS holds annual displays at the Walgett Show with a different theme each year, and an annual display held September or October. The theme for the September display is usually topical and in 2009 the Museum will be celebrating Walgett's 150th birthday and also 100 years since the first motor car arrived in Walgett.

Other exhibitions arranged as requested. e.g. 2009 has seen Scouts, Guides, Cubs and Brownies, the History of Racing in Walgett, History of St Joseph's School, Old Bottles and History of Sport in Walgett. We

assisted with information for a 50 year Celebration of the Walgett Aero Club. and at the 2010 Walgett Show there will be a display of the History of the Walgett District Pony Club.

The objective of the Temporary Exhibition Program is to undertake two community exhibits per year

C. Collection Management Program

This program is designed to ensure the Museums Collection is properly managed for the long term. The Museum operates the Mosaic Collection Management Software system to record the documentation of the collection and record the location and condition of individual items.

This is an on going task as there is a backlog of data input and research. The collection consists of some 3000 photographic images, a similar number of artefacts and 1000 paper documents.

The aim of the Collection Management Program is to document 200 items per year

D. Building Management and Development Program

This program has three objectives, the refurbishment of the historic fabric, the upgrading of the existing displays and the creation of a new wing for the museum. The estimated cost for these works is \$1,000,000.

Funding for \$150,000 has been applied for to undertake stages one and two. Discussions are on going with the Shire and other agencies interested in the creation of the new wing to house community / cultural activities.

The aim of this program is to raise \$1,000,000 over the next decade, with the existing building completely refurbished by 2012.

E. Oral History and Publication Program

Over the last two decades the Society has contributed to countless articles and publications. Through its website it is actively selling a wide range of publication over the net. The Society is committed to producing four short articles of topical interest for the Spectator newspaper annually and to financially support the reprinting of out of date publications.

The Society is keen to record the memories of its older citizens for use in future displays. In this context the Society is interested in working with senior students and a school history teacher to compile up to 5 video histories using accepted oral history protocols. Several members of the Society have agreed to be subjects for the project and provide guidance. This work would build on activities associated with the Community History Project funded by the NSW Heritage Office.

The aim of this program is to maintain a viable publications distribution service and to establish an on going video based oral history program

F. Website Operation Program

The Historical Society has a long record of undertaking historical research and unearthing interesting historical images. A major difficulty for the society, as with other groups, is to make this information available to the public. One method to overcome this problem is the creation of a new website, such as that produced by the Lightning Ridge Community, or to extend the Walgett Shire Council site.

In 2009 www.walgett.org.au was launched and the Society is committed to the doubling of site content each year for the next three years.

The aim of this program is to maximise digital access to the Societies through its own web portal

G. Schools Program

It has been agreed that Walgett and District Historical Society will offer students in years 6, 9 and 12 in Walgett schools a \$100 prize for the best local history essay. The Society will also arrange for its publication

As part of this program the Society would support interested students to research their area of interest using the museum archives.

The aim of this program is to stimulate interest in Shire history by local school groups.

H. Membership Recruitment Program

The Society recognises the need to expand its membership base and is committed to launching a membership drive. In addition to upgrading membership literature a number of members have agreed to speak at public forums to promote the work of the organisation and the importance of local history.

The Society has also agreed to meet regularly with the Tourist Association and work on areas of common interest including driving and walking guides and new interpretative signage.

Document produced and endorsed September 2009.

To be reviewed on a biannual basis.