



# THE ENTRANCE PENINSULA

## COMMUNITY PRECINCT

ENCOMPASSING: THE ENTRANCE; THE ENTRANCE NORTH; LONG JETTY TOOWOON BAY; BLUE BAY; SHELLY BEACH & MAGENTA

[www.theentranceprecinct.org](http://www.theentranceprecinct.org)

### The Wyong Shire Councils' Director Community and Recreation Services, Maxine Kenyon's presentation, 15 November, 2011 at 7:00pm on "Community and Recreation Services' Structure "



The Vice Chairperson of TEPCP, Anne Rowland welcomed Maxine and thanked her for her attendance. Maxine used a PowerPoint presentation to show the current structure of her Directorate as presented below. Maxine explained that her position is new and was created out of the Service Delivery Review last year. Maxine explained that her background was in community. She has a BA in Welfare and is currently working on obtaining an MBA. She has had a number of positions, starting out as a youth worker in not for profit organisations, in disability services and accommodation services. She was employed in two other Councils where she co-ordinated community development work and social plans. She managed community facilities; then manager of major projects and strategy reporting and innovation as well. She then had a similar role to her present one with Ryde Council before coming to Wyong Shire.

Council realised they needed a Directorate with a focus on the Community with a Director that had community experience. The purpose of the new Community and Recreation Services Directorate was identified as *"Increasing community involvement and connection through education, culture, recreation and engagement and providing well-maintained buildings, facilities and services for the use and enjoyment of community spaces, recreational facilities including cultural pursuits (e.g. libraries)."* Maxine explained that these words were great for the review but she needed something that was easy for my staff to understand and remember. The team developed the following statement that captured what her directorate was about in one sentence:

***"We are in the business of connecting and enabling our community to improve their quality of life"***

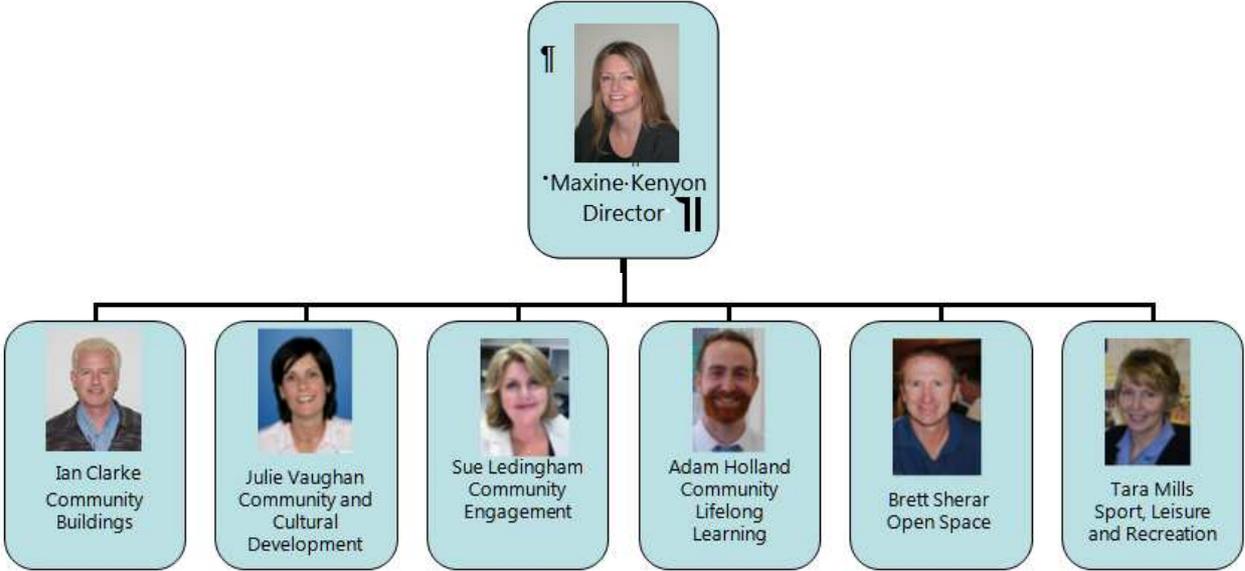
Maxine stressed the importance of everyone recognising that Council was a business. Council has to think strategically about how we run the organisation to make sure it can do the things that the community wants it to do. We are in the business of connecting and enabling. The focus of her directorate is to build up the capacity of residents and community groups to enable them to improve the quality of their life. And what is quality of life? Some people think it's providing parks; some think it's having enough money to support single parents. It's whatever you make it. Each department will have it's individual focus. It had been made very high level to ensure the focus is to improve Wyong Shire for the benefit of residents. Her new challenges included managing such diverse things as beaches and cemeteries.

Maxine manages six teams, with a total of four hundred and fifty eight people in her department. There are twenty five sites, including libraries, child care centres, life guards on beaches, depots and the civic centre. These diverse locations results in the need to for a management focus that makes them feel connected to Council and the Department. There is a lot of part time employees, especially in child care.

As part of the Service Delivery Review six new managers and a new director came on board. This has been a huge change process for the staff in understanding where they are going, how are we going to get there and how do we work together.

Maxine was open in stating that Community and Recreation Services costs Council money. It is not revenue neutral because it delivers important services that the community needs. The majority of the money the Department receives (Income \$16million) comes from council's four holiday parks. 1% of income comes from cemeteries, 2% from the hire of ovals, 4% from Community Buildings and 25% from child care. On the expenditure side we spend \$43million. A lot of money! The emphasis this year on capital expenditure ( about \$1.6million ) has been maintaining our existing assets. Council sees the value in providing services and community centres at a subsidise rate. This results in a net operating loss of about \$28million.

Maxine than described the different teams and what they work on.



**The Community Building Department** is managed by Ian Clark. Ian has 25 years service with WSC. We do work on community buildings, we still have some State Government money for upgrade work, we have a rapid response team to remove graffiti from Council buildings and they look after playgrounds. Half of our playgrounds are over fifteen years old. The audit of Wyong's 159 playgrounds has revealed that we need \$7million over four years to get them to a base level standard. We have started to put in The Master Locksmith Access Key (MLAK) system that allows 24 hours a day access to disabled public facilities. This team also looks after the Long Jetty Depot.

**The Community and Cultural Development Department** is probably well known to TEPCP. They now look after the Precinct Committees which was not the case before the restructure. They held a Precinct Forum to get feedback about community engagement and they are about to come back to precincts and discuss it. This team does the planning, and is undertaking a community facilities review. Council has over 114 community buildings. Some are managed by 355<sup>1</sup> Committees and some are managed by Council and some have fallen by the



way side and that is what we have to look at. On the information we know at the moment, \$5.7million is required to bring our community buildings up to a reasonable standard. This is why capital works in this department has lessened so Council can address it's maintenance issues. This Department is planning so that at budget time the facts can be put to Councillors; that if they want to bring these 114 buildings up to a reasonable standard then they will have to allocate considerable funds.

<sup>1</sup> 355 refers to the section of the Local Government Act under which these committees are established.



The Community and Cultural Development Department manages the cemeteries.

It does a lot of Road safety work. Council has the Cares facility at Palmdale. The Community and Road Education Scheme (CARES) is a road and bicycle education program for Years five, six and seven school groups. This department does a lot of educational campaigns for schools, particularly around environmental issues including Water Wise and the TLEMP<sup>2</sup>. They also look after grants and community events.

There is a grants review underway at the moment. They are looking at how much they are offering, when were offering, what's the criteria and how the money is being used.

**Community Engagement** is managed by Sue Ledingham. What we have started to do is move kiosks out to the Civic Centre and some libraries so people can come in and do things themselves on line. As help is available you can learn to use Council's online services here. They look after all the communications and media. This team runs the front desk at the Customer Contact counter at the Wyong Shire Council Civic Centre at 2 Hely Street ,Wyong. It is responsible for communications, Council's web site and internal intranet, as well as printing and design. Council is advertising for a Community Engagement Coordinator to engage with the community on how Council is talking to the Community, how the Community talks to Council, so you don't find out things at the last minute, when someone has pulled down a tree or a playground and you do not know what is going on. Council recognises it is not perfect, but is putting in place steps to improve. All Council staff will be responsible for Community Engagement in the same way that they are responsible for Customer Service. Every interaction you have with Council, whether it is on the phone, at function or just walking down the street, is important and Council is aiming to entrench this in it's staff.



**Community Lifelong Learning Department** is managed by Adam Holland. This is a new team. It is a combination of the Libraries, Child Care Centres, Vacation Care Centres as well as a focus on partnerships. People in Wyong Shire need to improve their learning. Wyong has a high rate of youth unemployment. The retention of year twelve students is low. Council needs to create opportunities for them to learn, for adults to learn, for children to learn and to embrace learning. Council has done a lot of consultation around life long learning. What is Council's role in it, because it is not Council's role to provide learning programs, its Council's role to facilitate it. There is a lot of new technology being put into libraries. RFID<sup>3</sup> readers are being installed that will streamline the way you borrow books by simply scanning your card. It will prevent the theft of books, CD's and the like. Trials are also being done with Kobo eBooks for young people to see how that works.



TEPCP's Charles and Narelle Harvey enjoy the Library Services at The Entrance Library

<sup>2</sup> TLEMP -Tuggerah Lakes Estuary Management Plan

<sup>3</sup> Radio-frequency identification (RFID) is a technology that uses radio waves to transfer data from an electronic tag, called RFID tag or label, attached to an object, through a reader for the purpose of identifying and tracking the object.

**The Open Space Department** is managed by Brett Sherar. This is where we spend money. Council mows 37million square kilometres each year. We have a number of Landcare groups which Council supports.



Council is investigating "Tidy Towns" and how they work and how do they connect to Landcare and do we need to have both. We do a lot of the work in natural areas. A lot of the work done under \$25million Estuary Management Plan is undertaken by the Open Space team. Council has a nursery, it does the public tree management as well as the dredging of the lake. Council planted over one thousand trees and thirty thousand plants this year. They also manage the booking of sporting fields.

**The Sport Leisure and Recreation Department** is managed by Tara Mills. It is quite a small team, This team does a lot of the planning, when we are looking at open space fields, it does the design of playgrounds. The lifeguards on the beaches are part of this team. Council has just spent \$5million over the last few years to improve their holiday parks. The utilisation of Council's holiday parks has nearly doubled over the past five years. This team liaises with all the sporting groups. Then we have Toukley Swimming Pool, The Entrance Baths, the Lakehaven Recreation Centre and Wyong Swimming pool managed by this team. 42 min



## CHALLENGES

Maxine then addressed the Challenges her Directorate faced:

- **Change -** Maxine said the change has been enormous and was on going. It impacted on the 400 staff in her directorate because many had been there many years and were faced with a new way of doing things and with new people.
- **Systems and Processes -** There are issues with systems and processes. When I started I asked what was the utilisation of our buildings. No one knew! So a lot of work has been done around our systems and processes so that Council has the information needed to make informed decisions
- **Expectations -** Maxine again reinforced the message that her directorate was the **"People Team"** and the expectations from the community, Councillors and other Council Directorates is very high. She advised that she only had so many people, only so many hours in the day and only so much money. That is why it is important that Council informs the community about the how and why of the decisions it makes. Because the is a new Directorate there was a lot of catching up to be done.
- **Plans vs delivery -** Maxine made the observation that Council had a lot of documents that state where we should be, but often fail to tell you how you are going to get there. Taking shared paths as an example she said that the plans showed where they wanted them to go but not how much it would cost and how it could be implemented. The challenge is that Council does not want to construct sections of path ad hoc. Council needs a plan that says why we are doing this work here and not here,

These are the key challenges for my Directorate; change is the big one and we are making a difference in the way we do business. **We are in the business of connecting and enabling our community to improve their quality of life.**

Anne Rowland thanked Maxine for attending and providing TEPCP with a detailed account of the Community and Recreation Services Directorate.

Note taker Doug Darlington