

# Case Study: Marrambidya Wetland

## COUNCIL NAME

Wagga Wagga City Council

## WEB ADDRESS

[www.wagga.nsw.gov.au/city-of-wagga-wagga/environment/marrambidya-wetland](http://www.wagga.nsw.gov.au/city-of-wagga-wagga/environment/marrambidya-wetland)

## SIZE

4826 square kilometres

## POPULATION

63,428

## Overview

Wagga Wagga's major sewerage treatment works has been extensively upgraded. Decommissioned tertiary ponds were decontaminated, reshaped and landscaped to create the 7ha ponds of the Marrambidya Wetland. Water management mimics natural flows and temperatures to address ecological and environmental needs. The wetland was designed to function as a new community and environmental space with multiple positive impacts for the community including aquatic habitat, a space for students to conduct investigations into aquatic ecology, a public tourist facility for passive recreation and learning by the Wiradjuri community.

## Background

Initiation for the wetland came from council staff and consultants working on the redevelopment of the sewerage works. There was also community desire to have a place where the local Wiradjuri and indigenous people could practice their culture activities and teach younger generations; the wetland provided the opportunity for such a place.

A Steering Committee including Council, Riverina Environmental Education Centre, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga Local Aboriginal Lands Council, Aboriginal consultation group Marra Marra, Wagga Wagga Urban Landcare, TAFE, Riverina Local Land Services and NSW DPI – Fisheries was formed to develop the wetland design and objectives.

Objectives for the Marrambidya Wetland were:

1. To convert a disused area into a viable community resource.
2. Links to the indigenous cultural heritage of the site.
3. An area of enhanced biodiversity.
4. A resource for education and passive recreation such as bird-watching.
5. Enhanced tourism for the city.



## Implementation

Council received a \$100,000 grant from NSW Environmental Trust to undertake investigative works into the project design, planning and preparation of a Plan of Management, and gaining community support for the proposed redevelopment. Council allocated \$737,289 of funding towards construction, including \$200,000 contributed by Riverina Local Land Services. Origin Energy also contributed \$90,000 to improvements.

The construction and establishment involved:

- Contractors engaged to undertake bulky earth works.
- Local nurseries supplying native wetland plants.

- Builders constructing outdoor learning shelter, bird hides and elevated viewing platform.
- Development and installation of environmental and cultural interpretive signs.
- Two Green Army teams planted wetland species and bush tucker garden, build gunyahs, and install seating around the site.
- TAFE and Wagga High students participating in the revegetation work.
- Marrambidya Wetland Activities Group formed .

## Outcomes

A community open day was held to celebrate the opening of the wetland and the project has generated interest from other councils wanting to undertake similar projects. The quantifiable biodiversity elements achieved include native fish and macroinvertebrates released into the ponds, 14 nest boxes constructed and installed for threatened species and 22,000 aquatic plants established.

The Riverina Environmental Education Centre offer workshops at the wetland taking in public school students from a 250 km radius. Two high schools and TAFE are using the wetland as a teaching resource for wetland ecology and for practical classes on habitat restoration. The Marrambidya Wetland will become its own attraction for those with an interest in bird watching. It will also be an attractive area for people to picnic, walk, take in the sights from the raised viewing platform, and to learn about local Wiradjuri culture through the interpretive signage. A Healing Place at the wetland was unveiled on Apology Day 2016.

## Key Learnings

The project's concept involved cooperation between different sections of Council. It re-defined the procedures by which sections within Council formulate the scope, design and delivery of such projects. The project has led to more formal integration of environmental objectives into Council's project management methodology. The formation of the Marrambidya Wetland Activities Group will ensure that the wetland is promoted to the public and the activities at the wetland are coordinated to avoid conflict between user group activities.

Thorough planning and collation of community expectations of the completed project before work actually starts on the construction phase was an important lesson. Future projects at the wetland will further add improvements for visitors.

## Contact

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**This project was the 2016 winner of the Natural Environment Protection & Enhancement: On-Ground Works Award at the LGNSW Excellence in the Environment Award**