

# V.O.W.W.

## Voice of Woodville and Wallalong

*including Brandy Hill, Seaham and Nelsons Plains*

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## HELP US SAFEGUARD OUR LOCAL CHARACTER

**If you love where you live and want to safeguard and nurture its character, please join VOWW and get involved for your community's sake.**

What does where you live mean to you?

If you're lucky enough to live in our north-west corner of Port Stephens Council, in West Ward, you'll know that the community and landscape beyond your front gate has very significant and individual character.

We're very unlike the urbanised centres elsewhere in the council area.

We live on, or surrounded by, a large alluvial plain of great natural beauty and agricultural richness, dotted with tiny and historic villages.

In flood it can be an unforgiving, sometimes heartbreaking landscape, but we know alluvial bounty follows. The cycle of flood and drought has forged our land and the lives and character of our communities.

The NSW government is now stressing the importance of character in its planning system: for communities to recognise the strengths of where they live and to get involved in defining the character of their local area.

### WALLALONG UPDATE

Although the proposal for a large town development at Wallalong has previously been rejected by the NSW government, the developer proponents have not dropped the idea.

The McCloy Group recently briefed Port Stephens councillors on their plan, largely unaltered from five years ago. It would see a town of 10,000 plus people, centred on the northern part of the village, and would need a fourth Hunter River crossing.

Representatives of VOWW addressed councillors on 19 June to express our concern about this plan, insisting councillors engage the community early on this time if the matter is revived.

'Consultation is essential throughout the plan-making process to ensure that character is planned for and consistent with the community's view of the desired future character of their area,' says the Planning & Environment Department in its recent circular on this issue.

**The future character of our area relies on our community actively defining and promoting such views at every opportunity.**



**VOWW (Voice of Woodville and Wallalong) is already involved in many such activities, but we cannot work successfully without the support and involvement of residents.**

If you would like to become involved, membership of VOWW is \$5 per annum. We meet several times a year to report on local issues of importance to our area and to attend forums on behalf of members. **Our next meeting is on Wednesday, 19th September.** We will also hold our Annual General Meeting then. (See the back of this newsletter for membership and meeting details).

VOWW mounted vigorous opposition – all the way to Macquarie Street – to the proposal to build a town of 10,000+ people in the middle of a flood plain at Wallalong. It started in 2013 and it took a few years to win the fight, but it brought our community together and we all learned a lot about local, state government and planning processes along the way.

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Best of all, we learned how to make a difference, where many had said we couldn't possibly.

VOWW has organised community information sessions on several issues – most recently a 'meet the candidate' forum ahead of local government elections. Residents groups have also joined VOWW as sub-groups to fight disruption from increased output from quarries and against inappropriate residential development close to the chicken sheds on Seaham Road.

Other issues taken up by VOWW include speed limits on local rural roads, road safety issues in a number of locations, and koala signage and sightings in Wallalong.

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*Margarete Ritchie*

*Acting President,  
VOWW.*



## WHO IS VOWW?

**The Voice of Woodville and Wallalong is a not-for-profit community organisation, formed by residents in 2013 to safeguard the character of our north-west corner of Port Stephens Local Government area.**

We represent residents of Woodville, Wallalong and neighbouring areas including Brandy Hill, Seaham and Nelsons Plains.

Its formation was prompted by a developers' proposal to build a new town of 10,000+ people at Wallalong, supported by council, but which failed to win State Government support.

VOWW has represented residents on many other important community issues. It is not opposed to development, but believes it should be compatible with existing rural land use and must not be in flood affected areas.

## VOWW MEMBERSHIP

Annual membership of \$5 can be paid in the following ways:

1. In person at the AGM
2. By Direct Debit to V.O.W.W. using BSB 032 529 and a/c 288653.  
Please include your name as reference so we can identify you.
3. Post to VOWW at PO Box 91, Morpeth 2321.

Please also email your details to the email address at top of this flyer.

## AGM NOTICE

The AGM of VOWW will be held at:

Woodville School of Arts Hall, Paterson Rd, Woodville.

Wednesday, 19th September, 2018 at 6.30pm.

**Guest speaker: Ryan Palmer, Mayor of Port Stephens**