



GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2023 - 2024**





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## VISION

To be the recognised leader in Local Government through continuous learning and sustainability.

## MISSION

To ensure that the Council's long term role is viable and sustainable by meeting the needs of our residents in a responsible caring way, attract sustainable development while maintaining the traditional rural values, character and culture of our people.

## COUNCIL CORE VALUES

- 1. For Our Community and Visitors**  
 We will provide a safe, clean and healthy environment in which all people have the opportunity to participate in and share in the Council's services and facilities.
- 2. For Our Community Committees**  
 We will seek their opinion in relation to the services in which they assist us, offer relevant and timely support and recognise their valuable contribution.
- 3. For Our Staff**  
 We will create an atmosphere of team support, which encourages frank and honest communication, and the use of common sense and innovation in a safe and friendly working environment with the aim of efficiency.
- 4. For Our Councillors**  
 We will treat all Councillors equally and ensure that they are provided with accurate and timely advice and expect that they will treat each other and the staff with due respect.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY

Council acknowledges the traditional owners of the land, the Kamilaroi People and pays its respect to Elders both past and present.



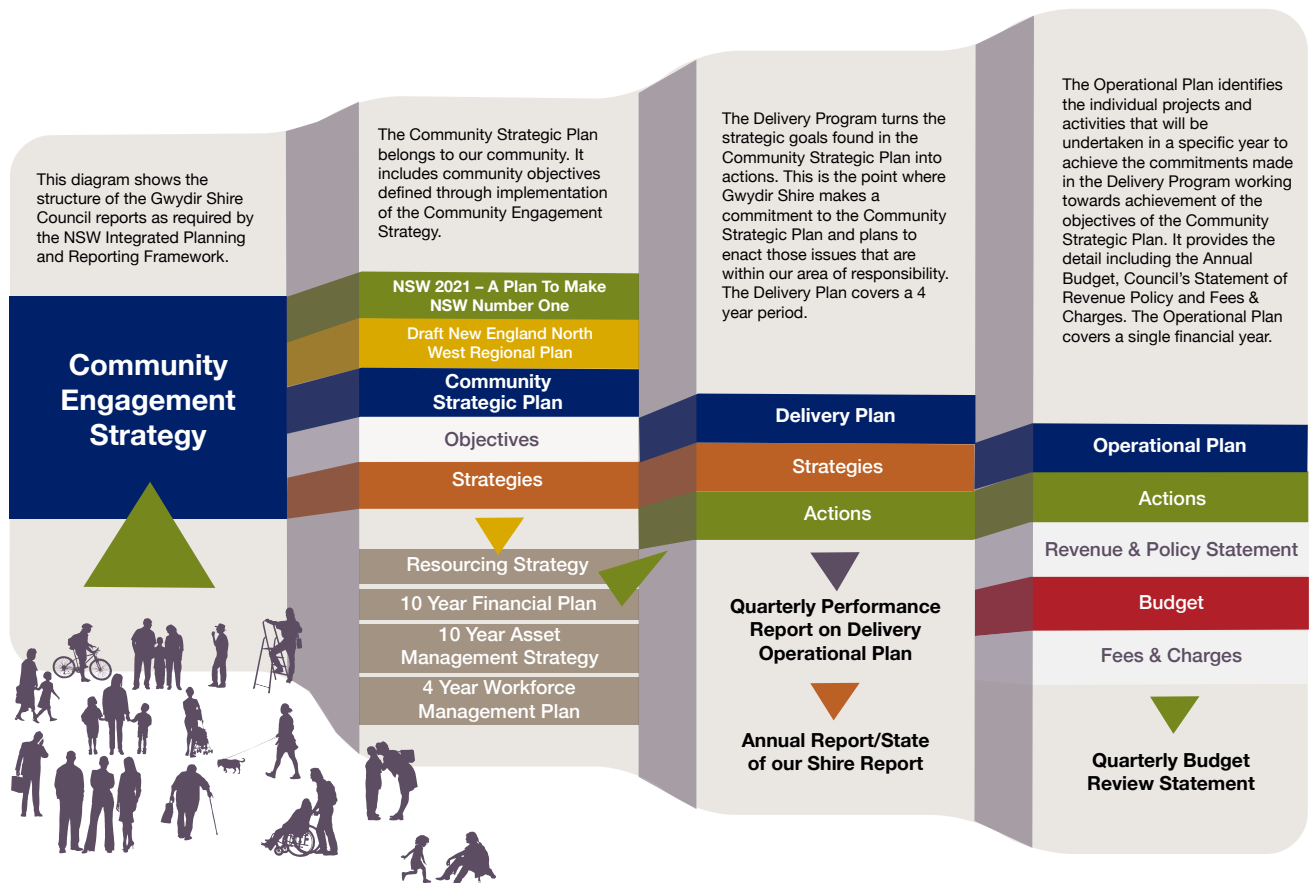
### OUR PLANNING FRAMEWORK

#### How it all fits together

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework impacting all NSW Councils was introduced by the NSW State Government in 2009. The reforms replaced the former Social and Management Plan structures. All NSW Councils are required to develop a Community Strategic Plan spanning 10 years, a Delivery Program spanning the four year period of the elected council and Operational Plans covering each financial year.

The framework allows Gwydir Shire Council to link all their plans together to get the maximum leverage by planning holistically for the future. Key changes to the Act in 2021, reinforce the pivotal role of the IP&R framework in guiding all council planning and decision making.

Gwydir Shire Council has been working within the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework since June 2012. The essential elements of the framework, and how they fit together, are shown in the diagram below.



**Our Community Vision established during the community consultation process is...**

## GWYDIR COUNTRY–FRESH AIR, INNOVATION, OPPORTUNITY & RESILIENCE

The Community Strategic Plan as developed by the community will be implemented by the Council on behalf of the community. The plans are underpinned by the principles of social justice and are built around the five goals outlined below:



All NSW Councils provide different services. Some of these services are the traditional services such as infrastructure renewal and waste management or ‘roads, rates and rubbish.’ Gwydir Shire Council is committed to meeting its commitments under the Local Government Act 1993 – Sections 8A, 8B and 8C and to be transparent in reporting to our community and stakeholders. This Annual Report 2023-2024 is the primary means of sharing our performance in the last financial year.

If you would like to find out more about Gwydir Shire Council or contribute, through feedback, to the running of the Council you can do the following;

### Visit Council’s website

24/7 access to council is provided through our website [www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au). On our website you will find information on our operations by viewing the Integrated Planning & Reporting documentation (IP&R), agendas and minutes and other key documents. Policies and guidelines are also available on the website [www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au)

### Social Media

We are on Facebook and Instagram. Look for us on Facebook or Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/gwydirshirecouncil>. Enquiries, suggestions and comments can be posted here for consideration by the Administrator. Please ‘like’ and ‘follow’ us to make sure you get regular updates.

### Council & Committee Meetings

Council meetings are held on the last Thursday of every month commencing at 9am. Committee meetings (involving the whole Council) are held on the second Thursday of every month commencing at 9am. Although this is not the forum to contribute, members of the public are encouraged to come along and sit in the gallery to view the business of the council. Information on the location and time of these meetings are published in the local media and on our website.

### Community Public Meetings

Public meetings in outlying centres are held once a year or when there are topical issues concerning certain areas. Residents are encouraged to attend these meetings and have their say on the future planning and current operation of the Council. Information on the location and time of these meetings are published in the local media and on our website.



## MAYOR'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Gwydir Shire Council's Annual Report.

The past 12 months have been both busy and highly productive for Council.

We have been fortunate to receive a substantial road budget, supported by stimulus funding and natural disaster assistance from both the State and Federal Governments. This has enabled us to make considerable progress on repairing roads across the Shire damaged by the five major flooding events experienced in our region.

Plans for the new administration office in Bingara are well underway, with contracts signed and construction set to commence in the upcoming reporting period. The project is expected to take approximately 44 weeks to complete. I would like to commend the indoor staff at Bingara for their resilience in managing the challenges posed by the condemned building, and the disruption it has caused. Despite being spread across multiple locations; the Council has continued to function effectively.

We are also continuing to face a housing shortage throughout the Shire. The recent land release in Bingara has been very well received, and it is encouraging to see new dwellings being constructed. In addition, Warialda residents can look forward to more building blocks becoming available soon.

I am pleased to report that the strong relationship between staff and elected members remains a key factor in our success, with everyone working toward common goals and sharing a passion for serving our community. I extend my gratitude to the Gwydir team for their hard work and dedication over the past year. I trust you will find this Annual Report informative and that it will provide you with a deeper appreciation of the vital services a rural Shire delivers to its communities.

As this will be my final Annual Report message as Mayor of Gwydir Shire, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the community and staff of Gwydir for their support throughout my term as Mayor. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve this community and I am proud of all that we have achieved together.

I offer my congratulations to the incoming council and wish you the best for your term in local government. I look forward to following your progress.

*Mayor  
John Coulton.*





## MESSAGE FROM **GENERAL MANAGER**

The 2023/2024 Financial Year has been a challenging period for the Shire as it recovers from severe storm and flooding events. This resulted in major damage to the Council's Road and related infrastructure.

Major damage occurred along the banks of the Gwydir River at Bingara to many recreational assets as well.

It will take many months to complete the repairs to the Shire's Road network. In many cases the roads were already under repair from previous storm events.

Six of the Council's elected members; Mayor Cr John Coulton (15 years), Deputy Mayor Cr Catherine Egan (20 years), Cr David Coulton (8 years), Cr Chris Matthews (4 years), Cr Jim Moore (11 years) and Cr Geoff Smith (12 years), have decided to not seek re-election at the September 2024 Local Government Elections. 70 years of experience!

All these Councillors certainly deserve to be remembered for their collective service to the Gwydir Shire Community.

Cr Catherine Egan was elected to the very first Gwydir Shire elected Council following the amalgamation of the former Bingara, Yallaroi and 40% of Barraba Shires.

Cr John Coulton was elected to the position of Mayor in September 2009 following a rather unsettled period within the elected Council. He along with his fellow Councillors returned stability to the Council.

Even allowing for the damage inflicted by storm activity this year has been positive with significant road and facility improvements being undertaken.

*Max Eastcott*  
*General Manager*

## GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL




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## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

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Gwydir Shire is located on the North West Slopes and Plains of NSW, approximately 400kms north of Sydney, 120kms north of Tamworth, 300kms south west of Brisbane, 40kms west of Inverell and 40kms east of Moree.

The Shire sits at the crossroads of the Fossickers Way, a popular north-south touring route, the Gwydir Highway, a significant east-west route linking the NSW North Coast to Outback NSW and on Nature's Way (State Touring Route 3), which links Narrabri to Inverell via Gwydir Shire. The Bruxner Highway (east-west route) traverses the northern edge of the Shire with links into southern Queensland.

Much of Gwydir Shire lies between the 29°S and 30°S latitudes, placing it mid-way in the realm of arable lands within the Southern Hemisphere. It has a temperate climate with warm to hot summers (25°C – 35°C) and cool to mild winters (10°C – 20°C). The average elevation across the shire is approximately 350m above sea level. The Gwydir Shire lies about 300kms from the Tasman Sea and the north coast of NSW.

The Shire is part of the New England – North West Region of NSW (also known as the Northern Inland Region) and is bounded by Tamworth Regional Council to the south, Narrabri Shire to the south west, Moree Plains Shire to the west, Inverell Shire to the east and Uralla and Guyra Shires to the south east.





Incorporating an area of 9,122 square kilometres, Gwydir Shire extends from the Nandewar Range in the south and north to close to the Queensland border. The landscapes of the Shire are diverse, and in places, breathtaking.

The southern and central areas of the Shire are located within the Gwydir River catchment area with the Gwydir River flowing through Bingara and Gravesend. The southern areas of the Shire are hilly with pockets of highly fertile river flats along the Gwydir River and its main tributaries.

Mt Kaputar National Park forms the western edge of the Shire, with rugged remnant volcanic peaks and landforms rising above the Gwydir Valley. The northern part of the Shire lies within the 'Golden Triangle'. Built on the black soils from basalt outflows of the New England, it is one of the most productive agricultural areas in Australia.

Agriculture is the primary land use and economic activity within Gwydir Shire. Livestock production dominates in the southern and central areas of the Shire, with the Shire producing prime beef, lamb and pork. The Shire has a collection of beef cattle and sheep properties with a number of renowned beef studs.

Broadacre cropping is undertaken in the northern part of the Shire, with the main crops being wheat, sorghum and barley. Other crops include dryland cotton, other grains (oats, maize, triticale), hay and pasture seeds, pulses (chickpeas, field beans, mung beans, faba beans, lentils)

and oilseeds (canola, soybeans and sunflowers).

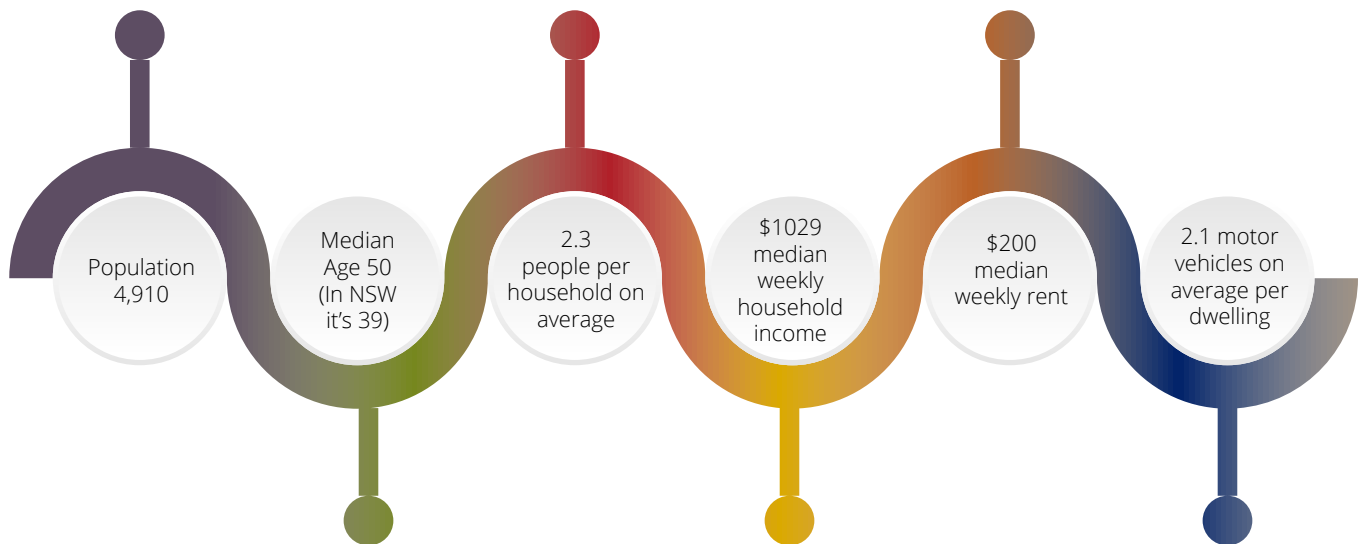
In June 2015, Gwydir Shire had an estimated population of 5,068. The Shire has two small towns, Bingara and Warialda, located approximately 40km apart. Bingara services the southern part of the Shire. Located on the Gwydir River at the intersection of the Fossickers Way and Nature's Way (State Touring Route 3), Bingara is a popular stop for travellers.

Warialda is located on the Gwydir Highway, midway between Inverell and Moree. The town is a service centre for both the surrounding rural area and Highway travellers.

Both towns have small, vibrant shopping centres, with IGA supermarkets, historic hotels, eateries and shops that meet the day-to-day needs of the community. There are also a few boutiques and some lifestyle and 'quirky' retailers that are always popular with visitors. Both towns are ideal to use as a stop-over base for exploring the Gwydir Shire and surrounding regions.

The Shire has five rural villages – North Star, Croppa Creek, Coolatai and Gravesend in the northern part of the Shire, and Upper Horton in the south. The Shire has 21 rural localities – Boonal, Blue Nobby, Yallaroi, Crooble, (part of) Pallamallawa and Balfours Peak in the northern half of the Shire, and Warialda Rail, Gineroi, Bangheet, Riverview, Elcombe, Pallal, Rocky Creek, Back Creek, Cobbadah, Gundamulda, Dinoga, Gulf Creek, Upper Bingara, Keera and Copeton in the southern half.

## SOME OF GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL STATISTICS



There are 50.4% people in the labour force in Gwydir Shire. Of these, 60.6% were employed full-time, 29.7% were employed part-time, and 4.2% were unemployed.



The most common occupations in the Shire are, 30.8% Managers, 14.2% Labourers, 12.3% Professionals, and 9.6% Clerical/Administrative workers.

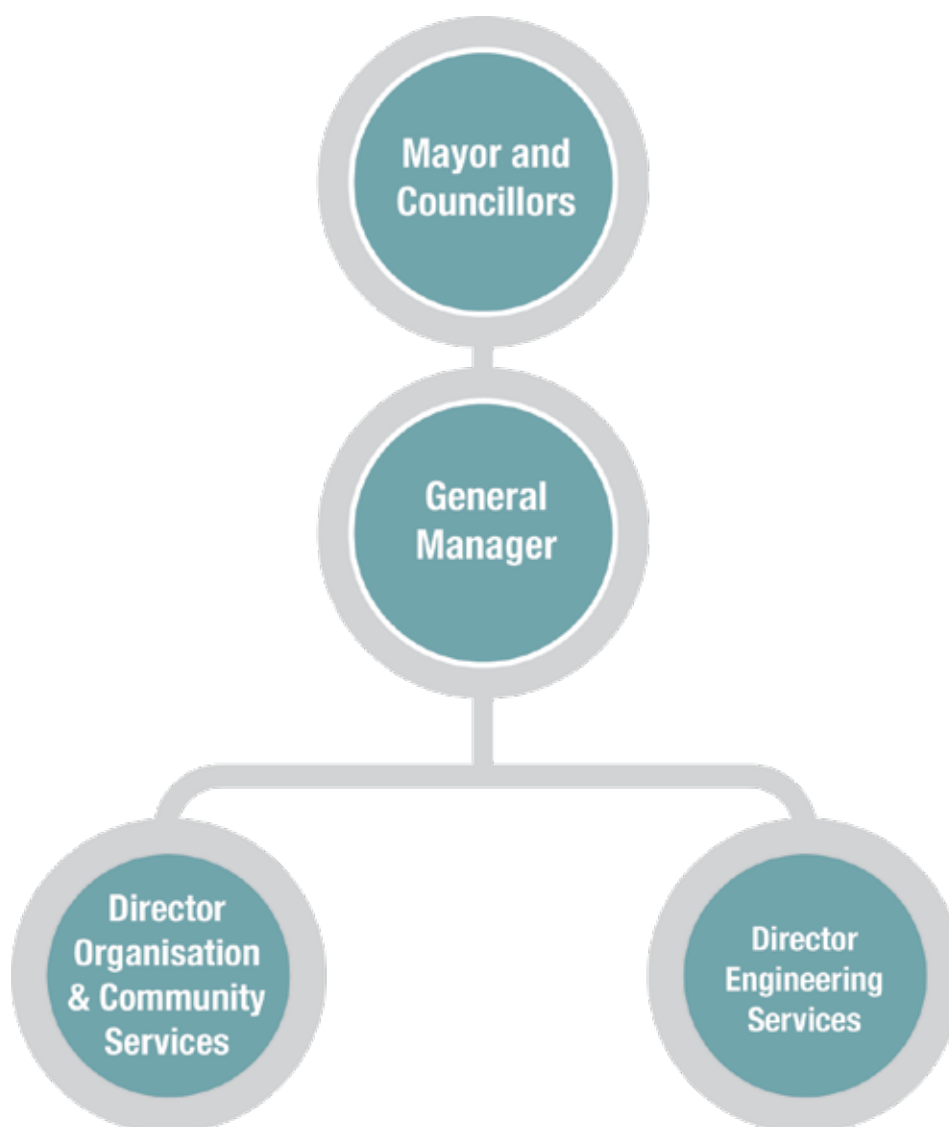
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## SOME OF GWYDIR SHIRE **ORGANISATION STRUCTURE**

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Below is the organisation structure in place during this reporting period.

### Our Structure





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## OUR ELECTED COUNCIL

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### CR. JOHN COULTON – MAYOR



3575 Allan Cunningham Rd  
Warialda NSW 2402  
Mobile: 0427 297 082  
Email:  
jcoulton@gwydir.nsw.gov.au

### CR. CATHERINE EGAN – DEPUTY MAYOR



4 Keera St  
Bingara NSW 2404  
Mobile: 0447 241 484  
Email:  
cegan@gwydir.nsw.gov.au

### CR. CHRISTOPHER MATTHEWS



1 Junction St  
Bingara NSW 2404  
Mobile: 0417 143 070  
Email:  
cmatthews@gwydir.nsw.gov.au

### CR. DAVID COULTON



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Email:  
dcoulton@gwydir.nsw.gov.au

### CR. GEOFF SMITH



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Mobile: 0428 295 240  
Email:  
gsmith@gwydir.nsw.gov.au

### CR. JAMES (CURLY) MOORE



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Warialda NSW 2402  
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### CR. LYNDON MULLIGAN



Mobile: 0427 657 076  
Email:  
lmulligan@gwydir.nsw.gov.au

### CR. MARILYN DIXON (OAM)



55 Cunningham St  
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Email:  
mdixon@gwydir.nsw.gov.au

### CR. TIFFANY GALVIN



“Damehill”  
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Bingara NSW 2404  
Mobile: 0428 241 318  
Email:  
tgalvin@gwydir.nsw.gov.au

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## HOW THE ANNUAL REPORT IS STRUCTURED

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This Annual Report is divided into three sections:

### Section 1 – Gwydir Shire Council Achievements

This section provides an outline of Gwydir Shire Council's progress against the actions set out in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

### Section 2 – Statutory Reporting Requirements

This section includes the Statutory reporting requirements prescribed by the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021.

### Section 3 – Financial Statements

This section includes Gwydir Shire Council's General Purpose Financial Statements for the Financial Year Ending 30 June, including an Income Statement, Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Changes in Equity and Statement of Cash Flows.





# RECORD OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS OVER 2023 - 2024





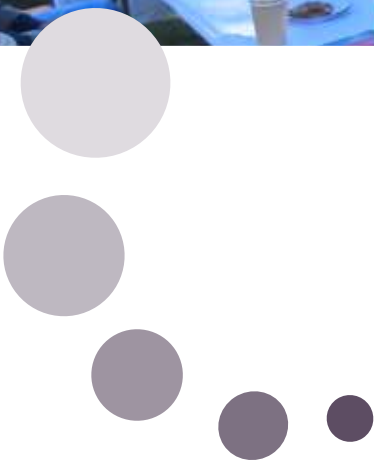


A HEALTHY AND COHESIVE COMMUNITY (SOCIAL)

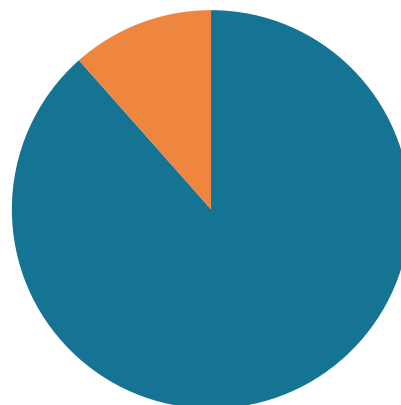
The first key theme identified by our Community through the consultative process was a social objective that we titled ‘A healthy and cohesive community’.

Council utilises a software program to track progress against actions. Progress reports on the actions during the period of the Operational Plan are reported to Council monthly.

This section of the report outlines the progress we have made during this reporting period in implementing the adopted Delivery Program. Additional information on the achievements for Council Business Units is included following this summary information.



A healthy and cohesive environment



■ In Progress ■ Not Updated



**BUILDING THE  
BUSINESS  
BASE  
(ECONOMIC)**

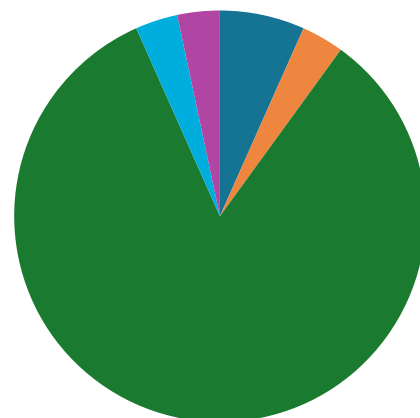
The second key theme identified by our Community through the consultative process was an economic objective that we titled 'Building the business base'.

Council utilises a software program to track progress against actions. Progress reports on the actions during the period of the Operational Plan are reported to Council monthly.

This section of the report outlines the progress we have made during this reporting period in implementing the adopted Delivery Program. Additional information on the achievements for Council Business Units is included following this summary information.



Building the business base



- Completed
- Deferred
- In Progress
- Not Started
- Not Updated



AN  
ENVIRONMENTALLY  
RESPONSIBLE SHIRE  
(ENVIRONMENT)

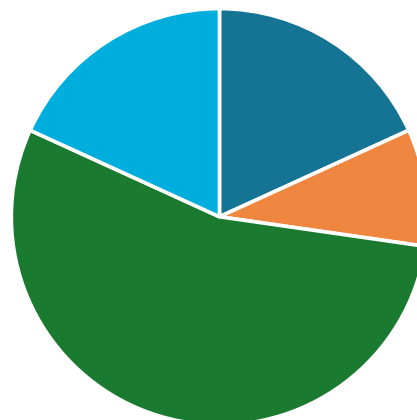
The third key theme identified by our Community through the consultative process was an Environment objective that we titled ‘an environmentally responsible shire’.

Council utilises a software program to track progress against actions. Progress reports on the actions during the period of the Operational Plan are reported to Council monthly.

This section of the report outlines the progress we have made during this reporting period in implementing the adopted Delivery Program. Additional information on the achievements for Council Business Units is included following this summary information.



An environmentally responsible Shire



• Completed • Deferred • In Progress • Not Updated



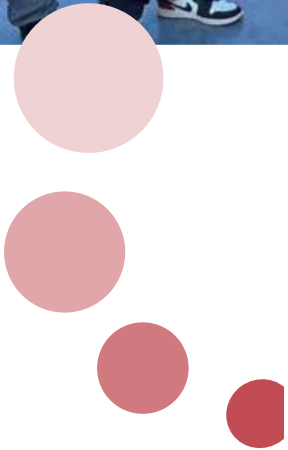


**PROACTIVE  
REGIONAL AND  
LOCAL LEADERSHIP (CIVIC  
LEADERSHIP)**

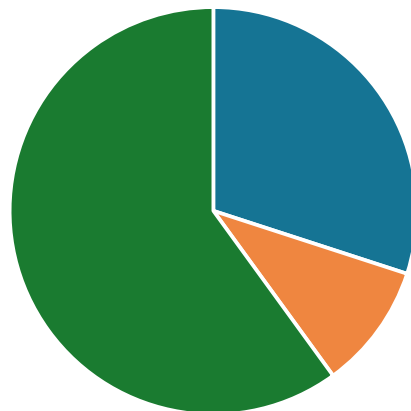
The fourth and final key theme identified by our Community through the consultative process was a civic leadership objective that we titled ‘Proactive regional and local leadership’.

Council utilises a software program to track progress against actions. Progress reports on the actions during the period of the Operational Plan are reported to Council monthly.

This section of the report outlines the progress we have made during this reporting period in implementing the adopted Delivery Program. Additional information on the achievements for Council Business Units is included following this summary information.



Proactive regional and local leadership



■ In Progress   ■ Not Started   ■ Not Updated

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## OUR FINANCIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

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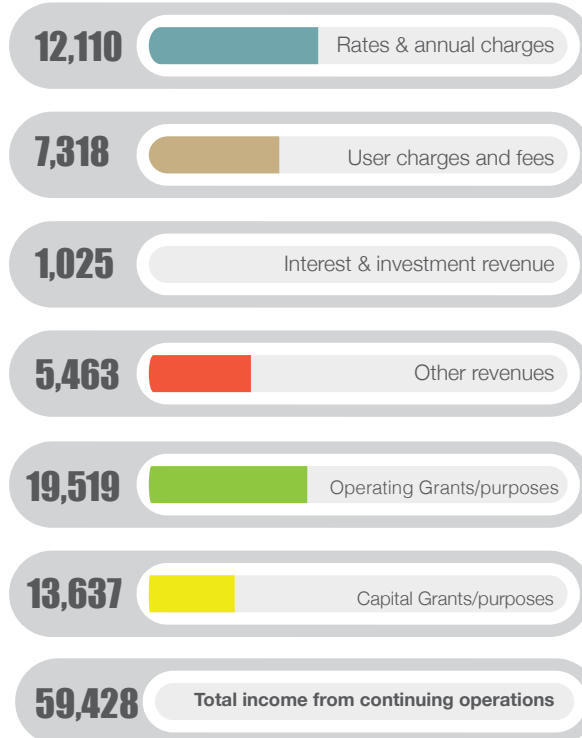
The 2024 Financial Year has seen Gwydir Shire Council extremely busy completing a large amount of grant funded capital works projects along with ensuring the vital services our communities need continue to be provided and operating.

The breakdown of monies that Council receives and expends are tabled below:

<b>Income Statement</b>	<b>(\$'000)</b>
Total Income from Continuing Operations	\$ 59,428
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations	\$ 49,164
Net Operating Result from Continuing Operations	\$ 10,264
Net Operating Result before Capital Grants and Contributions	-\$ 3,373
<b>Balance Sheet</b>	<b>(\$'000)</b>
Total Current Assets	\$ 36,859
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 17,152
Net Current Assets	\$ 19,707
Total Non-Current Assets	\$ 535,575
Total Non-Current Liabilities	\$ 13,082
Total Equity	\$ 542,200

## Gwydir Shire Finances at a Glance

### Council Income - where our money comes from (\$'000)



### Council Income - where our money goes (\$'000)





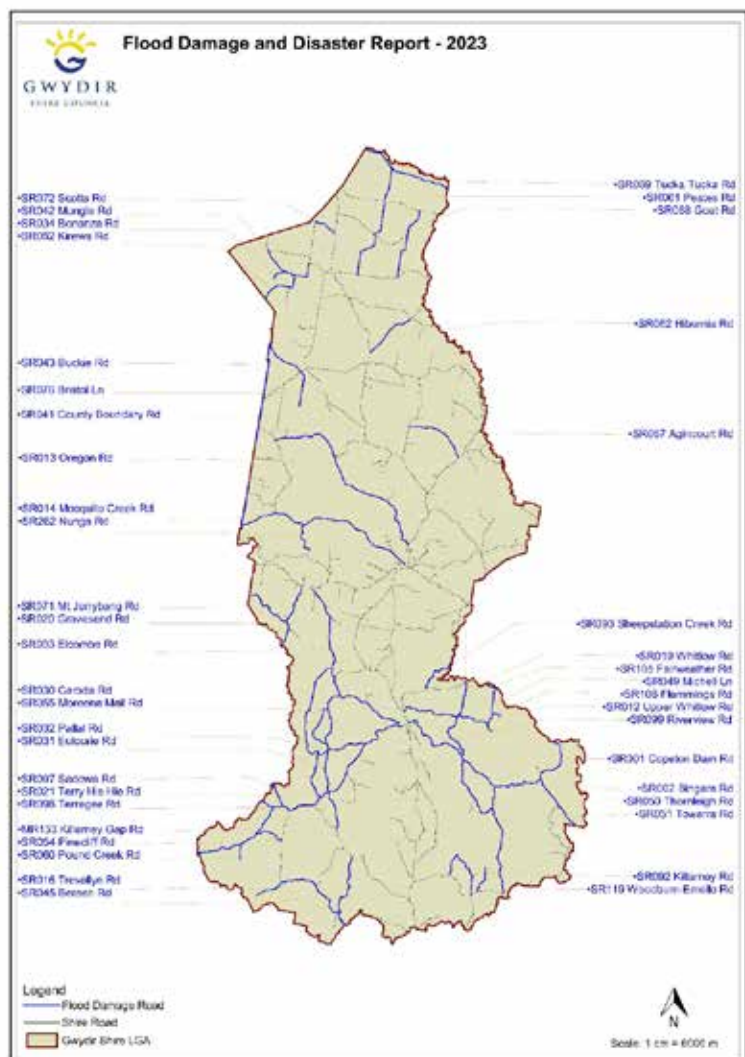


## GWYDIR SHIRE FLOOD DAMAGE REPORT

In the 2023-2024 financial year, Council experienced its fifth natural disaster declared flooding event since 2020. The damage ranges from gravel loss on unsealed roads to failed drainage structures, to complete, widespread pavement failures.

During the reporting period, council staff averaged an expenditure of \$13,000 per day addressing flood damaged roads, and this work will continue for some time. Councils' current priority is to continue working on any remaining damage. At present all the roads consisting of long sections of damage have been repaired. Council is now working on the roads with small sections of damage throughout the length.

As a result of the four flooding events, Council has a dedicated Flood Damage Response Team. This includes a Flood Damage Project Manager, two Council Construction Crews and contractors from Council's earthmoving panel contract.

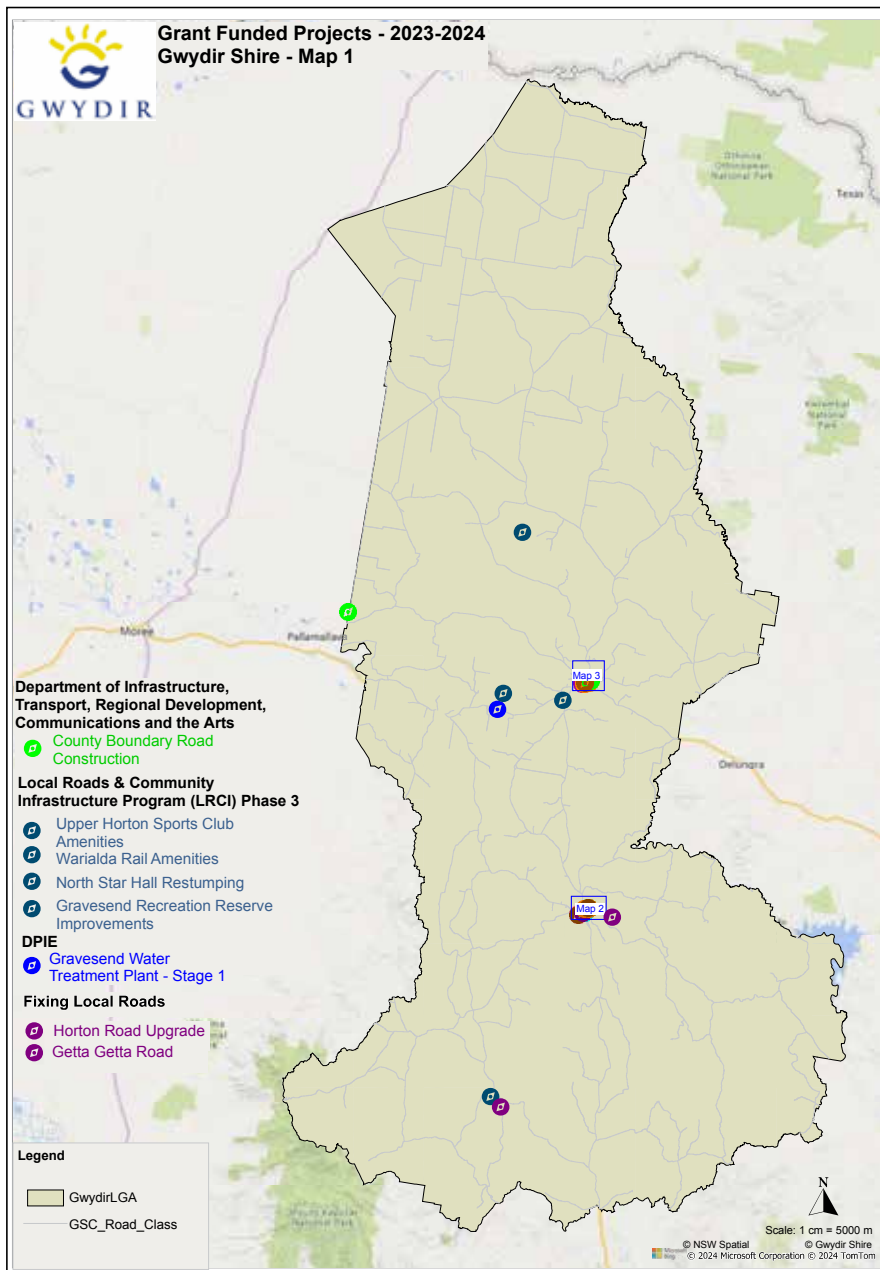


## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH OUR GRANT FUNDED WORKS

In recent times there has been unprecedented, once in a generation, access to both State and Federal Grants to meet the challenges that the natural disasters presented to the Shire's communities. Through this access to funding Gwydir Shire and various community groups have successfully upgraded or installed infrastructure

and provided events for and to the community that is going to benefit both locals and visitors for many years to come.

Below are some maps of the grant funded projects that have been completed or are in the process of being completed in 2023-24.





## Grant Funded Projects - 2023-2024 Bingara - Map 2



### Grant Funded Projects 2023-2024 Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 4

- Roxy Theatre  
Maintenance

### Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 5

- Playground Equipment Upgrades  
Upgrades

- Gwydir Oval  
Upgrades

### Local Roads & Community Infrastructure Program (LCRI) Phase 3

- Bingara Footpath Program  
Upgrades

- Bingara Riverside Caravan Park  
Amenities Upgrade

### Restart NSW - Big River Dreaming - Water Weaving Way

- Interpretive Centre - The Living Classroom

### Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants Program

- The Living Classroom  
Emergency Accommodation

### Open Space Program

- Bingara Skate Park

### Legend

- 1 - Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 4
- 2 - Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 5
- 3 - Local Roads & Community Infrastructure Program (LCRI) Phase 3
- 4 - Restart NSW - Big River Dreaming - Water Weaving Way
- 5 - Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants Program
- 6 - Open Space Program
- Reserve / Park
- Hospital
- GwydirLGA
- Waterway
- MR63
- Shire Road
- Crown Road
- Actual\_Road



Scale: 1 cm = 110.008 m





## Grant Funded Projects - 2023-2024 Warialda - Map 3

GWYDIR



### Grant Funded Projects 2023-2024

#### Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 4

- Nicholson Oval  
Amenities & Changerooms

#### Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 5

- Warialda Showground  
Amenities
- Playground Equipment  
Upgrades
- Warialda Swimming Pool  
Stage 3
- Warialda Recreation Ground  
Upgrades

#### Local Roads & Community Infrastructure Program (LRCI) P3

- Warialda Footpath Program  
Upgrade and Improvements
- Reedy Creek Access Road
- Reedy Creek Footpath - Stage 1
- Warialda Street Tree Upgrade

- Warialda Memorial Swimming Pool  
Improvements

- Warialda CBD Park

- Warialda Fitness Centre  
Amenities

#### Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants Program

- Warialda Emergency Accommodation

#### Dept of Health Business Improvement Fund for Residential and Aged Care - Round 2

- Naroo Improvements  
Upgrade and implementation information and technology at Naroo

#### Aged Care Approvals Round - Capital Funding Grant

- Naroo Improvements  
Expansion, fit-out and furnishings of activities room

#### Legend

- 1 - Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 4
- 2 - Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 5
- 3 - Local Roads & Infrastructure Program (LRCI) Phase 3
- 4 - Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants Program
- 5 - Aged Care Funding

- Reserve
- School
- Hospital
- Waterways
- Road
- Highway
- Actual\_Road



Scale: 1 cm = 100 m

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## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH OUR SECTION 355 COMMITTEES

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### Bingara Anglers Club

This year, at the Bingara Anglers Club and Native Fish Hatchery, we have seen the completion of the Hatchery upgrades and renovations, as well as a record year for registrations at the Easterfish. With a complete makeover of the Hatchery building and fish breeding area still under renovation until early 2024, the planned Murray Cod and Golden Perch breeding and restocking was put on hold for another year. With grants now available, funding has been sourced through the \$2-for-\$1 Native Fish Stocking Program for next year to breed, grow and/or purchase fingerlings for stocking the Gwydir River. Further funding has also been sourced to hold a Gone Fishing Day in the first half of next financial year, where kids and keen 'fishos' can come and learn the secrets to becoming a great angler, with a free sausage sizzle and the chance to win some fabulous prizes.

This year's three-day Easterfish event on the banks of the Gwydir River and Copeton Dam saw a record number of registrations, with over 310 applicants signing up for the tournament. The conclusion of the event, again, saw a massive crowd show up to the Hatchery for a BBQ, some drinks, entertainment and great prizes. The committee looks forward to hopefully seeing more applicants and sponsorship next year, with the opportunity to get back into restocking our beautiful Gwydir River and the vision of holding some additional tournaments and events throughout the year. Happy fishing



### Warialda Cultural Community Centre (WCCC) - Carinda

Warialda Cultural Community Centre (WCCC - Carinda) continues to enjoy local and visitor patronage with sales in the Shop continuing to do well.

WCCC has now managed Carinda for 45 years with the maintenance of the 1880s building being the main priority of members.



The Tuesday Craft Group continues to be a great social outlet for patrons and a place to share craft skills. The group meets in the Stump Room between 10.00am and 12 noon every Tuesday. There is also a Thursday Night craft group for those who are unable to attend the day meeting.

The Thursday group also meets in the Stump Room between 6.00pm and 8.00pm.

WCCC continues to be an integral part of the Warialda community providing monetary support to local organisations and as a place for social contact.

WCCC meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month [except January] at 10.00am and the Carinda shop is open Monday to Friday 10.00am to 2.00pm and Saturdays 9.00 am to 12.00 noon.

All members are volunteers who are dedicated to maintaining the beautiful old building and providing a service to the Warialda and district.

Thank you to Gwydir Shire Council for their support.

### Warialda Historical Society

Once again, we have had a productive year promoting Family and General History for Warialda and District.

It is very pleasing to have some new faces join our Society and already they have become very valuable members of our small group.

With the small grants from Be Connected we have been able to pay for internet and worldwide Ancestry. We hope that this facility will be used more widely by our members.

A huge thank you to the executive and all volunteers for the cooperation and dedication they provided to the Society and its many activities that were conducted throughout the year. Many volunteer hours are given to not only open the Museum but to fundraise, coordinate activities and maintain facilities.



### Bingara District Historical Society

The group participated at the Australia Day Awards by selling drinks where the Society was nominated for ‘Special Event of the Year’ for the opening of our Military Museum. Although we did not win, we were honoured to receive a certificate of recognition. Two other major events were held which were a great opportunity to foster community spirit. The Community Support and Volunteer Groups Information Day “Bingara’s Heart Beats” on 16 March 2024 was a mammoth task. This event aimed to highlight the diverse range of community and volunteer organisations in Bingara that locals can be a part of. The next event that followed was ‘Our Golden Past: The Way We Were’, which was a storytelling event held on 22 May this year. This showcased stories and family histories from the Bingara area.



### Warialda Men’s Shed

The Gwydir Shire Council initiated the formation of the Warialda Men’s Shed in 2008 by providing a large shed, some equipment and some projects to start us off.

Council has continued their generous support each year and have helped us apply for Government grants to purchase equipment.

We currently have 12 members with an average of 6 or 7 meeting each Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30am until midday – with an all-important morning tea being held at 9:30am.

Since its inception there has not been a day when we have had no jobs awaiting attentions, so besides the fellowship it is also fulfilling a vital, practical role in the community. Projects for this year include a football passing practice target, restoring a set of outdoor table and seats, reframing and repainting bench seats for St Joseph's Convent School, converting a round wooden table to a larger oval table, constructing a set of timber outside steps, 5 Camphor Laurel timber tables, sitting castors on a BBW, 2 routed timber signs, and many other repair jobs in timber or steel.

Five times each year we prepare the shed for use by the Roads and Maritime Services to carry out checks for registration for local trucks and buses.

### Warialda Driver Reviver

Warialda Driver Reviver recognises the importance of road safety with offering travellers a place to stop, have a break and enjoy refreshment before continuing to their destination. Local volunteers help keep this initiative going with operating at peak holiday periods including long weekends and during the school holidays.

### Warialda Sports Council (WSC)

In its 44th year, Warialda Sports Council continues to make significant contributions to the sporting community in Warialda.

WSC currently has 11 affiliate sporting bodies. Affiliation covers junior and senior rugby league, touch football, cricket, netball, golf, swimming, pony club, jockey club, little athletics, and three local schools.

Our local sports people have once again achieved outstanding results over the past 12 months with representatives competing at local, zone, regional and state level. Warialda Sports Council continues to recognize these achievements at an annual presentation evening where awards are presented for sub-Junior girl or boy of the year, junior girl or boy of the year, senior sports person of the year, sporting team of the year, sporting event of the year and service to sport.

Mini Numbers is the primary fundraising activity for the WSC and is still a big success.



## S355 HALL COMMITTEES

### Yallaroi Hall

The Yallaroi Hall Committee is an active committee who work collaboratively with Council to provide facilities that are safe and fit for purpose for residents of Gwydir Shire and visitors alike.

### North Star Memorial Hall

The North Star Hall continues to provide a facility for community events on both a regular and casual basis.

### Gravesend Hall

The Gravesend Hall Committee continued working towards restoration of the hall. The builder who had previously been working on the hall has relocated and the committee are working on securing a new builder to progress works.

Future works yet to be completed include:

- New lining boards the old dining room section.
- Replacement of some exterior lining boards and around the doorway and fireplace in the dining section finished off to the outside.
- Electrical installation to be completed when the wall linings have been installed.
- Painting inside and out.
- Timber floors to be sanded and refinished.

Our annual Christmas light competition is always a hit and is sponsored by the Regional Australia Bank. And our colouring in competition is sponsored by the Committee.

We extend our gratitude to the Council for taking over the Christmas Carnival.



## The Bingara Community Op Shop

The Bingara Community Op Shop has had a very successful year with a few changes in operating hours and procedures. There are six sections of the operation with a group leader and volunteers allocated to these areas. This gives ownership to the volunteers who work hard to make the shop so successful. The volunteers give their time freely and make an amazing contribution to the community.

The Bingara Community Op Shop opened the “Food Pantry” this year to assist those in need. Six volunteers have recently completed the Hygienic Food Practices Course. There is one Food Supervisor but that will be increased within the near future.

The Op Shop team is very excited with the Council gift of the nearby office/shed once the new council building has been built. Furniture donations continue to increase, and this will provide a space for expansion to accommodate the larger pieces when they arrive at the shop.



The Poppy Project within the community was a great success. The display in the library was appreciated by many and there are still poppies adorning the back gate.

The inaugural Biggest Morning Tea was a beautiful day. The group raised over a thousand dollars for the Cancer Council.

The Bingara Community Op Shop continues to be a vibrant group within the community. The group was involved in the Orange Festival, the Share your story activity still occurs, the group joined the Businesses Bowling competition, and they continue to donate to the community, the shop is a social hub for the town and those in need know that the shop is a place of inclusivity and will render help.

There is a huge range of talent within the volunteer pool, and this results in a growing and vibrant business for the town.

A comment which encapsulates the business came from a local customer, “You can never leave this place without feeling happy.” This of course says a great deal about the team of volunteers, and thanks must go to them.

Bingara Community Op Shop Annual Financial Report 2023-2024	
Opening Balance	\$28,703.37
Closing Balance	\$28,211.50
Difference	-\$491.87

Income and expenditure for the Bingara Community Op Shop, with details of donations made during the year.	
Income	\$76,295.55
Disbursements	\$61,483.05

Donations	Total (\$)
Bingara Community Practice	\$8,820.00
Bingara Central School	\$5,600.00
Northern NSW Rescue Helicopter	\$5,000.00
Gwydir Shire - Country Comfort	\$3,500.00
Lions Club of Bingara	\$2,000.00
Emma Wilkins	\$2,000.00
Bingara Historical Society	\$1,500.00
Cancer Council	\$1,261.16
Big bash tennis	\$300.00
Touriandi	\$200.00
St Johns Anglican Women	\$100.00
Bingara and district cancer action group	\$40.00
<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>\$30,321.16</b>

Note: REPAYMENTS denotes equipment, material and supplies purchased by volunteers and subsequently reimbursed



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## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN SOCIAL SERVICES

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### Targeted Early Intervention Reform Program

- Supported Playgroups
- Toy Libraries
- Youth Service
- Neighbourhood Centre

### Children's Services

- Bingara Preschool
- Tharawonga Mobile Resource Unit

### Contracted Services and 355 Committees of Council

- Centrelink
- The Bingara Community Op Shop



## TARGETED EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

### Supported Playgroups

In Bingara and Warialda families enjoyed a range of outdoor activities including, obstacle courses, ball games, and pretend play. Indoor play involved craft, building with blocks, book reading and pretend play in the home corner. Different styles of play and experiences were created for families catering for different ages and stages of development. This encourages the children to develop skills through the activities provided.

Toy Libraries are exceptional facilities that our families use for borrowing toys as well as providing a meeting place and support service. They are a place for families to come and experience playgroup, catch up with friends, meet new locals, be supported, and provide a great social interaction experience for our little people to enjoy and learn.

### Toy Libraries

#### Festive Events and Celebrations

Each Year special events are celebrated like Mother's Day, Father's Day, International Women's Day, Anzac Day, Christmas, Easter, Dental Health Week, National Families Week, Birth Certificate Ceremonies, Grandparents' Day, and Children's week, all these special events are celebrated at the toy libraries.





### Children's and Families Week

On Tuesday, 24 October the Bingara Toy Library held the annual Children's Week event. The event was celebrated in the back yard with a picnic morning tea, which families helped provide. The children were able to experience free play using the outdoor equipment, water table experiences, story time, chasing bubbles and eating an array of yummy fruit.

In Warialda on Wednesday, 15 May Toy Library Celebrated Families Week. A morning tea was enjoyed by the families, children, and staff for this occasion.

### Gwydir Shire Birth Certificate Presentations

A birth certificate ceremony was celebrated in November 2023 with nine (9) new babies being welcomed to our shire. Cr. Catherine Egan once again presented each child with their certificate and gift bag.

### Guest / Guest Speakers

Each month our toy libraries provide information sessions for families on a wide range of topics. This year we had staff from Rural Outreach Service and the Moree Women's Refugee engage with families and offer support.

The Dietician from Hunter New England Health, Sally Lavery provided information to all families who may have had new babies, were expecting, or had older children and had questions regarding challenges they may have been experiencing.

Physiotherapist from Warialda Family Practice, Ellen Gordon presented information to mums about their pelvic floor, and ways to improve their pelvic health before and after birth.

Speech Pathologist from Hunter New England Health, Sandy Scotton discussed when to see a speech pathologist, where you can access this and books and information to help also.

Child and Family Health Nurse from Hunter New England Health, Sarah Frater was available at the Toy Library to support and provide information for families and to facilitate checkups on newborns, Continence Nurse from Hunter New England Health, Lavinia Hill discussed bed wetting, bowel issues, toilet training, and provided tips and tricks to help families.

Gwydir Librarians read stories and provided craft activities throughout the year.



### Kool Skool Kids

The Kool Skool Kids Program Continued to run Each Tuesday and Thursday afternoon during the school term. This service provides children from kindergarten to year three (3) a safe space for after school activities. The afternoon sessions include craft, games, Lego, reading, movie afternoons, outside play and giving the children a safe environment until their parents collect them at 4.30pm.

Over the 2023-2024 financial year our toy libraries facilitated 1,822 points of contact with children and families in Gwydir Shire.





# YOUTH SERVICES

## Youth Programs

The Youth Space Program ran in Warialda from June 2023 to December 2023 and provided an opportunity for students to participate in after school activities which were tailored to their strengths and interests, as well as having a chance to develop new skills and friendships. The program consisted of physical exercise, card and board games, music jam sessions and conversations made around areas of bullying and choice making.

The Gwydir Youth Peer Tutoring Program started last year at the instigation of Rebecca Ju, a student who participated in the Gwydir/Willoughby Youth Exchange program. Rebecca identified a lack of access to opportunities for tutoring when she was here and set about rectifying this discrepancy by submitting a proposal to Willoughby Council. The proposal was approved, and funding allocated. Willoughby Youth Action Group now promote the program to students who are interested in teaching, education, and similar careers. The program caters to year 7 – 12 students from Gwydir shire who participate in online tutoring with the support from students in the Youth Action Group Program.

Youth Services teamed with Warialda Little Athletics to hold a colour run as a fundraiser for the Little Athletics Club. Over twenty runners ran around the Warialda High School oval as twelve volunteers, at different stations attempted to ‘colour’ them with coloured powder and coloured water. A sausage sizzle, cooked by volunteers, and drinks were available after the run at a small cost. The Youth Mentoring Program has been assisting young people with Centrelink, Medicare, job applications, behaviour management and resumes.





## Youth Week

The Department of Regional NSW supplied activities for Youth Week. Eco Dyeing and Weaving Workshops were held at Ceramic Break Sculpture Park, providing an opportunity for the Youth of our shire to get creative.

## Youth Exchange

The 2023 Gwydir/Willoughby Youth Exchange Program saw a record number of students participate, with ten students from Willoughby and nine from Gwydir. Students, supervisors, councillors, and senior staff from both councils met at The Living Classroom on Thursday 29th of June, for a country style welcome dinner prepared by the Friends of Touriandi.

Early Friday saw a visit to the Myall Creek Memorial site, with many appearing to show significant interest in the information available. Then back for the Orange Picking Ceremony. The youth enthusiastically participated in Adam Marshall's challenge to find the largest Orange. After a picnic lunch by the Gwydir River and a photo opportunity at the Gwydir/Willoughby plaque, the group was joined by Willoughby Council staff and councillors for a Gwydir River trail ride. After a change of clothes, some took a quick look at the Bingara Community Op Shop to check the handmade lanterns, browse for bargains, and grab a cup of homemade soup before rejoining the group for a diner dinner and "Grease", at the Roxy Theatre.

A full day Saturday, saw a visit to Bingara Museum, Orange Festival (where Mayor, John Coulton presented students with Certificates of Participation, they had free time before walking in the parade), a trip to Ceramic Break Sculpture Park, then more free time, and karaoke at The Living Classroom.

Another big day on Sunday with a trip to Croppa Creek, where the group met Councillor Lyndon Mulligan who shared his knowledge of farming in a section of an area known as the Golden Triangle, where meat, grains and cotton are grown. A detour on the return trip provided an opportunity to look at Cranky Rock. Back to The Living Classroom for a farewell dinner and bonfire.





On Thursday, 31 August the Gwydir youth and supervisors travelled by car, bus and train to join the Willoughby folk at Chatswood. A ten-hour trip for some. Check-in at Silkari Apartments and off to Lilong Chinese Restaurant for dinner.

On Friday the group took the train and ferry to Taronga Zoo. Some left early and headed back for some free time, whilst others continued to explore. A train trip to an NRL game topped off a long day.

The Emerge Festival on Saturday provided a chance to experience the multiculturalism of the Willoughby Council area and an opportunity to shop. The participants of the Exchange walked in the parade and visited the Chatswood Youth Centre where Willoughby Councillors shared information about their area and about being a city councillor. The group explored the Love Bites Respectful Relationships Exhibition at Chatswood Library. A few stayed on for the optional Consent Training whilst others took advantage of some free time. An evening meal and activities at the Youth Centre rounded off the day.

The first activity on Sunday was the Sydney Harbour Bridge Climb, followed by a trip to Lane Cove for adventures on the water with kayaking, stand up paddle boarding, power boating and swimming on offer. The day was finished with a large group dinner and the exchange finished with a long trip home on Monday.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Bingara Neighbourhood Centre continues to assist community groups with grant applications and attend to the needs of the general public through advocacy and referral to other services.

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES

### Bingara Preschool

It has been another year of accomplishments for Bingara Preschool, with the much-anticipated opening of the new front classroom. The new classroom has been an aspiration of the service for years, and finally, in September 2023 it was completed and fully licensed. The last twelve months have seen the service continue to strive to meet the best outcomes for each child within the context of the National Quality Framework.



### Educational Curriculum

Bingara Preschool facilitated a play-based curriculum, focusing on encouraging each child to feel safe, secure, and supported. The team of Educators have embraced the updated Early Years Learning Framework (Version 2) and have implemented the subtle changes into the curriculum. One of the main goals this year was for all Educators to broaden their ability to embed multicultural perspectives within the services environment. The team often discussed ways to increase and facilitate various aspects of culture to encourage the children's knowledge, thoughts, and acceptance.

The service celebrated a range of cultural events during the year including:

- NAIDOC Week.
- Father's Day.
- Remembrance Day.
- Christmas.
- Lunar New Year.
- St Patrick's Day.
- Pancake Day.
- Easter.
- ANZAC Day.
- Mother's Day.
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Day.
- Harmony Day.

Another focus of the Educational Curriculum is to extend and investigate the children's interests and home culture. Over the past year, the children and Educators have explored and learnt about the following topics including pirates, football, volcanoes, holidays, fishing, role play, family events, occupations, dinosaurs and colours.

This year, the service has implemented a school readiness program after lunch each day. During this session the children participate in a range of experiences that promote the skills that will assist them next year when they attend formal schooling. The Educator facilitates a variety of experiences including listening to an entire story, learning about the features of a book, being able to create their own ending to a story, extending on social skills and identifying and writing their own name. The Educator also focuses on concepts such as numbers, colours, shapes and initial sounds.

### Educational Leader

The Educational Leader has continued to study for the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Teaching). The Educational Leader has mentored and supported the work placement students and the service trainees while undertaking their practical components. The Educational Leader organised the group training for all Social Services staff to complete the updated Child Protection Unit. She also monitored the required documentation for the planning cycle and provided support and suggestions to other educators when required. The Educational Leader liaised with other service professionals in relation to training that is available and is currently planning the next group training.



## Quality Improvement Plan

There are two main goals identified in the services Quality Improvement Plan in 2023 - 2024. The first goal was to update the soft fall forte play area as it has become outdated. The team is actively researching natural based play environments, that feature sustainable materials. The service is also currently waiting for the next round of grants to be released, so an application can be submitted to fund this project. The second main goal is for the team to extend the loose parts collection for the children, this adds to the sustainable practices of the service.

## Graduation and End of Year Celebration

In December 2023, the Preschool welcomed families and community members to the end of year celebration and formal opening of the new classroom. Together the children, their families, community members and the educators celebrated the opening of the new classroom and each child's time at the service. Each child received their special folder full of memories reflecting on their time at Preschool. Each family also received a copy of their child's completed observations and related documentation. The service organised a photographer to take photos at the event and provided each family with a copy. All that attended enjoyed a shared picnic morning tea, and then together explored the Bingara Preschool.

## Excursions and Events

Bingara Preschool has continued to build strong reciprocal relationships within the wider community. Over the past year the children have attended the following excursions and community events: The Orange Picking Ceremony (Community Event), The Easter Hat Parade (Bingara Central School - Excursion), The Orange Festival (Community Event), The Bingara Show (Community Event), The Bingara Library (Excursion), The Infants Sports Day (Bingara Central School - Excursion), The Infants Frolic (Bingara Central School - Excursion), The Little Bit of Blue (Excursion - The Roxy), The Bingara Multipurpose Service (Teddy Bears Picnic Excursion), Gwydir Shire Christmas T-Shirt Day Challenge (Community Event), Gwydir Shire 'Wear Your Boots to Preschool' (Community Fundraiser), and the Gwydir Shire 'Wear Pink to Work' (Fundraiser).

## Bingara Preschool Has also celebrated the following events

Book Week was celebrated in August. Preschool held a dress up day, where the children were encouraged to dress up in their favourite costume. There were a wide variety of costumes including princesses, superheroes, and fairy tale characters. The Educators dressed up too in their favourite costumes. When the children arrived, the Educators took the children's photos on the boardwalk, and this was placed on the services social media page to share with their families. For the children who were absent, the families were invited to send a photo of their child dressed up at home. These photos were also added to the Book Week social media post.

On Wednesday, 21 May, Preschool facilitated National Simultaneous Storytime. National Simultaneous Storytime is held in May each year and is organised by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). Each year ALIA chooses a book written by an Australian author and illustrator. This book is then read simultaneously in a range of places around Australia including schools, preschools, childcare services, bookshops and within family homes. This year marks the events 24th year. The children enjoyed exploring outdoors in the morning, and then at 12pm the children grouped together to enjoy the 'Bowerbird Blues' story on the Smartboard, which was read by Aura Parker, the author.

We celebrated Australia's Biggest Morning Tea with all families invited into the service to share a picnic styled morning tea. Each family brought in a plate of food to share. The children showed their families around the preschool, with the yard being the preferred place to explore. The Preschool raised \$237 for the Cancer Council, and this will help people who have been affected by cancer.

On Thursday, 27 June, 'Reptiles on the Go' visited Preschool. The show presented a wide range of reptiles including a turtle, a crocodile, a blue tongue, and a python. The presenter spoke to the audience about important facts regarding each of the animals. The preschool also welcomed the Toy Library Facilitator and the Toy Library families, as they too watched and enjoyed the show. This show was at no cost to the families, as this was funded by the Gwydir Shire Council.

Other events that were celebrated at Bingara Preschool during the last year included:

- Pyjama Day
- Mother's Day

### Visitors, Family and Community Involvement:

Bingara Preschool has welcomed a variety of visitors to the service during the last year. This included the residents and employees from Touriandi, on multiple occasions during the year they visited us. Touriandi visitors, children and educators enjoyed a shared morning tea, craft activities, dancing and exploring the yard together.

Preschool also welcomed the Library Officer from the Bingara Library. The Library Officer visited the service several times throughout the year, reading the children their favourite stories and facilitated craft activities for the children to engage in.

To extend on the children's current interests, Preschool arranged for Rural Fire Service and NSW Fire & Rescue to visit during the month of March. Both fire services were very interactive with the children, encouraging them to use the fire hose and other fire equipment. The firefighters discussed fire safety with the children and the importance of knowing when to call 000.

Other visitors to Bingara Preschool included:

- The Stage 5 students from Bingara Central School prepared and cooked meals with the Bingara Preschool children.
- Bingara Central School kindergarten teacher for a series of visits.
- Family members shared a recipe, provided collage, provided seedlings and planted vegetables.
- The Inclusion Support Teacher from Early Links.
- The Early Intervention Teacher from Ross Hill Public School.
- The Speech Pathologist from Moree Community Health.
- The Steps Vision Screener from Inverell Community Health.
- The Occupational Therapist from Vital Health.
- The Speech Therapist from Vital Health.
- Two university students completed some of their allocated practical requirements.
- Two work placement students from Bingara Central School.
- A Tafe student who completed some of their allocated practical requirements.
- Tafe trainer and assessor.
- International Child Care college trainer and assessor.

## THARAWONGA MOBILE RESOURCE UNIT

Tharawonga Mobile Resource Unit has had a very successful year with the addition of a new venue in Warialda. Tharawonga operated at Croppa Creek on Monday, North Star on Tuesday, Yallaroi on Wednesday, Yetman on Thursday, and Warialda on Friday from term 2, 2024. Over the course of the year, enrolment of children has increased significantly in most of these venues. There are now 44 children attending Tharawonga.

We have a fresh new team of educators this year thanks to the Gwydir Shire Council funded Certificate III in Early Childhood Education.



These same educators are now enrolled in the Diploma of Early Childhood Education. Educators have undertaken training in CPR, First Aid, Asthma, Anaphylaxis and the most current Child Protection unit. The Service Director is also engaged in additional whole day training as a part of the CCCFR (Community Child Care Fund Restricted) project focusing on CCCFR sleep and rest risk assessment community of practice. The service Director is actively working towards her 4th year Early Childhood teaching degree, Bachelor of Education (Birth to 5 Years).

The Tharawonga Parent Fundraising Committee has been proactively involved, continuing to work with the service to fundraise for required resources for the service. The committee organised a raffle and held a ladies brunch on Sunday, 23 June 2024. These were very well supported events that raised funds for the service.

### Educational Program

This year educators have critically reflected on the program structure and made changes to this document to enable the programmed opportunities and planned learning experiences to be one document across the service. The service program is still offered by a lead educator for each of the venues to ensure that all educators are collaboratively providing an educational program for the service.

The program outlines the planned learning activities and program opportunities, such as group time including language, and music and movement, community, and family partnerships and collaboration. It also includes intentional teaching. Children's voices, interests, strengths, and needs are reflected in the program, which also incorporates spontaneous and child-directed activities. The new Early Years Learning Framework (Version 2) and childhood theorists are the emphasis of our programs, which are tailored to the locations that Tharawonga visits.

### Transition to School Program

Tharawonga strives to build good rapport with the isolated schools. We operate on three school premises, which makes transition to the school program an easy and effective transition for the children attending formal school next year. Seven children transitioned from Tharawonga to schools for the 2024 year and six children will transition into school in 2025. Educators completed seven online NSW Department of Education Transition to School Statements for the children attending school in 2024. These forms went to two different schools to support the teachers to get to know the children's interests, strengths, needs, and share successful strategies. The educational program is incorporating a school readiness session for the children attending formal schooling in 2025. The children are engaged in intentional learning to promote school readiness.

### Compliance Visit and Assessment & Rating

The service has implemented some of the feedback provided from our previous assessment and rating visit. The service is working collaboratively to continue reviewing and updating the self-assessment documentation in line with current practices and areas that require improvements.

### Excursions and events

The rural and remote locations of venues can at times impact what events and excursions are available to the service, where possible, many opportunities are facilitated.

The service has had an annual visit from the STEPs screening program conducted by the representative from the Inverell Community Health Facility. A representative contacts the service and arranges to conduct the vision screening across our venues on all children who are four years old and attending formal school the following year.

The following learning was shared with the children through celebrating significant events and dates.





Farm Safety Week was highlighted as this is reflected in the communities and is a major part of the family's home culture. The children have been expressing to the educators what they believe is not safe on the farm. The children have participated in creative experiences identifying the unsafe pictures and the younger children have been learning to identify the animals in the pictures. Educators have read the story "Boo's Farm adventure" which explains being safe on the farm and what's not safe especially focusing on water concepts and the danger this poses to farming communities.

The children at Croppa Creek participated in National Tree Day. This involved a creative experience of decorating a tree, consisting of gluing coloured tissue paper that the children tore into small bits and glued on the tree shapes that the educators drew. This activity allows the children to refine their fine motor control, experiment with colour and pasting. The children were able to plant a mandarin tree with the teachers and the school children at Croppa creek as a part of building a collaborative partnership with the school. The preschoolers and the school children are going to take shared responsibilities for the tree, ensuring that it is watered and well cared for.

During Dental Week we looked at what good teeth brushing looks like and how to brush our teeth, and talked about how brushing our teeth helps get rid of food that builds up on our teeth as well. All the children received a toothbrush kit.

Other events that were celebrated at Tharawonga during the last year included:

- R U OK? Day
- Grandparents Day
- Remembrance Day
- End of year performance
- Christmas
- Chinese New Year
- Easter
- Mother's Day
- Reconciliation week
- National Simultaneous story time
- Butterfly education and awareness week
- Insect week
- World Environment Day

### Graduation

Families were welcomed to the Vicarage Café at North Star to participate in a Preschool graduation ceremony for children attending school in 2024. The children were presented with their portfolios and certificate of graduation from Tharawonga. The children had opportunities to have photographs with families to celebrate this milestone. Educators also presented children returning to Tharawonga in 2024 with their portfolios and certificate of appreciation.

This event allowed for valuable conversation and community engagement with our service in relation to providing feedback for 2023 and ideas for 2024.

The Tharawonga educators promote art and craft as a part of the children’s learning. This experience provides the children opportunities to engage with senses such as touch, sight, and sound, and helps develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. It also encourages them to explore their creativity, imagination, and self-expression. This learning experience incorporated digital technologies which was child instigated when they wanted to discover how to create their own butterfly.

The educators at Tharawonga promote group time experiences by providing music and movement which reflect on learning about following instructions, spatial awareness, self-regulation, listening skills, social and problem-solving skills, learning about music, rhythm and about quick decision making.



Collaborative partnerships are an important aspect of our mobile service as we service a variety of different rural communities. The service strives to build collaborative partnerships in each of the communities it visits. The service has developed a collaborative partnership with the Croppa Creek and North Star Schools through the school children reading stories in small groups to the children attending Tharawonga.

## CONTRACTED SERVICES

### Centrelink

Staff provided support in arranging a visit from Inverell Services Australia staff to assist Bingara residents connect to sign up for and access online services again this year. The service received a very successful service audit, with ongoing changeover of Services Australia branding – signage and promotional materials. The agency managed numerous in-house staffing changes and a new Centrelink Supervisor during the year. The office continues to be well utilised.

## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

During the 2023/24 financial year Council received 45 Development Applications and 8 s4.55 Modifications with a total value of \$14,127,329.00. The types of development applied for were 8 new dwellings/residential accommodation types, 22 applications for residential ancillary developments (such as dwelling additions and alterations, garages, carports verandahs, pergolas, patios, shipping containers and swimming pools), 3 rural and 1 urban subdivision, 1 farm buildings, 2 telecommunication towers, a quarry, 2 cattle feedlots, 2 commercial, a solar installation on an aged care facility, the continued operation of a community event and the construction of the new Bingara Council Administration building.

Development Locations:

Locality	No	Locality	No	Locality	No	Locality	No
Barraba	1	Bingara	15	Boonal	1	Gravesend	2
Upper Horton	2	Warialda	20	Warialda Rail	3	Whitlow	1

The total number of development applications determined for the year was 60 as seen in the below table which also includes various other applications and approvals issued under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

	Development Application		S4.55 Modification Application		Subdivision Certificate	
	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24
Applications Received	47	45	11	8	4	2
Applications Refused	1	0	0	0	0	0
Applications Withdrawn/Closed	1	2	1	0	0	0
Total Applications Approved	60	43	10	8	4	2
Applications Approved by Delegation	59	39	10	8	4	2
Applications Approved by Council	0	4	0	0	0	0
Application Approved by Regional Planning Panel (RPP)	1	0	0	0	0	0
Applications Approved by Private Certifier	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0



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## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN **AGED CARE**

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### NAROO FRAIL AGED CARE FACILITY



Naroo Frail Aged Hostel continues to be a vibrant and caring facility for the elderly community members of the Gwydir Shire. Bed occupancy remains high and there is an active waiting list.

Naroo is a 36-bed single room residential facility. All rooms have their own ensuite attached.

The facility is set on beautifully landscaped grounds with a bushland backdrop. Naroo includes a 10-bed secure dementia wing comprising of an ambient indoor/outdoor courtyard with an automatic roof. Staffed 24/7 by a combination of care staff and registered nurses, Naroo offers residents the individual care that they need.

Naroo Frail Aged Hostel provides support to older people who can no longer live at home. It can include:

- help with everyday living
- assistive equipment
- personal care and health care
- accommodation.


Naroo Frail Aged Hostel can help you to:

- stay connected to your community
- be more independent
- take care of your health and safety
- meet your cultural and social needs.

We are proud of our Resident experience external survey results:

### Residents' Experience

★★★★★ **Excellent**



The Residents' Experience Rating shows what current residents think of Naroo Frail Aged Hostel. This rating was most recently updated on 21 September 2023.

Following a site audit conducted on 10 January 2023 to 12 January 2023, the Commission made a decision on 13 February 2023 to re-accredit the Service.

The period of accreditation of the Service will expire on 13 February 2026.

## Improvements:

### Purchase of Aboriginal artwork

The objective of this was to enrich the environment of the lounge room at Naroo by incorporating indigenous artwork, promoting cultural appreciation and diversity among residents.



### Bed Replacements

Thirty-one (31) new king single beds and mattresses were purchased at a cost of \$160,697.00 during the reporting period. This will ensure that residents have access to top quality and comfortable sleeping arrangements. The purchase also included 8 mattresses and pumps for management of residents with high risk of developing pressure injuries.

### New generator

A new generator has been installed at the Facility. The generator will act as a reliable backup power source during unforeseen outages. This not only guarantees power supply but also plays a crucial role for essential equipment such as power for residents requiring Oxygen supplementation and kitchen fridges and freezers, ensuring they stay operational, preventing defrosting and contamination.

### Purchase of Contiplan wipes

The use of IAD (Incontinent Acquired Dermatitis) wipes at Naroo have effectiveness in preventing and managing incontinence associated dermatitis among residents. IAD wipes are specially formulated to clean, protect and soothe the skin. Helping maintains skin integrity and prevents skin breakdown. This has reduced the number of residents with this condition and improved care and comfort.

### Rhapsody Spa Bath

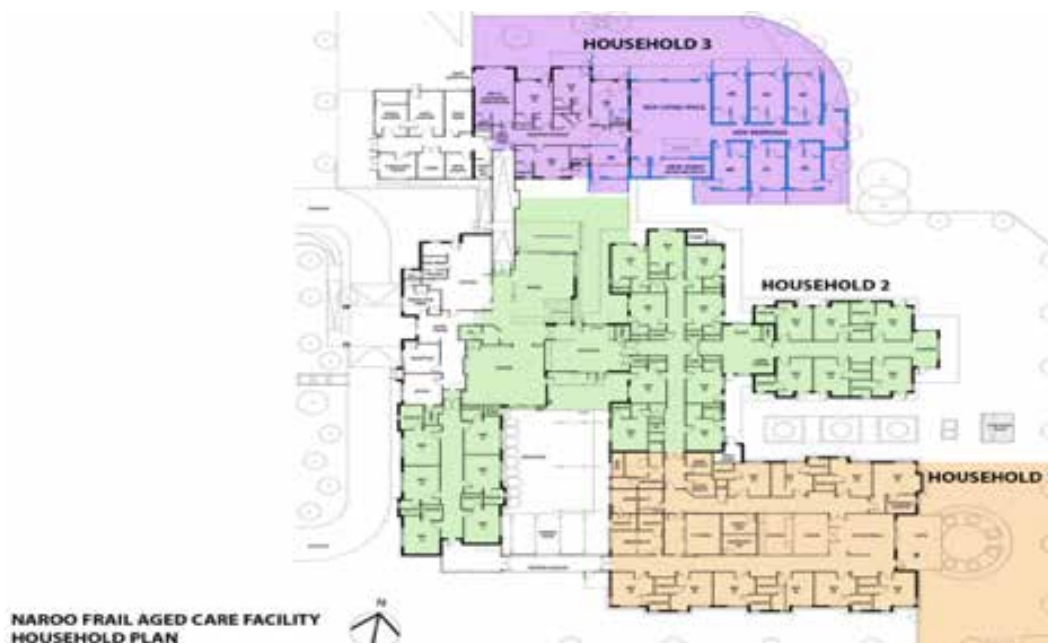
The purchase and installation of the Rhapsody Bathing system was funded through the successful Business Improvement Grant Round 2. The use of the spa and bathing system is in sequence with the current renovations. The system will improve skin integrity for residents and provide pain management for palliative care residents reaching the end of life.



## Renovations

Building works for the Aged Care Approvals Round (ACAR) grant build in High Care and the internal courtyard have commenced with Nathan Cobb being the successful tender. This new round of construction works is part of a masterplan to change the existing model of care at Naroo from Ageing in Place to a Household Model of Care.

Backed by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety’s support, the small household model of care is becoming more common across Australia’s aged care landscape. Small scale living is seen to deinstitutionalize aged care, breaking apart the expectations of residents living alongside dozens of strangers in large communal spaces. There are shared living spaces, including a kitchen and dining area, but residents can always retreat to their bedrooms which are not located off busy hallways.



## Palliative Trolley Initiative

The Palliative Trolley initiative was established to provide families with essential resources and information concerning end-of-life care. The aim is to offer support, guidance, and comfort to families during challenging times.

Components of the Trolley include information resources like:

- brochures on end-of-life care options
- contact details for support services
- aromatherapy kits
- essential oils and instructions for relaxation
- aromatherapy diffusers for a calming environment
- activities for Families
- coloring books and puzzles for relaxation
- reading materials on coping strategies



## Staffing and Learning and Development

The recent recruitment of an additional Registered Nurse (RN) to the Facility has proven to be an invaluable addition to the Naroo team. Assuming the role of weekend RN, this role has significantly alleviated the workload and reduced stress for both management and other RN staff members. The proactive approach and readiness to undertake various responsibilities demonstrated by staff have been crucial in maintaining seamless operations and ensuring the delivery of high-quality care to all Naroo residents.

With the support of Council, two existing staff members are pursuing their Registered Nurse qualifications at the University of New England as part of their own professional development. These staff members have embarked on this challenging, educational journey with the support of Council and their colleagues at Naroo, reflecting both their commitment to advancing their professional careers and the supportive framework provided by the community.

Furthermore, three staff members have successfully completed their Certificate III in Individual Support. Notably, one of these individuals began their career at Naroo as a school-based trainee and has now transitioned to a Permanent Part-Time (PPT) role. This progression highlights not only the dedication and hard work of our trainees, but also Council and Naroo's commitment to fostering the "grow our own initiative," providing our community with a pathway to professional development and career advancement within their local community.

## Staff Training and Certification

Naroo has achieved a 100% completion rate for staff training in First Aid and CPR. This accomplishment underscores the organisation's dedication to maintaining a safe work environment and ensuring that all staff members are well-prepared to handle emergencies by providing the relevant training opportunities.

## Approval of Vaccinations

This has been a process in the waiting since receiving the vaccine fridge. Naroo has been approved by the Board of Vaccine Government to hold Influenza vaccines etc. and Registered Nurses who are accredited immunizers are able to administer vaccinations in-house being a benefit to Naroo residents. This removes added pressure from our local GP (general practitioners) and ensures vaccines are administered in a timely manner.



### Naroo Advisory Committee

The Naroo Advisory Committee continues to support the residents and staff at Naroo Frail Aged Hostel, and has recently purchased new linen, bedding and six recliners for the residents. These items enhance comfort for residents providing what Naroo is all about, a homely comfortable and caring space for everyone.

### Leisure and Lifestyle

Leisure activities offer a number of important benefits for aged care residents and are a key part of wellbeing to help promote a healthy lifestyle. Gentle exercise, for example, is important for maintaining good physical health and assists in the reduction of falls, especially for seniors. Lifestyle activities can also improve resident well-being and mental health outcomes by providing a sense of purpose, friendship, and community. Instead of living alone with minimal social interaction, an aged care resident has access to regular social activities that help reduce isolation and increase connection.

Naroo has a robust Leisure and Lifestyle program. A calendar is completed monthly by our Leisure and Lifestyle coordinator offering an array of activities. The residents are also encouraged to be involved in suggestions for activities and can do this by completing a 6 monthly activities survey as well as the resident satisfaction survey that is completed quarterly and reported to the Department.

Examples of Activities offered at Naroo include:

- Regular group outings to local areas and clubs.
- Carpet bowls
- BBQ's
- Cultural days celebrating diversity
- Carpet bowls
- Art lessons
- Exercise classes and regular walks
- Celebration of Carers week, Demetia week and RUOK
- Pet visits
- School visits
- Music therapy



## COMMONWEALTH HOME SUPPORT PROGRAMME (CHSP)



### BINGARA, DELUNGRA & WARIALDA

#### Learning and Development

CHSP staff attended safe food handling courses and completed CPR and First Aid accreditation requirements during the period, as well as attending the Transport for NSW Forums which are always very informative and keep staff up to date with relevant information and resources available.

#### Activities and Programs

The past year has been positive for CHSP services. We visited new locations as well as returning to some familiar favourites and undertook new activities within the Service. Supported by volunteers who are keen to keep minds and bodies active, clients seem to thrive on the group activities offered to them.

During the year, we visited Molly May's café in Manilla for lunch. Other popular outings included a BBQ on the banks of the Gwydir River, a picnic on the Bingara Golf Course and trips to Delungra and Inverell. Lunches were also held at the Imperial Hotel and the Sportsman's Hotel. Our Bingara ladies also visited the Sporting Club for lunch at the Chinese restaurant. The centres also provide weekly morning teas and lunches for clients.

Bingara CHSP staff entertain and amuse clients by dressing up for special events such as Halloween, Melbourne Cup, Christmas, Australia Day, St Patrick's Day, Anzac Day, Easter and Mother's Day. All services hold monthly birthday parties for everyone who celebrated their birthday during that month, and Warialda CHSP provide the birthday person with a free lunch. We had the pleasure of hosting several 90th birthday celebrations for some of our regular clients during the period.

Warialda & Delungra CHSP have held bingo sessions followed by a two course lunch, along with card games and outdoor outings to local parks, weather permitting. Thanks to some funding received, the Bingara CHSP Lingerlonger room and Warialda CHSP





centre has again been host to free chair exercise classes conducted by Dale Hartin from ReHealth in Moree. Two six-week blocks of classes have been held during this year and have become increasingly popular with our clients.

While attending morning tea and/or lunches at the centre, the Bingara ladies have continued their knitting activities. The ladies received very generous donations of wool which have been and still are keeping them very busy. These donations have allowed them to contribute to some very worthwhile causes while doing something they love and keep their joints mobile. The many squares knitted by the ladies were sent to “Wrapped with Love” and made into blankets. The finished products are provided to more than 30,000 people in Australia and around the world to supply them with love and warmth each year. Baby Jackets, beanies and booties knitted were sent to “Life’s Little Treasures” for premature babies.

## Statistics

Transport to medical appointments outside of the local area has continued to be very busy. During 2023/2024, for CHSP offices more than 2,020 trips were made to medical appointments in Inverell, Tamworth, Armidale, and Moree by CHSP clients. For Bingara, there were 463 trips made by 18 CTP clients and 7 Department Veteran Affairs (DVA) clients had 149 trips during this time. Bingara CHSP was supported by 15 volunteers who have remained devoted to the cause and looking after our clients in an exceptional manner. Warialda and Delungra volunteers contributed more than 7,500 hours of care and support to the CHSP clientele. This support from volunteers is appreciated and valued as the centres would simply not be able to function without them.

The CHSP Access Buses travelled to Inverell regularly during the period, also making trips to Tamworth for our clients. The bus was also utilised as an alternative mode of transport for medical appointments when other CHSP vehicles were in use, and Naroo utilized the Warialda CHSP bus when needing additional transport for residents.

During the period it was identified that further outings for the under 65 category of the Bingara client base were needed, as a result two social outings specifically for CTP clients (under 65) saw us travel to the Pally pub and Delungra pub for a delicious lunch and plenty of laughs.

Local transport has remained in demand this year, many clients using the service for medical appointments, physiotherapy appointments and the optometrist who visits monthly, along with appointments at the Bingara Multi-Purpose Centre with the Podiatrist, Dietician and other specialists who visit the facility regularly.

The Meals on Wheels service has serviced up to twenty clients in Bingara with 2,984 meals being provided, and Warialda volunteers delivered 2,590 meals to client homes during the year.

In Bingara, social support of over 5,895 hours was provided to 115 clients by staff and volunteers by way of community transport, group and individual social support, meals on wheels, and local transport. There were 358 meals served in the centre to 16 clients with many laughs shared during Centre Based Day Care that is held every Tuesday.

In Delungra and Warialda 7,540 hours of support was provided to clients, that support being both individual and group support. There were 2,163 meals provided in the Warialda Day Centre and 688 in the Delungra Centre. These services provide a vital source of socialisation for our clients, many of whom do not have that regular contact with anyone.

The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) continues to be a vital service for our community, with staff and volunteers providing services to our clients that allow them to access entry-level support services to live independently and safely at home but also providing a space to come to that gives our clients a sense of community and belonging with the in-centre programs offered.

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## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN **BUILDING SERVICES**

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### Our Achievements in Building Services

Council's Building Services Business Unit comprises five (5) full time, one (1) part time (shared resource), and two (2) apprentice staff members and is responsible for, but not limited to providing the following services to the community:

- Building approvals, certification, and inspections
- Swimming pool compliance and inspections
- Sanitary plumbing and drainage approvals and inspections
- Building repairs and maintenance
- Capital works construction.

### Building Certification and inspections

Building Services staff provide an effective and affordable building approval, certification, and inspection service to the community. Services extend to the assessment and issuing of construction certificates, complying development certificates, building certificates and occupation certificates. Staff also carry out critical stage mandatory building inspections during the building process to ensure that buildings and structures are compliant, safe, and fit for purpose.

Our Business Unit also provides information and advice to members of our community in relation to various building related issues, including lodgment of applications on the NSW Planning Portal.

Building Services staff respond to complaints received in relation to illegal development, building safety and other matters and carry out investigations and enforcement action where necessary.

### Sanitary plumbing and drainage approvals and inspections

Gwydir Shire Council is the delegated authority by Fair Trading NSW to issue approvals for and inspections of sanitary plumbing and drainage within the Gwydir Shire Local Government Area. This includes the installation of all sanitary plumbing and drainage and includes the installation of on-site sewerage management systems (OSSM) where there is no access to a reticulated sewer system.

Council regularly conducts inspections on OSSM systems for the sale of properties to ensure that systems have been installed properly and are operating effectively to ensure health of the occupants, adjoining properties, and the environment.

All sanitary plumbing and drainage work must be carried out by an appropriately licensed plumber.

### Building Repairs and Maintenance

Building Services continues to carry out planned maintenance activities and responded to reactive repairs and maintenance requests across approximately 200 Council owned building assets. Staff also responded to after-hours security calls and emergency repairs to Council buildings.



## Capital Works

The majority of our regular Capital Works program for 2023-2024 was again deferred to allow Building Services staff to undertake projects under the Stronger Country Communities, Local Roads & Infrastructure and other grant funding programs.

Capital works projects completed included:

- Nicholson Oval – Construction of new amenities building (including dressing sheds & canteen)
- Warialda Rail Recreation Ground – Construction of amenities building (additional works to be completed 2024/25)
- Holden Street Aged Units – Refurbishment of Unit
- Warialda RFS HQ – Removal of loading dock and raised decking & conversion to vehicle bay
- Warialda Showground – Renovation of existing amenities
- Bingara Toy Library – Internal and external painting.

## Training

Council’s Building Services staff continue to undergo mandatory training to ensure their ability to maintain a safe and compliant workforce which includes:

- Safe working within proximity of power lines training
- First aid training
- Asbestos removal
- Working at heights.

Staff also participated in CPD training to ensure their ability to maintain accreditation where required under relevant legislation.

## Summary

The Building Services Business Unit continues to work collaboratively and cooperatively with other Business Units within Gwydir Shire Council to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of our goals for our community.

Our major Capital Works project for the 2024-2025 financial year will be the completion of the Wellness & Interpretive Centre at the Bingara Living Classroom. This project will present a new challenge for our Building Services crew due to its uniqueness in architectural design. We look forward to delivering this project to the community!





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## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

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### Biosecurity Priority Weeds

This year has been challenging for council's Biosecurity team due to wet conditions and staffing changes. Despite these hurdles, significant progress has been made in weed control, community education, and regulatory compliance.

The year began with the appointment of two new Biosecurity Officers. However, one officer's departure after a few months necessitated an internal search to fill the position. Two candidates were selected for a three-month trial period, during which they inspected Croppa Creek properties for Parthenium, conducted weed control and identification, and attended regional weed meetings. Both candidates performed admirably, with one ultimately being offered the position.

Extensive training has been completed and continues to ensure our officers perform to the highest standards and in line with relevant industry regulations. This includes Department of Primary Industry (DPI) Officer induction training and a Certificate IV in Government Investigations.

### Educational and Community Activities

The team actively engaged with the community through various events including but not limited to:

- Attending Warialda and Bingara Shows, providing information to landowners and residents about priority weeds.
- Participating in AG Quip field day with the weeds trailer.
- Attending an Ag retailer's information evening.
- Distributing booklets during the Hay Runners event in Bingara.

### Parthenium Outbreak

The major Parthenium outbreak at Croppa Creek remains a high priority, with monthly inspections ongoing. A significant achievement this year is Yallaroi Station being declared Parthenium-free for five years, allowing it to be removed from our list. Rapid response efforts continue in collaboration with the Department of Primary Industry (DPI) and Local Lands Services (LLS), ensuring effective inspection and eradication.



Efforts to map and control Harissa cactus have ramped up this year. Council has strengthened its collaboration with Local Land Services (LLS) and Landcare, resulting in more detailed mapping and targeted control measures. These joint initiatives focus on managing current infestations and preventing the spread of Harissa cactus, thereby protecting local biodiversity and agricultural lands.

Despite the challenges, Council’s Biosecurity team remains committed to managing and controlling priority weeds, ensuring the health and biodiversity of our region.

### Private Works

Private works were undertaken at one property during the reporting period:

- Residential landholder in Bangheet: African Boxthorn & Green Cestrum control, \$1,333.92 (September 2023)

### Riverside Camping

The compliance team carries out regular camping inspections along the Gwydir River to ensure that camping is conducted in a safe and environmentally sustainable manner. Inspections of camping areas are undertaken daily through the workweek, with compliance officers providing a friendly presence and answering enquiries from campers about the area. The Shire collected \$8,232.30 from the four donation boxes across the camping grounds, an increase from \$5,830 the previous year.

Throughout the year, there was a daily average of 19 caravans and motorhomes visiting the Gwydir River campgrounds, a rise of about 15 percent from the previous year.

After the 2022-2023 flood, consultation took place with emergency services and the council. Following discussions with all stakeholders, council rangers erected lockable gates at all entrances to the free camping areas. In the event of further flooding, procedures have been put in place to evacuate and direct campers from the riverside. Emergency services and council will continue to work together in this process.

There were no other major incidents in the camping areas. There have been minimal camps set up outside the designated areas, with three camping complaints received. The general behaviour of campers was compliant, and there were no public order or safety issues.

Below: Lockable gates erected at entrances of free camping areas.



## Animal Management

Regulatory officers seized nine (9) dogs that were microchipped and registered with current owner contact information. This enabled their canine friends to be successfully reunited with their owners rather than going to the pound. A further seventeen (17) dogs were seized and transferred to the impounding facility. Four (4) dogs were successfully rehomed within the area, and the other thirteen went to rehoming organisations. The staff have networked with several rehoming organisations across the state to ensure that the maximum number of unclaimed suitable pets find new homes. The council is pleased to report that it has successfully met all the new rehoming requirements introduced in the Companion Animals Act.

During the year, twelve (12) dog barking noise complaints were reported and investigated. There were three (3) dog roaming reports, four (4) nuisance dog reports, and four (4) reports about cats that were investigated and actioned. Regulatory officers seized one (1) domestic cat, which was returned to the owner. Feral cat control continued at the landfills, with cat traps set and monitored throughout the shire.

## Vehicles and property

Routine surveillance was conducted at rest stops for litter and truck effluent release. The Council received two (2) abandoned vehicle reports. These unclaimed vehicles did not reach the required value threshold and were taken to the landfill for scrap as provided for under the Impounding Act and the Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Act, which came into force on 1 November 2022. Three (3) vehicles were also impounded at the Council's impounding facility.

During the period, there were no non-companion animals impounded. Eleven (11) grazing permit concurrences were processed for the period, compared to two (2) from the previous year. Thirteen (13) nuisance animal reports were investigated, comprising four (4) cattle roaming complaints, two (2) involving horses, two (2) for roosters, one (1) for goats, two (2) for chickens, and two (2) for sheep. Council also issued notices of intention requiring fencing to prevent stock from escaping, which both went to order.

Council received eleven (11) overgrown and untidy block reports during the reporting period. These were inspected along with proactive patrols of the villages, resulting in six (6) notices of intention being issued, one of which went to order. Council also issued one notice of intention requiring fencing to prevent stock from escaping, which went to order.

## Dog Attack Statistics

Known dog attacks reported and investigated by council's Regulatory Officers are entered into the Companion Animals Database, in accordance with the requirements of the Companion Animals Act 1998. During 2023-2024 there were eight (8) incidents during the period. All incidents were investigated and reported through the Companion Animals Database portal. All incidents were resolved.

Council rangers attended the Ranger's Conference in Parramatta. At the conference, rangers receive up to date legislative developments and participate in professional development workshops.

## Penalty Notices

### Companion Animals Act

- Four notices for "Owner of dog which rushes at or attacks a person/animal."
- Three notices for "In charge of dog which rushes at or attacks a person/animal."
- One notice for "Fail to prevent dog from escaping – not dangerous/menacing/restricted dog."
- One notice for "Owner of dog not under control in a public place."
- One notice for "Failure to immediately remove dog faeces from a public place."



### Local Government Act

- One notice for “Leaving in a public place bottle/glass/syringe causing damage to property.”
- One notice for “Failure to comply with order number 21 (health/safety of land/premises).”
- One notice for “Failure to comply with order number 18 (keeping birds/animals).”

### Protection of the Environment Operations Act

- One notice for “Disposal of asbestos waste at a place not lawful to receive it.”

### Legal Proceedings

There were no legal court proceedings for this period.

### Water Sampling

Weekly water sampling was conducted for Bingara and Warialda, fortnightly for Gravesend and monthly for North Star as per the NSW Health requirements. The sampling is undertaken by the Council’s Compliance team.

### Public Health (Food)

All 27 high-risk food businesses underwent their annual inspection, except for school canteens. Inspections were also carried out for mobile food vans and stalls operating within the shire. The annual food inspection survey was completed and submitted to the Food Authority.

Information, including fact sheets from the Food Authority and a regional food safety calendar, were distributed to food businesses. Individuals seeking information about starting a food retail business, as well as mobile and home food businesses, were provided with the necessary details. One complaint was received during this period, which was investigated and addressed appropriately. Staff participated in regional meetings and training sessions with the Food Authority.

Financial Year	Usage (kWh)	YoY Change (%)	Cost (\$)	YoY Cost Change (%)
2023-2024	1,576,842.0	5 ↑	612,497	33 ↑
2022-2023	1,499,661.0	4 ↑	460,286	22 ↑
2021-2022	1,440,565.0	-6 ↓	377,908	-10 ↓
2020-2021	1,533,212.0	-6 ↓	421,568	-4 ↓

Council’s three major sites—Bingara Water Treatment Plant, Naroo Hostel, and the Warialda Sale Yard Bore—along with street lighting, are contracted through Shell. All smaller user sites are contracted through AGL. These contracts are arranged via Local Government Procurement, which negotiates for the best price and stability in the volatile energy market. The top five sites for power costs are Binara Water Treatment Plant, Naroo Hostel, the Sale Yard Bore for Warialda water supply, Council Offices Warialda, and Bingara Caravan Park.

Solar systems are operational at Naroo Hostel, Warialda Council Chambers, Warialda Works Depot, Warialda Sewerage Treatment Works, the Roxy Theatre Complex, The Living Classroom, and Bingara Wastewater Treatment Plant.



## Electricity

Electricity consumption continues to be monitored through the Azility portal. The total usage reached 1,576,842 kWh, marking a 5% increase. However, the expenditure rose by 33%, totalling \$612,497, which is \$152,211 more than last year. Despite securing the best market price through Local Government Procurement, the overall increase in electricity costs was unavoidable.

## Cemeteries

Annual cemetery reporting was completed for all nine cemeteries under the council's control. During the reporting period, there were 53 interments in the active cemeteries within the local government area (LGA), with 28 at Warialda cemetery and 25 at Bingara cemetery. No activity was recorded at private cemeteries.

The NSW Government introduced the Interment Industry Scheme as part of the Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulation 2022, licensing all cemetery and crematorium operators and setting clear standards. This helps families make informed choices.

Key licence conditions include:

- Clear consumer contracts
- Minimum cemetery maintenance standards
- Pricing transparency
- Quality customer service
- Respect for religious and cultural principles.

From 1 July 2024, the interment services levy will apply to all cemetery and crematoria operators, excluding inactive cemeteries. This ensures Cemeteries & Crematoria NSW (CCNSW) is properly funded to improve customer protections and maintain standards. Gwydir Shire Council now holds a Group 3 license and has updated forms and processes to align with the new regulations.

## Waste Collection

The recent period marked the beginning of a new waste management contract with J.R. Richards & Son. To commemorate this milestone, a Truck Art Competition was held, inviting students from schools in Gwydir Shire to create artworks inspired by the theme "Let's get it sorted – Be a waste warrior." The winning entry is now featured on the side of a waste collection truck, where it will remain for the lifetime of the contract.

*Right: Winning entry for Truck Art competition.*



There were minimal changes to the collection per service over the period:

- **Red bin:** An average of 349 kg per service was collected over 1,568 services, up from 340 kg (+2.6%).
- **Yellow bin:** An average of 112 kg per service was collected over 1,566 services, up from 108 kg (+3.7%).
- **Green bin:** An average of 146 kg per service was collected over 1,377 services, up from 141 kg (+3.5%).

Collection data shows an increase in all waste streams, possibly due to new services being added as the local population grows. There have been some instances of contamination in all waste streams, but with continued and improved education, this is expected to decrease. Council's waste app, Gwydir Waste, offers users information and education on which items go in each bin. It also includes a calendar to show which collection is scheduled for the week. Council has initiated a recycling bin swap project in Bingara, allowing rural landholders without access to curb side collection to participate in recycling.

## Landfills and Transfer Stations

Warialda and Bingara landfills have been enhanced with new security cameras, water tanks for firefighting, and upgraded signage. Both sites now also feature tyre cages to aid in tyre recycling. Additionally, an awning has been installed at the Bingara office to provide protection from wet weather and sun.

Below: Tyre cages for tyre recycling. New awning installed at Bingara Landfill office. Warialda Rail landfill has also seen infrastructure upgrades and new signage. New gate codes have been issued to residents in the Warialda Rail area.



## Community Consultation - Streetlight Recommendations

Council has submitted twenty streetlight recommendations to Essential Energy, focusing on high-priority areas such as Bingara and Warialda hospitals, Touriandi Lodge, and several locations across North Star. Essential Energy will assess these recommendations and the existing poles in those areas to determine their suitability for upgrades. This initiative aims to enhance safety and visibility in crucial locations.

## Part 5 Assessments

Throughout the year, several Part 5 - Review of Environmental Factors assessments were completed and are now awaiting approval. These assessments evaluate the potential environmental impacts arising from construction activities.

## Koala Park Wildlife Reserve

The Koala Park Wildlife Reserve was officially opened by Mayor John Coulton on June 7, 2023. The park features interpretative signage detailing the creation of the reserve, its features, and Koala ecology, making it a must-visit for families and tourists.

Council has recently held discussions with several key stakeholders, including Landcare, North West Koala ARKS, and other specialists, to develop a management plan. This plan will define project goals, management procedures, and mitigation of threats such as feral animals (cats, foxes, cane toads, plant species), and highlight further improvements needed for the area.

Additionally, a donation box is available at the park this year, with all funds going to the North West Koala ARKS. A sign will be erected above the donation box, featuring a QR code to allow for cashless donations.





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## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN TOWN UTILITIES

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Gwydir Shire Council provides water supply to Bingara, Warialda, Gravesend, and North Star.

Bingara's water supply is sourced from the Gwydir River via bank infiltration chamber; the water is then treated using a dissolved air floatation/filtration process and disinfected with chlorine before delivery to reservoirs where the water gravitates to users.

Warialda's water supply is sourced from groundwater from five (5) bores. The water is aerated and disinfected with sodium hypochlorite before being delivered to residents.

Gravesend's water supply is sourced from the Gwydir River via bank infiltration bores located north-east of Gravesend township. The water is disinfected with sodium hypochlorite before being delivered to residents.

North Star's water supply is sourced from sub-artesian ground water. The water is aerated and then treated using a Reverse Osmosis process and disinfection with sodium hypochlorite before being delivered to users.

### Water Operations and Maintenance

A total of 807ML of water was treated and delivered across Gwydir Shire during the 2023-2024 year.

- 19 new water connections were installed during 2023-2024
- 14 water service lines were replaced from main to meter
- 244 service lines repaired
- 66 water meters replaced
- 59 water main break repairs
- 34 water meter isolating taps replaced
- 300m of water main replaced
- All plumbing and drainage work at Plunkett Street units.



Council's four (4) water supplies operate under a Drinking Water Quality Management System which involves placement of multiple barriers of protection to ensure water quality is maintained. Inspection and testing of water quality occurs daily and protocols are followed. As an independent check, Council's Environmental Department collects water samples from the reticulation system of the four (4) supplies and these samples are provided to the NSW Health Laboratory for analysis.

There were no emergency water quality events during the reporting period.

### Water Charges

Water charges have an access and a usage component with a two-part tariff. The residential 20mm water access charge was \$515.00 and the Water usage charge \$1.70 /kL less than 600 kL over 600 kL is charged at \$2.40 / kL.

Water meter reading and billing are undertaken on a quarterly basis.

## Grant Funding

Council received funding from NSW Department of Planning and Environment (NSW DPE) to undertake a Bulk Water Metering Project, which involved calibration of Bingara Water treatment plant raw and clear water meters. The reservoir meters at Gravesend, Bingara, Warialda South, Warialda North, and North Star were replaced. The Project total was \$165,000 with \$148,950.00 funded by NSW DPE. The aim of the project is to monitor water usage and identify water losses.

Council received funding from NSW Department of Planning and Environment (NSW DPE) to undertake Gravesend Water treatment Plant options assessment study, with the aim of the study to recommend a suitable water treatment process and concept design to enable Council to go to tender for design and construction of water treatment plant in 2024.

### **Water Supply Capital Improvements in 2023-2024 included:**

- Water meter replacement program
- Installation of water monitoring system at Gravesend and The Living Classroom. This is a remote water monitoring system that provides alerts to a mobile phone when the water levels in tanks and bores drop below an acceptable (nominated) level
- Installation of solar panels at Bingara Water Treatment Plant
- Secure yield groundwater report
- Pump replacement program at Queen Street booster, saleyard bore
- Mains replacement in West Street Bingara – 200m
- Mains replacement in Bandalong Street Bingara 100m.

## Sewerage Systems

Gwydir Shire Council operates two (2) sewerage systems. Warialda’s sewerage system was built in 1969-1970 with a design size of 1500 EP (equivalent population). Warialda operates under Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Licence L584 for small treatment plants with an allowable discharge of 250mL per year into Reedy Creek. The yearly inflow into the sewerage treatment was 171mL with 38mL of treated effluent being recycled and used on the local golf course to irrigate fairways and tees.

Bingara sewerage system was commissioned in 1971 and has a design capacity of 2000 EP. The Bingara system operates under EPA Licence L586 for small treatment plants with an allowable discharge of 250 mL per year into the Gwydir River. The inflow for Bingara sewerage treatment plant for 2023-2024 was 46ML and 8ML of treated effluent was recycled and used onsite.



Council undertakes monthly testing of samples from both Warialda and Bingara sewerage discharge to comply with the EPA standards. These results are published on Council's website. Council's residential sewer access charge is \$625 per annum and the non-residential sewer access charge is \$555 per annum. Non-residential sewer customers also pay a usage charge based on their water consumption and a sewer discharge factor. Non-residential customers have a trade waste charge levied each year.

### Sewer Operation and Maintenance

Council water and sewer operators undertook the following repairs in 2023-2024.

- 112 sewer blocks
- 14 sewer pump blockages in sewer pump stations
- 21 sewer main repairs.

New switchboard was installed at sewer pump station No. 3 and the old switchboard was decommissioned.

#### Capital Works Sewer during 2023-2024

- North and East Bingara Pressure sewer project completed with just under 10km of pipelines installed and 86 residents connected.
- Warialda – STP inlet pipe relined
- Bingara – STP inlet pipe relined
- Electrical switchboard replacement sewerage pump station No. 3 Bingara
- Warialda sewerage treatment plant – trickle filter refurbishment
- Bingara sewerage treatment plant - trickle filter refurbishment
- Warialda sewerage pump station No. 3 pump replacement
- Warialda truck wash pond installation of solar aeration unit

*Below: Horizontal drill installing pressure sewer pipes. Right: New electrical switchboard at pump station 3, Bingara*



### Warialda Truck Wash Facility

The Warialda truck wash facility was used by 1,403 trucks between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024, averaging 116 trucks per month with an average wash down time of 59 minutes. An average of 744kL of water was used per month.

The income from the truck wash for the reporting period was \$105,733, less monitoring fees and expenses.

The truck wash hours of operation are from 6am to 11pm with the amenities building open 24 hours a day accessed using the AVDATA fob. This appears to have minimal effect on the truck wash facility. A new solar aerator was installed at the truck wash ponds in June 2024. The aerator oxygenates the water to prevent the pond from turning anaerobic.





### Parks and Gardens

Gwydir Shire Council operates and maintains fifteen (15) parks, four (4) sporting fields, eleven (11) playgrounds, twelve (12) reserves, two (2) cemeteries and numerous gardens.

Two (2) separate work crews have operated in the north and south of the shire during the reporting period. The northern crew maintains parks and gardens in the Warialda, Warialda Rail, Gravesend, Coolatai, and North Star areas. The southern crew maintains parks and gardens in Bingara, Upper Horton, the Glacial Area, and Myall Creek Memorial site. Facilities in these areas are frequented by numerous visitors and Council aims to keep these areas in prime condition.

During the cooler months gardeners undertake tree trimming, stump grinding and maintenance activities.



*Above: Street gardens. Right: New shelter in Apex Park, Warialda*

### CWA Park Bingara

A request was made by several residents of Bingara to have a blue tree painted as part of the Blue Tree Project. The Blue Tree Project is a mental health initiative created by Kendall Whyte as a legacy for her brother Jayden serves as a reminder that there are always people around to listen to and help those suffering from mental illness. Refurbishment of the playground commenced and will be completed October 2024.

### All Abilities Park, Warialda

Retaining walls were erected and trees were planted at All Abilities in Warialda, finishing the project.



## Sportsgrounds

New goalposts were installed at Warialda Recreation Ground in March 2024.

New electronic scoreboards were installed at both Warialda Recreation Ground and Gwydir Oval in Bingara in time for the 2024 football season.

## Bingara Showground

Gwydir Shire Council is the trustee for Crown Land Reserve D560019 Bingara Showground. The showground is maintained by Council in consultation with six main user groups: Bingara Show Society, Bingara Pony Club, Bingara Polocrosse, Bingara Jockey Club, Gwydir River Run and Bingara Camp draft. The showground is popular for holding large regional equestrian events due to the size and excellent facilities available onsite. Several scheduled events were held during the 2023-2024 year:

- Inaugural cattle working dog trials
- Bingara Races
- Bingara 2023 pony camp
- Auction sale
- Pony Club 2024 mini camp
- 2024 Bingara Show
- Bingara camp draft
- Stockman's challenge
- Numerous one day equestrian events.

A swabbing stall was installed at the Bingara Showground prior to the August 2023 Bingara Races meeting to accommodate mandatory random testing as required by Racing NSW. Racing NSW and the Bingara Jockey Club met the cost of construction.

Aussie Hay Runners coordinated the delivery of 71 trailer loads of donated hay to the Bingara Showground in August 2023 and again in June 2024. The hay was distributed to local farmers.

In December 2023 a country music festival was held at the Bingara Showground attracting over 300 campers.

Bingara Showground was booked for camping during the local RSM Club's country music weekend in April.

Bingara Showground was also host to a Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) rally in May 2024 hosting approximately 30 caravans.

Replacement of the shade sail at showground was undertaken before the annual races. Bird proofing of the grandstand by the council building crew was undertaken in May 2024.

## Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Grant (LRCI)

### Gravesend Recreation Ground

Local Roads and Community Infrastructure funding provided an underground irrigation system for Gravesend Recreation Ground including the installation of the Rhino tank and pressure pump to complete the project.

### Batterham's Lookout, Bingara

Improvements at the Bingara Lookout were completed under Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Phase 1. These improvements included a new guard rail, car park fencing, signage and a picnic shelter, tables and chairs. The work was completed in August 2023 with the landscaping of a path to the picnic table. Visitor information signage and a seat halfway to the lookout will be installed to complete the project.

### Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Phase 3

A new amenity building purchased for Upper Horton, was set up on piers and an access ramp installed during May. A new septic tank and plumbing is required to complete the project.

### Stronger Country Communities Round 5

Construction of the new campdraft facility at Bingara Showground was undertaken as part of Stronger Country Communities funding. The council constructed the access road for the new facility in April 2024. As part of this project the old campdraft arena was dismantled by the user groups during various working bees. Additional lighting was installed at the northern end of the main arena 2024.

### Regional Sports Facility Program

A covered netball court next to Gwydir Oval was installed in 2023 and was officially opened by the Member for Northern Tablelands Adam Marshall on 19 July 2023. The facility is a great asset for the community and can be utilised for multiple functions in addition to netball.

### Skate Park:

Council obtained funding under NSW Open Spaces Program to construct a skate park in Cunningham Park, Bingara. The project was completed in June 2024 with the official opening held on 12 June 2024. The skate park has proven to be a popular attraction for the youth of Bingara and surrounds.





### Council Depots:

A new 20,000 litre emulsion tank was installed at the Bingara sewerage treatment works depot in November 2023. The new storage tank is large enough to handle semi-trailer loads of emulsion. The tank is provided under contract from Downer EDI locking Council into a five-year contract with Downer for the supply of emulsion at Bingara and Warialda depots.

### Workshop and Plant

Council operates two workshops. Warialda workshop staff include Workshop Supervisor, two fulltime mechanics, one fabricator/welder, one apprentice mechanic and one school-based trainee mechanic.

The Bingara workshop consists of a Workshop Supervisor, trades assistant and one school-based trainee mechanic.

During 2023-2024 the workshops completed 325 services and carried out a total of 1875 repairs to individual items of plant.

Council’s fabrication section undertakes repairs to councils’ plant and equipment along with fabrication of various building maintenance task for example, handrails for access ramp at Naroo Aged Care facility. The picture below shows the frame for placement of skid steer attachments.

New workshop tools and equipment purchased during the reporting period included:

- New guillotine
- Truck stands
- Bench grinder
- Welding helmet with ventilation
- Mig welder

Council’s heavy plant fleet consists of the following equipment:

Description	Number	Trucks	Number
Graders	7	Primemover/lowloader	1
Excavators	4	Primemover/Side tipping trailers	3
Front end Loaders	3	Tip truck and pig trailer	3
Backhoes	3	Jetpatcher	2
Skid Steer Loader/sweeper	2	Watercarts	5
Rollers – smooth drum	3	Lime Spreader	1
Roller – padfoot	2	Medium tipper trucks	5
Roller – rubber tyred	1	Light trucks	5
Tractor – Grid roller combination	3		
Tractor – Slasher combinations	5		
Compactor – Landfill	1		
Rock Crusher	1		
Road Reclaimer	1		

Three of council’s graders are equipped with grade control equipment introducing technology into the road construction process, leading to more accurate road construction and design and minimising material wastage.

Road crews are open to new methods of road maintenance the ecombi roller below has been purchased for maintenance of gravel roads towed behind grader.

## Plant replacement Program

The following new items of plant were purchased in 2023-2024:

- Secondhand pig trailer for use in driver training
- Broons eCombie flat drum and rubber tyred roller
- Hire to buy CAT 289D skid steer with road profiler, mulcher and attachments
- Skid Steer roller attachment
- Hire to buy CAT Grader 150
- Isuzu FXZ water truck P2096 – replacement
- UD 8 tonne tipper
- utilities – replacements x 8
- 8.5 KVA Generator for work crew
- Solar traffic lights
- Flexidrive pump
- 72” zeroturn Kubota mower
- 72” zeroturn Ferris mower
- 2 x Tipping trailer for depot rubbish
- Skid steer slasher attachment
- Mower trailer 11 x 7 galvanised tilt trailer
- Stick rake for landfill excavator
- Vermeer vacuum excavator truck

## Heavy Plant Disposal:

P1721 Cat 12M grader - sold

P1786 – Isuzu water truck – sold

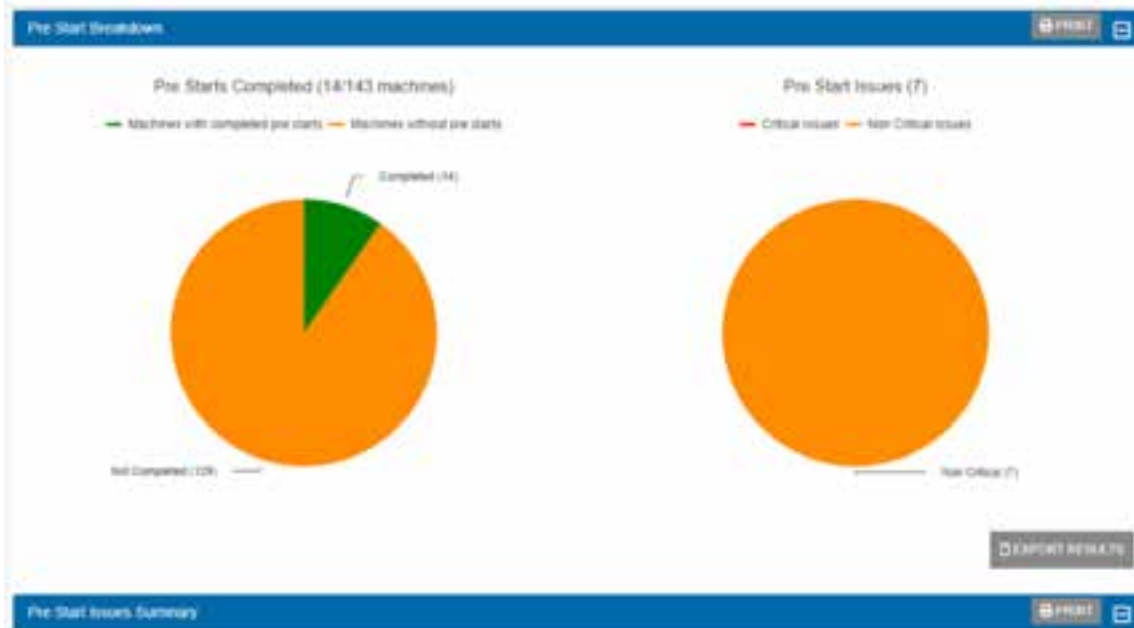
P1886 – Isuzu crew cab maintenance truck



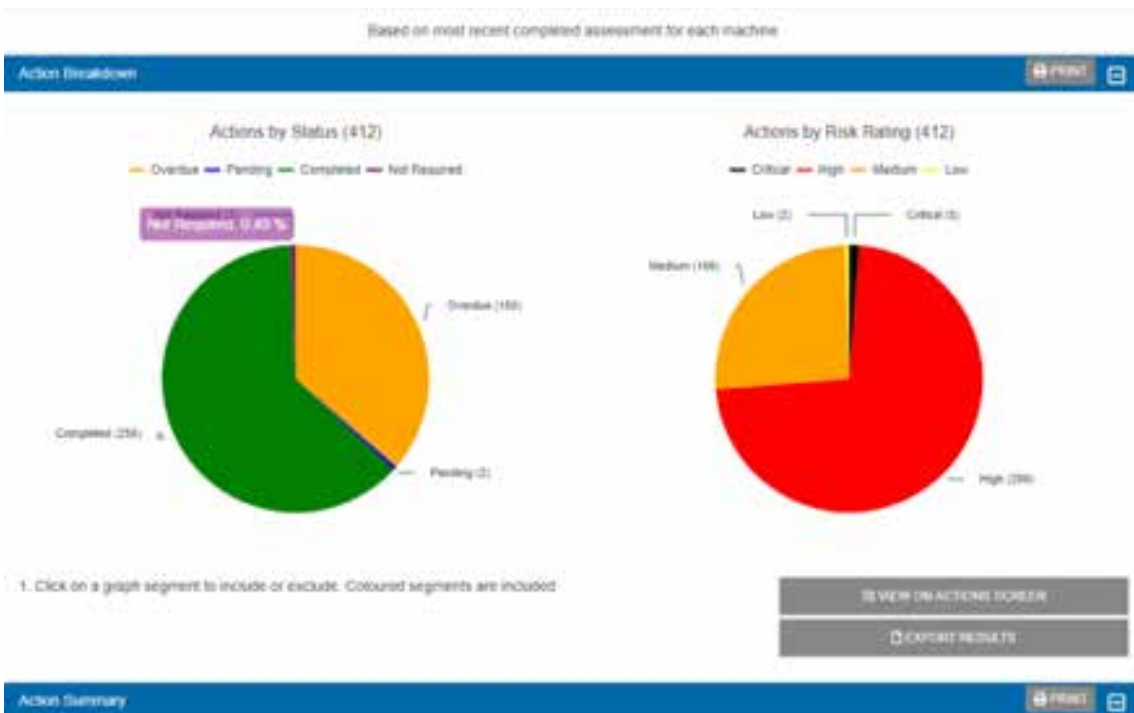
## Plant

Council moved to electronic daily inspections for plant. This can be undertaken in the field via an App on mobile phones. Staff have undertaken training, and it is expected that this new procedure will enable better efficiency and accuracy with reporting of plant and aid with workshop planning. The picture below is an example of the reporting function.

### Prestart



### Action Summary





## Portable toilets

Council has four portable toilets available for use on road works and private hire.

The use of the toilets was donated to several community events during the year including:

- Model aeroplanes fly in
- Anglers club fishing competition
- Upper Horton Rodeo
- Upper Horton trail ride
- Gravesend fishing competition
- Gravesend campdraft
- Coolatai campdraft
- Landcare field days
- Coolatai Tractor Pull
- Warialda Offroad race
- Warialda Show
- Warialda Races
- Nicholson Oval junior league – during the construction of their new facilities
- Several private rentals.



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## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN ENGINEERING SERVICES

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Council delivered an extensive infrastructure maintenance and construction program in the 2023-2024 financial year, with a total expenditure of over \$24million. This represents a fourfold increase over a typical year. Works were carried across all infrastructure asset classes, with a focus on major grant funded works and disaster recovery.

### Sealed Road Network Expansion

In the 2023-2024 financial year, Council continued its multi-year program to upgrade 86km of gravel road to bitumen sealed formation. The program will see the transformation of a number of key freight routes that currently experience wet weather access issues and reduced road safety due to poor gravel pavements.

2023-2024 saw the completion of the laying of new pavement and sealing of the entire length of Getta Getta Road, while over 10km of IB Bore Road and 6km of County Boundary Road were also completed. Further, the entire length of Wearnes Road was sealed, with the exception of approaches to causeways that are to be reconstructed in the 2024-2025 financial year.

The above projects were funded from a number of Federal and State Government income streams, including the Fixing Local Roads Program, Fixing Country Roads Program and the Roads of Strategic Importance Program. Additionally, co-contributions from Council have been made across most projects.

### Heavy Patching Program

Over 120,000m<sup>2</sup> of Council's sealed road network was heavy patched in 2023-2024. Works included the entire length of the Croppa Moree Road and selected segments of Warialda Road and Delungra Road.

### Disaster Recovery

In the 2023-2024 financial year, Council experienced its fifth natural disaster declared flooding event since 2020. The cumulative damage from all five events is expected to exceed \$30million. Throughout the year, Council staff averaged an expenditure of \$13,000 per day addressing flood damaged roads and this work will continue for some time.

### Routine Maintenance

Council undertook an extensive maintenance program in 2023-2024 maintenance grading over 1500km of gravel roads.

### Gulf Creek Road Timber Bridge Replacement

Utilising NSW Government funding under the Fixing Country Bridges Program, Council successfully replaced the last timber drainage structure in the shire, that being Gulf Creek Road. The new structure was opened to traffic in March 2024 and included pavement and sealing works of the structure's approaches.

To see the full impact of the works completed in the 2023-2024 reporting period see the map earlier in this report that highlights all roads within Gwydir Shire.

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## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN CORPORATE SERVICES

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During the 2023-2024 reporting period, Gwydir Shire Council continued the operation and maintenance of its two community fitness centres. Both facilities, located in Warialda at 38 Hope Street and Bingara at 8 Bombelli Street, remained open 24 hours a day for public membership. The centres feature secure electronic entry systems and security cameras to ensure the safety of members. The gyms offer a variety of workout spaces, including separate areas for weight training, cardio, aerobics, and boxing. Membership options continue to be available on a casual, monthly, or six-monthly basis.

The aim of the Gwydir Fitness Centres remains to provide the community with resources to promote healthy and active lifestyles. The facilities also serve individuals focused on rehabilitation or maintaining mobility.

This year saw no major grant funding or upgrades, however normal operations continued without disruption, and both fitness centres remained self-sustaining. Membership numbers remained stable, with each facility maintaining a consistent membership base of over 50 individuals. Despite the absence of new funding or significant renovations, the gyms have continued to generate sufficient revenue to remain sustainable.

Free workout programs are still available on the Gwydir Fitness Centre website, and a free fitness journal is offered at both fitness centres to support members in tracking their progress.

The Gwydir Fitness Centres continue to provide valuable services to the community, fostering health, well-being, and fitness for all.

## BINGARA AND WARIALDA VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES

### Bingara Visitor Information Centre (VIC)

Housed in the historic Bingara Court House, the Bingara Visitor Information Centre continues to play a vital role as a hub for tourists and locals alike. Throughout the 2023-2024 reporting period, the centre has not only provided information but has also expanded its offering of unique merchandise, including locally sourced products such as honey, jams, relishes, cards, and spice mixes. Popular souvenir items like Roxy milkshake containers and Roxy-branded wine and spirit glasses remain best-sellers, offering visitors a tangible connection to the rich history of Bingara and the iconic Roxy Theatre.

In addition to merchandise, the Bingara VIC serves as the central booking office for performances and events at the Roxy Theatre, which continues to host a variety of functions including balls, fundraising dinners, workshops, and community events. Regular theatre tours, which are available through the VIC, have remained popular, offering visitors insight into the heritage and culture of the region.



Accommodation at The Living Classroom, a unique venue offering modern amenities for individuals, families, schools, and corporate groups, continues to be a valuable offering through the VIC. This year, bookings have remained steady, supporting the region's tourism economy.

Over the past three decades, the staff and volunteers at the Bingara VIC have witnessed the transformation of the town from a curiosity to a sought-after tourist destination. Their dedication to providing a welcoming atmosphere and expert local knowledge continues to enhance the visitor experience, and 2023-2024 has been no exception. Whether greeting locals or travellers, the VIC staff remain committed to ensuring that all who visit leave with a positive impression of Bingara and the surrounding areas.

*Below: Warialda Visitor Information Centre. Right: Bingara Visitor Information Centre*



### Warialda Visitor Information Centre (VIC)

The Warialda Visitor Information Centre has continued to provide essential services to visitors throughout the 2023-2024 reporting period. As an important resource for tourists and locals alike, the VIC helps with accommodation bookings, information on local attractions, and general inquiries to make each stay in Warialda memorable.

The centre features a well-maintained retail section, offering local produce and artwork, supporting the community's artisans and producers. In particular, the Wells Gem and Mineral Collection remains a highlight for visitors, attracting significant interest and providing a unique insight into the region's geological history.

Warialda itself offers a wide array of activities for visitors with varying interests, from scenic natural attractions to cultural experiences. The VIC staff and volunteers remain dedicated to helping visitors discover the best of what Warialda has to offer, ensuring their stay is enjoyable.

As the year drew to a close, the Warialda VIC embarked on a new phase of renovations. These renovations focused on creating a more open and inviting space for visitors, enhancing the overall experience. In addition, significant improvements were made to the customer service area to enhance both its practicality and safety for staff, ensuring a more secure and efficient workspace. These upgrades are expected to further improve the visitor experience and solidify Warialda's status as a tourist destination. These renovations are due to be completed in August, with visitors being welcomed to see our newly refurbished centre.

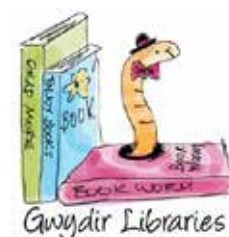
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## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN **COMMUNITY ASSETS**

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### GWYDIR LIBRARIES

The Bingara and Warialda libraries are very busy places with many happenings. These include a writers' group, home schooling and after school programs, a community support hub, story time, holiday activities, Lego challenges, The Great Gwydir Book Hunt, teenage movie sessions, senior film afternoons, kanopy tutorials, A walk among the tombstones, preschool and school visits, children's sculpture challenge, library lovers' month, scavenger hunts, Be Connected tutorials, book club, STEM craft sessions, teenage quiet room, visit to and by the residents of local Aged Hostels and hospitals, visits to the Toy Libraries. There are also senior craft sessions, exam supervision, external study assistance, and home deliveries.



Visitors to the community enjoy spending time in the library reading, using the computers and WIFI. More and more people are requesting assistance with their iPhone, iPad, and laptops so a booking system between 2pm and 3pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday have been allocated, this allows staff one to one time to assist without disruption. Staff as always are readily available to assist people each morning unless they prefer to book a spot for one-to-one assistance.

Library staff are supported by three passionate volunteers. Staff and volunteers attended the community information day, 'Bingara's Heartbeats' at Gwydir Oval on 16 March 2024. This was a great morning highlighting what the library offers along with residents being able to speak to our volunteers.

Central Northern Regional Library (CNRL) Tamworth staff visited both libraries and delivered children's secret agent mission and Virtual Reality (VR) escape room activities. Council Building staff meet in the study space with clients for development and compliance approvals and assistance.

Teenagers are visiting the library after school to chill out in the quiet room. Teenagers have their own devices (BYOD) and visit the library with parental permission, device use is strictly under the BYOD policy, all teenagers are aware of the policy and use of their device while in the library. Bingara Community Op Shop held their fashion parade in the Bingara Library on 9 March 2024. Author Patsy Kemp visited both libraries in October to chat about her new novel, *The Drover's Daughter Rides Again*. Many people attended these events and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The library promoted Families Week, National Stroke Week, and National Child Protection Week and supplied resources to community members.

## GWYDIR LEARNING REGION TRAINING (GLR)

### Heavy Vehicle Training and Assessment

With the Smart and Skilled Drought Package being discontinued the income stream from Heavy Vehicle Training and Assessment fell dramatically during the reporting period. Council staff made an application to access an alternate funding source via Smart and Skilled, being the Agskilled Program. Unfortunately this application was extremely slow and had greater limitations than the drought package. Under the AgSkilled program eligible participants must work, or be actively seeking work, in on-farm operations from one of the following industries:

- Production Horticulture
- Livestock
- Grains
- Fibre



Training Needs Identification's (TNI's) applications under this program needed to include a letter of support from the employer. The letter of support needed to outline the industry the participant belongs to, and the training need identified to enable eligibility for funding to be determined. In an effort to provide clients with greater opportunity, an application was submitted to Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to include additional Units of Competence (UoC) to GLR Training's scope. ASQA confirmed approval of the application and GLR Training now has the following UoC's on scope:

- TLIC3004 – Drive Heavy Rigid Vehicle
- TLIC3005 – Drive Heavy Combination Vehicle
- TLIC4006 – Drive Multi-Combination Vehicle
- TLILIC2014 – Licence to drive a light rigid vehicle
- TLILIC2015 - Licence to drive a medium rigid vehicle
- TLILIC2016 - Licence to drive a heavy rigid vehicle
- TLILIC3017 - Licence to drive a heavy combination vehicle
- TLILIC3018 – Licence to drive a multi-combination vehicle

### Gwydir Country Education Fund (GLR CEF)

On Saturday, 18 November 2023, Country Education Foundation Australia (CEFA) celebrated 30 years of supporting rural and regional students to access further education.

Warialda Public School, St Joseph's Catholic School, Warialda High School, Bingara Central School, and Bingara Preschool took part in the Gwydir CEF 'Bootbash' fundraiser on Friday 15th March 2024 where students, teachers and volunteers were encouraged to 'wear their boots to school' and make a gold coin donation. Total funds raised \$492.00.

During the reporting period there were 13 local students receiving financial assistance through GLR CEF. Reimbursements continue to roll in. Recipients have claimed reimbursement for education related expenses including laptops, computer accessories, textbooks, uniforms and work boots, fuel, and accommodation.

### Gwydir Career Start Program

The following table outlines the subsidies claimed by Gwydir Shire Council for current trainees and apprentices. These figures include *Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy*, *Completing Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy*, *Priority Wage Subsidy*. The Priority Wage Subsidy is a wage subsidy for employers of Australian apprentices training towards an occupation listed on the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List. Employers can claim 10% of wages paid to the Australian Apprentice for the first and second 12-month period (up to \$1,500



per quarter) and 5% of the wages paid to the Australian Apprentice for the third 12-month period (up to \$750 per quarter) and Hiring Incentive. The Hiring Incentive supports Australian Apprentices undertaking a Certificate II or above qualification that is not listed on the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List. A payment of \$1,750, for a full-time Australian Apprentice and \$875 for part-time Australian Apprentice is made at 6 and 12 months.

Period	No. of Employees	Claimed/Paid
01/07/2023 – 30/09/2023	13	\$15,272.76
1/10/2023 – 31/12/2023	5	\$ 3,343.94
1/01/2024 – 31/03/2024	16	\$25,292.70
01/04/2024 – 30/06/2024	1	\$ 2,500.00
<b>Total Claimed for 2023/4</b>	<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>\$46,409.40</b>

### School Based Trainee Water Operation Showcase



Gwydir Shire Council again proved it is the recognised leader in Local Government through continuous learning and sustainability by employing the only School Based Trainee in Water Operations in the State. Training Services NSW acknowledged this achievement by highlighting Council’s Career Start Program, and more specifically our Water Operations team. A film crew visited Wialda on Thursday, 10 August 2023 to capture footage of the trainees’ daily operations and then interviewed Council staff including Elijah Lane (School Based Trainee), Rhyllie Marle (Trainee), Mick Todd (Water & Sewerage Supervisor), Andrew Cooper (Manager, Town Utilities) and, Clarissa Barwick (Gwydir Career Start Program Coordinator).

*Above: Elijah Lane (School Based Trainee) being interviewed*

Click on this link to view the video:  
<https://youtu.be/kSWIbRyo3eE>

### Learner Driver Lessons

In an effort to increase participation, GLR Training launched a campaign offering students at both Wialda High School and Bingara Central School two learner driver sessions for the price of one special.



## PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Council manages over fifty properties throughout the Shire, including units for the aged, commercial premises, caravan park permanent residents and service outlets.

### Aged Units

During the year Council staff continue to regularly visit every resident (or their delegated family member) to check in and connect with them, inspect their units, and attend to maintenance requests.

### 44 Hope Street, Warialda

44 Hope Street, Warialda was sold, and the transfer of the property was finalised on 25 January 2024. Following the sale, the retail outlets continued to be leased as a condition of the sale contract.

### 8 Olive Pyrke Terrace, Warialda

Over the year the premises at 8 Olive Pyrke Terrace, Warialda, was occupied by the Medical Registrar and rented to Warialda Family Practice. When the Registrar vacated the premises in February it was leased to Ambulance Officers. The Officers have now also vacated, and the premises is up for sale and rent.

### Northern Slopes Landcare Association (NSLA) – leased premises

Due to the demolition of the Maitland Street Council Offices Council has assisted NSLA move to 65 Maitland Street.

### Public Amenities – Cnr Hope and Stephen Streets

The public amenities situated on the Cnr Hope and Stephen Streets were closed to the public on 31 March 2024. Due notice was given to the public through signage and social media posts.

### Plunkett Place Units – Kenny Cottages

During the reporting period Council made available two cottages which are rented by visiting medical practitioners, nursing staff, and allied health providers.

## CARAVAN PARKS

During the reporting period renovation works has been undertaken by an external contractor at both Bingara and Warialda caravan parks. These works have included releveling the cabins, fitting subfloor skirting boards to each 'deluxe' cabin, trimming trees, and removing trees, fitting gutter guard to the cabins at Warialda, and general minor repairs such as repainting post and rails on cabin verandahs, refasten loose cross bracing and rails, and replacing missing tie down chains and shackles.

### Warialda

From 1 May 2024 Council has granted a one-year short term licence to an external party to run the park. This partnership has proved successful to date with greatly enhanced park lawns and gardens, and increased presence onsite.

### North Star

This park is leased to the owners of the Vicarage Café, North Star.

## Bingara

The new amenity was made operational during the year and has been well received. This asset is a positive impact on the usability and presentation of the park.

The eastern internal road (which runs through the cabins) has been sealed. The rest of the internal roads were repaired.

At the end of April, a family moved into the onsite residence. They leased the residence for a five-month period. During this period, the tenants managed after hours enquiries and bookings.

## CRANKY ROCK RECREATION RESERVE

The Reserve continues to be well presented and an immensely popular spot. An onsite caretaker maintains the Reserve.

New signage has been installed onsite.

## SWIMMING POOLS

Entry to both pools was again free to Gwydir Shire residents and ratepayers.

### Lifeguard Course

Council invited expressions of interest from community members to undertake a Pool Lifeguard Course provided by Royal Lifesaving NSW. Fifteen expressions of interest were received with only seven of those applicants enrolling and completing the course. The seven participants Bingara (2), Delungra, Moree and Warialda (2), joined the trainer at the Warialda Swimming Pool on 25 and 26 November.

### Warialda Swimming Pool

The Warialda Swimming Pool opening was delayed due to the pools needing to be sandblasted and repainted. In 2022 a contractor repainted the pools, but the application proved faulty. This work was at the expense of the contractor.

Thursday, 28 March 2024 marked the end of an era with Allan Colley announcing he was hanging his towel up for the last time after 16 years as Pool Manager with his wife, Danni.

Allan's skill, knowledge and passion has helped hundreds of children over his 16 years at Warialda, with not only local swimmers taking advantage of his ability, but also families travelling from surrounding areas to join his daily training sessions.

*Right: Allan Colley – managed the Warialda Swimming Pool for 16 years*

Upgrades at the Warialda swimming pool began in April with the installation of a six-coat hyper flake epoxy system to the kiosk, office and kitchen floor. New cabinets and benches were also installed in the kiosk. Other works include repainting the kiosk, and installation of doors on changerooms in female amenities.

The upgrades are funded from the State Governments Stronger Country Communities Program and the Federal Government Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) Program.



## NSW RURAL DOCTORS BUSH BURSARY 2023

Gwydir Shire Council again took part in the NSW Rural Doctors Network Bush Bursary Program. The program provides selected medical, nursing and midwifery students with funding to undertake a two-week placement in Country NSW.

Placements at the Warialda Family Practice and Bingara Community Practice took place between Monday 4 and Friday 15 December 2023.



*Above: Bush Bursary recipients with Dr Di Coote and Dr Clem Gordon*

## EVENTS

Council runs and supports many community events including:

- Bingara's Heartbeats – Volunteer Day – 16 March 2024 – hosted by the Bingara Historical Society
- Bingara Angler's Club Easterfish
- Warialda Anzac Day March
- Gravesend Anzac Day March
- Bingara History Story Telling
- Coolatai Tractor Pull
- Warialda Christmas Carnival
- Warialda Rail Christmas Carnival
- Crooble Christmas Carols
- Orange Festival

### Honey Festival

Kerry McDonald was presented the 2023 Debbie Ford and Fay Honour Memorial - Busy Bee Working Award. Kerry has and continues to work tirelessly for our community including serving as a Gwydir Shire Council and Warialda P&A stalwart.

### Aladdin and his Magic Smartwatch

Aladdin visited the Warialda Memorial Hall and shared his magical story with 296 students. There were two shows Aladdin and his Magic Smartwatch which were both very well received.

### Websites

Council manages two websites - Visit Gwydir, and the Council website. The launch of the Visit Gwydir website occurred on the 13 September 2023.



A public launch took place at the Justin Herald evening at The Roxy on 30 October 2023. Both websites were upgraded in 2024 to include accessibility widgets.

## Social Media

Council uses social media to convey information to the public in real time.

Gwydir Shire Council has both an Instagram and Facebook account, and there is a Bingara and Warialda, Place of Wild Honey Facebook page. These outlets are the current main forms of communication that Council has with the community. The advantage of these platforms is not only the reach it has but the ability to reschedule the same messaging (posts) multiple times.

Social media is a valuable tool in providing urgent information, like road closures and boil water alerts to the public. Generally, users tend to share or tag people who may be affected by road closures or boil water alerts which increases the chances of people obtaining the information that they need, as it is a direct link to the user's notifications.

Council also shares posts from other accounts which may be of interest or relevant to the residents and ratepayers in the Gwydir Shire. This includes but is not limited to surveys, workshops, training, achievements of community members and announcements by Member of Parliament. Social media is a fantastic tool for keeping people aware of what is happening locally within the community.

Examples include:

- on 25 January 2024, an emergency water alert was issued for Bingara. A post was scheduled on the Gwydir Shire Council's Facebook page to tell residents that water use was restricted to household only as an issue had occurred with the plant. This post had over 94 shares and reached 9,207 people.
- On 4 May 2024, a roads update video of IB Bore Road and County Boundary Road was published to the Gwydir Shire Council Facebook page. The post reached 3,783 people and the post engagement score was 266.
- A post was published to the Gwydir Shire Council Facebook page on 10 May 2024 to promote Council's Heavy Vehicle Driver courses and training. The post reached 4,112 people and had an engagement rating of 101.
- The Orange Festival poster published to the Gwydir Shire Council Facebook page on the 27 June 2024 was a paid boosted post. Council committed \$50.00 to the post which directly resulted in the post reaching 6,417 people.

## Design Work

Council staff continue to design eye catching and effective flyers, posters, and social media posts. Such work includes assisting community groups promote their services and events.

## The Gwydir News

Following the resignation of The News Editor, in August 2023 Council advertised to fill the vacated position and at the same time sought Expressions of Interest (EOI) from organisations or groups who may seek to coordinate and manage a community newspaper or newsletter.

When the advertisement and EOI period closed Council received two applications for the Editor position and one EOI.

The Deputy Mayor and council staff analysed, negotiated, and finalised an agreement with Northern Inland Community College (NICC). This agreement saw NICC produce the Gwydir News with its first issue published in February 2024.

## MYALL CREEK MASSACRE MEMORIAL SITE

On 10 October 2023 members of the Australian Water Association visited the site as part of their On Country Experience – National Water Week. Council staff hosted the visit and shared with attendees the history of the site, highlighted Council's partnership with Friends of Myall Creek Massacre Memorial Committee, (FOMCMMC) and provided detail on the development of the site as an ecological showcase.

Throughout 2023-2024 Council staff attended the FOMCMMC quarterly meetings. During the reported period, the trees along the Memorial Path were assessed by an arborist and trimmed as needed as a safety measure.

During March and April Council's staff, received a letter of appreciation from Friends of Myall Creek Memorial Inc. This letter conveyed the Committee's gratitude to Council as to how the site is continually well presented.

The annual memorial ceremony was held on Sunday 9 June with over 700 people attending. Council staff helped the Friends of Myall Creek Committee with the event. Such help included traffic control, set up and clearing the site.

Stringybark Ecological together with Armidale Tree Group undertook wide spaced plantings of white box, silver leafed ironbark, wilga, kurrajong, white cypress pine, hop bush, weeping Myall, western golden wattle, native olive, and yellow box. This work is part of the ecological restoration of the woodland surrounding the Massacre Site. This is funded by the Federal Government under its Murray Darling Basin Healthy Rivers funding program.



*Myall Creek Massacre Memorial Site – Ecological Restoration – 550 plantings*

## THE LIVING CLASSROOM (TLC)

TLC has become a true community asset with many choosing to celebrate family events and happenings. It is also a hub for regional meetings. The use will continue to grow especially due to installation of a fully integrated sound and video conference system. A community nursery was formed in July 2023 and is a collaboration between Council and the Northern Slopes Landcare Association (NSLA).

The relationship with the University of Southern Cross (USC) continues to be a success with the onsite USC Officer running many workshops available to the public. Such workshops aim to assist regional agriculturists and small business owner to prepare and be ready for future droughts. Building works have commenced on the Interpretive Centre and will be completed in the next reporting period.

## THE ROXY COMPLEX

### The Roxy Theatre

The Roxy is a multi-function venue, as is proven through the wide variety of functions and events that occurred during the period.

Pink took over the complex with a screening of the Barbie Movie as a fundraiser for Bingara’s Breast Cancer Squad in October 2023. Over \$2,000 was raised for Community Comfort.

Gravesend, Pallamallawa and Croppa Creek Public Schools held their first film festival at The Roxy in November 2023. Council staff made a presentation of the Roxy’s history and created a real cinema vibe for the 60 plus students by providing popcorn and a drink.

Bingara Central School utilised the venue many times during the year for a whole school awards presentation night, regional financial officer workshops, and its Year 12 Formal.

It has been used for the Australia Day celebrations, a Citizenship Ceremony, a Wedding, a Funeral and many Christmas and birthday parties. It is the place for community meetings, workshops, information nights and conferences.

Roxy performances included Whalebone, Paris After Dark, and A Little Bit of Blue. The town choir met Monday afternoons in The Roxy.

The North West Theatre Company held screenings for their Film Club members on the last Sunday of each month, and produced and performed the play *It’s My Party and I Will Die If I Want To*. NWTC also hosted a trivia night and a Poetry and Pancakes event.

The theatre was also the home for free stretch and physical wellbeing classes.

The trade training centre kitchen was used by a local food vendor to prepare her goods for sale, caterers, and community groups.

### Roxy Café

Council leased the Café to the owners of Fresh Finds on 8 January 2024. The tenants are incredibly happy in the Café and are positive advocates for the community and Council.



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## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN WORK HEALTH & SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT

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The Council remains committed to fostering a proactive approach to risk management and ensuring a safe and healthy working environment for all staff, contractors, and community members. In the 2023-2024 reporting period, Council has undertaken several key initiatives to enhance our risk and WHS systems in line with legislative requirements and best practices.

### Risk Management

Council recognises that effective risk management is integral to achieving our strategic goals and ensuring the sustainability of our operations. Over the past year, we have strengthened our risk management framework through:

- **Risk Management Framework:** We have reviewed our risk tolerances and objectives to establish clear governance roles and define Council's risk appetite to guide decision-making and integrates risk management into all key business processes to ensure consistency and accountability across departments.
- **Business Continuity Planning:** Reviewing our business continuity and disaster recovery plans to ensure resilience in the face of potential disruptions, including natural disasters and cyber threats.
- **Insurance and Risk Transfer:** Working closely with our insurers to assess and optimise coverage for key operational and asset-related risks, focused on issues that are relevant to our Council.
- **Northern Inland Risk Management Group (NIRMG):** Council continues to host the NIRMG meetings, facilitating regional collaboration on risk management strategies.

### Work Health and Safety

The council remains dedicated to ensuring compliance with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW) and fostering a safe working environment. This year, key WHS initiatives included:

- **Establishment of the WHS Committee:** Formed to enhance consultation and collaboration on safety matters across Council.
- **Self-Audits:** Council conducted the WHS self-audit and public liability audit, in partnership with insurers StateCover and StateWide Mutual, to evaluate and enhance WHS performance, aiming to reduce Council's insurance premiums and receive rebates.
- **Health Initiatives:** Council offers free staff skin checks and flu vaccinations to promote overall health and wellbeing.



## Insurance Costs

Insurance Class	2023 / 2024	2022 / 2023	2021 / 2022
Accumulated Sick Leave	\$9,551.50	\$11,116.29	-
Carriers Liability	\$787.60	\$750.75	\$715.00
Casual Hirers Liability	\$6,891.95	\$6,411.12	\$5,698.77
Councillors and Officers Liability	\$49,670.13	\$46,204.77	\$42,004.34
Crime	\$19,382.69	\$17,036.83	\$14,487.79
Environmental Impairment Liability	\$61,030.01	\$59,423.60	\$56,772.10
Motor Vehicle	\$222,777.81	\$190,764.26	\$176,453.24
Motor Vehicle Adjustment	\$19,748.03	-\$4,840.28	-
Personal Accident	\$4,307.28	\$3,993.28	\$3,962.48
Property	\$502,378.44	\$399,384.03	\$352,766.17
Property Adjustment	\$51,497.20	-	-
Public & Products Liability	\$1,696.89	\$1,552.32	\$1,552.32
Public Liability - Professional Indemnity	\$282,906.16	\$263,168.53	\$233,927.58
Workers Compensation	\$546,599.87	\$740,351.15	\$718,734.37
Workers Compensation Top Up	\$7,073.68	\$5,970.11	\$3,156.98
<b>Total inc. GST</b>	<b>\$1,786,299.24</b>	<b>\$1,741,286.76</b>	<b>\$1,610,231.14</b>

## BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT

In line with the obligations set out by the Office of Local Government (OLG), Council is required to undertake regular service reviews with the establishment of the next Council to ensure that services are delivered efficiently, effectively, and in alignment with community needs and strategic objectives. These reviews are essential for ensuring value for money, optimising resource allocation, and improving service outcomes across all Council departments.

In the 2023-2024 reporting period, the Business Improvement Department developed and implemented a Service Review Framework to systematically evaluate council services. This framework ensures that all reviews are conducted with consistency and thoroughness, supporting Council in meeting its obligations under the OLG guidelines.

As part of its obligations and in line with the new framework, the department successfully tested and implemented the service reviews for the Parks and Gardens Department and the Stores Department.

### Parks and Gardens Department

The review identified 17 areas for improved resource allocation and maintenance scheduling, resulting in better management of public spaces and enhanced service delivery to the community. Recommendations from the review are being implemented, with a focus on establishing more effective service levels to align better with Council resources.

### Stores Department

The service review highlighted 20 opportunities for streamlining inventory management and procurement processes. As a result, the department is adopting improved stock control and procurement systems, expected to enhance operational efficiency and reduce costs.

## INFORMATION SERVICES

The Information Services Department encompasses the areas of Information Technology (IT), Records, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

### Information Technology (IT)

The IT department has continued to provide essential support and innovation to ensure the Council's technological infrastructure is robust, secure, and scalable to meet future demands. Key achievements during the 2023-2024 period include:

- **Digital Transformation:** IT led the implementation of our payroll system to a digital platform, improving accessibility, usability, and processing times. This digital transformation is part of the long-term strategy to modernise Council's IT services and provide our staff with data no matter their location.
- **Infrastructure Upgrades:** The department completed critical upgrades to Council's network infrastructure, increasing bandwidth and system reliability to better support remote work and cloud-based services. These upgrades are designed to enhance operational continuity and performance.
- **Cybersecurity Enhancements:** In response to growing cyber threats, the department continues to progress our maturity in cybersecurity best practices. This is particularly aligned with the ASD Essential 8 and the guidelines to Cyber Security as outlined by the Office of Local Government (OLG). As a result, we continue with our impeccable record of having 0 major cyber security incidents.
- **Support Services:** The IT helpdesk has seen a marked increase in support requests, responding to 2,353 tickets during the reporting period. The department is focused on streamlining helpdesk processes to improve response times and resolution rates.

### Records Management

The Records Department has played a vital role in ensuring compliance with statutory obligations regarding the management, retention, and disposal of Council's records. During the 2023-2024 period, key initiatives included:

- **Digitisation of Records:** In an effort to improve accessibility and reduce paper usage, the department has completed digitisation of key historical documents, such as Council minutes that pre-date amalgamation, as well as historical maps of the Gwydir area. This project has improved retrieval times and streamlined records management processes.
- **Records Management Assessment:** The Council undertook initiatives to improve Council's records management self-assessment from under a baseline score of 3.0, to exceeding the baseline score to 3.27, according to the Records Management Assessment Tool provided by State Records NSW.

### Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

The GIS department has been instrumental in supporting data-driven decision-making across Council, particularly in asset management, town planning, and rural addressing. Key initiatives and accomplishments in 2023-2024 include:

- **Cemetery Mapping:** A significant achievement this year was the progress of the Cemetery Mapping Project, which involved capturing and mapping burial plots across Council-managed cemeteries. This project provides an accurate and easily accessible database for cemetery management, assisting both Council staff and the public with plot locations and historical records.
- **Asset Mapping and Management:** GIS have updated equipment to ensure that assets are better captured, updated, and more accurate for critical infrastructure. This information will be pivotal in budgeting, planning, and locating our assets in the future.



## SECTION 2

# STATUTORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

## AMOUNT OF RATES & CHARGES WRITTEN OFF DURING THE YEAR

Pension Rebate Breakdown Claim 128		Pension Rebate		
Rate Classification	Rebate Given	Council	Govt	Total (\$)
General Rates	Pensioner Farmland	-\$6,050.61	<b>-\$4,950.50</b>	-\$11,001.11
	Pensioner General	-\$39,316.73	<b>-\$32,167.90</b>	-\$71,484.63
		<b>-\$45,367.34</b>	<b>-\$37,118.40</b>	<b>-\$82,485.74</b>
Water & Sewer Rates	Pensioner Water	-\$22,079.63	<b>-\$18,061.00</b>	-\$40,140.63
	Pensioner Sewerage	-\$20,202.56	<b>-\$16,525.57</b>	-\$36,728.13
Waste Charges	Pensioner Domestic Waste & Disposal	-\$18,195.89	<b>-\$14,887.66</b>	-\$33,083.55
	Pensioner Waste Management	-\$14,222.25	<b>-\$11,636.60</b>	-\$25,858.85
		<b>-\$32,418.14</b>	<b>-\$26,524.26</b>	<b>-\$58,942.40</b>
	Total Claim	-\$120,067.67	<b>-\$98,229.23</b>	-\$218,296.90
			<b>-\$98,229.23</b>	
<b>Conservation Agreements Base Date 01/07/2022</b>				
	Farmland Ordinary	General Rates	<b>-\$4,206.00</b>	
	Farmland Ordinary	Base Amounts	<b>-\$581.80</b>	
	<b>Total</b>		<b>-\$4,787.80</b>	
	<b>Total Council Write Off</b>		<b>-\$103,017.03</b>	

### Councillor Expenses

Total cost during the year of the payment of expenses of, and the provision of facilities to councillors in relation to their civic functions.

**Provision of dedicated office equipment and telephone calls allocated to Councillors.** Provision of dedicated office equipment and telephone costs during the reporting period totalled \$4,297.12

**Provision of induction training and professional development for Mayor and other Councillors**

There was additional \$9,290 induction training or additional expenditure incurred for professional development for Mayor and other Councillors during the reporting period.

**Expenses of any spouse, partner or other person who accompanied a councillor in the performance of his or her civic functions.** The expenses incurred for any spouse, partner or other person who accompanied a councillor in the performance of his or her civic function during the reporting period.

**Expense involved in the provision of care for a child of, or an immediate family member of a Councillor.** There were no expenses involved in the provision of care relating to a Councillor during the reporting period.

**Details of overseas visits by Councillors, Council staff or other persons representing Council (including visits sponsored by other organisations).** There were no overseas visits by Councillors, Council staff or other persons representing Council during this reporting period.



Attendance of Councillors at conferences and seminars. Training of Councillors and provision of skill development (including interstate visits) A breakup of these costs is provided in the table below left:

Details	Amount (\$)
Air Travel	\$8,979.07
Course Seminar & Conference Registration	\$9,289.98
Other Travel Related Costs	\$5,067.87
Overnight Travel Expenses	\$13,752.84
Plant Hire for travel to Seminars & Conferences	\$17,849.34
Travel Accommodation	\$33,327.37
Civic Events	\$195.87
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$88,462.34</b>

List of interstate visits and number attending in table below:

State	Purpose	Attending
ACT	LG National General Assembly	6

Councillor induction training and Ongoing Professional Development in table below:

Professional Development & Ongoing Training	Sessions	Name of Councillors in Attendance
TfNSW Executive Safety Leadership Summit	1	Cr. John Coulton
Councillor Workshops (Budget)	1	Cr John Coulton, Cr Catherine Egan, Cr David Coulton, Cr Geoff Smith, Cr James Moore, Cr Tiffany Galvin, Cr M Dixon (OAM), Cr Christopher Matthews, Cr Lyndon Mulligan,
Crime Prevention and Community Safety Conference	1	Cr. Catherine Egan

Summary of resolutions made under Section 67 concerning work carried out on private land.

Summary	Description	Amount
2	Weed Control	\$1,115.50
4	Earthworks/Construction	\$23,902.43
0	Miscellaneous	\$0.00
12	Plant Hire	\$12,208.58
0	Sale of Gravel	\$0.00
0	Slashing	\$0.00
2	Water Delivery	\$665.61
2	Grading access road	\$576.15
<b>22</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$38,468.27</b>

## Details of contracts awarded by Council

Gwydir Shire Council had 15 active contracts during the reporting period exceeding \$150,000, 4 of these contracts were awarded during 2023-2024.

Project, Goods or Services to be Provided Under the Contract	Name of Contractor	Any Related Company/Sub-Contractor involved with the contract	Estimated Amount of Contract Ex GST	How may the amount payable be varied	Actual Expenditure Ex GST
Demolition of Bingara Administration Building	Crawford Constructions	Smiths Excavation and Earthmoving	\$350,000	Extra work required	\$359,239.00
Supply of Fuel	Roger Moore PTY Ltd				
Naroo Bed Replacement Program	Arjo	N/A	\$148,723.11		\$145,796.27
Bitumen Resurfacing Program	Roadwork Industries	N/A	\$1.5M	Bitumen rise and fall, additional projects, estimated lengths and areas.	\$118,024.06 (In progress)
Footpath and Concreting Works	Engineering & Civil Contractors	N/A	\$730K	Additional works required, unexpected underlying issues.	\$1,233,149.40
Guardrail and Terminal Upgrades	Irwin Fencing	N/A	\$650K	Additional works required, unexpected underlying issues.	\$656,422.75 (In progress)
Waste collection and processing	JR Richards 2-94 Manning Street Tuncurry NSW 2428 (PO Box 500 Tuncurry NSW 2428) 10/01/2023		\$350k - \$450k P/A	Contracted rise and fall formula	\$106,209.52 (in progress)
Small Sites Electricity	AGL		\$350k - \$450k	As per tendered rate increase	410,700.54
Large Sites Electricity	Shell Energy Retail Pty Ltd		\$150K estimated	As per tendered rate increase	\$178,034.41 (in progress)
Street Light Electricity	Shell Energy Retail Pty Ltd		\$77K estimated	As per tendered rate increase	\$67,015 (in progress)
Bingara Pressure Sewer System Product Supply and Service Tender	Enviro One Services and Installations Pty Ltd		\$500K	Additional quantities required due to missed properties or different size tank if Rock struck in excavations	In progress
Bingara North and East Pressure Sewer Construction	Ledonne Constructions Pty Ltd		\$3,000,000.00	Additional quantities required due to missed properties or variations due to Rock struck in excavations, electrical or plumbing variations	In progress
Long Run Skate Park Construction	Precision Skate Parks Pty Ltd	NA	\$274,000.00	additional works such as footpaths and slabs	\$274,000.00
Supply and Delivery of Granite Road Base Materials	ATJS Earthworks Pty Ltd		\$650,000.00	Increased requirement for material due to site factors	
Renovation of the customer service and SNSW at the Warialda information centre	Randall Group	NA	\$189,735.00	Any additional unforeseen works not included in the contract.	

# MODERN SLAVERY ACT

## Modern Slavery Act 2018

There were no issues raised by the Anti-Slavery Commissioner during the reporting period concerning the operations of the Council. This Modern Slavery Statement is provided by Gwydir Shire Council in accordance with Section 428 (4) of the NSW Local Government Act 1993.

This statement outlines Gwydir Shire Council's commitment to upholding human rights and ensuring that modern slavery does not occur within its operations or supply chain. Council recognises the importance of taking proactive measures to address and prevent modern slavery, including forced labour, human trafficking, and other forms of exploitation.

## Organisation

The Gwydir Shire is located on the northwestern slopes and plains of the New England region in NSW, approximately 560km north of Sydney and 430km southwest of Brisbane. The Shire has two small towns - Bingara and Warialda. The Council is responsible for delivering a range of local government services to the community including infrastructure development, public health, and community engagement.

Our significant expenditure areas include bulk fuel, road base materials, and plant equipment. Additionally, Council depends on the administrative frameworks established by entities such as Local Government Procurement to source goods and services.

To combat modern slavery, the Council has implemented the following steps.

## Policies and Procedures

- **Code of Conduct:** Our Code of Conduct establishes comprehensive ethical standards that all employees, contractors, and suppliers must adhere to. This code outlines our commitment to integrity, respect, and compliance with legal and ethical obligations. It serves as a fundamental framework for behaviour and decision-making within the organisation.
- **Procurement Policy:** Our Procurement Policy mandates that all suppliers and contractors comply with fair labour practices and adhere to stringent anti-modern slavery requirements. This policy requires that suppliers demonstrate their commitment to ethical labour practices. It ensures that all procurement activities align with our values and legal obligations regarding modern slavery.
- **Due Diligence:** We perform thorough due diligence on our supply chain to assess and mitigate risks associated with modern slavery. This process includes a detailed evaluation of each supplier's practices, policies, and compliance with our anti-modern slavery standards. We require suppliers to provide evidence of their adherence to these standards and implement corrective actions if any issues are identified.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** The Council routinely reviews and updates its policies and practices to ensure their effectiveness in addressing and mitigating modern slavery risks. This includes periodic audits, stakeholder consultations, and policy revisions. We also encourage and facilitate the internal reporting of any concerns related to modern slavery, ensuring that there are clear and accessible channels for reporting and addressing such issues in a timely and effective manner.

## Actions Taken

- **Training and Awareness:** The Council is actively developing a training program aimed at educating targeted staff members about modern slavery issues. This training will cover the identification of potential exploitation scenarios, the reporting process for suspected cases, and the broader impact of modern slavery. The training will include ongoing education to ensure staff are well-equipped to recognise and respond to modern slavery concerns.

- **Supplier Engagement:** We are enhancing our engagement with suppliers to ensure that they consistently adhere to our stringent ethical standards and practices. This involves more frequent communication and collaborative efforts to improve transparency and compliance with our anti-modern slavery requirements. Our goal is to foster a responsible supply chain where ethical practices are upheld.
- **Enhanced Risk Assessment:** We are advancing our risk assessment procedures to more effectively identify and manage potential modern slavery risks within our supply chain. This involves refining our risk assessment frameworks and incorporating feedback from stakeholders to better understand and mitigate risks associated with our suppliers and their operations.
- **Tender Criteria:** Modern slavery considerations are now a mandatory component of all tender requests. Respondents must provide information of how they manage and mitigate modern slavery risks within their operations. This integration ensures that all potential suppliers are evaluated based on their commitment to ethical practices and compliance with modern slavery regulations.
- **Contract Clause:** All new contracts entered into by the Council now include specific clauses that address modern slavery issues. These clauses outline clear expectations for compliance, detail the consequences for breaches, and ensure that all parties involved are accountable for upholding our anti-modern slavery standards. This contractual requirement reinforces our commitment to preventing modern slavery in all aspects of our operations.

### Future Commitments

- **Boosting Awareness:** Council aims to significantly raise awareness about Modern Slavery risks among all employees across the organisation. This includes further training and informational materials to ensure that every staff member understands how to recognise and address these risks effectively.
- **Expanded Supplier Engagement:** Integrate a detailed supplier self-assessment questionnaire into every procurement request. This questionnaire should cover various aspects of modern slavery and human trafficking, enabling suppliers to disclose their practices and ensure compliance with our ethical standards.
- **Procurement Practices:** Establish and enforce a rigorous pre-purchase checklist for all procurement activities. This checklist should include specific criteria related to modern slavery risks, ensuring that all potential suppliers are vetted thoroughly before any purchasing decisions are made.
- **Enhanced Risk Assessment:** Implement robust and comprehensive risk assessment protocols for evaluating all prospective suppliers. This process should involve a detailed analysis of each supplier's practices, supply chain transparency, and adherence to modern slavery prevention measures to mitigate potential risks effectively.
- **Improved Reporting Mechanisms:** Develop and reinforce secure and confidential reporting channels for employees, contractors, and the wider community to report any concerns or suspicions related to modern slavery. Ensure these mechanisms are easily accessible, well-publicised, and supported by a clear process for addressing and investigating reported issues.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, our council remains committed to combatting modern slavery and upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct. We recognise that addressing modern slavery is an ongoing responsibility that extends beyond compliance to embodying a proactive and vigilant approach. By continuing to engage with stakeholders, review our policies, and enhance our practices, we aim to ensure that our operations and supply chains are free from any form of exploitation.

## DONATIONS PAID FOR 2023-2024

Total amount contributed or otherwise granted under section 356 (financially assist others). There was a total of \$158,789 donated under Section 356. The table over the page includes information on the donations granted:



## Donation Summary

Classification	Definite Donation Allocations	Potential Donations'
Donations less than \$1,000	\$13,757	\$28,606
Donations greater than \$1,000	\$31,853	\$55,752
Foregone Income	\$69,421	\$60,978
Internal allocation	\$16,935	\$38,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$131,966</b>	<b>\$183,336</b>
In-Kind contributions allocated across other expenditure areas	\$33,823	\$45,250

## Foregone Income

Organisation	Donation requested	Recommended donation	Actual donation
All junior and school sports plus community groups	Waiving of all hire fees	\$5,000	\$1,080
Anglican Church, North Star	Waiving water & waste charges	\$807	\$635
Bingara Bullets Rugby League Club (If participating)	Use of oval and training lights	\$800	\$3,500
Warialda Wombats Rugby League Club (If participating)	Use of oval and training lights	\$800	\$3,500
Bingara Radiance Club	Rates and other charges subsidy	\$3,796	\$4,136
Catholic Church, Presbytery, St Joseph's Primary School and Convent	Water, sewerage and waste charges	\$10,219	\$11,195
CWA North Star	Rates and other charges subsidy	\$1,375	\$1,510
CWA Warialda	Rates and other charges subsidy	\$1,924	\$2,736
Gravesend Showground	Waste charges	\$998	\$1,127
Gwydir Rugby Club (If participating)	Use of oval and training facilities	\$1,000	\$0
Presbyterian Church Warialda	Water, sewerage and waste charges	\$1,743	\$1,994
Scots Presbyterian Church, Bingara	Water, sewerage and waste charges	\$1,274	\$1,468
St Johns Anglican Church, Bingara	Water, sewerage and waste charges	\$2,954	\$3,422
St Mary's Catholic Church, Bingara	Water, sewerage and waste charges	\$3,821	\$4,805
St Simon and Jude's Anglican Church, Warialda	Water, sewerage and waste charges	\$2,283	\$2,538
Uniting Church, Bingara	Water, sewerage and waste charges	\$1,274	\$1,495
Unleash The Black Dog Ball (If held)	Waive hire fees of Roxy and kitchen	\$1,000	\$0
Bingara Central School	Partial waiving of water charges	\$5,000	\$6,981
Waiving Development Applications and other fees	For community group activities requiring a development application	\$3,000	\$1,556
Carinda House	Water, sewerage and waste charges	\$3,418	\$3,628
Warialda P & A Association	Rates, water, sewerage & waste charges	\$7,601	\$8,278
Boggabilla Anglican Parish	Rates and other chages subsidy	0	686
Bingara Historical Society	Network Charges	2000	2197
Warialda Rail Recreation Reserve	Waste charges	\$891	\$954
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$60,978</b>	<b>\$69,421</b>
<b>*Subject to sporting teams participating or events being held</b>		<b>\$3,600</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Definite</b>		<b>\$57,378</b>	<b>\$69,421</b>

### Donations < \$1,000

Organisation	Donation Type	Proposed Donation Requested*	Actual Donation
Upper Horton Rodeo and Campdraft (if held)	Annual sponsorship	\$500	\$0.00
Warialda Sports Council Awards (if held)	Annual sponsorship	\$350	\$324.00
Bingara Sporting Club Awards (if held)	Annual sponsorship	\$350	\$0.00
Warialda Wombats Rugby League Football Club (if participating)	Annual sponsorship	\$500	\$540.00
Bingara Bullets Rugby League Football Club (if participating)	Annual sponsorship	\$500	\$0.00
Bingara Missiles League Tag (if participating)	Annual sponsorship	\$325	\$0.00
Warialda Ladies League Tag (if participating)	Annual sponsorship	\$325	\$0.00
Warialda High School	Annual academic prizes	\$550	\$594.00
Bingara Central School	Annual academic prizes	\$950	\$1,026.00
Warialda Primary School	Annual academic prizes	\$550	\$594.00
St Josephs Primary School	Annual academic prizes	\$550	\$594.00
Gravesend Primary School	Annual academic prizes	\$550	\$594.00
North Star Primary School	Annual academic prizes	\$550	\$0.00
Croppa Creek Primary School	Annual academic prizes	\$550	\$594.00
Bingara Angler's Club	Annual sponsorship	\$500	\$540.00
Unallocated	Donations requests received during the year	\$21,006	\$8,357.00
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$28,606.00</b>	<b>\$13,757.00</b>
<b>*Subject to sporting teams participating or events being held</b>		<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Definite</b>		<b>\$28,606.00</b>	<b>\$13,757.00</b>

### 'Council Internal 'Donations'

Organisation	Donation Type	Recommended Donation*	Actual Donation
Willoughby/Gwydir exchange program (if held)	Annual allocation	\$10,000	\$11,534.59
Gwydir Learning Region	Annual allocation	\$20,000	\$0.00
Gwydir Learning Region's Country Education Foundation Committee	Annual allocation	\$5,000	\$5,400.00
Industry awards	Prizes and assistance during annual business award event	\$3,000	\$0.00
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$38,000</b>	<b>\$16,934.59</b>
<b>*Subject to event or activity being held</b>		<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Definite</b>		<b>\$28,000</b>	<b>\$16,934.59</b>

## Donations > \$1,000

Organisation	Donation Type	Proposed Donation Requested*	Actual Donation
Barraba PA & H Association (if held)	Annual donation	\$1,750	\$0.00
Warialda P & A Association (if held)	Annual donation	\$1,750	\$0.00
Bingara Show Society (if held)	Annual donation	\$1,750	\$0.00
Bingara Orange Festival (if held)	Annual sponsorship	\$15,000	\$0.00
Warialda Honey Festival (if held)	Annual sponsorship	\$15,000	\$0.00
Warialda Historical Society (Previous commitment by Council to 5 year project)	Who, when, where Cemetery Project (5 Year Project - Year 4)	\$5,000	\$5,400.00
Bush Bursary NSW Doctors' Network	Annual sponsorship	\$3,000	\$3,240.00
Warialda Rotary	Australia Day Celebrations & Flag Donation	\$1,750	\$13,306.00
Barwon Medical Scholarship	Annual sponsorship	\$3,000	\$0.00
Bingara Australia Day	Annual Donation	\$1,000	\$1,019.00
Gwydir Learning Region	Donation	\$0	\$3,888.00
Bingara Community Practice	Start up Loan	\$4,752	\$5,000.00
Warialda Motor Sports Club (if held)	Warialda Off Road event	\$2,000	\$0.00
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$55,752</b>	<b>\$31,853.00</b>
<b>*Subject to event or activity being held</b>		<b>\$37,250</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Definite</b>		<b>\$12,750</b>	<b>\$31,853.00</b>

## In Kind Support

Organisation	Donation Type	Recommended Allocation	Actual Donation
Bingara events unallocated (if held)	Support for community events	\$10,000	\$216.00
Bingara Jockey Club (if held)	Preparation for annual race day	\$2,000	\$3,000.00
Bingara RSL Club and Sub Branch	Upkeep of memorial gardens in Bingara	\$1,000	\$2,751.00
Bingara Show Society	Maintenance of showground	\$3,000	\$3,000.00
Carinda House Committee	Maintenance requests	\$1,000	\$1,958.00
Myall Creek Memorial Committee	Ground maintenance for annual commemoration	\$7,000	\$7,154.93
Warialda Apex Committee (if held)	Support during events	\$500	\$0.00
Warialda Events unallocated (if held)	Support for community events	\$10,000	\$1,153.60
Warialda Jockey Club (if held)	Preparation for annual race day	\$2,000	\$2,324.00
Warialda Preschool	Building Maintenance	\$2,000	\$5,536.30
Warialda P&A Association (if held)	Support during events	\$3,000	\$3,101.00
Warialda Tennis Club	Ground maintenance	\$750	\$0.00
Community Groups	Printing and photocopy	\$3,000	\$3,628.00
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$45,250</b>	<b>\$33,822.83</b>
<b>*Subject to event or activity being held</b>		<b>\$27,500</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Definite</b>		<b>\$17,750</b>	<b>\$33,822.83</b>

**Statements of all corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies in which council held a controlling interest**

Gwydir Shire Council did not hold a controlling interest in any corporation, private company, partnership, trust, joint venture, syndicate or any other body in the year ending June 30, 2024.

**Statements of all corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies (whether or not incorporated) in which council participated during the year**

The council is involved in several arrangements with a non-controlling interest in the following entities:

- Fossickers' Way Promotion Committee
- Local Government NSW
- Local RTA Traffic Committee
- Regional Tourism Committee
- Bush Fire Liaison (Service Level Agreement) Committee
- Border Regional Organisations of Councils
- Arts North West
- Namoi Joint Organisation
- New England Join Organisation (Association Membership)
- New England North West Regional Advisory Committee
- Country Mayor's Association
- StateCover Mutual
- Statewide Mutual
- Central Northern Regional Library and Information Service
- Warialda and District Chamber
- Bingara and District Vision 20/20
- Northwest Regional Community Care Project Advisory Committee
- CHSP and Disability Services Advisory Committee
- Northern Slopes Landcare Association
- Murray Darling Association Inc.

**Statement of all external bodies that exercised functions delegated by Council**

To better engage the community and reflect local community views and needs, Gwydir Shire Council delegates a range of its functions to volunteer committees:

- Bingara District Historical Society
- Gravesend Community Group
- Naroo Hostel Advisory Committee
- Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee
- Bingara Angler's Club
- Bingara Showground Advisory Committee
- Bingara Special Events Committee
- Warialda Tourism Committee
- Warialda Historical Society
- Coolatai Sportsground Committee
- North Star Hall Committee
- Croppa Creek Hall Committee
- Yallaroi Hall Committee
- Crooble Hall Committee
- Warialda Rail Community Committee
- Warialda Cultural Community Centre – Carinda House
- Warialda Sports Council
- Warialda Preschool
- Gwydir Community Health Alliance
- Gwydir Learning Region Committee
- Bingara Op Shop

**Equal Employment Management (EEO)**

EEO objectives as outlined in S344 of the Local Government Act 1993:

Eliminate and ensure the absence of discrimination in employment on the grounds of race, sex, marital or domestic status and disability in councils, and promote equal employment opportunities for women, members of racial minorities and persons with disabilities in councils.

Gwydir Shire Council are committed to the following EEO objectives.

- Ensure communication and awareness of EEO plans and initiatives
- Create a discrimination-free workplace
- Ensure robust and compliant policies, practices, evaluation and reporting
- Enhance diversity in the workplace and provide flexible personnel practices
- Develop strategies to attract and retain a workforce reflective of the diversity of the Gwydir Shire Council.

These objectives have underpinned all of Council operations.



**Statement of the total remuneration comprised in the remuneration package of the General Manager** table right.

**Senior Staff Members Remuneration Package**  
Not applicable. The only staff member classified as Senior Staff is the General Manager.

**Statement of the total number of persons who performed paid work on 14 February 2024 for Gwydir Shire Council** table below.

General Manager Remuneration Package	
Item	Amount (\$)
Salary	323,253
Superannuation	35,557
Non-Cash Benefits	28,600
FBT	0.00
<b>Total Package</b>	<b>384,710</b>

Description	Total no.
Total number of persons who performed paid work for Council on <b>Wednesday 14th February 2024</b>	176
Number of persons directly employed by the council on a <b>permanent full-time basis</b>	138
On a <b>permanent part-time basis</b>	63
On a <b>casual basis</b>	36
Under a <b>fixed-term contract</b>	0
Number of persons employed by the council who are <b>“senior staff” for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1993</b>	1
Number of persons <b>engaged by the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person’s employer, that is wholly or principally for the labour of the person</b>	0
The number of <b>persons supplied to the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person’s employer, as an apprentice or trainee.</b>	0

#### Coastal Protection Services Provided

Not applicable. Council did not levy any charges for coastal protection services.

#### Summary of the amounts incurred by the Council in relation to legal proceedings.

There were no legal proceedings during the reporting period.

#### Swimming Pool Inspections

Building Services have a private swimming pool inspection program in place where all known swimming pools in Gwydir Shire are inspected once every three years. The program is designed to ensure that owners of private swimming pools maintain their pools and pool barriers in an effective manner to ensure the safety of all pool users.

Council continues to carry out its inspection program and in the 2023-2024 financial year council inspectors carried out 53 pool inspections. Of those 53 inspections, 48 pools were found to be compliant on the 1st inspection. Of the 5 non-compliant pools, 2 were decommissioned, 2 were unable to be inspected due to restricted access to the property (despite unsuccessfully attempting to contact the owner), and the owner of the remaining pool is in the process of working towards compliance.

#### Government Information Public Access (GIPA) activity

In 2023-2024 reporting period Council received 8 requests under the Government Information (Public Access) Act, 2009. All were dealt with and the information requested was provided where it was possible to do so.

### Public Interest Disclosure (PID) Act 1994 and Regulation

No disclosures were made during the reporting period. Council's Privacy Management Plan is available at [www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gwydir.nsw.gov.au) to view or download.

### Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and Regulation 2000 Information

#### **Planning agreements**

There were no Planning Agreements in force during this reporting period.

#### **Developer Contributions**

No development contributions and development levies have been used or expended for projects during the reporting period. Each contribution is to go to expenditure on the particular roads identified in the specific Development Consents.

Value of all contributions and levies received during the reporting period totaled \$134,797.

### Fisheries Management Act 1994

Gwydir Shire Council has not been identified as responsible for the implementation of measures in any Recovery Threat Abatement Plan.

### Environmental Upgrade Agreements

There were no environmental upgrade agreements entered into during the 2022-23 reporting period.

### Stormwater Management Services

Council levied a Stormwater Management Service Charge (SWSC) of \$25 per residential property, \$12.50 for residential strata lots and \$25 per 350sqm for business properties. The total received funds for the 2023/24 financial year was \$39,760.37. Council's stormwater works program for the financial year included routine repairs, cleaning of gross pollutant traps and removal of debris from grates and inlets, along with the upgrade of stormwater facilities in Plunkett Street Warialda, identified during community consultation in the 2022-2023 financial year.

### Capital Works Projects

Council submitted a Capital Expenditure Report to the OLG during the reporting period as a measure of 'best practice' for the demolition and construction of the new council building in Bingara. Although Gwydir Shire Council is the applicant, both the planning assessments and development applications were prepared by consultants independent of council during the reporting period. One being for the demolition of the remaining structure which was approved. The successful tenderer for the demolition commenced works onsite in February 2024. The construction application is likely to take us into the next reporting period with a projected commencement date for the construction being September 2024. Full details on the assessment report can be found in the September 2023 council meeting minutes.

# STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES COMPANION ANIMALS ACT 1998 AND REGULATION 2008

## Companion Animals management

Gwydir Shire Council employs two Regulatory Officers who are responsible for administering the Companion Animals Act 1998. The officers patrol the region to provide companion animal owners with support, education and regulation. A summary of the activities undertaken in 2023/24 are listed below.

## Animal Enclosure (Pound)

Council's animal enclosure facility is located on the industrial estate in Warialda, situated behind the Essential Energy Depot. It consists of 5 large kennels with runs that can be reconfigured into 10 separate kennels with the closing of internal doors. It also features a multipurpose veterinary/laundry/storage room, an office with a foyer for receiving the public, and an enclosed outdoor animal exercise area. Council's regulatory officers commenced working from the building after its completion in 2023.

## Pound data / Collection returns

Council reports annually on impounded animals in the Gwydir Shire region. This information is provided to the Office of Local Government, and forms part of the Survey of Council Seizures of Cats and Dogs. Council lodged its pound data collection return in July 2024. A brief summary of the pound data collections for the year and comparison to the previous period is presented in the table below.

ACTIVITY	CATS		% change	DOGS		% change
	2023	2024		2023	2024	
<b>Year</b>						
Total Animals Seized	32	36	13%	21	28	24%
Returned to Owner	2	1	-50%	14	9	-36%
Impounded	0	0	-	7	17	143%
Surrendered	0	0	-	0	0	-
Released to Owners	0	0	-	0	0	-
Rehoming within Gwydir Shire	0	0	-	4	4	0%
Released to rehoming organisation	0	0	-	3	13	333%
Euthanised unsuitable for rehoming	0	0	-	0	0	-
Euthanised unable to be rehomed	0	0	-	0	0	-
Euthanised feral	30	35	17%	0	0	-

## Nuisance, Menacing and Dangerous Dog Orders

- **Nuisance Orders:** One dog was placed on a nuisance order this year.
- **Menacing Dog Declarations:** Five dogs were newly declared as menacing, while eight dogs remain under menacing dog declarations from previous years.
- **Dangerous Dog Declarations:** Two dogs were newly declared as dangerous, with seven dogs remaining under dangerous dog declarations from previous years.

## Microchipping and Registrations

- **Microchipping:** 78 dogs and 10 cats were microchipped during the period.
- **Registrations:** 63 dogs and 9 cats were registered, generating a total of \$7,469.

## Microchipping and Registration Totals

	ID Microchip Only			Registered			Total		
	2023	2024	%	2023	2024	%	2023	2024	%
<b>Cat</b>	334	524	57%	180	201	12%	514	725	41%
<b>Dog</b>	4222	5989	42%	1553	1767	14%	5775	7756	34%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>4556</b>	<b>6513</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>1733</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>6289</b>	<b>8481</b>	<b>35%</b>

## The top ten identified registered breeds in Gwydir Shire

The top ten identified registered **Dog** breeds in The Shire

BREED	2023	BREED	2024
Australian Kelpie	314	Australian Kelpie	320
Jack Russell Terrier	292	Jack Russell Terrier	297
Labrador Retriever	176	Labrador Retriever	185
Border Collie	153	Border Collie	164
Australian Cattle Dog ( Blue)	147	Australian Cattle Dog ( Blue)	157
Cavoodle	130	Cavoodle	126
Maltese	111	Golden Retriever	115
Daschund (miniture)	111	Maltese	114
Unknown	100	Daschund (miniture)	112
Cocker Spaniel	98	Cocker Spaniel	109

The top ten identified registered **Cat** breeds in The Shire

BREED	2023	BREED	2024
Domestic	319	Domestic	328
Ragdoll	50	Ragdoll	47
Birman	29	Birman	28
(Other)	15	(Other)	14
Burmese	10	Burmese	10
Domestic	10	Domestic (other)	9
Russian Blue	9	Russian Blue	8
Ragdoll	8	Siamese	8
Siamese	7	Ragdoll cross	8
Unknown	7	Persian	7

## Dog Attack Statistics

Reports of known dog attacks investigated by the Council's Regulatory officers are recorded in the Companion Animals Database, as required by the Companion Animals Act 1998. In 2023-2024, six incidents involving nine dogs were reported to the Council, investigated, and documented in the database. All incidents were resolved.



### Funds spent on Companion Animal management and activities:

In 2023-2024, the Council spent a total of \$129,145 on companion animal management. This amount covers the employment of Regulatory officers, the operation and maintenance of the Council's Companion Animal Impounding facility, and its associated administrative functions. These functions include rehoming companion animals, microchipping and registration, maintaining the companion animals register, and conducting educational and awareness activities.

### Educational activities

The Strategic Companion Animal Management Plan (SCAMP) outlines objectives for raising awareness and educating the community about companion animals. This year, social media continued to play a key role in various Companion Animal Management Activities, including education, reuniting lost pets, and rehoming.

The Shire also produces a range of factsheets for companion animal owners, available both physically and online on the Council's website. These resources include strategies to promote the desexing and permanent identification of companion animals. Desexing cats and dogs is recognized for reducing nuisance behaviours such as roaming, aggression, and unwanted litters. We actively promote desexing to our customers, highlighting its social and financial benefits.

### Strategies to reduce euthanasia rates

An amendment to the Companion Animals Act, effective from March 4, 2022, requires rehoming organizations like the Council to follow specific steps for rehoming seized and surrendered dogs. Fortunately, the Council's existing processes were already aimed at minimizing euthanasia, ensuring compliance with the new requirements.

Gwydir Shire Council uses a Facebook page to advertise eligible impounded animals for rehoming, allowing the community to view and share this information widely. Council has also developed partnerships with regional rehoming organizations such as Lucky Paws, PetRescue, and Macintyre Pet and Animal Rescue in Goondiwindi. Animals not rehomed locally are shared with these organizations, reaching a broader audience.

Thanks to the efforts of the Regulatory Officers and the systems and relationships they have developed, no dogs were euthanized this year. All euthanized cats were feral.

### Off leash areas

The Council has four off-leash areas within the Shire, each clearly marked with regulatory signage outlining permitted and prohibited behaviours. These areas are regularly maintained by the Council's Regulatory and Parks and Gardens staff, including mowing, tree watering, and general upkeep.

The four off-leash areas are:

1. **Bicentennial Park:** This area includes part of the Bingara River Common Crown Reserve under council management and is unfenced.
2. **All Nations Hill, Hill Street, Bingara:** This fenced area features a dog bubbler, dog obstacles, and seating.
3. **Long Street Triangle Park, Warialda:** Located at the corner of Long and Mosquito Creek Road, this fenced area includes a dog bubbler, dog obstacles, litter bags, a bin, and seating.
4. **Off-leash Reserve, Gwydir Street, Gravesend:** This fenced area offers dog obstacles and seating.

## COMPLIANCE WITH THE NSW CARERS (RECOGNITION) ACT 2010

The inclusion and support to Carers of Aged Care residents is a high priority within the Gwydir Shire Council. Planning and assessment of our aged care residents always involves carers, if applicable taking into consideration the supports of the carer and their perception of the caring relationship. Irrespective of the age, function and place of residence such as a Residential Aged Care Facility, carers are often heavily involved in decision making with regards to the resident's needs, assessment and support planning. The ongoing involvement of carers is often essential to the wellbeing of residents residing in residential aged care and this is promoted and supported at Naroo Frail Aged Care. Allowing and supporting Carers to be involved reduces depression, provides continuity of relationships, and sustains connection to home and family to the resident. It also enables the carer to feel needed, useful, and appreciated.

The new Aged Care Standards incorporate the importance of Carers in the industry, and it is expected that organisations partner with the consumer and their carer/s. Consumers Dignity and Choice is supported by allowing consumers to make decisions about when family, friend's carers or others should be involved in their care. Consumers often continue to receive care and support from unpaid carers when entering residential care such as family and friends. These people have been supporting the consumer over a period before they accessed care and services and continue to be recognised by the Gwydir Shire Council. Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) services celebrate Carers Week annually. Carers Week is about recognising and celebrating the outstanding contribution family, friends and carers make to our Shire.

Naroo Aged Care Hostel Facility also continues to recognise family and carers monthly, holding a BBQ each month to celebrate the resident's birthdays and inviting them to attend.

Carers are also involved in our Disability Inclusion Committee undertaking a consultative role.

### Educational Strategies

Staff awareness and education is available through various programs such as Dementia Australia and Golden Carers. Staff also have access to webinars providing information and education on programs such as the Integrated Carer Support Service Model.

A copy of the NSW Carers charter is displayed in the Gwydir Shire Council units within the Shire. Carers play an integral role within the Gwydir Shire Council and are recognised and involved in the day-to-day care of resident residing in the Naroo

Aged Care Hostel Facility owned by Gwydir Shire Council, as well as services provided through Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) and NSW Transport.

### Consultation and liaison with Carers

Consultation and liaison with Carers occur within Naroo Aged Care Hostel Facility and Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) services on a daily basis. Carers are identified and kept informed with any changes or deterioration of their loved ones.

Gwydir Shire seeks input and feedback from consumers and their carers and has access to various methods for raising and resolving complaints in a timely manner. This feedback is actively reviewed, and the services are improved where appropriate.

The Disability Inclusion Access Committee is made up of people in the community who are interested in helping to make their community or town more disability and dementia friendly. Work continues on the implementation of Dementia Friendly communities within the Shire.

### Staff who are Carers

Carers leave is available to all staff working for Gwydir Shire Council and is supported by the Gwydir Shire Council Sick and Carers Leave Policy.

### Disability Inclusion Act 2014 – including information on the implementation of council’s Disability Inclusion Action Plan

The Gwydir Shire Council recognises that people with a disability have the right to exercise choice and control in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their support and services. The aim is to provide people with disability opportunities for access and participation, consistent with that provided to other community members.

The Gwydir Shire Council has an active Disability Inclusions Advisory Committee that meets regularly. The committee includes both carers and persons living with a disability and Council representatives and medical professionals. The Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) went to the June 2023 Council meeting and was displayed for 28 days before being adopted and publicly available to the community as of July 1st, 2023. Actions from this Plan will continue to be integrated into Council’s Integrated Planning and Reporting documents. Council continues to plan and work toward addressing the issues that we need to as an organisation to ensure that people with a disability in our community are not disadvantaged and can live comfortably in their chosen community.

During the reporting period sections of footpath in Bingara and Warialda have been upgraded or installed to allow for easier access for people with mobility issues.

The current disabled parking spaces in Bingara and Warialda have been reviewed and determined as the most practical spaces available that do not compromise safety to those using them. The Committee and staff will continue to monitor these spaces along with the opportunity to add more if the need arises.



**SECTION 3**

**COPY OF AUDITED  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

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**SEE SEPARATE  
ATTACHMENT**

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