



ORDINARY MEETING

AGENDA

Thursday 29 May 2025

NOTICE OF MEETING

Notice is hereby given that an **Ordinary Meeting of Gwydir Shire Council** will be held in the Warialda Office Council Chambers on **Thursday 29 May 2025**, commencing at **10:00 am** to discuss the items listed in the Agenda.

Your attendance is respectfully requested.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Max Eastcott', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Max Eastcott
General Manager

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This meeting will be recorded for placement on Council's website.

All speakers must ensure their comments are relevant to the issue at hand and to refrain from making personal comments or criticisms or mentioning any private information.

No other persons are permitted to record the meeting, unless specifically authorised by Council to do so.

Content	Page No.
1 Official Opening and Welcome - Mayor	4
2 Apologies	4
3 Confirmation of the Minutes	4
4 Presentation	4
5 Call for the Declarations of Interests, Gifts Received and Conflicts of Interest	4
6 Mayoral Minute	4
6.1 Cost Shifting Report.....	4
7 Officers' Reports	68
7.1 Dealing with items by exception	68
7.2 Executive Services Report.....	69
7.3 Organisation and Community Services Report.....	80
7.4 Technical Services Report.....	109
7.5 Business and Strategy Report.....	119
7.6 Council's Investment Report.....	152
7.7 Country Mayors' Association March 2025 Meeting	155
7.8 Organisational Structure	171
7.9 March 2025 Quarterly Financial Review.....	176
7.10 Proposed Community Meeting Dates	187
7.11 Gravesend Recreation Reserve	189
8 Councillors' Reports	194
9 Committee of the Whole - Confidential Items	194
10 Closure	194

1 OFFICIAL OPENING AND WELCOME - MAYOR

2 APOLOGIES

3 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 8th April 2025 as circulated be taken as read and CONFIRMED.

4 PRESENTATION

Nil

5 CALL FOR THE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS, GIFTS RECEIVED AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

6 MAYORAL MINUTE

6.1 Cost Shifting Report

The pressure on councils to continue to provide services of appropriate standard to our communities is now extraordinary.

The unrelenting growth of cost shifting to councils, coupled with rate pegging, is increasingly eroding any possibility of financially sustainable local government and risking the capacity of councils to deliver tailored, grassroots services to their communities and properly deliver and maintain vital local infrastructure.

Alarming, the latest research commissioned by Local Government NSW (LGNSW) shows that the increase in cost shifting has been accelerated by various NSW Government policies.

As shown in the latest cost shifting report produced by independent consultants Morrison Low on behalf of LGNSW for the 2021/2022 financial year (www.lgnsw.org.au/costshifting), an amount of **\$1.36 Billion** of expense has been passed on to councils to fund. This is an increase of \$540 million since the last report from the 2017/2018 financial year and represents lost services, lost opportunity and lost amenity for all our residents and businesses.

On average, this represents an additional cost of \$460.67 for every ratepayer across the state. With councils having to fund this ongoing subsidy for the State Government each and every year it means our communities get less or go without. They go without better roads, they go without better parks, they go without important community services that only councils provide, and they and their ratepayers are effectively paying hidden taxes to other levels of government.

Councillors, our communities deserve better and this must stop. Prior to the most recent state election the then Minns Opposition wrote to LGNSW acknowledging that

cost shifting had undermined the financial sustainability of the local government sector.

Now in 2025, it is important to councils and communities that the NSW Government urgently seek to address cost shifting through a combination of regulatory reform, budgetary provision and appropriate funding.

The NSW Government has recently responded to the report ***Ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services***, which is attached for you information.

MAYORAL RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive and note the findings of the LGNSW Cost Shifting report for the 2021/2022 financial year and the NSW Government's response to the *Ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services* report.

FURTHER that a copy of both attachments be placed on the Council's website, social media pages and the Gwydir News so that the Gwydir community can access the information.

FURTHER that the draft attached correspondence addressed to the Premier, the NSW Treasurer and the NSW Minister for Local Government seeking that they urgently seek to address cost shifting through a combination of regulatory reform, budgetary provision and appropriate funding is endorsed.

ATTACHMENTS

1. ML Report- LGNS W- Annual Cost Shifting [6.1.1 - 37 pages]
2. Government response - Inquiry into the ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and servi [6.1.2 - 23 pages]
3. Cost Shifting Letter [6.1.3 - 2 pages]



LGNSW Cost Shifting Report – How State Costs Eat Council Rates



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Contents

Contents	i
Tables	i
Figures	ii
1 Executive Summary	1
2 Background	3
2.1 What is cost shifting?	3
2.2 Cost shifting and the rate peg	4
2.3 This report	4
3 Findings	5
3.1 Emergency service contributions and obligations	8
3.2 Waste levy	16
3.3 Rate exemptions	19
3.4 Regulatory functions	22
3.5 Funding programs	24
3.6 Pensioner rebates	26
3.7 Service gaps	28
3.8 Other cost shifts	29
3.9 Future survey considerations	30
4 About the survey	32
4.1 Development of the survey	32
4.2 Conducting the survey	32
4.3 Responses to the survey	32
4.4 Data validation and analysis	32

Tables

Table 1 Cost for rate exemptions	22
Table 2 Cost for increased regulatory functions that cannot be recovered through fees and charges	24
Table 3 Cost for services provided by Council as a result of a State or Federal service gap or market failure	29



Figures

Figure 1 2021–22 cost shifting components	2
Figure 2 2021–22 cost shifting components	6
Figure 3 Total cost shift by council classification	7
Figure 4 Cost shift per ratepayer by council classification	7
Figure 5 Emergency services contributions and obligations by council classification	9
Figure 6 Respondent councils with the highest emergency services contributions and obligations burden	9
Figure 7 Respondent councils with the highest emergency services contributions and obligations burden as a proportion of total operating expenditure	10
Figure 8 Respondent metropolitan and fringe councils with the largest ESL bill for 2021–22	11
Figure 9 Respondent regional and rural councils with the largest ESL bill for 2021–22	11
Figure 10 Respondent councils with the largest ESL bill as a proportion of total operating expenditure	12
Figure 11 Top 10 councils with the highest ESL bill in 2023–24	12
Figure 12 Top 10 councils with the highest 2023–24 ESL increase as a percentage of the rate revenue increase	13
Figure 13 Additional RFS contributions by council classification	14
Figure 14 RFS Depreciation Expense by council classification	15
Figure 15 Waste levy by council classification	17
Figure 16 Respondent councils with the highest waste levy	17
Figure 17 Waste levy area map	18
Figure 18 Rate exemptions by category	20
Figure 19 Rate exemptions by council classification	20
Figure 20 Average rate exemption for respondent councils as a proportion of rates revenue by council classification	21
Figure 21 Respondent councils with the highest rate exemptions as a proportion of rates revenue	21
Figure 22 Unfunded regulatory costs by category	22
Figure 23 Unfunded regulatory costs by council classification	23
Figure 24 Respondent councils with the largest regulatory cost as a proportion of total operating expenditure	23
Figure 25 Funding program costs shifted by category	25
Figure 26 Funding program costs shifted by council classification	25
Figure 27 Respondent councils with the largest funding program costs shifted as a proportion of total operating expenditure	26
Figure 28 Average total pensioner rebates as a proportion of total rates revenue by council classification	27
Figure 29 Service gap costs by council classification	28
Figure 30 Respondent councils with the highest service gap cost as a proportion of total operating expenditure	28
Figure 31 Other cost shifts by category	29



1 Executive Summary

Cost shifting remains one of the most significant challenges facing the NSW local government sector. As the peak organisation representing the interests of all 128 general purpose councils in NSW, as well as special purpose councils and related entities, Local Government NSW (LGNSW) regularly monitors the extent of cost shifting onto local government via its Cost Shifting Survey.

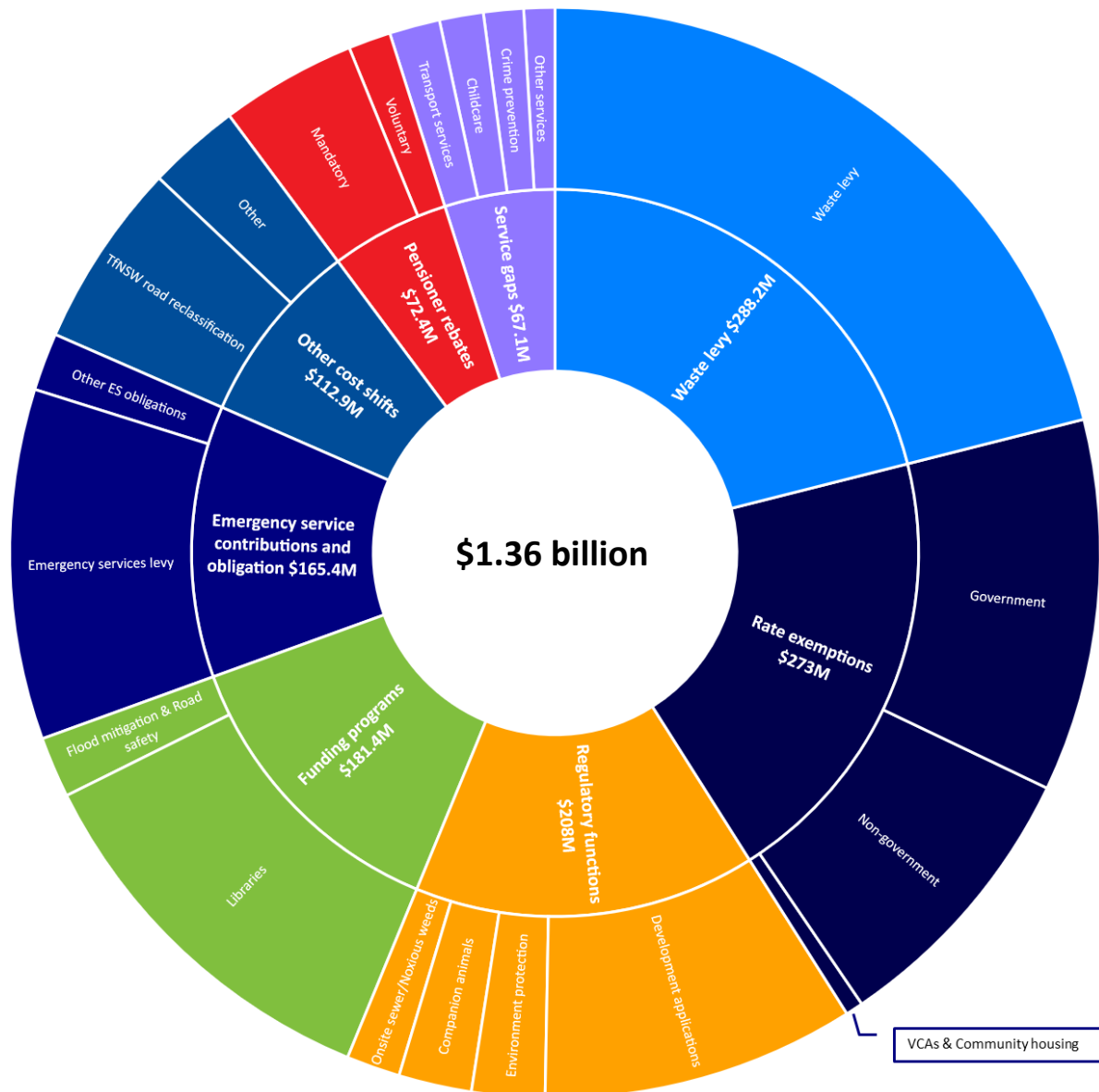
The 2021–22 Cost Shifting Survey has revealed that cost shifting totalled **\$1.36 billion** in 2021–22 (see figure on the next page), far exceeding historical records and representing an increase of \$540 million since the Cost Shifting Survey was last carried out in 2017–18. Alarming, the increase in cost shifting has been accelerated by various State Government policies, with the most significant examples of cost shifting in 2021–22 being:

- The **waste levy**, which remains the largest single contributor to cost shifting in NSW, totalling \$288.2 million, because the NSW Government did not fully reinvest the waste levy, paid by local councils, back into waste and circular economy infrastructure and programs.
- The **Emergency Services Levy** and associated **emergency service contributions**, which totalled \$165.4 million and represented the largest direct cost shift to local councils. In 2021–22, councils contributed \$142 million through the Emergency Services Levy, \$12.7 million through Rural Fire Service (RFS) obligations, and \$10.7 million in depreciation expenses on RFS assets.
- The NSW Government's failure to fully reimburse local councils for mandatory **pensioner rate rebates**, resulting in councils losing \$55.2 million.
- The NSW Government's failure to cover the originally committed 50 per cent of the cost of libraries operations, resulting in an additional \$156.7 million in costs to councils.

Local councils and their communities are facing unprecedented challenges. As they lead the recovery efforts from both the COVID pandemic and repeated natural disasters across much of NSW, local councils are also grappling with the same challenges affecting the State and Federal Governments, such as rising costs, increased economic uncertainty, and severe skills and labour shortages – all of which are impacting council budgets and affecting service and infrastructure delivery in local communities. The continual shifting of the obligations and costs for State and Federal functions and services onto local government coupled with a defective rate peg system, is only making the situation worse. In 2021-22, each ratepayer of NSW has approximately \$460.67 from councils' rates eaten by state government costs.



Figure 1 2021–22 cost shifting components





2 Background

2.1 What is cost shifting?

Cost shifting describes a situation where the responsibility for, or merely the costs of, providing a certain service, concession, asset, or regulatory function is imposed onto local government from a higher level of government (Commonwealth or State Government) without the provision of corresponding funding or the conferral of corresponding and adequate revenue raising capacity other than out of general rates.

As the council cannot raise or receive sufficient revenue to fund the imposed service concession asset or function, cost shifting forces councils to divert funding collected from ratepayers away from planned projects or services that the council has committed to the community to deliver in its Delivery Program.

In NSW, cost shifting has taken a number of forms including:

- **The Emergency Service contributions:** Councils are required to fund 11.7 per cent of the cost of Fire & Rescue NSW, Rural Fire Service (RFS) NSW and the NSW State Emergency Service (SES) through an Emergency Service Levy (ESL). 73.7 per cent of emergency services costs is funded through insurance premiums and the remaining 14.6 per cent from the NSW Government's treasuries. Councils provide additional financial contributions to emergency services agencies in addition to the ESL.
- **The waste levy:** The waste levy is not as much a cost shift to councils as an invisible tax levied on ratepayers through councils. The waste levy is a levy paid by all waste facilities to the NSW Government, the cost of this levy is recovered through the waste collection fees levied by councils, in effect shifting the burden of this tax on to ratepayers.
- **Forced rates exemptions:** Councils are required to exempt government and other organisations from paying rates in the local government area. These organisations utilise local government services and infrastructure. As they are exempt from paying rates, the burden of the costs they incur is shifted to the ratepayers to fund. Examples of exempt organisations include government departments, private schools, and non-government social housing providers.
- **Imposing additional regulatory functions:** State and Federal levels of government implement or increase regulatory requirements through legislation that is then administered by local government. The costs of this new or increased regulatory function is often not funded by the determining level of government and councils must fund this through their own revenue sources including rates.
- **Cutting or failing to adequately continue to fund programs for services that need to continue:** Many funding programs announced by State or Federal government are required to be delivered by local government but are either not fully funded from their initiation or, if an ongoing initiative, funding is reduced over time leaving councils with the decision to either continue the program and make up the burden of the cost or cease the program entirely. An example of this in Libraries, where the original commitment from State Government was to fund 50 per cent of libraries cost, it now covers approximately 8 per cent of the total costs, leaving councils to fund an additional \$156.7 million to make up the difference.



- **Pensioner rebates:** Councils are required to provide pensioner rebates on rates and other charges, for which the State government only subsidises 55 per cent of the cost, the remaining 45 per cent is funded by other ratepayers.
- **Councils absorbing the costs of service and market gaps that should have been provided by State or Federal governments:** This is particularly an issue in rural and regional NSW, where councils often must step in to provide or support a service that is traditionally delivered either directly or through subsidised private providers. This can be for a diverse range of services from aged, disability or childcare through to medical services, education, or public transport services.

2.2 Cost shifting and the rate peg

Cost shifting has been a term used for many years to describe the cost impact on local government of decisions made at the State and Federal level. It is particularly relevant in NSW where a rate pegging system is applied to restrict how local government can raise rates revenue.

The issue of State and Federal decisions having a direct financial impact on local government exists in all States and territories of Australia to some extent. In many cases, local government can be the best and most efficient partner for State and Federal government to deliver its programs or services.

Challenges arise with respect to how the State and Federal initiatives are, or continue to be, funded. In States where there is not a rate pegging system in place, local councils are able to better manage the financial impacts by adjusting rates or levying specific fees and charges to reflect the change in costs of providing the imposed service, concession, asset, or regulatory function.

The rate peg in NSW sets out the maximum amount that local councils can increase their rates by and is set by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) each year. In determining the rate peg, IPART does not adequately consider the cost shifting impacts on councils. As a result, increases in the costs shifted to councils identified here are not covered by a commensurate increase in rates revenue. This means that councils have to divert funding from other commitments agreed with their communities in their Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program to fund the cost shift incurred. This has a direct impact on councils' ability to deliver services to the community and their overall financial sustainability.

2.3 This report

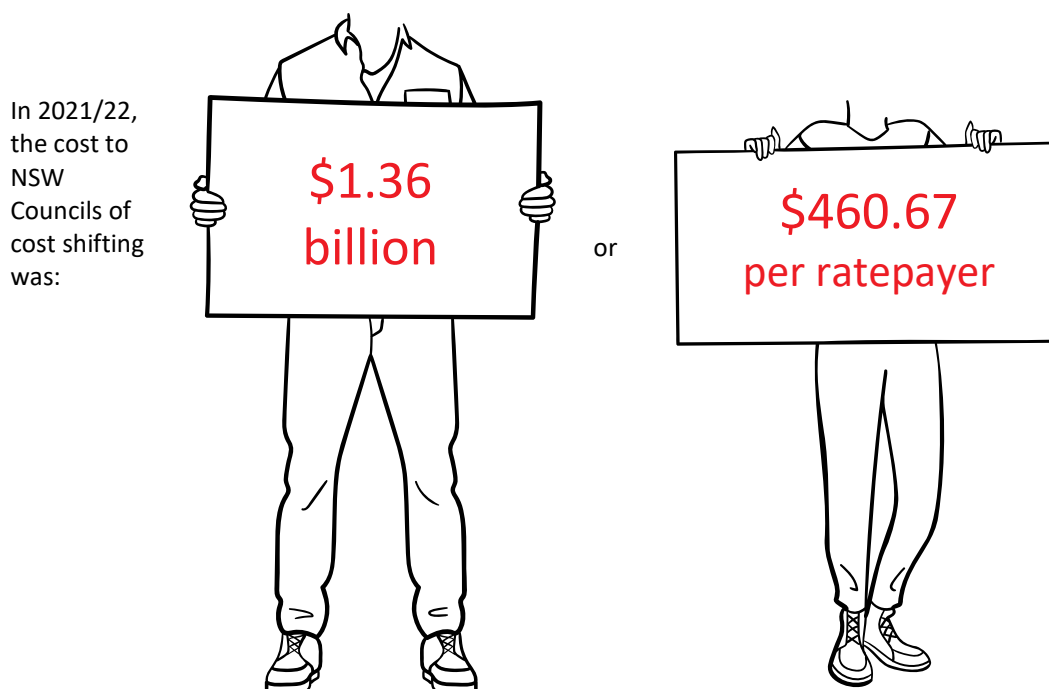
This report provides analysis and insights from the 2021–22 Cost Shifting Survey conducted in May 2023.

Section 3 of this report provides more detail on the findings from the survey, breaking down the findings into their key cost shifting areas, as identified in section 2.1 above, and Section 4 outlines the approach and methodology used in the survey and analysis..



3 Findings

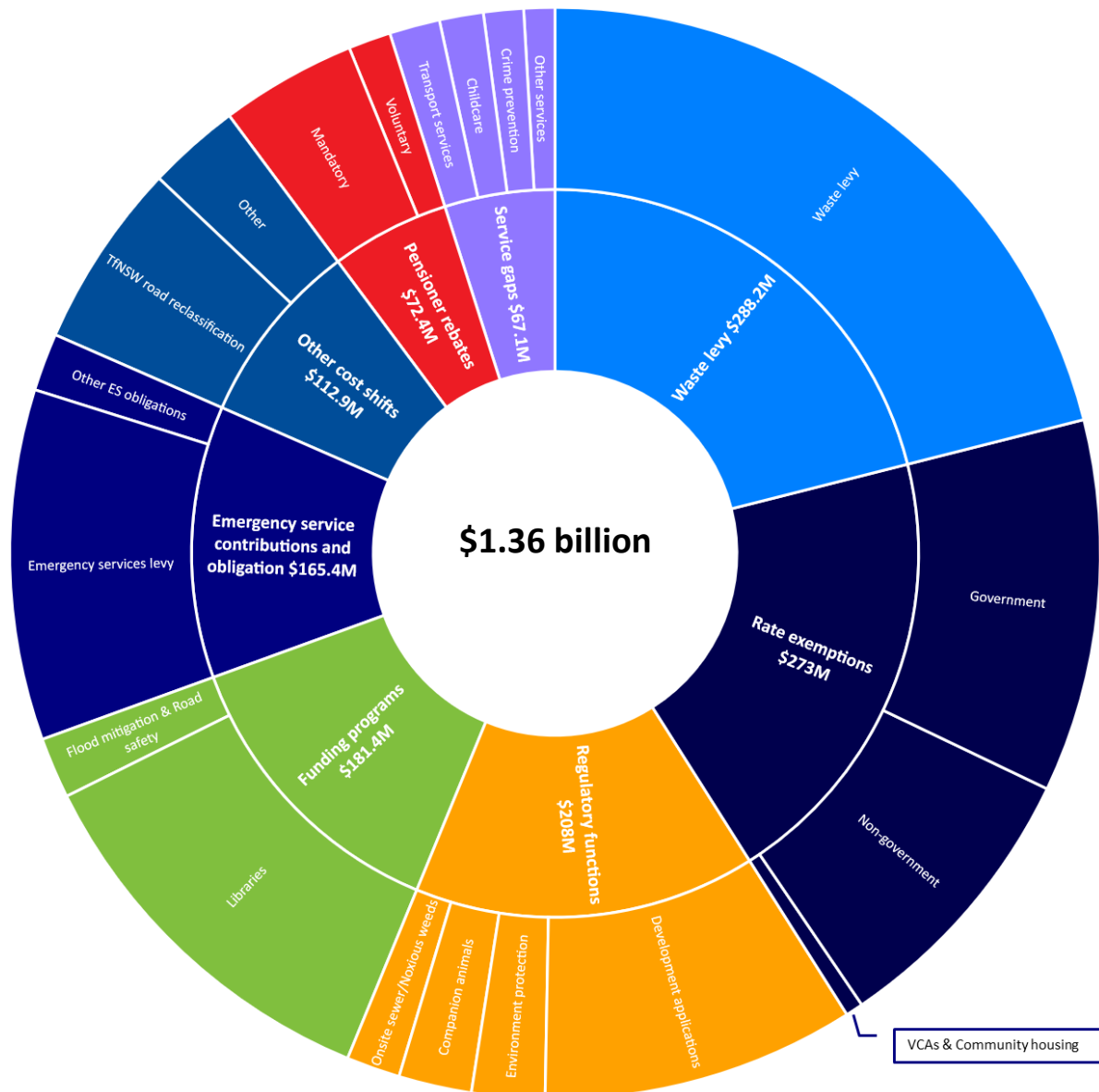
Our survey found that cost shifting cost NSW councils \$1.36 billion in 2021–22, which represents \$460.67 for each ratepayer. In effect, this is the average amount of rates that councils must divert from the services and infrastructure that council has committed to provide the community in order to fund the unrecoverable cost services, programs and functions that are imposed from the State or Federal governments.



Many services, programs, and functions that the State and Federal governments require local councils to deliver, in turn provide benefits to the local communities they serve. This report does not provide an assessment on the merit of these costs, only to bring them to light. Due to the nature of how the services, programs and functions are provided and funded, cost-shifting can be hidden from view. This analysis helps to quantify and highlight these costs for all tiers of government and the community.



Figure 2 2021–22 cost shifting components



The largest direct cost shift to councils is from emergency service contributions and other emergency service obligations, totalling \$165.4 million.

However, the cost of rate exemptions are higher still, representing a total of \$273.1 million of potential rates that are exempted and redistributed to other ratepayers to pay. An additional \$288.2 million in waste levies are passed onto the ratepayers through the waste collection fees in their rates bill. A further \$156.7 million



in costs for libraries has been covered by councils to make up the difference between the committed funding for councils' libraries and the subsidies received.

While in nominal terms the largest total cost shifts have been seen metropolitan councils, was on a per ratepayer basis rural and large rural councils have seen a greater impact, as the graphs below indicate.

Figure 3 Total cost shift by council classification

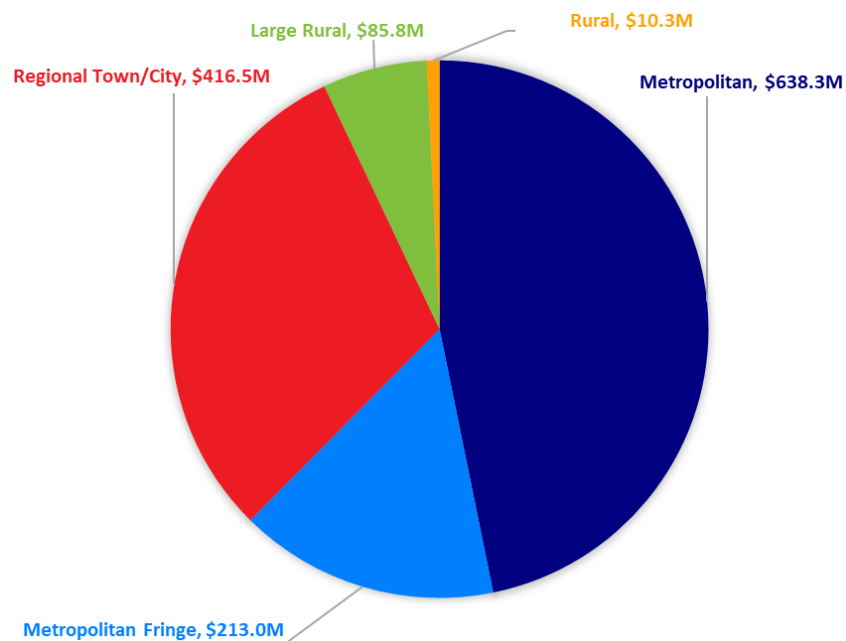
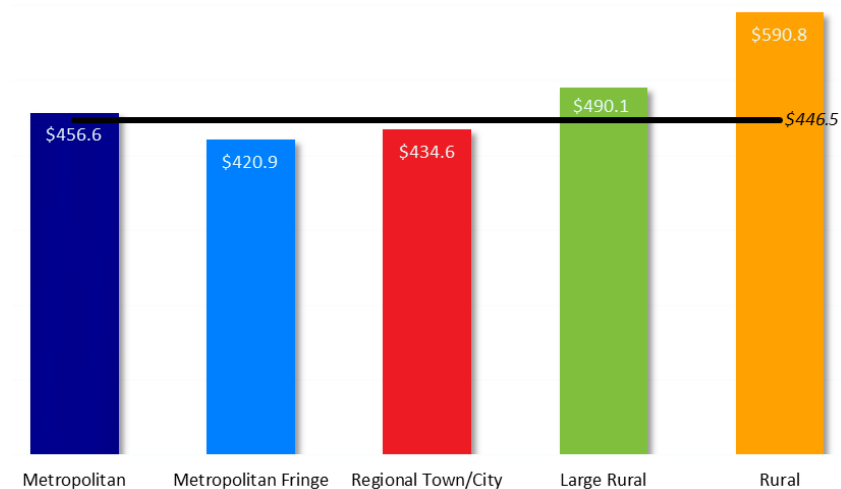


Figure 4 Cost shift per ratepayer by council classification





We will explore each component of rate shifting in the following sections.

3.1 Emergency service contributions and obligations

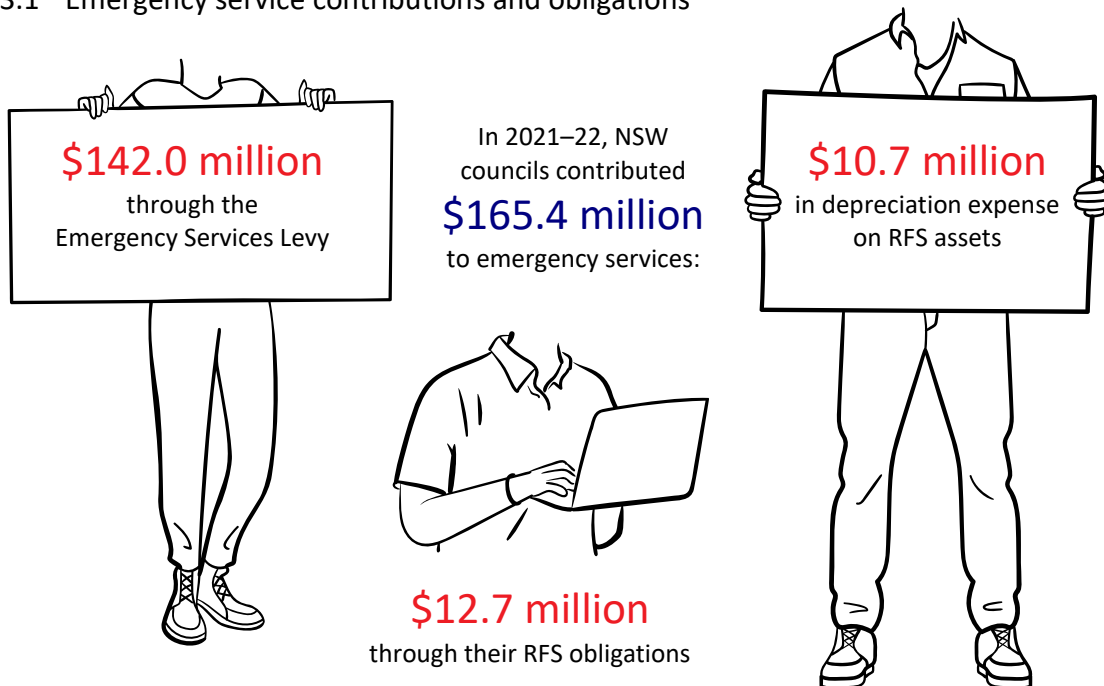




Figure 5 Emergency services contributions and obligations by council classification

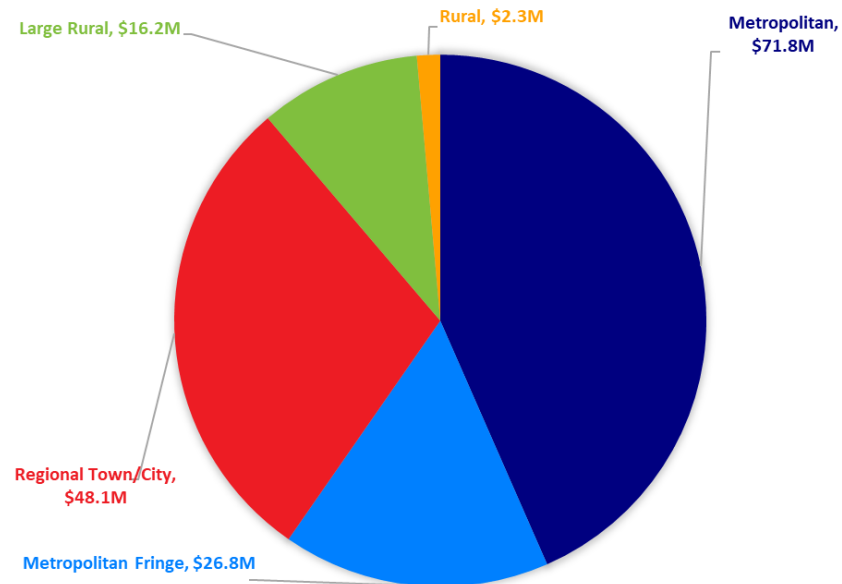


Figure 6 Respondent councils with the highest emergency services contributions and obligations burden

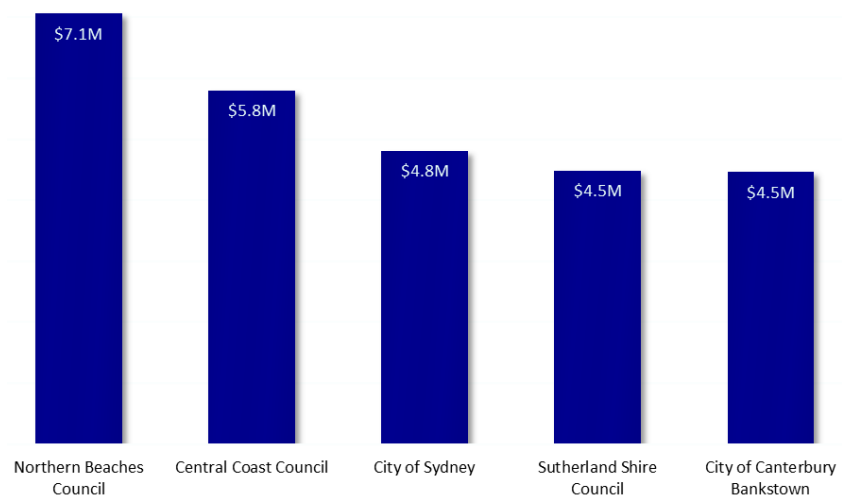
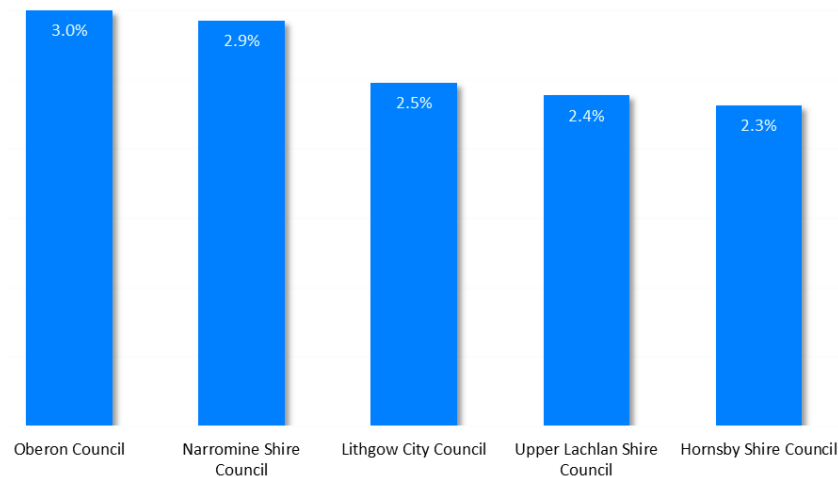




Figure 7 Respondent councils with the highest emergency services contributions and obligations burden as a proportion of total operating expenditure



NSW councils are required to fund 11.7 per cent of the NSW SES, NSW Fire and Rescue and NSW RFS budgets through a direct contribution levied each year by the State Revenue Office. This is funded directly from general revenue, primarily rates, as councils have no ability to raise revenue to fund this in any other way.

Councils also have no influence on the costs or budget setting of these organisations. This contribution of ratepayers' funds is in addition to the Emergency Services Insurance Contribution that is extracted through insurance companies, who cover 73.7 per cent of the agencies' budgets and results in higher insurance premiums for policy holders

The emergency service levy is estimated to have cost NSW councils overall \$142.0 million in 2021–22. That is a total of \$46.23 per ratepayer, which goes directly to the NSW Government as part of the emergency services contribution.



Figure 8 Respondent metropolitan and fringe councils with the largest ESL bill for 2021–22

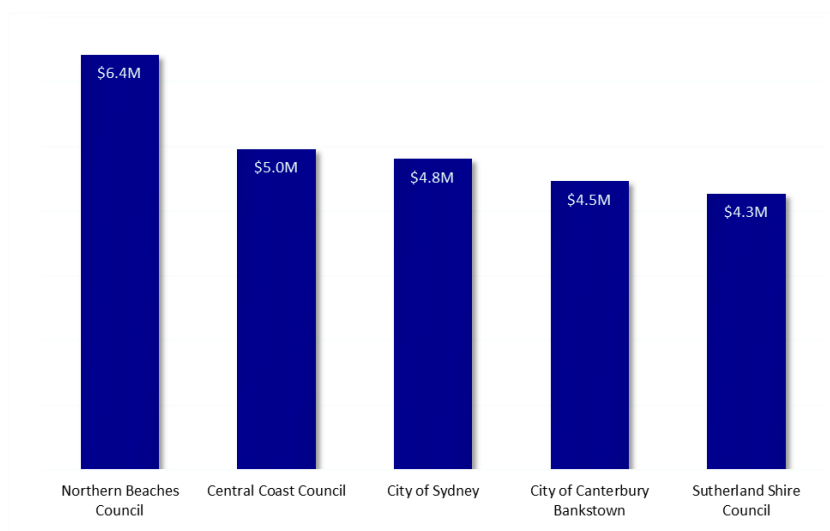


Figure 9 Respondent regional and rural councils with the largest ESL bill for 2021–22

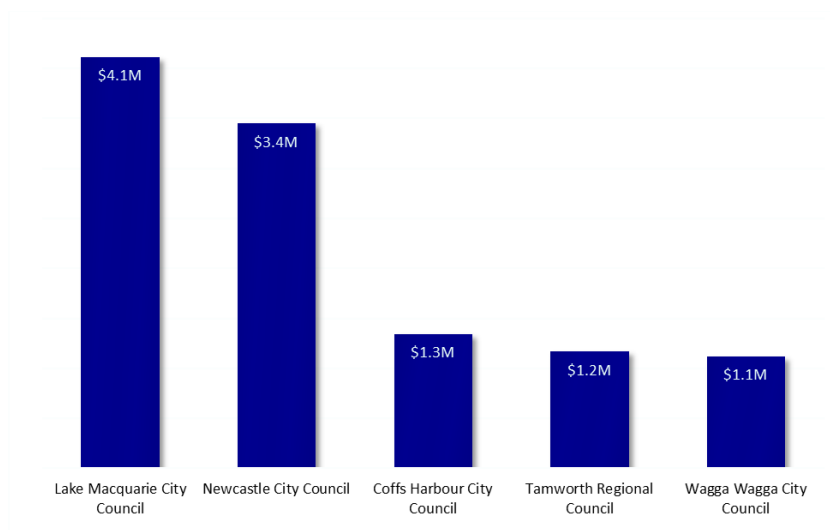
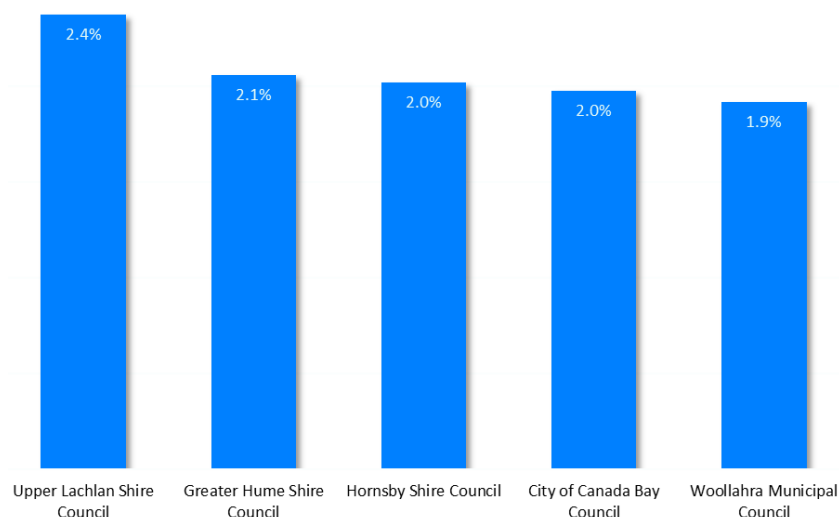




Figure 10 Respondent councils with the largest ESL bill as a proportion of total operating expenditure



In 2019, the NSW Government subsidised councils for the increase in Emergency Service Contribution costs, because of a large increase in the ESL resulting from large increase in workers compensation costs followed by the Black Summer Bushfires and the unfolding COVID pandemic. From the 2023–24 financial year, the NSW Government increased the budgets and therefore costs for the three relevant agencies and removed the subsidy at the same time. Councils were not advised of this change until after they had developed and put their 2023–24 budget on public exhibition as they are required to do. The increase represented a \$41.2 million cost increase from the prior 2022–23 financial year.

With the rate peg set at 3.7 per cent for the 2023–24 rating year, the increase in emergency services contributions has put substantial pressure on the financial sustainability of local government.

Figure 11 Top 10 councils with the highest ESL bill in 2023–24

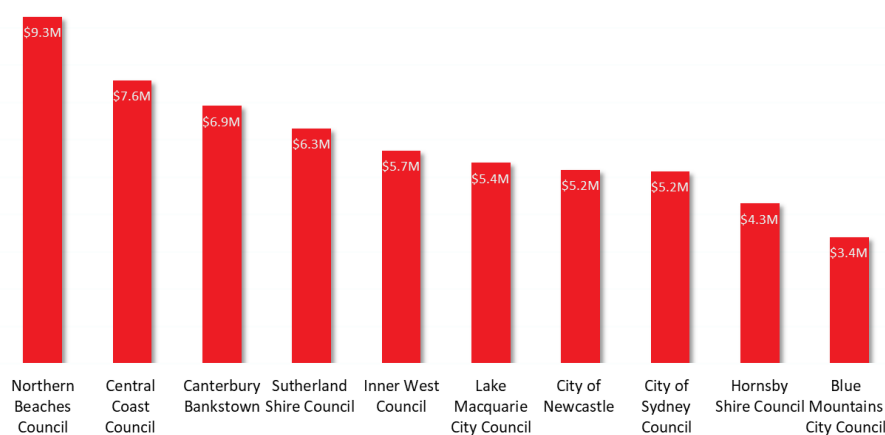
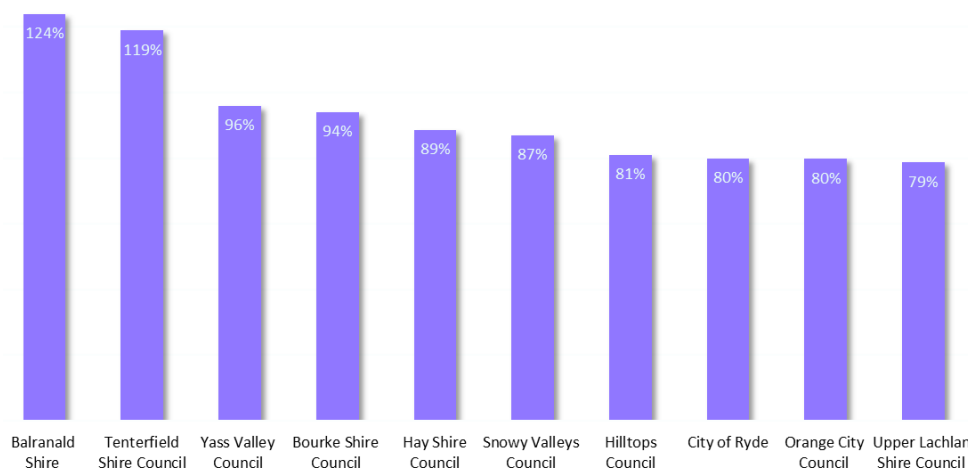




Figure 12 Top 10 councils with the highest 2023–24 ESL increase as a percentage of the rate revenue increase



The increases in emergency services contributions from councils have hit both the largest and smallest of councils.

“Two of the four biggest expense payments that Central Coast Council must make each year are for State government levies: the emergency services levy and the waste levy. They are in the millions each and are funded straight out of our rates and waste revenue.”

David Farmer, CEO, Central Coast Council



“Central Darling Shire is the largest shire in NSW covering an area of 53,000 square kilometres in Far Western NSW, but it has the smallest (and declining) population of less than 2000. CDS is not a typical shire as it consists of a series of isolated communities (Menindee, Ivanhoe, Wilcannia and White Cliffs) and large pastoral holdings. It borders the large unincorporated area of the Far West.

For Council, the Emergency Services Levy has increased by \$70,000 for 2023/24, bringing the total Council contribution to \$318,989. The increase is some \$70,000 which is more than double the increase in rates due to rate pegging.

For the 2023/2024 financial year the Council income from rates is budgeted to be \$913,000. This includes the rate peg increase of 3.7 per cent, which looks like being eaten up by the hike in the ESL.

For a Council like Central Darling this level of increase is simply unsustainable and will result in the further reduction of services to our residents.

There is a clear case for the NSW Government to fully fund this increase as part of its community service obligation as small rural councils with a limited rate base cannot afford to continue to pay.”

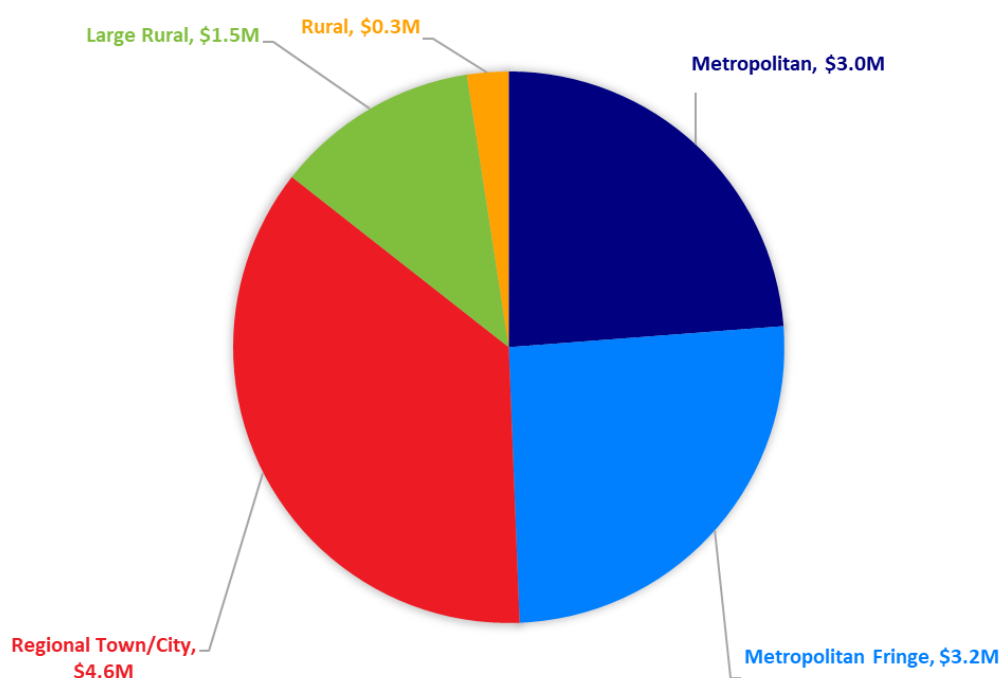
Bob Stewart, Administrator, Central Darling Council¹

¹ Figure 11 does not include Central Darling’s actual result as it was not provided to LGNSW.



In addition to the emergency service levy, local councils are required to support the RFS and SES in other ways. This commitment seems to be different for different Councils. For example, for some councils, when the RFS annual budget is allocated back to the districts, some of these funds are vested in councils through the Rural Fire Fighting Fund (RFFF). These funds are then administered by councils to deliver repairs and maintenance of buildings and a small amount of plant and equipment. In some cases, Councils also fund other functions such as training and provision of office supplies. If the RFFF is insufficient to provide these in any one year, some councils will then provide further financial support directly to the districts to meet the difference. In 2021–22, the cost of this additional support has been estimated at \$12.7 million.

Figure 13 Additional RFS contributions by council classification



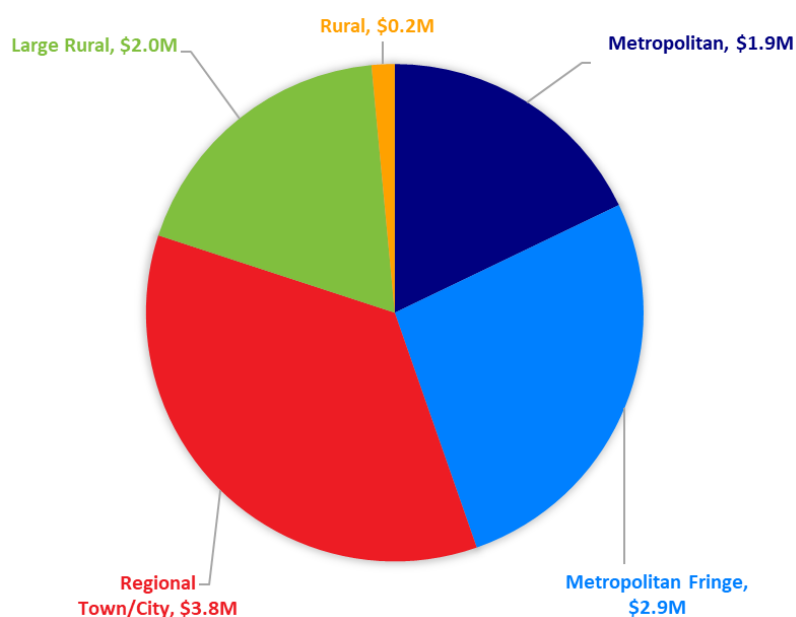
The RFS funding arrangements are the most complex of all the emergency services and creates challenges for both councils and the RFS. While councils are aware that their obligations to provide financial support to the RFS are generally over and above the RFFF, the costs at a district level are extremely volatile from one year to the next and dependent on whether there is a bushfire in the district (in which instance the district will fund some aspects of other districts' costs if they come to support the local bushfire response) or if the district comes to the aid of another district (in which instance they will receive additional funding which reduces the pressure on its own budget and therefore the financial support required from the local council).

What results is that councils have to bear the budget risk of the volatility of RFS costs and funding, while RFS districts don't have accountability for their own budgets and costs, and are not able to help to provide certainty because they don't know where the next emergency will be. Much of these volatility issues are resolved at a State level, when looking at the RFS services overall.



In addition to the direct repair and maintenance costs, councils are also required to recognise RFS red fleet assets and account for their depreciation expense in council financial reports. In 2021–22, this depreciation cost is estimated at \$10.7 million.

Figure 14 RFS Depreciation Expense by council classification



This has been a somewhat contentious issue in recent years and ultimately comes down to identifying where control of these assets lie. In summary, the NSW Government has concluded under the *Rural Fire Services Act 1997*, which states that these assets are vested to councils and therefore “on balance, councils control this equipment” under the Australian Accounting Standards². The NSW Audit Office has accepted this position in undertaking their audit function of local government.

Many councils, with the support of LGNSW, have refused to accept this position, which has resulted in 43 NSW councils receiving a qualified audit opinion of their 2021–22 financial reports. Their position is that control of these assets sits with the RFS, and therefore the NSW Government, based on the Australian Accounting Standards Board Conceptual Framework, which does not necessarily define control as a legal ownership right, but rather:

“... the present ability to direct the use of the economic resource and obtain the economic benefits that may flow from it. Control includes the present ability to prevent other parties from directing the use of the economic resource and from obtaining the economic benefits that may flow from it. It follows that, if one party controls an economic resource, no other party controls that resource.”³

² Audit Office of New South Wales (2023) *Regulation and monitoring of local government*, NSW Government, 23 May 2023.

³ Australian Accounting Standards Board (2022) *Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting*, AASB, 7 April 2022.



This issue is ongoing, and while depreciation itself is not a cash expense, the accounting for depreciation in local government has two key financial implications. Firstly, the increase in depreciation expense will reduce a council's overall surplus or increase its deficit, which has implication for a council's measures of financial sustainability. Secondly, for most local government assets, depreciation is used as the estimate of required renewal expenditure for councils to maintain assets at their current condition. In other words, councils must fund depreciation with a similar level of capital cashflow to ensure assets are kept at required standards, this is not the case for firefighting equipment, which is funded through the State Government's budget allocation to the RFS. This remains an ongoing issue at the time of writing this report.

3.2 Waste levy

The waste levy is a tax on landfill facilities and only applies to 42 metropolitan and 19 regional levy areas shown in Figure 18. Although, not technically a "cost shift" – as the cost of the levy is recovered through waste charges – it represents a somewhat "invisible tax".

The purpose of the waste levy is to provide economic incentive to alternative waste management processes, such as recycling and resource recovery. The funds raised by the waste levy go directly to NSW Government general revenue. Some funds do come back to communities and councils through grants for a variety of projects, but this only represents 10 to 15 per cent of the funds raised through the tax.

The metropolitan levy at \$147.10 per tonne in 2021–22 is nearly twice the amount per tonne of the regional levy at \$84.70 per tonne in 2021–22. Some councils, such as Central Coast and Newcastle, operate their own landfill facilities and pay the levy directly to the NSW Government. Not all councils operate landfills directly, many councils have their waste managed through contracts with private providers. While these providers will incur the levy directly, councils in the levy areas will collect waste charges that include the waste levy as a component of the waste fees. Depending on how their waste management contracts are structured, some councils have been able to provide an estimate of this levy collected in the waste fees while others have not.

Of the 51 councils surveyed who are in the levy area, 36 provided an estimate of the amount paid, which totalled \$287.8 million in 2021–22. Based on this data, we have estimated the total amount of the waste levy paid through waste collection fees in 2021–22 at \$292.9 million.



Figure 15 Waste levy by council classification

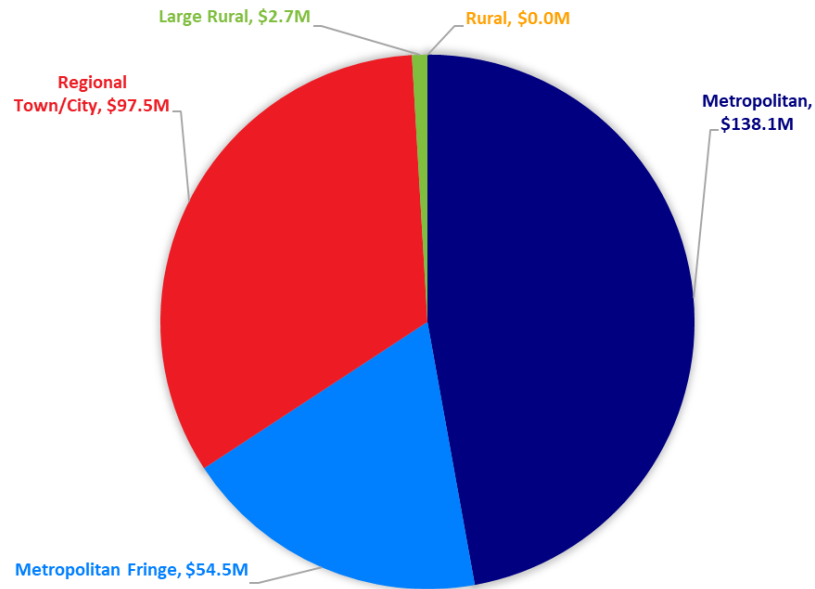


Figure 16 Respondent councils with the highest waste levy

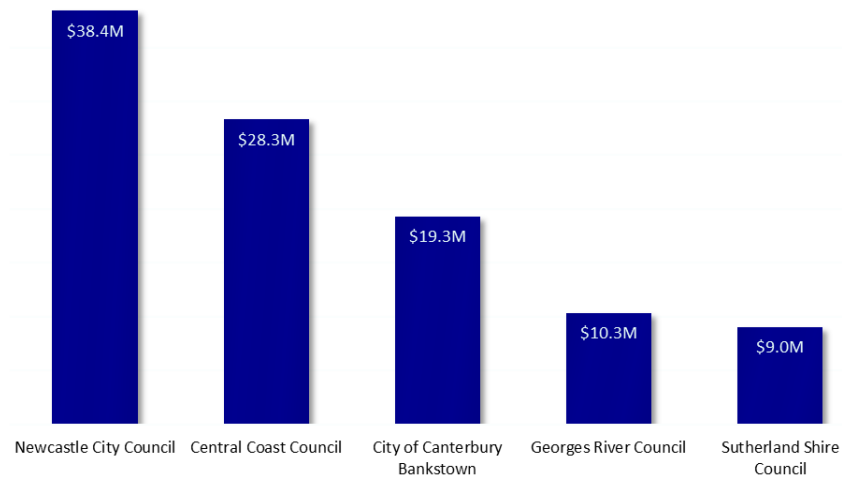
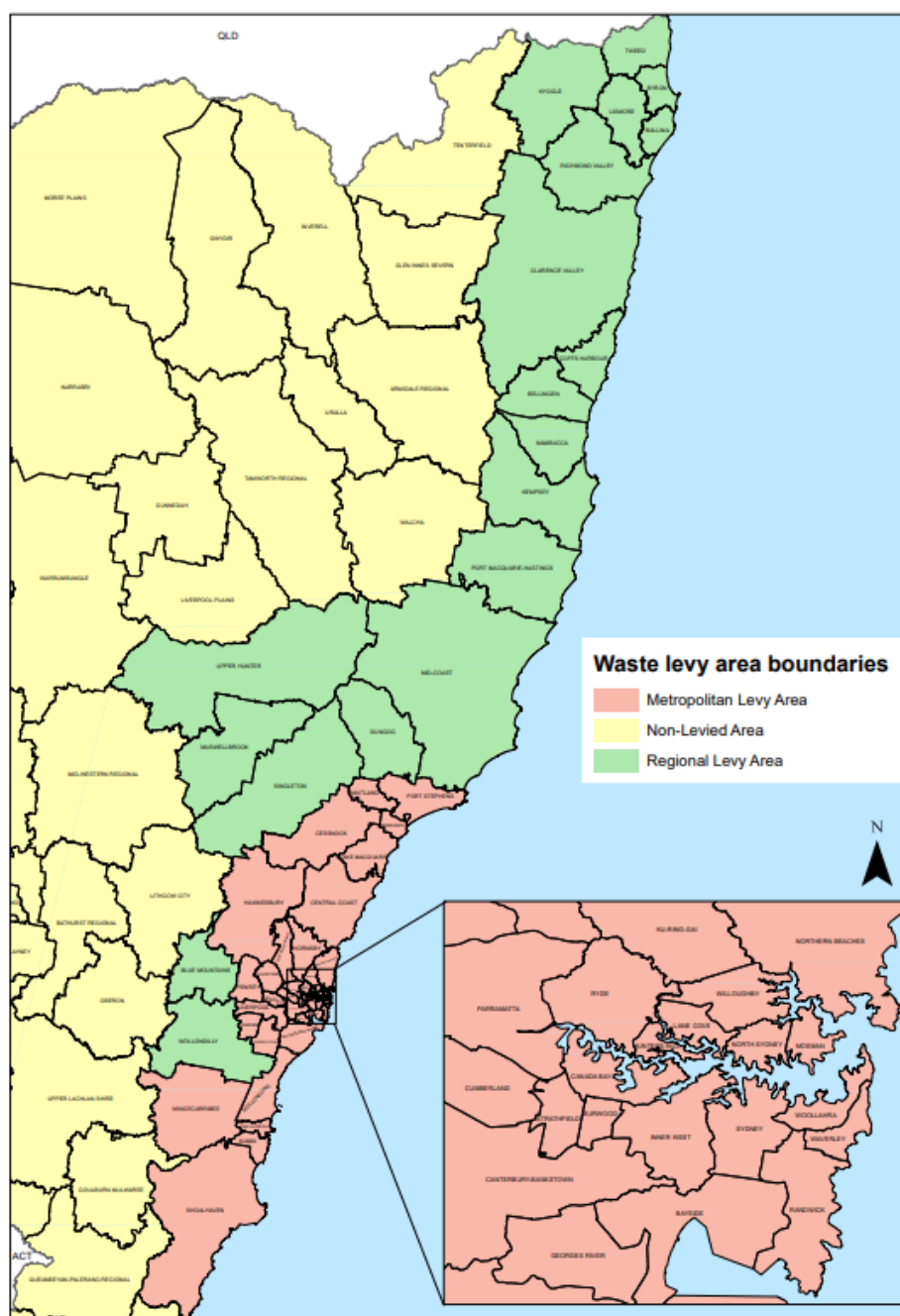




Figure 17 Waste levy area map⁴



⁴ <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/-/media/epa/corporate-site/resources/wasteregulation/levy-area-map.pdf?la=en&hash=C00135E31055627BB8A41EAE8222864C2655B186>.



3.3 Rate exemptions

Many government and private property owners in a local government area are exempt from paying rates to councils. Due to the way rates are calculated, this doesn't usually affect the total amount of revenue that councils are able to raise through rates. It does mean that the distribution of the rates burden falls more heavily on the existing ratepayer base.

For government-owned properties, rate exemptions are a part of a complex set of arrangements for exemptions of some taxes between the different tiers of government. State Owned Corporations (SOCs and GTEs) pay tax on lands owned and used for commercial purposes. This is provided for under competitive neutrality policy/National Competition Policy (a notable exception to this arrangement is the Forestry Corporation). Councils are exempt from most State and Federal taxes (for example land tax, payroll tax, stamp duty, and income tax). Councils are also involved in delivering a wide range of services or regulatory functions under various State and Commonwealth Acts and they receive a large number of different grants from State and Federal governments, including the untied Financial Assistance Grants that the States administer and distribute to councils.

Additionally, there are many non-government organisations that are also exempt from paying rates, including private schools, hospitals and retirement villages, as well as not-for-profit organisations such as religious organisations. While these organisations are exempt from paying rates; all expect and receive services and infrastructure from councils, the cost of which is funded by ratepayers.

Community housing was an area that we asked councils about specifically as the NSW government has been in the process of transitioning the ownership and management of public and social housing to non-government Community Housing Providers. Under past practice, social and public housing provided by State Government agencies paid rate equivalents on all their properties. CHPs are exempt from rates and more and more social and public housing is moving into this category. As a result, the rates exempt status seems to be moving with the community housing property.

The total amount of rate exemptions represented \$273.1 million, shifting approximately \$89.04 to each NSW ratepayer.



Figure 18 Rate exemptions by category

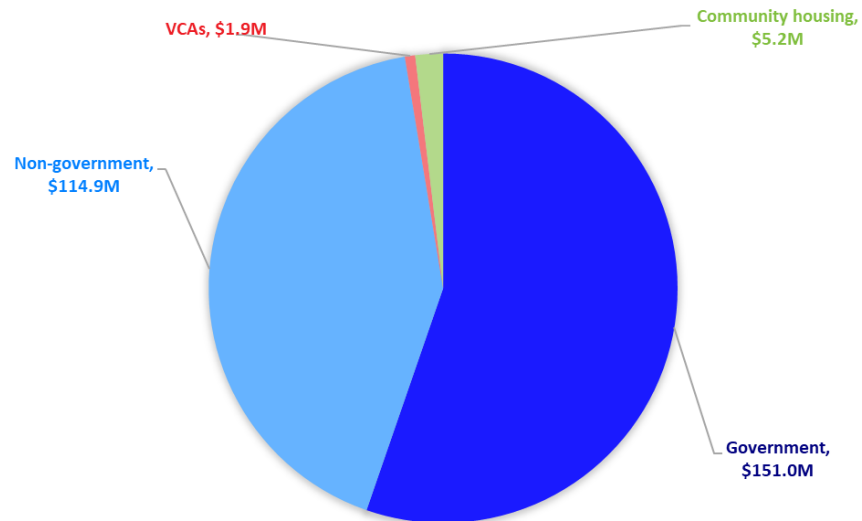


Figure 19 Rate exemptions by council classification

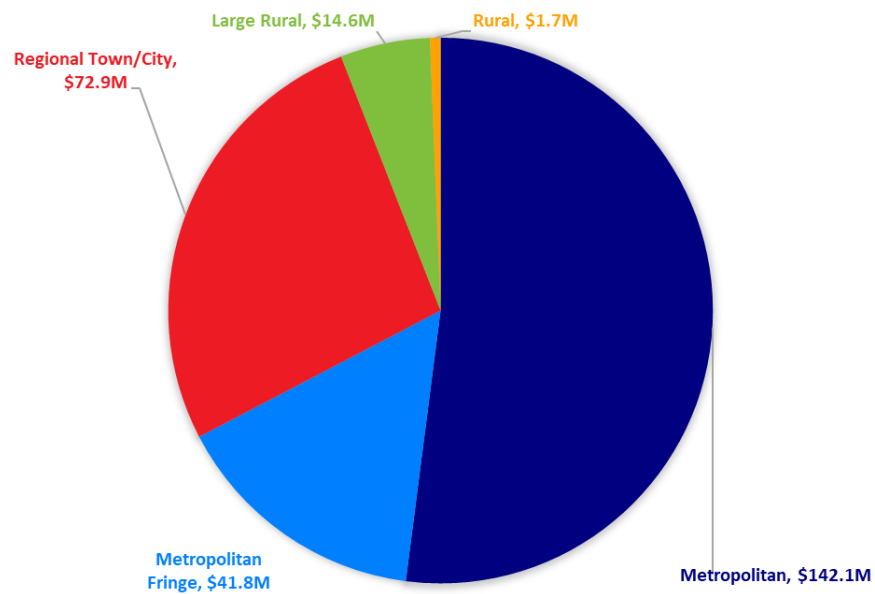




Figure 20 Average rate exemption for respondent councils as a proportion of rates revenue by council classification

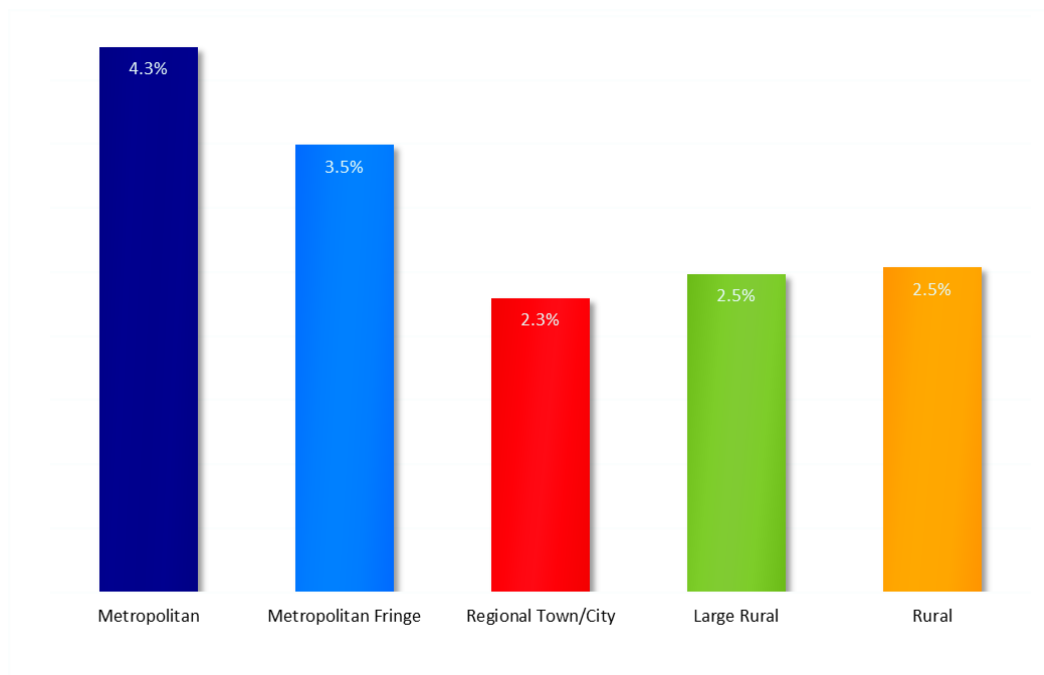


Figure 21 Respondent councils with the highest rate exemptions as a proportion of rates revenue

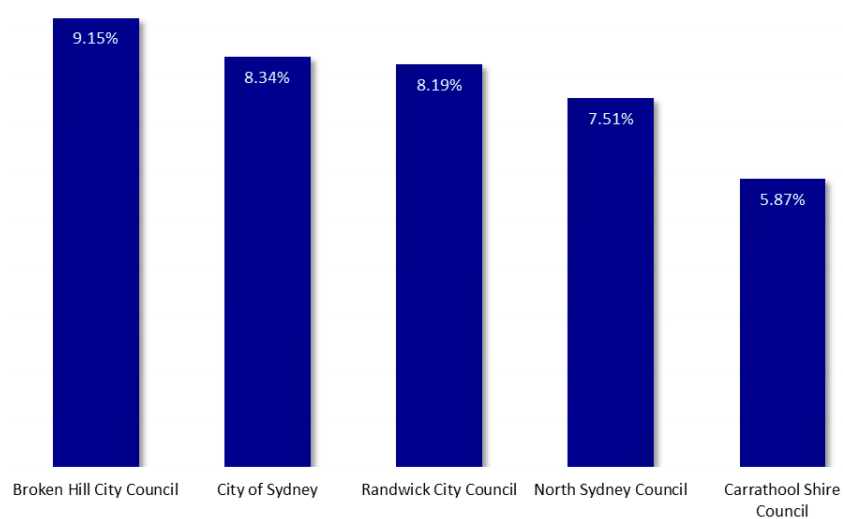




Table 1 Cost for rate exemptions

Rate exemption	Number of councils who responded to this question in the survey with a figure	Total amount of cost shift provided	Estimated total cost shift for all NSW Councils (based on population)
Government-owned property	62 (from which two councils put a figure of 0)	\$95.5M	\$151M
Non-government-owned property	61 (from which one council put a figure of 0)	\$72M	\$115M
Voluntary conservation agreements	47 (from which ten councils put a figure of 0)	\$1.2M	\$1.9M
Community housing	53 (from which 11 councils put a figure of 0)	\$3.3M	\$5.2M

3.4 Regulatory functions

In addition to the obligations under the *Rural Fire Services Act 1997*, *Fire and Rescue NSW Act 1989* and the *State Emergency Service Act 1989*, councils incur additional costs of increased regulatory responsibilities. These are additional functions or requirements that are not fully funded by increases in fees and charges.

In 2021–22, the unfunded costs for regulatory functions represented \$208.0 million.

Figure 22 Unfunded regulatory costs by category

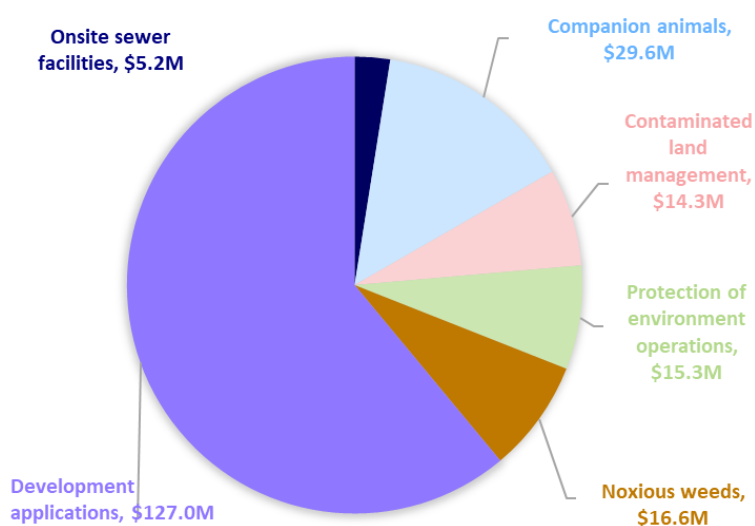




Figure 23 Unfunded regulatory costs by council classification

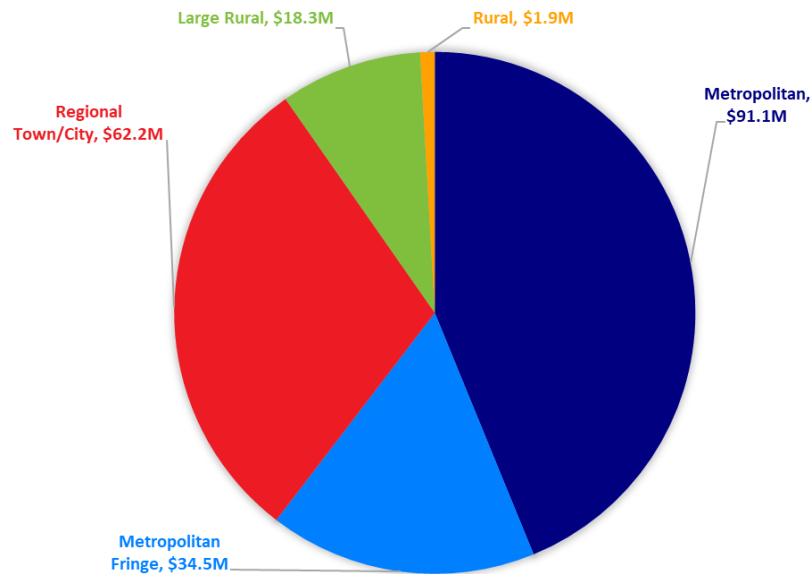
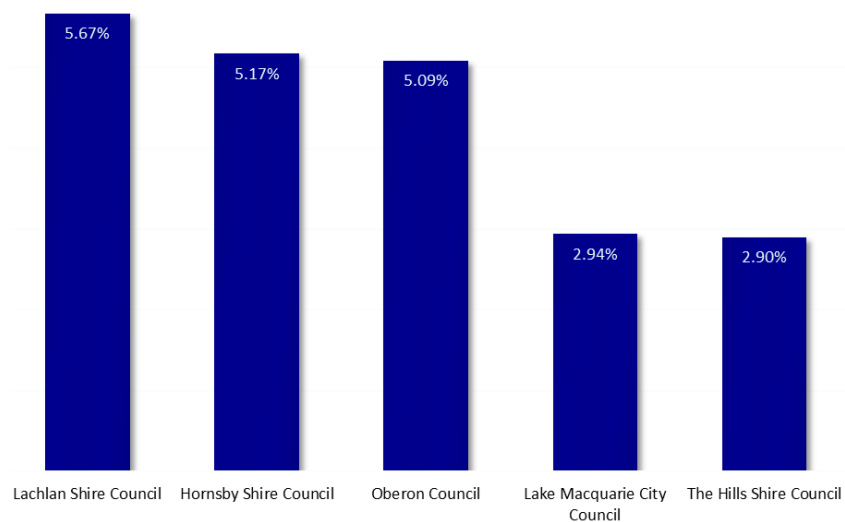


Figure 24 Respondent councils with the largest regulatory cost as a proportion of total operating expenditure



The function and total estimated costs from councils are outlined in the table below.



Table 2 Cost for increased regulatory functions that cannot be recovered through fees and charges

Regulatory function	Number of councils who responded to this question in the survey with a figure	Total amount of cost shift provided	Estimated total cost shift for all NSW Councils (based on population)
Onsite sewer facilities	35 (from which 15 councils put a figure of 0)	\$3.4M	\$5.2M
Companion animals	69 (from which four councils put a figure of 0)	\$19.6M	\$29.6M
Contaminated land management	45 (from which nine councils put a figure of 0)	\$7.2M	\$14.3M
Protection of environment operations	48 (from which four councils put a figure of 0 and one a negative amount)	\$9.9M	\$15.3M
Noxious weeds	64 (from which eight councils put a figure of 0)	\$11.1M	\$16.6M
Development applications	64 (from which five councils put a figure of 0 and one a negative amount)	\$86.7M	\$127.0M

3.5 Funding programs

Councils are occasionally required to fund the continuation of several funding programs that were instigated by the NSW Government, but for which funding commitments have, over time, either been reduced or removed entirely. The three main funding programs councils currently continue to fund are:

- Library subsidies: the original library funding subsidy was 50 per cent of the library services costs, however this has reduced over time. In 2021–22, councils paid an estimated \$156.7 million on library services that would have been covered by the originally committed 50 per cent State government subsidy.
- Flood mitigation: the program was originally established with the State and Federal governments providing 80 per cent of the costs and councils funding 20 per cent, the shortfall of this funding is estimated to be costing councils \$18.2 million in 2021–22.
- Road safety program: funding for programs and ongoing staff for education, however councils were not able to reduce the costs with the removal of the funding program. In 2021–22, councils have an estimated cost burden of \$6.4 million as result.

The total cost to council to continue to meet the funding shortfall of these programs was \$181.3 million, the vast majority which was the shortfall in the library subsidy of \$156.7 million.



Figure 25 Funding program costs shifted by category

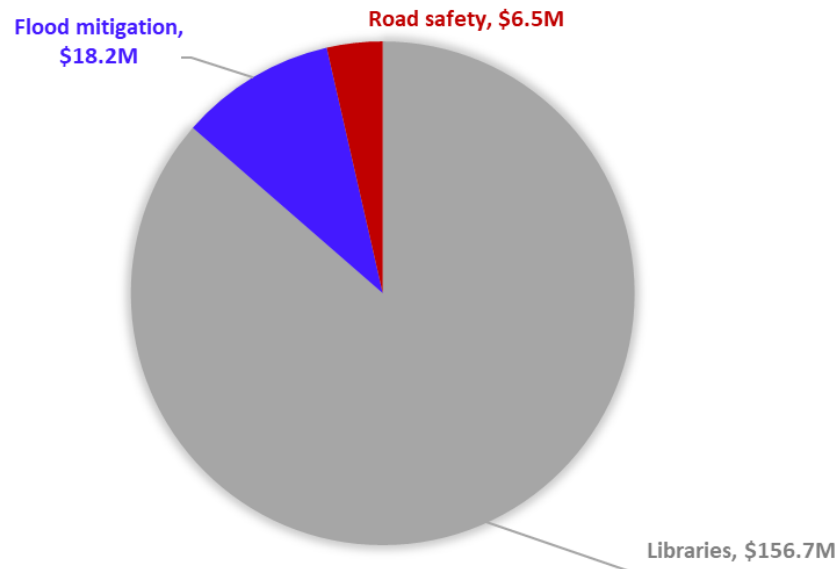


Figure 26 Funding program costs shifted by council classification

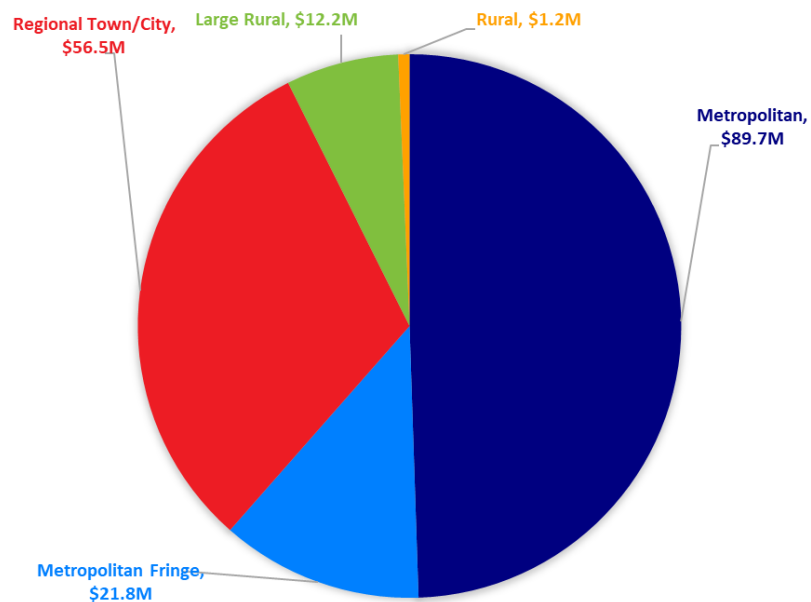
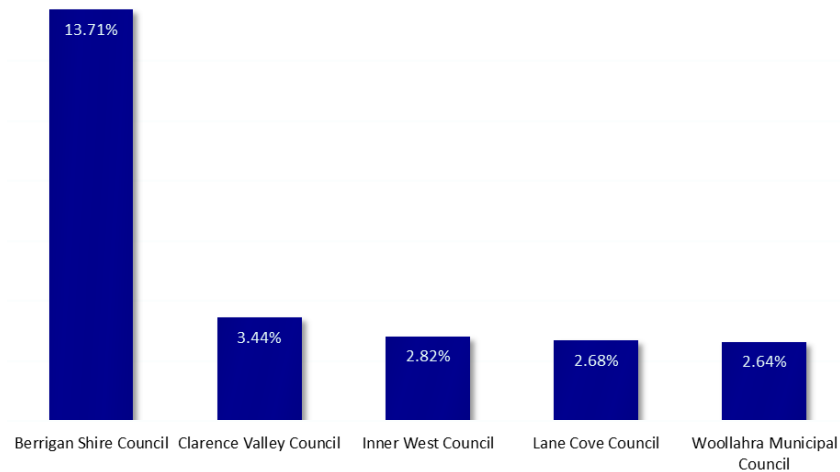




Figure 27 Respondent councils with the largest funding program costs shifted as a proportion of total operating expenditure



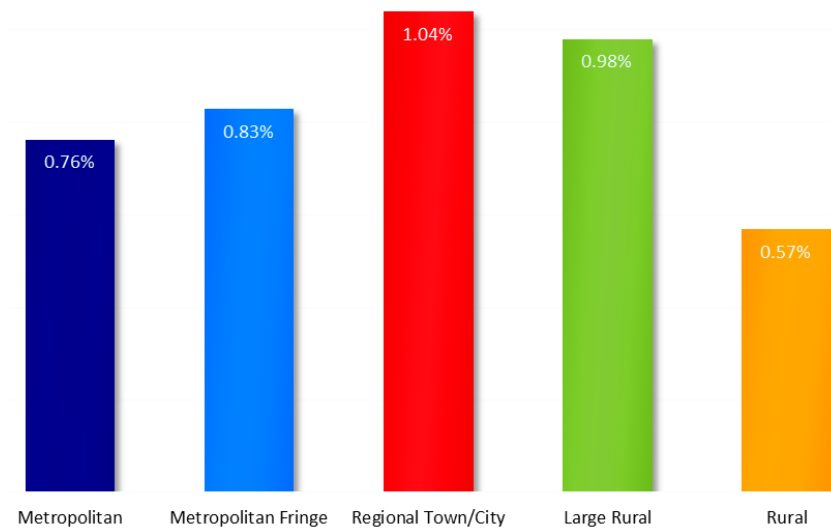
3.6 Pensioner rebates

Councils are required to provide rates rebates to pensioners, which are partially subsidised by the NSW Government. This mandatory pensioner rebate is an estimated net cost to councils of \$55.2 million. This does not include the cost of administering the mandatory pensioner rebates, as each pensioner claim needs to be registered and their details checked by the council.

The level of mandatory rebate has not risen substantially over many years, and therefore has not kept pace with inflation. As a result, many councils have elected to apply further voluntary rebates to ease the financial burden on pensioners. NSW councils incur an additional \$17.2 million in voluntary pensioner rebates. The total cost of pensioner rebates is estimated to be \$72.4 million.



Figure 28 Average total pensioner rebates as a proportion of total rates revenue by council classification





3.7 Service gaps

This section captures costs incurred by councils in providing services as a result of insufficient service provision by another level of government or a market failure of a subsidised or privatised public service. In 2021–22, it is estimated that councils spent \$66.6 million on filling these gaps.

Figure 29 Service gap costs by council classification

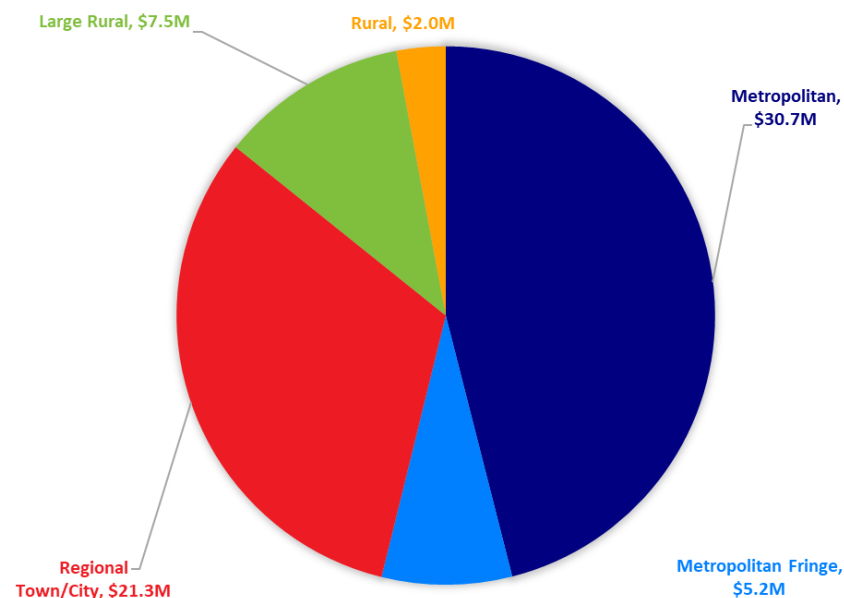
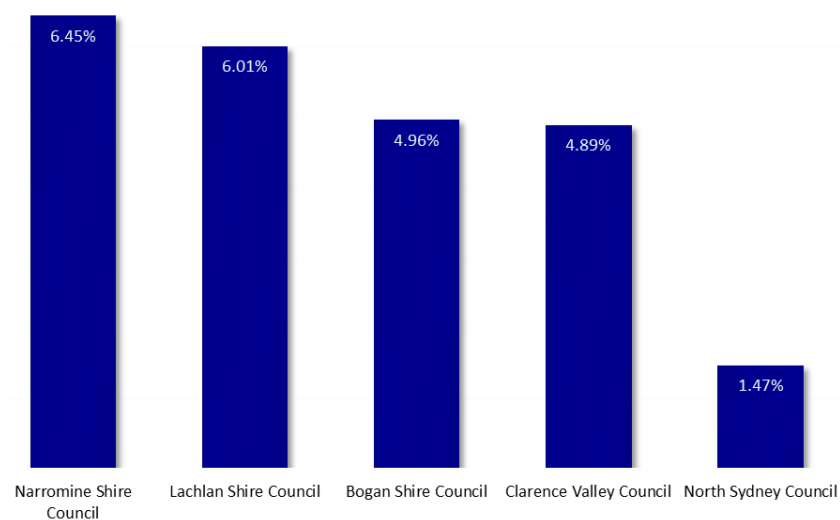


Figure 30 Respondent councils with the highest service gap cost as a proportion of total operating expenditure





The estimated costs are set out in Table 3, below.

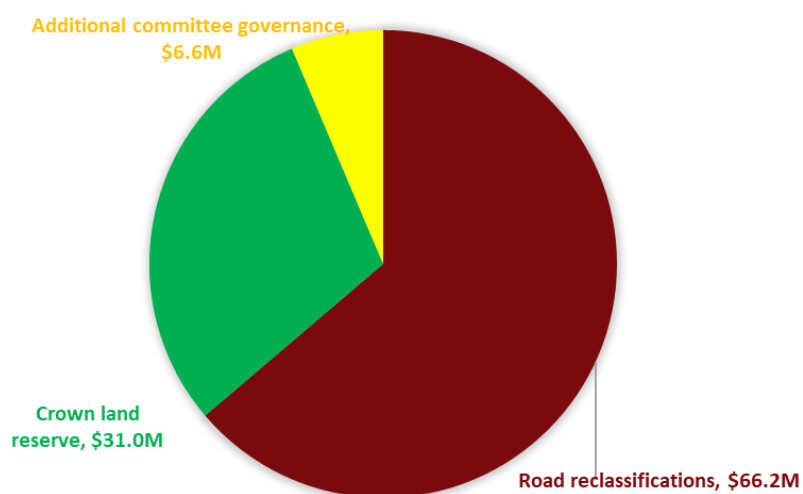
Table 3 Cost for services provided by Council as a result of a State or Federal service gap or market failure

Regulatory function	Number of councils who responded to this question in the survey with a figure	Total amount of cost shift provided	Estimated total cost shift for all NSW Councils (based on population)
Immigration and citizenship ceremonies	60 (from which ten councils put a figure of 0)	\$1.1M	\$1.6M
Crime prevention and policing	51 (from which 11 councils put a figure of 0)	\$10.2M	\$16.2M
Medical services	33 (from which 15 councils put a figure of 0)	\$2.2M	\$3.2M
Aged care services	36 (from which 19 councils put a figure of 0)	\$3.9M	\$5.6M
Disability care services	28 (from which 17 councils put a figure of 0)	\$1.4M	\$2.2M
Childcare services	49 (from which 19 councils put a figure of 0 and two councils a negative figure)	\$12.0M	\$17.8M
Transport services	37 (from which 20 councils put a figure of 0)	\$14.1M	\$20.5M

3.8 Other cost shifts

A number of other areas for cost shifting were identified and gathered in the survey and are outlined here.

Figure 31 Other cost shifts by category





Under the Transport for NSW (formerly RMS) road reclassification program in the 1990s, many roads were reclassified as local or regional road for councils to own and maintain. Of the 68 councils that responded to the survey, 32 were able to estimate the cost of this reclassification, 12 were not able to reliably estimate, and 24 stated that it was not applicable. The total estimate of costs provided by councils was \$26.7 million in 2021–22.

Under the Crown Lands Act 1989, councils have full responsibility to maintain crown reserves under council management and are expected to subsidise shortfalls in maintenance cost from general revenue. This is considered appropriate as the benefits from crown reserves under council management generally accrue to the local community. However, as a result, councils should also be entitled to any current or potential revenue from crown reserves that is required to cover maintenance and improvement cost (e.g., revenue from refreshment facilities, telecommunication facilities). The NSW Government will on occasion take over allowable revenue raising activities on council managed crown reserve land (not including national parks) or will require councils to transfer revenue from council managed crown reserve land to the State Government.

Of the 68 councils surveyed, 22 estimated the lost revenue at \$14.8 million in 2021–22. A further 27 councils were not able to reliably estimate the costs and 19 councils advised that this item didn't apply to them. This estimate does not represent the total net cost of managing (maintaining) crown lands. Nor does it include in transfers associated with the caravan park levy. Only any action by the State Government to limit revenue raising capacity or require the transfer revenue to the State Government has been considered cost shifting.

3.9 Future survey considerations

We asked councils what other areas that should be considered for future surveys. The key areas that respondents identified as costs to be captured in future surveys included:

- Monopoly services costs:
 - NSW Audit Office being the monopoly on local government external audits.
 - NSW Electoral Commission holding a near monopoly on council election administration.
- Cost of Joint Regional Planning Panels (JRPPs) requirement to access councils DAs as per mandated policy.
- Costs of mandatory On-Line Planning Portal – Implementation and ongoing operational costs.
- The Sydney Regional Development Fund Levy.
- Costs associated with Forestry NSW and impact of logging on council owned infrastructure. Rates foregone on State Forest land.
- Capturing the additional cost of Emergency Services administration staff.
- Heritage advisor costs, whilst there is some grant funding towards this it still needs to be administered by council who hand out the grant funds and do general administration.
- Cost involved in Special Variations applications given that councils have to undertake this process to recover costs shifted. This is a lengthy and resource intensive process, which is particularly challenging for smaller councils.
- Net cost of Street Lighting (Less subsidy from Transport for NSW).



- Cost of ongoing maintenance associated with the Community Water Bore program from early 2000s (the program was in conjunction with NSW Office of Water).
- Cost of management of overabundant native species doing damage to infrastructure. This is a NSW government function which is not being undertaken by the State and therefore some councils are doing it.
- Crown Land right to native title compensation (falling to Councils instead of the State).
- Any costs imposed by Service NSW (e.g., disability parking).
- Costs of sharing of facilities especially with Department of Education (schools, parks, playgrounds etc).
- Costs of maintaining State facilities that are located on Crown land.
- Provision of stormwater trunk drainage.

These additional items will need to be validated in terms of the details of what is entailed and whether they are indeed cost shifts before inclusion in any future survey.

We also recommend that some items in the current survey be considered for exclusion in future survey on the basis that they are onerous for councils to quantify and do not materially contribute to the total estimated cost shift for councils, nor are they expected to increase over time. The following items should be reviewed for exclusion:

- Road safety program (Q7) – (0.5% of total cost shift estimate).
- Onsite sewer facilities (Q10) – (0.4% of total cost shift estimate).
- Immigration and citizenship services (Q16) – (0.1% of total cost shift estimate).
- Waste management license fee (Q29) – (0.03% of total cost shift estimate).



4 About the survey

This section outlines the methodology employed to develop and administer the 2021–22 cost shifting survey.

4.1 Development of the survey

The last cost shifting survey of NSW councils was undertaken with 2015–16 financial data. We have used this last survey as the starting point for the 2021–22 Cost Shifting Survey questions. We undertook a review of the previous questionnaire guided by the following guiding principles:

- Ensure that questions are still relevant.
- Where possible maintain questions so that there can be direct year on year comparisons if required.
- Ensure that interpretation of questions is understood and consistent across all councils.
- Identify new areas of cost shifting where required.

An initial review of questions was undertaken by the project team, consisting of Morrison Low and LG NSW staff. We also established a working group that included representatives of senior leaders and financial staff of a cross section of rural, regional, and metropolitan councils. The working group undertook a review of the questions and provided their feedback through a facilitated workshop and feedback gathering tool. We also asked two leading local government academics to provide their feedback through email and one on one meetings on the questionnaire and our approach to understanding cost shifting in local government.

4.2 Conducting the survey

The final survey was provided in a Microsoft Excel format to councils on 17 April 2023 along with a request of councils' 2021–22 Financial Data Return (FDR), which contained council's audited financial Statement information. The FDR was used to gather a small amount of cost shifting information, but predominantly for data validation purposes.

4.3 Responses to the survey

Councils were asked to return their survey responses and FDRs by 8 May 2023. Some councils requested extensions to this date, which were granted up to 19 May 2023. A total of 75 out of 128 councils provided completed surveys (a 58.6% response rate), although not all answers were completed by all responding councils. Only 72 councils provided their FDRs, as three councils were still finalising their 2021–22 financial Statements at the time of survey completion date.

4.4 Data validation and analysis

Data validation included review of outliers both in total terms as well as a proportion of the council's proportion of total operating expenditure. Where possible, we also compared survey responses with councils FDR data returns to understand if there may have been discrepancies or misinterpretations of questions. This



required us to seek further information and validation with some councils on their responses to some questions.

We also utilised State Government financial reports for the Emergency Services agencies to validate to estimate of the ESL against the contributions that these agencies reported in their financial Statements.

For most questions, we have used population as the basis for estimating the total cost shift to all NSW councils for the survey data received. For some we were able to directly estimate through published reports. For example, we used the State Library's 2021–22 report on local council libraries with included operating costs and subsidies received. For other questions, such as the waste levy, where it is not relevant to all councils and there are different levels of the levy between metropolitan and regional councils, we used populations within the relevant and group councils as a basis for estimating the total cost of the waste levy.

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Inquiry into Ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services – NSW Government Response

Standing Committee on State Development

May 2025



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Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

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Introduction

The *Local Government Act 1993* requires councils to provide strong and effective leadership, planning and decision-making. They must carry out their functions in a way that provides the best possible value for residents and ratepayers as determined by the democratically elected councillors. However, the NSW Government acknowledges that some councils across the state are experiencing financial challenges that impact their ability to provide services that communities rely upon.

In recent years, some councils that have gone through the Special Variation process to increase rates above the rate peg have seen strong community pushback. These community campaigns are motivated by the pressures of the current cost of living crisis and perceptions that councils are not spending their existing funds in ways that meet community needs. While councils are independently elected and responsible for managing their own finances, the State Government has a duty to ensure their long-term viability.

In March 2024, the Hon Ron Hoenig MP, Minister for Local Government, asked the Legislative Council's State Development Committee to undertake a review into the ability of councils to fund infrastructure and services and to provide recommendations for a way forward. The Committee handed down its report in November 2024 setting out 17 recommendations. In response, the NSW Government will undertake significant reforms to progressively improve the financial sustainability of councils, in line with the individual responses outlined below.

In essence, the Government is proposing five key responses:

1. Maintaining control of council rates by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to ensure council's rates revenue keeps pace with forecast changes in costs;
2. Requiring councils that want to permanently adjust their revenue to undertake a Comprehensive Spending Review that forensically examines their expenditure as well as their revenue;
3. Simplifying the Special Variations process to focus only on specific council projects or programs;
4. Streamlining local government financial statements, which unnecessarily complicate local government financial reporting; and,
5. Drawing on the knowledge and experience of general managers, finance directors and other experts in the local government sector, to establish an Expert Advisory Panel to provide technical support for the delivery of reform based on the recommendations of the Committee.

The Government's reforms aim to enhance the reputation of local government as a robust, independently elected, third tier of government. All governments operate with limited resources and must efficiently use those resources to meet their community's needs. Councils will be sustainable if they can ensure expenditure is matched to both revenue and their community's service delivery expectations.

Elected councillors are in the best position to do this work as they can understand and balance competing community perspectives. To do their job, councillors need to have accurate

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information and be empowered to make decisions about what services their communities want and can afford.

The Government will therefore progress reforms to ensure that councillors receive timely, appropriate, and accurate financial information to be visibly in control of their councils. This information will also be made transparent and public to maximise scrutiny over decisions being made in the local government sector.

The Government proposes that if a council believes it requires additional income to meet community expectations, it must assure IPART and the community at large that they have closely considered their operations prior to increasing their rates. Councils in financial distress should be assisted to build structured financial recovery plans, and sustainable services and infrastructure, rather than resorting to reactive rate hikes.

Importantly, the role of IPART is not to take away council's autonomy but rather to ensure that councils are efficient and have reasonably considered alternative plans, prior to seeking to increase rates.

These changes will be made as part of a wide range of reforms as explained in detail in response to each recommendation.

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Government Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

That the NSW Government conduct a comprehensive review of the rate exemptions and concessions under the *Local Government Act 1993* to:

- better target the eligibility criteria for rate exemptions and concessions
- achieve a better balance between local council financial sustainability, community benefits and principles of equity.

Government response: Support

In 2016, IPART reported on the local government rating system and provided a substantial number of detailed recommendations. The Government does not believe a new comprehensive review of rate exemptions is necessary due to IPART's comprehensive analysis. However, the Government will review IPART's recommendations as a starting point for a targeted consideration of local government rate exemptions and concessions to ensure the effective distribution of the rating burden across communities.

This consideration will exclude any rating of land currently exempt due to its use for charitable or religious purposes. While it is noted these organisations rely on councils, they provide important social services the community at large depends upon.

The Government also notes the focus on the rateability of Build to Rent dwellings raised during the Inquiry. It is noted that a Build to Rent apartment building provides a council significantly less rate revenue than an equivalent apartment building using strata title. The Government will continue to consult with councils and Build to Rent providers to consider changes to the rating system to account for this anomaly.

Action:

The Government will review IPART's recommendations to ensure the effective distribution of the rating burden across communities.

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Recommendation 2:

That the NSW Government redesign the local government rating system, including reassessing council base rates, and seek to:

- implement measures, such as greater use of the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework and rates benchmarking, to provide local government greater flexibility and latitude to set their own rates
- emphasise the importance of continual evaluation and service delivery
- keep rates affordable and maintain safeguards to ensure rates meet community needs
- examine the use of capital improved value, rather than unimproved land value, to set the variable component of rates.

Government response: Partially Support

The NSW Government agrees with the views of the sector that financial sustainability is a serious concern for many councils, particularly in regional and remote areas. However, residents and ratepayers have also suffered a loss of real income through recent inflationary pressures. The NSW Government must ensure council rates remain affordable. It is also recognised that rates are only one part of the challenge for council financial sustainability, and grants, fees, charges and expenditure also need to be considered.

The Government notes that the rate peg has historically undercalculated the increases in costs borne by councils. While IPART has been setting the rate peg using a cost index formula since 2010, it was only in 2022 that a “population factor” was added to this methodology to adjust the total income that a council may receive by any population increase in that council area. Before this, population increases in an area did not increase a council’s revenue from rates.

A redesign of the rate peg methodology was implemented by IPART in 2023 and applies from the 2024-25 financial year onwards. These changes allow IPART to adjust for the individual circumstances of a council rather than apply the same indexation across the state. The Government is confident that the new rate peg methodology is robust. It provides a good starting position for councils in matching revenue to expenditure. If a council and a community agree that current service standards are sufficient to meet community needs, the rate peg should accurately compensate for cost increases beyond a council’s control.

However, some communities may agree an increase above indexation is acceptable to provide for better service standards. Other councils may need additional income to maintain existing service standards due to circumstances the rate peg cannot account for. The Special Variation process is not suited for this form of permanent rating uplift. A new pathway is necessary to allow for permanent rate increases above the rate peg.

Action:

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The Government will prepare legislation and regulatory changes to allow the review of council income and expenditure through a **Comprehensive Spending Review process** which will be separate to the Special Rate Variation process.

The proposed process will enable councils who want to permanently adjust their rates to consult with their community and submit to IPART their proposed revenue and expenditure. The process should build upon a council's Integrated Planning and Reporting.

Guidelines for the Comprehensive Spending Review process will be based on the following principles:

- **Council resourcing based on community need** - It will be up to elected councillors to determine the needs of their community through consultation. Their proposed resourcing strategy and delivery plan must be framed around the community's priorities and the council's ability to deliver on them.
- **Transparency** – Councillors and the public should be aware of which council operations are performing well and within budget, and which are performing poorly. Advice should be provided on how to improve the efficiency of poorly performing council functions.
- **Long-term rate paths** - The Government accepts the view of ratepayers that one-off rate increases of 40-80% lead to “bill shock” and make it difficult for vulnerable groups to pay their rates. Any future rate increases must consider the long-term and spread the impact over time.
- **Intergenerational equity** – It is important that councils in financial distress do not make decisions that have significant long-term implications or push issues ‘down the road’. Too often, councils have deferred difficult choices or made short-sighted decisions like reducing maintenance, which can exacerbate future challenges and financial risk.
- **Independence of councils** – The power to make policy decisions like appropriate service standards is a matter for the democratically elected councillors, not the State Government. IPART will play an advisory role, to ensure that all options have been adequately considered and consulted upon.
- **Recoverability of costs** – Councils should be resourced via rates, charges, fees, and grants to adequately fund their statutory functions, responsibilities, and obligations.

The Comprehensive Spending Review process is proposed as follows:

Councils will submit to IPART:

- What they plan to build as infrastructure and provide as services;
- What their estimated rates, grants, fees and charges will be;
- Whether they require additional rating income and how it compares to the rate peg; and,
- Evidence of community engagement.

IPART will consider:

- Whether the council has adequately estimated the cost of delivery;
- Whether the community has the capacity to pay the rates and fees proposed;
- Whether the council is effectively spending their present funds for the betterment of local communities; and,
- Whether the delivery program and resourcing strategy are reasonable.

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IPART will then examine the need for any rates adjustment, consistent with the delegated powers under the *Local Government Act 1993*, and provide guidance to a council about how it can be more efficient.

IPART will continue to index council cost increases and moderate rate increases over time.

The Comprehensive Spending Review will be developed in consultation with IPART and the Expert Advisory Panel.

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Recommendation 3:

That the NSW Government seek to improve the special variation process, should the rate peg be retained in its current form, to:

- make it less resource and time-intensive for local councils
- streamline the process for the assessment of special variation applications

consider alternatives to special variations that allow councils to raise additional rates to maintain existing service levels.

Government Response: Support

The Special Variation framework has been historically used for time-limited special projects that a council needed additional resources to complete. Successful examples include the Gundagai Main Street Upgrade and Randwick's Special Environmental Levy.

Many recent Special Variations are not time-limited or targeted but are used to permanently increase a council's rate base to address broader financial sustainability concerns. As described in the response to Recommendation 2, the Government believes that a Comprehensive Spending Review is necessary before a council applies for higher permanent rating income. However, many councils may still require additional income for special projects or programs on a short-term basis without seeking a permanent increase in their rates.

To meet this need, the current Special Variation process will be retargeted to focus on funding for specific places, projects or programs.

Action:

The Government will review the existing Special Variation Guidelines to ensure these variations are focused on specific, time-limited projects where additional spending is necessary.

The Government agrees that for the Special Variation process to be effective, it must be worthwhile for a council to pursue. Through updates to the guidelines, the Government will remove bureaucratic requirements in the Special Rate Variation process that make the current system onerous for councils.

Communities must also be able to easily determine the benefit of a specific project or improvement when being asked to consider a temporary Special Variation.

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Recommendation 4:

That the NSW Government conduct an audit of, and seek to update, the statutory fees and limits that apply to local government annual charges and user fees and charges to better reflect and account for increases in market costs and pressures, including inflation.

Government Response: Support

The Government accepts the evidence received from the Inquiry that many annual charges and user fees, such as the Stormwater Levy, have legislated caps that have not changed in many years. The Government notes that inflation has reduced the value of these charges over time, limiting councils' ability to use them to fund services. The Government will review these fees so that they better reflect the cost of delivering that service efficiently.

However, the level of other statutory charges, such as the fees relating to development applications, serve important policy goals and may need to be kept low to incentivise efficiency and positive policy outcomes.

Many fees charged by councils to ratepayers are not legally fixed and may be set by the council at its discretion. Through the Comprehensive Spending Review process, the Government will encourage councils to consider whether their discretionary fees and charges reflect the cost-effective delivery of council services, so that any subsidies are deliberate and explicitly considered in the budget-setting process.

Action:

The Government will undertake an audit of statutory fees and charges and user fees to align them, where appropriate, with reasonable service costs and index these costs with CPI (Consumer Price Index) where applicable.

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Recommendation 5:

That the NSW Government advocate to the Australian Government to increase the federal taxation revenue distributed via Federal Financial Assistance Grants from 0.5 per cent to 1 per cent and amend the current commonwealth grant guidelines per capita distribution method, that disproportionately benefits inner city councils.

Government Response: Support

While much of the discussion around financial sustainability focuses on councils' rate base, the councils most exposed to financial pressures are smaller rural and remote councils that cannot adequately fund services through rates alone.

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport adopted an inquiry into local government sustainability on 21 March 2024, following a referral from the Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Catherine King MP.

The NSW Government Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) provided a submission to that inquiry. It noted the reality that the relative value of the Financial Assistance Grants has declined over the last few decades. This has impacted councils, particularly rural and regional councils that have limited capacity to raise their own revenue through fees and charges. The submission also noted the ongoing challenge for the NSW Local Government Grants Commission in allocating a fairer share of the general purpose component of the Financial Assistance Grants to councils with the greatest relative need when a fixed 30% of the general purpose component must be allocated based on population.

That inquiry handed down an interim report in January 2025. While the interim report did not provide any recommendations, it reflected the themes received through submissions and public hearings that the current system, including the per capita distribution method, is perceived to be inadequate by many stakeholders.

Action:

The NSW Government will continue to regularly and strongly advocate to the Australian Government to increase its Financial Assistance Grants to local government to 1% of GDP to assist those smaller councils.

In recognition of the financial challenges faced by smaller rural and remote councils, a continual review of the Federal Assistance Grants distribution model will also be part of the ongoing process of the NSW Local Government Grants Commission in its allocation of grants to NSW councils.

OFFICIAL

Recommendation 6:

That the NSW Government consider grant models that:

- provide a more secure and sustainable source of funding to local councils to achieve more equitable distribution of grants funding and provide councils with greater discretion in relation to how funding is spent
- take into account the preference of local councils for predictable grants that are determined in a timely manner and assist councils to receive grants within appropriate timeframes to support the delivery of infrastructure programs.

Government Response: Support

The Government supports continual innovation and improvement to the local government grant framework and has updated the Grant Administration Guidelines to underpin this commitment.

The Government will also examine options to create a greater proportion of needs-driven grants, including Community Service Obligations, with notional allocations, as well as to incorporate whole-of-life costing, where appropriate, including depreciation and maintenance.

Action:

The NSW Government will continue to explore new models for grants to be provided to councils.

OFFICIAL

Recommendation 7:

That the NSW Government implement changes to the developer contributions framework to better financially support local councils to fund the ongoing costs at the completion of new infrastructure and works deemed essential to support development including community facilities as determined by the council on behalf of the local community.

Government Response: Noted

The Government encourages councils to plan for the ongoing costs of new infrastructure funded by contributions to ensure whole of life cycle costs are considered when identifying and adopting projects.

Any changes to current policy settings that would lead to increased contributions payable by developers needs to be balanced against feasibility risks and delivery of the Government's housing targets.

OFFICIAL

Recommendation 8:

That, as part of the process of redesigning the local government rating system as outlined in Recommendation 2, the NSW Government have regard to the findings and recommendations of Portfolio Committee No. 8 – Customer Service’s Pounds in New South Wales report and ensure councils are able to properly fund pounds and companion animal services.

Government Response: Support

The Government responded on 16 January 2025 to the findings and recommendations of the *Pounds in New South Wales* report. In that response, the Government notes it is reviewing the Companion Animals Fund, looking at the most effective ways to utilise revenue from companion animal registrations and annual permits to best support councils in meeting their management responsibilities towards dogs and cats.

Over the past three financial years, an average of \$10 million per year was collected in registration fees through the Companion Animals Fund. Councils, until the end of 2023/24, received 80 per cent of all fees paid for companion animal registrations in their LGA.

One of the prime drivers of this review of the Companion Animals Fund is the inequity in the distribution of fees across councils. For example, in Quarter 4 2022/23, 97 councils (76 per cent) received less than 1 per cent of registration fees. In dollar terms, 75 councils (60 per cent) received less than \$10,000 in quarterly payments.

Action:

The Government will consider how the use of this money can be improved as part of the Government’s election commitment to review the *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

OFFICIAL

Recommendation 9:

That the NSW Government continue to improve the timeliness of disaster recovery assistance funding to local councils by utilising funding agreements such as tripartite arrangements which have provided councils with faster access to the funds they require to cover the cost of natural disaster recovery efforts.

Government Response: Support

The principles of the advanced funding model for disaster recovery works developed through new Tripartite Agreements have provided support for councils to deliver recovery works in a timely manner. The advanced funding model is strongly supported at all levels of government and is proposed to continue to ensure councils are not disadvantaged when delivering recovery works and remain cash flow positive throughout delivery.

Action:

The methodology for providing advanced funding is being reviewed as part of the Statewide Review of Disaster Funding. In addition, the Government is investigating additional ways to streamline the administration of funding for essential public asset restoration.

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Recommendation 10:

That the NSW Government centralise disaster recovery funding within the NSW Reconstruction Authority to assist in improving expenditure on mitigation and preparedness and create dedicated and ongoing funding streams for communities, councils and community organisations to support their work on mitigation and preparedness.

Government Response: Support in Principle

While the Government supports the concept of centralising disaster recovery funding and a dedicated funding stream, this is subject to identifying an appropriate funding source and building capability to deliver.

The Government has recently established the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) Management Board to strengthen the oversight of DRFA funded programs. The Board includes senior representatives from the Premier's Department, NSW Treasury, Reconstruction Authority (RA) and key delivery agencies as well as the Office of Local Government (OLG). The Board will recommend options to streamline the management of disaster recovery in NSW.

Disaster Adaptation Plan (DAP) Guidelines are nearing completion, and the RA is delivering pilot DAPs in the Northern Rivers and Hawksbury/Nepean regions to identify and prioritise future investment in mitigation and preparedness.

Action:

The Government will continue to implement the review of Disaster Funding.

OFFICIAL

Recommendation 11:

That the NSW Government continue to advocate to the Commonwealth Government to incorporate betterment funding into disaster recovery funding arrangements.

Government Response: Support

The Government provided input into the independent review of the DRFA (the Colvin Review), as well as a review led by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

The NSW Government's feedback on both reviews articulated the need for greater opportunity for funding support for the betterment of essential public asset infrastructure under the DRFA.

On 25 October 2024, the Australian Government released the final report of an independent review of Commonwealth Disaster funding, which identified 47 recommendations to improve the existing Commonwealth's disaster funding arrangements.

Action:

The Government will use the Colvin Review and subsequent reform processes being led by NEMA to advocate for betterment funding as part of Disaster Funding arrangements.

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Recommendation 12:

That the NSW Government seek amendment to the Rural Fires Act 1997 such that Rural Fire Service assets are vested in the Rural Fire Service, with consequential amendment to the duties of councils as public authorities to prevent the occurrence of bushfires on, and to minimise the danger of the spread of a bush fire on or from land under its control or management.

Government Response: Noted

On 30 January 2024 this matter was referred to the NSW Parliament's Public Accounts Committee Inquiry into Assets, premises and funding of the NSW Rural Fire Service. The inquiry has held two public hearings and has received 78 submissions.

The Committee is still considering the matter.

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Recommendation 13:

That the NSW Government review the depreciation methodology that applies to depreciation rates.

Recommendation 14:

That the NSW Government consider excluding depreciation expenses from the calculation of the Operating Performance Ratio.

Government Response: Support

The Government supports reviewing the depreciation methodology, noting that this methodology stems from the requirements of Accounting Standard AASB 116 - Property, Plant and Equipment. It is noted that other jurisdictions in Australia are also reviewing asset valuation.

The Government supports ensuring that council financial reports provide councillors and the public a workable understanding of a council's assets, liabilities and cash flow to support good budget-setting.

Many of the challenges outlined in submissions and by the Committee relate to the impact of fair value asset accounting, particularly for non-realizable assets in a local government context. The Government will continue to explore options to address these challenges.

Action:

The Government, in consultation with the Expert Advisory Panel, will consider alternative valuation methodologies and how they can be best incorporated into council accounts. The Panel will also provide advice on how councils could create and use asset maintenance/replacement reserves, along with how to account for the increasing risk of natural disasters.

As an interim measure, the Office of Local Government has released the 2024/25 Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting, including a sub-total in council Income Statements that excludes depreciation expenses. The Office of Local Government has also removed performance ratios from the Code for the 2024/25 financial year while a broader review is conducted.

These reforms will provide councillors and communities with more timely and accurate financial information, offering a clearer understanding of the overall performance of councils, particularly cash flow.

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Recommendation 15:

That the NSW Government:

- identify opportunities to reduce cost shifting to local government
- undertake greater consultation with local government prior to making decisions that may result in cost shifting
- review the practice of discounting infrastructure and other funding applications by border councils due to use by interstate residents
- use its waste levy review to examine how the Waste Levy can better support infrastructure and services that support the transition to a circular economy.

Government Response: Support

The Government stands by its commitment, outlined in the 2024-2027 Intergovernmental Agreement to Guide NSW State-Local Government Relations on Strategic Partnerships, to work with local government to strengthen the sector's financial sustainability and consider councils' financial capability in service delivery.

The Government acknowledges that the effective implementation of its policy agenda relies on an effective and strong partnership with local governments to best achieve policy outcomes. This partnership is based on mutual respect, continuous improvement, and strong and productive consultation.

The financial sustainability of councils is a key priority for the Government, which continues to fund billions of dollars of services and infrastructure for councils across the state every year. As the functions of government evolve over time, it may be most appropriate for local governments to manage new activities rather than State. For these functions to be performed adequately, it is vital that both levels of government work collaboratively and that councils are sufficiently resourced to perform these roles. The involvement of local government through consultation, or co-design of new policies where appropriate, will maximise the chance of successful outcomes for NSW communities.

Action:

The Government reinforces its commitment to the Intergovernmental Agreement with Local Government NSW and will continue to work collaboratively with councils and the sector.

OFFICIAL

Recommendation 16:

That the NSW Government review the financial reporting guidelines and accounting model for local government.

Government Response: Support

The Government supports reviewing the financial reporting guidelines and accounting model for local government.

The Government has asked the Office of Local Government to improve the effectiveness, timeliness and cost of financial reporting processes for councils. However, it is noted that local government financial reporting guidelines and accounting practices are required to meet the requirements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board at this point in time.

On 6 March 2025, the Office of Local Government released revised Quarterly Budget Review Statement (QBRs) Guidelines for consultation, which aim to modernise quarterly budget statements across the local government sector. The changes introduce a standardised reporting template and require councils to report on individual council funds so that councillors and the community can easily assess the performance of each council function independently. The guidelines also introduce a new requirement for councils to provide the Office of Local Government with an electronic QBRs throughout the financial year.

By requiring councils to provide clear, up-to-date financial information, the Government hopes to increase the ability of councillors, the public and the Office of Local Government to oversee council budgets throughout the financial year, not just when the Annual Report is published.

As noted in response to recommendations 13 and 14, the Office of Local Government has removed performance ratios from the Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting for the 2024/25 financial year while they are under review. The Government has also commenced consultation with key stakeholders on the removal of the Special Purpose Financial Statements to reduce duplication.

Previous reform in this space, including the requirement for councils to have an Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) help councillors stay informed about financial challenges and potential risks that require the council's attention, separate to briefings by council staff.

Action:

As previously noted, the Government will consider how alternative valuation methodologies can be best incorporated into council accounting.

The Office of Local Government will also use the 'Your Council' website to share financial data collected from councils through annual returns and QBRs. This will provide the community access to information about their council's income and expenditure, cash reserves, long term financial outlook, and service delivery performance.

OFFICIAL

Recommendation 17:

That the NSW Government review the performance measurement ratios for local councils.

Government Response: Support

Performance ratios should provide a clear understanding of a council's spending priorities and budget decisions. Among other factors, they should be highlighting key measures such as:

- how much money is being spent against how much is being earned
- available cash
- how much money council is spending on the maintenance and renewal of its assets

To enhance public and OLG oversight over the financial performance of councils, ratios should be provided quarterly, rather than only being included in councils' annual audited accounts. More frequent data on a council's liquidity, spending on major projects and service delivery is important for the community to monitor how well their council is performing.

Action:

The Government is reviewing the local government performance ratios to ensure they are fit for purpose. Data from councils' QBRs is being used to develop new performance criteria better suited to local government finances.

The Government has also asked the Office of Local Government to enhance the functionality of the Your Council website so that it is a more effective tool for transparency between councils and their communities.

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APPENDIX – Expert Advisory Panel

The proposed Expert Advisory Panel will include the following representatives:

- a mix of general managers from metropolitan, regional and rural councils
- a mix of Chief Financial Officers from metropolitan, regional and rural councils
- representatives from NSW local government unions
- representatives from Local Government NSW

The proposed Expert Advisory Panel will also be advised by and have observer status from:

- the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
- the NSW Audit Office
- the NSW Grants Commission
- relevant State agencies (as needed to advise on fees and charges or disaster funding arrangements)



29th May 2025

The Hon. Chris Minns MP
Premier
kogarah@parliament.nsw.gov.au

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey MLC
Treasurer
office@treasurer.nsw.gov.au

The Hon. Ron Hoenig MP
Minister for Local Government
office@hoenig.minister.nsw.gov.au

Dear Premier, Treasurer and Minister

Cost shifting onto Gwydir Shire Council

I write to you on behalf of Gwydir Shire Council to seek your commitment to work in partnership with the local government sector to address the issue of cost shifting, which arises where the NSW Government forces councils to assume responsibility for infrastructure, services and regulatory functions without sufficient supporting funding.

Alarmingly, the latest research commissioned by Local Government NSW (LGNSW) shows that the increase in cost shifting accelerated. The latest cost shifting report produced by independent consultants Morrison Low on behalf of Local Government NSW, shows that the cost shifting burden is now valued at more than \$1.36 billion per year, up 78 per cent in just over five years. (Full report at www.lgnsw.org.au/costshifting).

On average, this represents an additional cost of \$460.67 for every ratepayer across the state, and results in lost services, lost opportunity and lost amenity for all our residents and businesses. These hidden taxation arrangements harm communities and run counter to the principles of transparency and good government.

For Gwydir Shire Council, this cost impost means that we are not able to better maintain the Council's Road network.

Councils welcomed your pre-election acknowledgement that the decade-long practice of cost shifting has undermined the financial sustainability of the local government sector.

GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL | ABN 11 636 419 850

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PAST WINNER OF THE A R BLUETT MEMORIAL AWARD AND THE NSW TRAINING INITIATIVE AWARD

To this end, the recent reforms to the rate peg methodology by IPART are a step in the right direction. Also positive is your forthcoming review of the Emergency Services Levy, which must no longer be imposed on either councils or on insurance policies, in line with every other state in Australia.

However, significant reforms remain required. For example, your government is encouraged to implement the 17 recommendations contained in the recent report, Ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services, from the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on State Development. Council notes your Government's response to 15 of the recommendations.

Would you please urgently work to deliver your pre-election commitments to ensure that cost shifting onto local government is addressed through a combination of regulatory reform, budgetary provision and appropriate funding?

Addressing this long-standing matter would demonstrate a commitment from your government to work in partnership with councils for the benefit of the communities we all serve.

Yours faithfully

Cr Tiffany Galvin
Mayor
Gwydir Shire Council

cc Mr Brendan Moylan MP
Member for Northern Tablelands

7 OFFICERS' REPORTS

7.1 Dealing with items by exception

File Reference: NA

Delivery Program

Goal: 5. Organisational management

Outcome: 5.1 Corporate management

Strategy: 5.1.2 Information Management Systems

Author: General Manager

STAFF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST Nil

IN BRIEF/SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Councillors to indicate those items that they wish to be withdrawn for discussion and debate.

Item Number	Report Details	Withdrawn
7.2	Executive Services Report	
7.3	Organisation and Community Services Report	
7.4	Technical Services Report	
7.5	Business and Strategy Report	
7.6	Council's Investment Report	
7.7	Country Mayors' Association March 2025 Meeting	
7.8	Organisational Structure	
7.9	March 2025 Quarterly Financial Review	
7.10	Proposed Community Meeting Dates	
7.11	Gravesend Recreation Reserve	

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

THAT items that have not been withdrawn will be adopted collectively in this resolution.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

7.2 Executive Services Report

File Reference: NA

Delivery Program

Goal: 5. Organisational management

Outcome: 5.1 Corporate management

Strategy: 5.1.3 Administrative and support functions

Author: Max Eastcott, General Manager

STAFF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST Nil

IN BRIEF/SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

This report is for reception.

TABLED ITEMS Nil

COMMENT

Gwydir Libraries

Highlights of the month

Bingara library hosted five programs over the two weeks school holidays.

School holiday activities were hosted at the library and The Living Classroom. 19 children attended a two-day program on 15 and 16 April. Both sessions were from 10am until 4pm each day. The children particularly enjoyed the nature craft session which was hosted by Council staff and a library volunteer.

Council staff and a second volunteer hosted a sewing session in the library on Wednesday 23 April 23 with five children attending.

Also, on this day six children and Council staff visited Touriandi Lodge, everyone loved chatting about their childhood. The children enjoyed a sausage sizzle and ice cream as well.

Warialda Library hosted five holiday programs over two weeks.

Part Time trainee Charlotte Lockyer hosted a children's holiday activity session, the session consisted of wheels chair art. Four children attended the activity. Other holiday sessions hosted in the library on two mornings by Nerissa.

During the last week of the holidays Helen entertained ten children, enjoyed cooking in the CHSP space, baking biscuits and slices. The following day ten children enjoyed a fun filled scavenger hunt and reading at Captain Cook Park.





GLR TRAINING

Heavy Vehicle Training and Assessment

Units of Competence on GLR Training's scope:

- TLIC3004 - Drive heavy rigid vehicle
- TLIC3005 - Drive heavy combination vehicle
- TLIC4006 - Drive multi-combination vehicle
- TLILIC 2014 – Licence to drive a Light Rigid Truck
- TLILIC 2015 – Licence to drive a Medium Rigid Truck
- TLILIC 2016 – Licence to drive a Heavy Rigid Truck
- TLILIC 3017 – Licence to drive a Heavy Combination Truck
- TLILIC 3018 – Licence to drive a Multi-Combination Truck

July 2024 – April 2025 Heavy Vehicle Training statistics are as follows:

	Enquiries	Applications for S&S Funding Submitted	Applications for S&S Funding approved	Paying Clients	Training completed	Future bookings
July 2024	7	1	0	3	3	2
August 2024	39	7	3	3	3	5
September 2024	14	4	8	1	5	3

October 2024	8	3	5	1	4	10
Nov 2024	12	2	1	3	7	7
December 2024	3	2	3	2	5	5
January 2025	12	0	0	4	5	5
February 2025	12	3	2	3	5	6
March 2025	7	5	0	1	3	6
April 2025	6	3	3	3	7	4

Training and assessment has been completed for a total of 47 clients in 2024/2025 financial year to 30 April 2025.

Learner Driver Tuition

Learner driver lessons undertaken from July 2024 – April 2025:

July 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	Mar 2025	Apr 2025
3	4	7	6	2	2	1	1	3	0

Automotive Trade Training Centre

In addition to GLR Training's use of the Automotive Trade Training Centre (ATTC) for heavy vehicle training, the facility is also utilised by Warialda High School for curriculum courses; Community College which run welding courses; and, a private trainer who holds whip making courses from time to time.

Gwydir Career Start Program

Gwydir Shire Council currently employs forty-one (41) trainees/apprentices/cadets. Gwydir Career Start participants constitute 16% of Council's full time equivalent workforce.

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.)

<i>Period</i>	<i>No. of employees</i>	<i>Claimed/Paid</i>
Total Claimed for 2023/4 Financial Year		\$46,409.40
01/07/2024 – 30/09/2024	18	\$25,291.30
01/10/2024 – 31/12/2024	9	\$12,194.60
01/01/2025 – 31/03/2025	8	\$14,700.40
1/04/2025 – 30/04/2025	2	\$946.77

NSW Government 'A Fresh Start for Local Government Apprentices, Trainees & Cadets' Program

The NSW Government launched the 'A Fresh Start for Local Government Apprentices, Trainees & Cadets' funding program in line with its goal to increase the local government workforce and employ an additional 1300 apprentices, trainees and cadets. \$252.2 million over six years has been committed to directly support local councils and the local government sector to developing sustainable workforces.

Successful applicants will receive funding that supports 100% of the applicable award wage for a new apprentice, trainee or cadet, as well as 15% of the on costs associated with the new employee's hiring.

Gwydir Shire Council received provisional approval of seven positions from Round 1 of the program. An application for four additional positions has been submitted for Round 2 of the program.

Aged Units

All aged units at Holden and Plunkett Streets, Warialda, and Whitfield Place, Bingara, are currently occupied.

Low Income Community Housing – Warialda

Community houses at 75 Queen Street and 113 Long Street, Warialda are currently occupied.

The Community house at 50 Market Street, Warialda, has recently been vacated.

Council's Building Services team will undertake minor repairs and maintenance prior to its vacancy being advertised.

8 Olive Pyrke Terrace

Currently unoccupied.

Expression Of Interest - Short Term Licence/S for the management and operation of Council Facilities

Expressions of Interest (EOI) were invited from a suitably qualified contractor, or contractors for the management and operation of one or more of four (4) Council facilities under short-term licences in accordance with the provisions of the Crown Lands Management Act, 2016.

These are the four facilities:

1. Bingara War Memorial Baths, Copeton Dam Road, Bingara
2. Warialda War Memorial Olympic Pool, Gwydir Highway, Warialda
3. Riverside Caravan Park, Copeton Dam Road, Bingara
4. Warialda Caravan Park, Gwydir Highway, Warialda.

The EOI was distributed through Gwydir News, Northern Daily Leader, LG Procurement and the Country Pool Managers Group. The advertised period closed on 9 May.

Contribution of Gwydir News

The April contribution was again well received. Several distributors requested extra copies.

Design Work

- ANZAC Day Social Tile
- Bingara Visitor Information Centre – Temporary Closure – Social Tile
- Gravesend Boil Water Alert Lifted – Social Tile
- Happy Easter – Social Tile
- Warialda Library – Temporary Closure – Poster
- Warialda Gym – Temporary Closure – Poster and Social Tile
- Road Closure Update – All GSC Roads Open – Social Tile
- Carinda House – Australia Biggest Morning Tea – Letter Box Drop
- Orange Festival (revised) – Poster
- Office Hours and Service Provisions for Easter and ANZAC Day 2025 – Social Tile
- What's On
- Nicholson Oval – Temporary Closure – Social Tile

Gwydir Shire Council Facebook Page

Views are the number of times the content is displayed. The reach score is the amount of people that saw the post at least once. The engagement rating is the number of reactions, comments, clicks or shares on a post.

On 1 April 2025, Council published a social tile advertising the General Plant Operator and Labour positions. This post had 6,459 views, an engagement score of 295 and reached 3,206 people.

On 2 April 2025, Council published a video to Facebook with the Easter Bunny visiting the Naroo residents and Warialda Preschool children. The post had 3,927 views, an engagement rating of 489 and reached 2,011 users.

On 3 April 2025, Council published information on the road closures within the Shire. The first post had 3,146 views, a reach of score of 1,765 and an engagement rating of 111. The second post had 3,317 views, a reach score of 2,130 people and an engagement rating of 92.

Additionally on 3 April, Council published a post about Nicholson Oval being temporarily closed due to the wet weather. This post had 1,053 views, reached 631 people and had an engagement score of 23.

On 4 April 2025, Council provided additional updates on road closures. The first post had 4,772 views, reached 3,001 people and an engagement rating of 76. The second post had 1,349 views, reached 783 people and an engagement score of 67. The third post had 3,155 views, a reach of 1,980 people and an engagement rating of 35.

Additionally of 4 April 2025, Council published a video of the Mayor encouraging Warialda residents to test private bores for PFAS. The post had 2,398 views, reached 1,322 people and had an engagement score of 237.

On 5 April 2025, Council published a post seeking assistance from the community on providing any information about the circuit work left on the Warialda Recreation Ground Oval. This post had 31,470 views, reached 9,326 people and had an engagement score of 6,634.

On 7 April 2025, Council provided more updates on the road closures within the shire. The first post had 2,317 views, reached 1,499 people and had an engagement score of 43. The second post on this day had 931 views, reached 542 people and had an engagement score of 25.

On 11 April 2025, Council published a post on how recent wet weather conditions had ceased works on the renewal of the speed patches and pedestrian crossing repainting in Warialda. New dates for the works were also included. This post had 2,463 views, reached 1,380 people and had an engagement score of 113.

On 12 April 2025, Council published a post about an upcoming Social Family Fun Run and encouraged people to join in on the activity. This post had 2,629 views, a reach of 1,254 and an engagement score of 82.

On 19 April 2025, Council published a post from the Mayor on the mobile and internet service issues in Bingara over the Easter weekend. The post had 6,764 views, had an engagement score of 763 and reached 2,851 people.

On 25 April 2025, a post was published from the Mayor on behalf of the Councillors stating what an honour it was for them to attend ANZAC Services across the Shire.

This post included over 50 photos. The post had 7,881 views, reached 2,984 people and had an engagement score of 3,740.

On 26 April 2025, Council published a video on the North Star children marching at an ANZAC Day commemoration. The post had 5,242 views, reached 1,988 people and had an engagement score of 249.

These statistics show how many people seek information from Council via Facebook. People particularly connect and share posts which include photos, and video clips.

Events

Throughout April, the staff worked with various event organisers to ensure relevant Event Management Plans were submitted to Council for approval. The following events were approved in April:

- Gravesend ANZAC Day Service
- Warialda ANZAC Day Service
- Crooble ANZAC Day Service

An Event Management Plan for the Coolatai Tractor Pull has also been submitted to Council's insurance company for review. This event is scheduled for the 17 and 18 May 2025. Council is currently awaiting comment from the insurance company for any advice on this specific event.

Staff also continued working on the Orange Festival. It is very exciting that Bingara boy and Channel 7 Television News Reporter, Hugh Whitfeld has accepted an invitation to compere this year's Festival.

Websites

For the month of April, staff conducted 1,283 audit logs on the Gwydir Shire Council and Visit Gwydir website. 851 of the audit logs were performed on the Gwydir Shire Council website and 432 audit logs were completed on the Visit Gwydir website.

On the Gwydir Shire Council website, staff focused attention on link text is meaning when read out loud and all spelling errors were all fixed for the month of April. Staff focused attention on link text is meaningful when read out loud, spelling errors, broken links and images for the month of April on the Visit Gwydir website.

At the time of writing this report, the Gwydir Shire Council website was sitting at 94% for quality assurance compliance, the industry average is 76.33%. The accessibility compliance score for the Council website was sitting at 97.68%, the industry average is 84.84%. Please note, these figures are based off errors only, it does not include potential errors.

The Visit Gwydir website is sitting at 96.02% for quality insurance compliance and 87.15% for accessibility compliance. Based on these scores, the team will focus future attention on the accessibility functions of the Visit Gwydir website.

These scores can fluctuate with new material being uploaded to the websites that continuously require reviewing. Without the maintenance of constantly checking the information that is being uploaded by various staff members, the compliance score is inclined to drop.

The Living Classroom (TLC)

The connecting pathways at TLC are all but completed.

When the cabin driveways are completed, the pathways will be acid washed and minor chips and cracks repaired.

Following hand railings along the pathways will be installed during May.

The latest date proposed for the connection of the high voltage electricity supply is 16 June.

The Roxy Complex

During April the North West Theatre Company presented Two One Act Plays. Over 350 people attended the performances. Feedback was very positive with the plays being reported as very entertaining and funny.

The stormwater and drainage project has now commenced. Works will continue to end June.

Bingara Riverfront Project

Works commenced during April. Soil Conservation Services have constructed the rock revetment and are currently undertaking earthworks. This project is to be completed by end June.

Both TLC and the Roxy Complex continue to be well utilised and presented to a high standard. See attached April calendar as to use.

The Councillors' activity schedule for April 2025

April 2025		
Councillor	Event	Date
Cr T Galvin (Mayor)	ARIC meeting – Gilgandra	04/04/2025
	Executive Meeting	05/04/2025
	ZOOM health forum with Brendan Moylan	08/04/2025
	Budget Workshop	08/04/2025
	Council Meeting	08/04/2025
	Library Meeting – Kootingal	23/04/2025
	Radio Interview – Telstra	22/04/2025
	Outage - Bingara	
	Bingara Office Working Group	24/04/2025
	ANZAC Day and Dawn Service at Bingara	25/04/2025
Cr Sean Coleman	Budget Workshop	08/04/2025

(Deputy Mayor)	Council Meeting ANZAC Day Service at North Star ANZAC Day Service at Crooble	08/04/2025 25/04/2025 25/04/2025
Cr John Bishton	Council Meeting Budget Workshop Upper Horton ANZAC Day Service ANZAC Day service - Bingara Bingara Office Working Group	08/04/2025 08/04/2025 25/4/2025 25/04/2025 24/04/2025
Cr Marilyn Dixon OAM	Council Meeting Budget Workshop Bingara Office Working Group	08/04/2025 08/04/2025 24/04/2025
Cr Michael Collins	Council Meeting Budget Workshop Gravesend ANZAC Day Ceremony	08/04/2025 08/04/2025 25/04/2025
Cr Rachel Sherman	Council Meeting Budget Workshop Warialda Dawn Service Warialda ANZAC Day service	08/04/2025 08/04/2025 25/04/2025 25/04/2025
Cr Sarah Crump	Council Meeting Budget Workshop Bingara Office Working Group	08/04/2025 08/04/2025 24/04/2025
Cr Scot Crispin	Bingara Office Working Group	24/04/2025








OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be received.



ATTACHMENTS

1. Roxy complex and TLC Calendar 2025 [7.2.1 - 1 page]

2025 . APRIL

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1  QUANTUM LEAP WORKSHOP 	2  QUANTUM LEAP WORKSHOP   MEETING  ROXY TOUR X8  REHEARSALS	3  QUANTUM LEAP WORKSHOP   MEETING	4  QUANTUM LEAP WORKSHOP   CLEANING	5  QUANTUM LEAP WORKSHOP 	6  QUANTUM LEAP WORKSHOP   REHEARSALS
7  QUANTUM LEAP WORKSHOP   MEETING X3  BINGARA CHOIR PRACTICE  REHEARSALS	8  QUANTUM LEAP WORKSHOP   MEETING X2	9  QUANTUM LEAP WORKSHOP   U3A MEETING  REHEARSALS	10  QUANTUM LEAP WORKSHOP   MEETING	11  PRIVATE FUNCTION	12  PRIVATE FUNCTION	13  NWTC BUMP IN  REHEARSALS
14  BINGARA CHOIR PRACTICE  NWTC PLAY	15  SCHOOL HOLIDAY ACTIVITY  MEETING X2  NWTC PLAY	16  SCHOOL HOLIDAY ACTIVITY  NWTC PLAY	17  NWTC PLAY	18  BIRTHDAY PARTY  NWTC PLAY	19  BIRTHDAY PARTY  BIRTHDAY PARTY  NWTC PLAY	20  NWTC PLAY  REHEARSALS
21  BINGARA CHOIR PRACTICE  NWTC PLAY	22  NWTC PLAY	23  NWTC PLAY	24  MEETING  NWTC PLAY	25  NWTC PLAY	26  NWTC PLAY	27  NWTC PLAY  REHEARSALS
28  BINGARA CHOIR PRACTICE  NWTC BUMP OUT	29	30  MEETING				

Legend - Roxy:  Theatre -  Kitchen -  Conference Room

TLC:  Classroom -  Bunkhouse

7.3 Organisation and Community Services Report

File Reference: NA

Delivery Program

Goal: 5. Organisational management

Outcome: 5.1 Corporate management

Strategy: 5.1.3 Administrative and support functions

Author: Leeah Daley, OCD Director

STAFF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST Nil

IN BRIEF/SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The monthly Organisation and Community Services Report details the activities carried out by the Department during April 2024.

TABLED ITEMS Nil

BACKGROUND

The monthly Organisation and Community Services report forms part of a regular reporting regime. The purpose of the report is to inform Council of the activities carried out within the Department.

COMMENT

AGED CARE – NAROO FRAIL AGED HOSTEL

Naroo Frail Aged Hostel – April 2025

Staff Meeting

Building works are still moving ahead, High Styles Furniture and Kitchens have installed the kitchen, tiling and painting was taking place.

The possibility of creating a checklist for our trainees so it's easier to keep them on track with where they are at and what they should be learning in line with their course

Fire exits need to always be free from clutter.

The front door alarm board has been fixed so duress and nurse alarms can be heard better by RN's and Admin staff. Trainee staff would be given duress 5 on their shift as supernumerary staff so they have a buzzer.

Education training sheet will be updated. All staff have been allocated a Generational Awareness course to complete. All those who need to update CPR courses will be offered in-house. Those staff needing to do full first aid it will be organised with Community College.

Residents News & Outings

April was full of activities starting the month off with Easter. Lots of cooking afternoons with scrolls, Oreo balls & cookie decorating. We then turned our focus to ANZAC Day. There was poppy making for all residents to wear a poppy on ANZAC Day. Paper plates were painted and cut out into the shape of a poppy and pins and rosemary attached to the back. Stain glass craft silhouettes were created with paper plates, contact and coloured cello paper. We were joined by MPS residents and members of the community for an ANZAC service to finish off the month.



ANZAC Day Service

Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) – Warialda/Delungra

Meetings

Next meeting with CHSP Manager May 2025

Volunteers

CHSP have four new Meals on Wheels volunteers who are already on the roster. Clients enjoy seeing volunteers, this is also a suitable time to stay connected with clients and to check on their wellbeing

Transport and Trips

CHSP has had two trips to Inverell shopping this month with our clients thoroughly enjoying their shopping experience, getting them out especially those that no longer drive. Transport has covered Armidale, Tamworth, Moree and Inverell this month. CHSP are excited to recruit one new driver but are always looking for more.

Social Support

Social support is always given when attending Day Centres, outings, Meals on Wheels, phone calls, client's inquiries, transport & home visits. Free exercise classes

are currently being held at the Warialda CHSP Centre commenced on the 30 April for ten weeks with Dale Hartin and has been well received by clients. The gentle exercise is just what the doctor ordered.

Day Centres

Those attending Warialda CHSP Centre on Monday, Fridays and Delungra Wednesdays are grateful for the service they receive. Everyone enjoys their time socialising with each other and enjoying morning tea and a two-course meal as well as playing fifteen games of bingo. Delungra building repairs have now been fully completed.

Food Service

Every week our Meals on Wheels client numbers are going up and there is always positive feedback from clients. Meals supplied five days a week and frozen meals if needed over the weekend supplied by Naroo.

Warialda/Delungra CHSP April 2025 Report		
	Delungra	Warialda
Day Centre		
Total Active Clients	17	89
Clients Receiving Service	13	52
Total Meals	54	135
Hours Clients Receive in Centre	164	385
Social Support		
Number of Clients	13	52
Individual Hours	10	104
Group Hours	154	281
Total Hours Received	164	385
Food Service – Meals on Wheels		
Clients	0	13
Meals	0	207
Individual Hours (MOW)	0	59
Transport		
Number of Clients	1	13
Number of Trips	6	94
Access Bus to Inverell		
Number of Clients	0	9
Number of Trips	0	2
Volunteers		

Number of Volunteers – April 2025	1	35
Monthly Volunteer Hours	16	549

Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) – Bingara

Volunteers

Bingara CHSP was supported by 8 volunteers with 342 hours of service during the month of April. These hours included out of town transport, local transport of Meals on Wheels and volunteers for the Group Social Support morning tea and lunch that is held on Tuesdays.

The hours that the volunteers work are determined by the time spent with clients by way of transportation, group social support and individual social support.

Transport and Trips

A busy time for out of town transport with 124 trips which was servicing 33 clients. There have been numerous bookings for the next couple of months and they continue to come in.

The Access Bus only made the one trip to Inverell in April due to the public holidays during Easter and ANZAC Day.

Our volunteers carry out regular maintenance checks on all the vehicles regularly as well as routine cleaning after each trip.

Social Support

Group Social Support continues with ladies enjoying every Tuesday for morning tea and lunch all while knitting squares for the “Wrapped for Love” charity.

The local transport has been very busy over April with clients attending local medical appointments as well as some shopping.

Food Service

There has been a slight increase in Meals on Wheels during April with 6 clients receiving a lunch time meal.

Meals on Wheels is coordinated by the Bingara CHSP staff and the meals are provided by the Bingara MPS.

Bingara CHSP April 2025 Report	
	Bingara
Day Centre	
Total Active Clients	14

Clients Receiving Service	9
Total Meals	35
Hours Clients Receive in Centre	175
Social Support	
Number of Clients	38
Individual Hours	61
Group Hours	175
Total Hours Received	236
Food Service – Meals on Wheels	
Clients	7
Meals	99
Transport	
Number of Clients	33
Number of Trips	124
Access Bus to Inverell	
Number of Clients	7
Number of Trips	1
Volunteers	
Number of Volunteers - April 2025	8
Monthly Volunteer Hours	342

SOCIAL SERVICES

Bingara Neighbourhood Centre

Funding Body – NSW Department of Communities and Justice

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

The Bingara Sporting Club were successful in their application for funding through Golf NSW and have completed the required works on the golf course. The club was assisted with the application and acquittal process.



Successful grants enable work on golf course

S355 Committee

The Bingara Community Op Shop

April has been a highly successful month for the Bingara Community Op-Shop, marked by increased customer traffic and strong community engagement, particularly during the Country Music Festival and Easter weekend.

Shop Activity

The shop experienced a significant rise in foot traffic due to the influx of out-of-town visitors as well as strong support from local customers.

The shop was open on Easter Monday, which proved to be a worthwhile decision given the high customer turnout.

Donations continue to arrive in generous quantities, helping to maintain well-stocked shelves and a diverse range of items for sale.

Community Pantry

The pantry continues to operate effectively and is providing valuable support to community members.

No major issues or shortages have been reported.

Facilities and Improvements

The carpet on the back veranda has been removed and replaced with artificial grass. This has improved both safety and accessibility for customers.

A working bee is being planned to revamp the back gardens. This activity will take place when the weather becomes cooler to ensure comfortable working conditions for volunteers.

Next Steps

- Coordinate and schedule the working bee for the garden upgrade.
- Continue to monitor donation levels and shop activity.
- Share photographs of recent updates and improvements in the next communication.



A well stocked front window display

Centrelink

Funding body – Services Australia

The Centrelink Agent has returned to work after sustaining an injury outside of work hours and the service is up and running smoothly. The quarterly assessment of the service was carried out by Services Australia and provided very positive feedback.

Youth Services

Funding body – NSW Department of Communities and Justice

Gwydir Willoughby Youth Exchange

Organisation for the 2025 Youth Exchange Program is advancing well, with the itinerary shaping into an engaging and enjoyable experience for participants.

Application Process

- Program applications are scheduled to be released in the coming weeks.
- A strong applicant turnout is anticipated, supported by the quality of the proposed itinerary.

Gwydir Itinerary

In consultation with Mayor Tiffany Galvin, most of the Gwydir itinerary will be made available for Councillors to attend. This offers valuable opportunities for Councillor engagement and participation in program events.

Willoughby Council Participation

Willoughby Council has confirmed five students will participate in the 2025 exchange. Planning for the Willoughby itinerary is in progress, with further details to be finalised and communicated shortly.

Next Steps

- Finalise and publish Youth Exchange application materials.

- Continue development of itineraries for both exchange locations.

Supported Playgroup Development Worker

Funding body – NSW Department of Communities and Justice Funding body – NSW Department of Communities and Justice

Warialda Toy Library	Mar 2025	April 2025
Total daily attendance counts for children, adults (calculating each child, each day over the month –total points of contact).	70	52
Full borrowing memberships (new and/or renew)	0	0
Non borrowing memberships (new and/or renew)	0	0
Casual borrowing memberships (new and/or renew)	0	0
Commemorative Birth Certificate applications received	0	0
Toys returned	3	6
Toys borrowed	0	2
Groups using the service (FDC carer, Pharmacy)	0	0
Monday group morning session x 2	0	0
Tuesday group morning session x 2	0	7
Wednesday group morning session x 4	16	3
Thursday group morning session x 4	41	29
Friday group morning session x 4	13	16

Community Engagement

On 1 April 2025, the Warialda Toy Library participated in a joint excursion with Warialda Preschool to Naroo Aged Hostel in Warialda. The visit formed part of the Easter celebrations with the elderly residents. Families and children enjoyed story time and sang along with the preschool group, contributing to a joyful and meaningful intergenerational experience.



Joint visit to Naroo Aged Hostel

Attendance

Attendance numbers were lower during April due to the school holidays and multiple public holidays with many families away during this period.

Activities

Throughout the month, families engaged in a range of creative and developmental activities including:

- Easter-themed crafts
- Sensory play
- Painting and construction
- Social play and interaction

These sessions continue to support early childhood development and community bonding.

Donations and Resources

The Toy Library received generous donations from a local family, including a foam ball pit and several ride-on toys, enhancing the play environment.

Families have expressed very positive feedback regarding the new tables and chairs.

The restored functionality of the air conditioning and heating system has significantly improved the comfort and usability of the space.



Warialda Toy Library

Bingara Toy Library

Funding body- NSW Department of Communities and Justice and NSW Department of Education - Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate

Particulars	March 2025	April 2025
Total daily attendance count for children, (calculating each child, each day over the month –total points of contact).	96	59
Full borrowing memberships (new and/or renew)	1	0
Non borrowing memberships (new and/or renew)	1	1
Casual borrowing memberships (new and/or renew)	0	0
Commemorative Birth Certificate – Voucher memberships	0	1
Toys returned	1	1
Toys borrowed	3	0
Children/Group using the service (FDC carer, pharmacy)	4	0
Monday group morning session x 5	19	2
Tuesday group morning session x 4	17	13
Wednesday group morning session x 3	21	34
KSK group afternoon session x 9	50	10

April was a quieter month for Bingara Playgroup and Kool Skool due to school and public holidays falling mid-month. Additionally, service closures were required on several days due to staff illness and annual leave. Despite this, families were still supported through meaningful engagement and activities.

Playgroup Update

Attendance and Membership

Attendance dropped due to holidays and closures, but engagement remained strong.

We welcomed a few new families, bringing our membership totals to:

- 3 Full Members
- 5 Casual Members
- 13 Non-Members
- 6 Birth Certificate Members
-

New mums applying for commemorative birth certificates were signed up early to access vouchers and services ahead of the official ceremony.

Activities Delivered

- Easter and Mother's Day crafts
- Visit to the Public Library
- Sensory play (playdough and shaving foam)
- Story time and nursery rhymes
- Puzzles, bubbles, and free floor play



Easter and Mother's Day craft

Family Support

A few mums were provided with helpful information regarding parenting concerns they raised.

Peer sharing from other families was embraced, showcasing the supportive nature of the group.

Communication

Notices regarding closures, May's program offerings, and community news were sent via email and posted on Facebook.

Kool Skool Program Update

Attendance

Start of Term 2 was delayed due to pupil-free days and staff leave. Families were notified via email and SMS.

Activities This Month

- Biscuit decorating
- Cars, LEGO, puzzles, and colouring
- Headbands game, Simon Says, whiteboard drawing
- Mother's Day crafts
- Movie afternoon on the final day of the month

Upcoming Plans

- **20 May 2025**– Ambulance Service presentation
- **21 May 2025** – Visit to the Public Library for Simultaneous Storytime
- **4 June 2025** – Bingara Preschool visit
- **Monthly** – Inverell Rural Outreach visits
- **24 June 2025** – Speech Therapist presentation

Other Updates

Staff have been steadily clearing old records, with ongoing shredding of archived paperwork from the past ten years.


Bingara Preschool

Funding Body – NSW Department of Education - Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate

Days	April 2025
Monday	19
Tuesday	19
Wednesday	22
Thursday	24
Friday	11

Bingara Library Visit

On Tuesday the 2 April 2025, the Bingara Library Facilitator and the Library's School Based Trainee visited the Bingara Preschool. The Library Facilitator read a range of stories from the local library to the children before dancing along to the Hokey Pokey. To finish off their visit, the Library School Based Trainee had prepared a craft experience for the children. The children were able to make their own paper Easter basket.

 **EYLF 5.4: The children listen and respond to sounds and patterns in speech, stories and rhyme.**



NSW Fire & Rescue Visit

On Monday the 7 April 2025, the Bingara Preschool welcomed some local firefighters from the NSW Fire & Rescue team. The firefighters talked to the preschool children about what to do in an emergency, including how to get down low and go, go, go. The firefighters showed the children their safety clothing and their safety resources. The children then got to go out into the front yard and look in and around the Bingara Fire truck. The children got to sit up in the truck and talk in the microphone. Lastly the children got to use the firehose, by spraying the water at some witch's hats.

✧ **EYLF 3.3 - At Bingara Preschool the children learn about personal safety and what to do in an emergency.**



Bingara NSW Fire and Rescue team

Touriandi Visit

On Tuesday the 8 April 2025, the preschool children created their Easter headbands, ready for their visitors later in the day. The service welcomed the staff and residents from Touriandi which is the local aged care facility in Bingara. Inside, the children performed two Easter dances for the visitors before parading their Easter headbands outside on the deck. The residents, staff, children and Educators explored and played out in the backyard. Before the visitors from Touriandi departed, they gave each of the children an Easter egg. The children and Educators thanked the visitors and wished the staff and residents of Touriandi a very Happy Easter.

✧ **NQS 6.2.3: The service builds relationships and engages with its community.**



A special visit from the residents at Touriandi

Exploring Rainbows

The children have shown a deep interest in learning about rainbows during the month of April. The children and the Educators having been exploring what colours are in a rainbow, how rainbows are made and have even tried to make their own rainbows. A variety of experiences have been facilitated, with the focus being on the colour, depth and science of a rainbow.

✧ **EYLF 4.2: The children explore their environment through asking questions, experimenting, and investigating.**



Making rainbows!

Educational Leader

The Educational Leader has supported another Educator with mentoring to assist in the completion of a unit assessment for the Diploma of Early Education and Care. The Educational Leader has supported one of the School Based Trainees with the induction process to the International Child Care College learner portal. Following this meeting the Educational Leader was able to assist the School Based Trainee with some assessment support.

✦ **EYLF Principle: Collaborative leadership and teamwork.**

Tharawonga Mobile Resource Unit

Funding body – Australian Government Department of Education

Days and Venues	April 2025
Monday at Croppa Creek	12 (0 extra casual places)
Tuesday at North Star	15 (2 extra casual places)
Wednesday at Yallaroi	16 (0 extra casual places)
Thursday at Yetman	7 (0 extra casual places)
Friday at Warialda	11 (0 extra casual places)

Overview

Due to the school holiday period, Tharawonga operated for only the first two weeks of April. Despite the shorter timeframe, the service continued to provide engaging learning experiences and maintained strong community partnerships.

Special Events

This month, Tharawonga celebrated Easter with a variety of engaging and festive activities. These experiences were thoughtfully planned to promote creativity, excitement, and a sense of celebration among the children.

Community Partnerships

Tharawonga strengthened community connections by participating in the following local school events:

North Star School - Easter Hat Parade, Special Celebration and students reading in small groups to the Preschoolers.

Yetman School - Easter Hat Parade and Special Celebration

Warialda - watching the school children participate in their annual colour run and being involved in decorating baked goods for Easter.

These events provided valuable opportunities for the children to engage with the wider community and celebrate together.

Staff Training and Development

Educators from the Day Care team attended a Peak Training webinar "*Me Do It Too! Nurturing Infant and Toddler Development Through Play.*" The session emphasised the importance of play in early development, particularly during the critical first three years of life.

Refresher courses in CPR and First Aid were completed by educators requiring updates, facilitated by Anne East through Allen's Training.

Family Updates

Two families at the Friday venue have informed the service that their children will be ceasing enrolment at Tharawonga following Week 1 of Term 2. These changes are scheduled to take effect in May. The service would like to start advertising for enrolments in the Warialda community for the service we are providing on Friday's. The school is willing to help by putting information in their newsletter and other forms of communication to the community.

Parent fundraising committee

The committee held an AGM meeting on Tuesday 8 April 2025. Due to a lack of attendance and other parents being available the formed committee is the same as the 2024 year.

The committee have taken on the responsibility for ordering the toy wish list that was put forward.

School Transition

The educators have programmed learning experiences that are continuing to promote the children's concentration, problem solving and focusing on activities such as a recycling game that incorporates where to donate items and a sequence puzzle set of what comes next.

Croppa Creek

This term with new enrolments commencing the service will have 15 enrolments. This will mean that we are at capacity for two-year-olds until more children turn 3 years old. The Service has created a waiting list of two-year-old enquires for enrolments with the service.

Gross Motor Development

The focus for this month has been on promoting and refining the children's gross motor skills through a range of engaging physical activities. Children actively participated in kicking soccer balls into nets, playing t-ball, and navigating climbing frames as part of the obstacle course setup. This focus was further extended by the children's own interest in playing "*What's the Time, Mr Wolf?*", which encouraged movement, coordination, and social interaction in a group setting.

Fine Motor Skill Development

Children also continued to strengthen their fine motor skills through a variety of hands-on experiences. These included drawing on whiteboards, constructing with wooden blocks alongside dinosaur figures, completing puzzles, and using foam boards with pegs. These activities supported hand-eye coordination, concentration, and dexterity in a playful and developmentally appropriate way.

✧ **Outcome 3.2 – Provide a wide range of materials to resource children's fine and gross motor skills.**

North Star

This term will see an increase in enrolments at the venue with families requesting additional days for their children who are attending formal schooling in 2026. This will see enrolments for the venue increase to 17 each Tuesday.

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✧ **Outcome 3.2 – Participate in physical play.**



Easter Hat Parade

Yallaroi

The first week of the month for this venue had to be cancelled in line with the services wet weather policy due to flooding conditions in the area.

Science and Discovery

This month, the children engaged in a hands-on science experiment titled “*Fizzy Eggs*”. Educators prepared Easter-themed shapes by freezing them and placing them into bowls. The children then used eye droppers to apply vinegar onto the frozen shapes, observing with fascination as a chemical reaction caused the shapes to fizz and bubble. This activity supported early scientific thinking and sensory exploration.

Child-Led Play and Imaginative Learning

In the sandpit area, children took the lead in their own learning through imaginative play. With dinosaur figures, they dug holes to bury them, setting up playful scenarios where the dinosaurs could be “discovered” by others. This spontaneous activity encouraged creativity, social collaboration, and problem-solving skills.

Physical Development and Gross Motor Skills

An obstacle course incorporating a slide, hoops, and hurdles was programmed to promote physical activity and strengthen gross motor skills. Children participated enthusiastically, developing coordination, balance, and confidence through active play.

✦ Outcome 4.1 – Use play to investigate, experiment and explore ideas.



Fizzy eggs

Yetman

The first week of the month for this venue had to be cancelled in line with the services wet weather policy due to flooding conditions in the area.

Music and Movement

Children participated in tapping stick songs to develop their understanding of rhythm, beat, following instructions and working cooperatively in small groups.

Mathematical Concepts

Wooden cutting fruits were used to explore mathematical ideas such as halving and part-whole relationships through hands-on, practical experiences.

Dramatic Play

A tea set was introduced to support imaginative role-play, encouraging language development, social skills, and collaborative play.

Fine Motor and Spatial Skills

Children engaged in stacking activities using colourful pebbles, promoting fine motor control, hand-eye coordination, creativity, and spatial awareness.

✧ Outcome 5.1 – Use language to communicate thinking about quantities, and to explain mathematical ideas.



Music and movement

Warialda

Social Experience

This month, the children were provided with the opportunity to participate in a picnic under the shade for morning tea. This experience offered a unique and enjoyable change from routine, fostering social interaction, turn-taking, and a sense of community in a relaxed outdoor setting.

Child-Led Play and Creative Exploration

In the sandpit, children explored their interests by making sand angels and mermaid tails with educators supporting and engaging in the experience alongside them. This activity, instigated by the children, encouraged imaginative thinking, sensory exploration and collaboration.

Sensory Exploration and Fine Motor Development

Children were introduced to a new sensory experience through dirt play dough, an activity initiated by an educator seeking to expand learning opportunities. Children used trucks to get "bogged" and dug holes in the play dough, demonstrating creativity, problem-solving, and strengthening fine motor skills in the process.

✦ Outcome 4.1 – Follow and extend their own interests with enthusiasm, energy and concentration.



Story time

Tharawonga Mobile Resource Unit - Day Care

Funding body – Australian Government Department of Education

Days and Venues	April 2025
Monday at Warialda	7 (0 extra casual places)
Tuesday at Warialda	6 (0 extra casual places)
Wednesday at Warialda (Week 1)	7 (0 extra casual places)
Wednesday at Bingara (Week 2)	9 (extra casual places)
Thursday at Bingara	9 (1 extra casual places)
Friday at Bingara	8 (0 extra casual places)

Warialda – Monthly Summary

Throughout April, children at Warialda actively participated in a variety of planned and spontaneous experiences designed to support development across multiple learning areas. Educators created opportunities that fostered creativity, physical growth, early literacy and sensory exploration.

Highlights & Key Activities

Creative Development – Clear Easel Painting

A major highlight this month was the introduction of painting on a large clear easel. Children responded with excitement and creativity, exploring colour mixing, brush techniques and collaborative art on a transparent surface. This provided a unique sensory and visual experience that enhanced both fine motor skills and self-expression.

Literacy & Storytime

Storytime continued to be a core part of the daily program. Children showed increasing enthusiasm for books, selecting favourites and gathering for group storytelling. This interest supports imagination, vocabulary development and early literacy foundations.

Infant Development – Tummy Time

For younger children, educators prioritised tummy time, tailored to individual developmental stages. This supported muscle strengthening, sensory awareness, and early movement skills.

Music & Movement

Children engaged in interactive music sessions featuring songs like “Hop Little Bunnies”, “Rock-a-bye Baby” and activities using tapping sticks. These experiences encouraged rhythm awareness, coordination, and social interaction in a joyful group setting.

Outdoor & Nature Play

With pleasant weather, children enjoyed active outdoor play including riding bikes, trampoline use and navigating the bike ramp all while promoting gross motor skills and confidence. Water play and exploration of the fishpond encouraged sensory exploration and curiosity about nature.

Summary

April at Warialda was filled with vibrant, hands-on learning experiences. Educators remain committed to fostering growth through engaging and age-appropriate activities and are excited to build on these interests moving forward.



Developing gross motor skills

Bingara – Monthly Summary

The Bingara learning environment provided a rich and meaningful play-based program throughout April. Activities were carefully planned to support developmental milestones, imaginative thinking, and social-emotional learning.

Highlights & Key Activities

Outdoor Play & Sensory Exploration

Outdoor learning remained central, with sandpit play enhanced by the addition of water. Children explored building towers and hiding farm animals, promoting problem-solving and imaginative play.

A sensory tub with cornflour, water, and food colouring was introduced to replicate a muddy play environment, further inspired by recent rainy weather. Farm animals added context and theme, enriching sensory exploration and language development.

Creative Arts – Sponge Painting

Children engaged in sponge painting activities that encouraged exploration of colour and texture. This open-ended art experience supported creativity, fine motor skills, and self-expression.

Music, Movement & Social Skills

Daily music sessions featuring “*Open Shut Them*” and “*Little Peter Rabbit*” were enthusiastically received. These activities supported rhythm, coordination, and group participation.

Educators also focused on nurturing social development through cooperative play. Children practiced turn-taking and communication on slides and climbing frames, developing important interpersonal skills like patience and fairness.

Summary

April at Bingara was marked by dynamic, child-led learning experiences. The team will continue to build on the children’s emerging interests and developmental needs in the coming months.

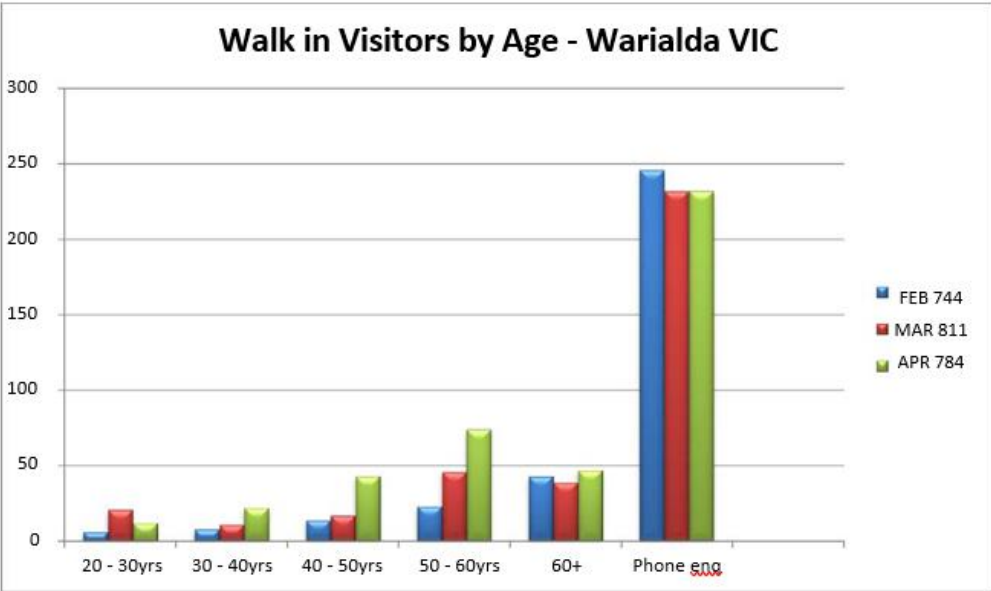
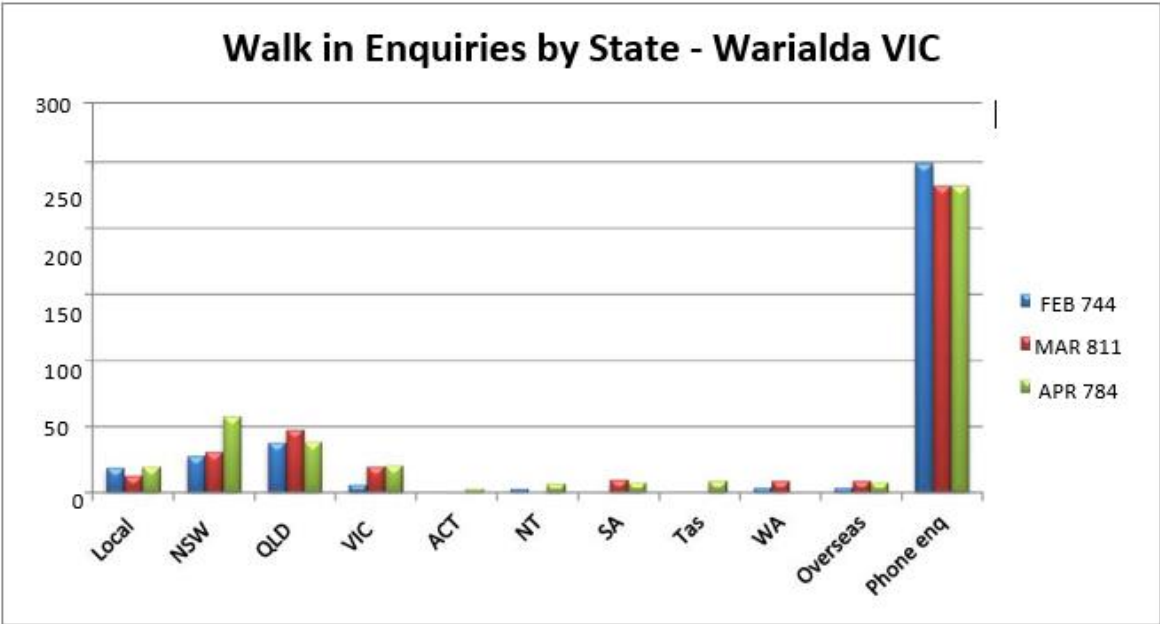


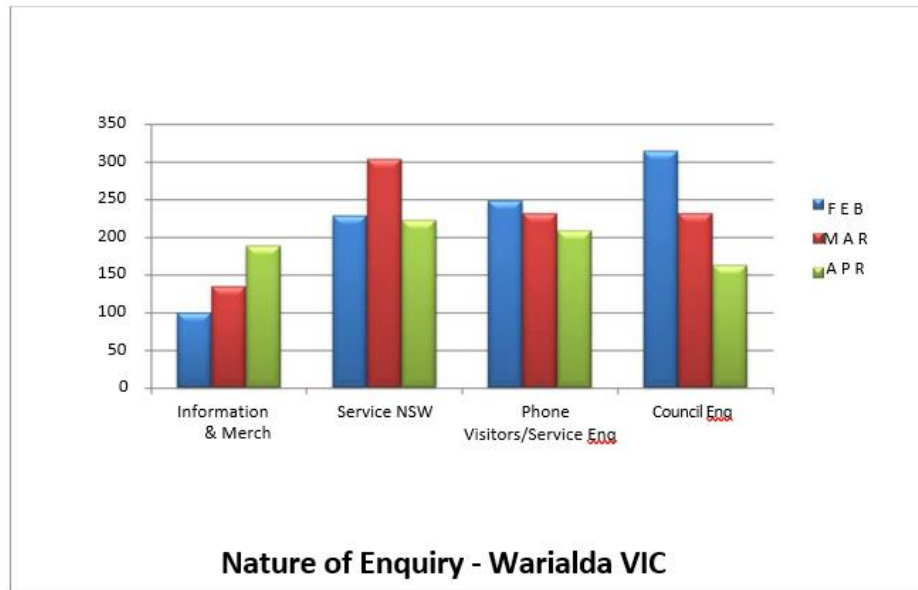
*Singing along***COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING AND TOURISM, AND ROXY THEATRE COMPLEX****Communications**Tourism*Warialda Visitor Information Centre*

February 2025		March 2025		April 2025	
Opening Hours	114	Opening Hours	150	Opening Hours	133
Volunteering Hours	8	Volunteering Hours	7	Volunteering Hours	5

Income	Feb 25	Mar 25	April 25
Merchandise Sales	\$589.30	\$766.57	\$1203.31
Total Monthly Income	\$589.30	\$766.57	\$1203.31

Visitors at Warialda VIC	Feb	Mar	April
Visitors	100	135	189
Service NSW	229	304	223
Council	166	140	163
Phone Enquiries	249	232	209
Total	744	811	784





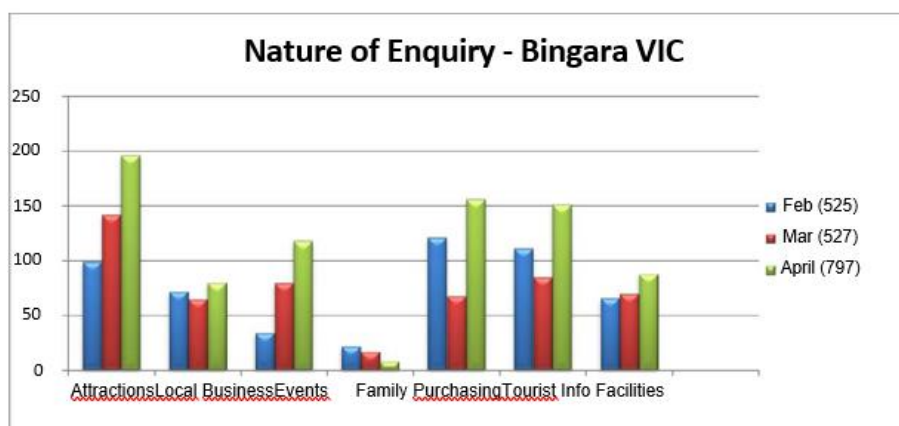
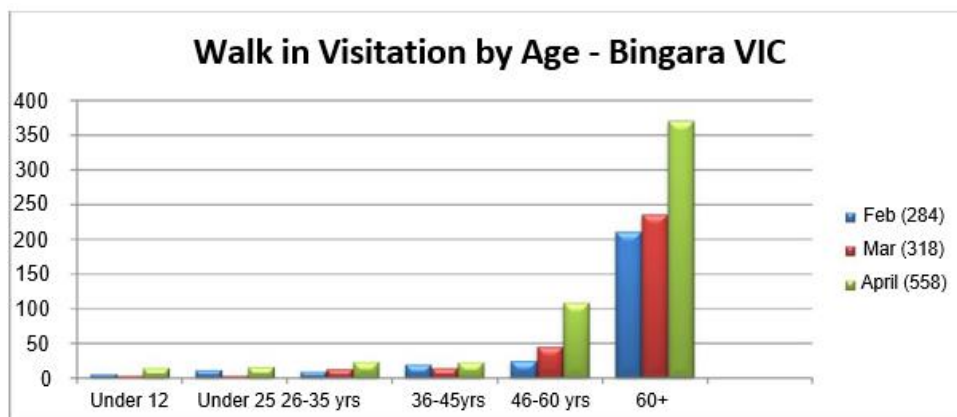
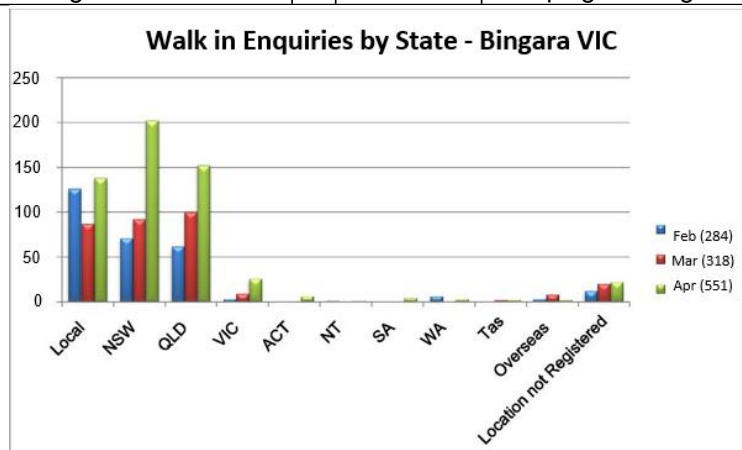
Bingara Visitor Information Centre

February 2025		March 2025		April 2025	
Opening Hours	130	Opening Hours	136.5	Opening Hours	139
Volunteering Hours	29.5	Volunteering Hours	32.5	Volunteering Hours	28.5

Income	Feb 2025	Mar 2025	April 25
Merchandise Sales	\$610.50	\$383.50	\$914.80
Total Merchandise Sales	\$610.50	\$383.50	\$914.80
Roxy Tour Income	\$190.00	\$70.00	\$120.00
Visitors at Bingara VIC	392	285	558

COMMENTS: - APRIL 2025			
TOURISM			
Tourism Visitation number		558	Up on previous month
Merchandise Sales income	\$	914.80	Up on previous month
Roxy Tour income	\$	120.00	Up on previous month
CAMPING DONATIONS			
Camping Donations - collected by Council rangers and from individuals - Received by the VIC:-	\$	338.30	A little down on previous month
TLC BUNKHOUSE - ONLY			
TLC Bunkhouse Hire Receipted at VIC	\$	180.00	Jenny Beesly – 1 bunkhouse room x 2 nights
ROXY CONFERENCE ROOM HIRE or SMALL MEETING ROOM HIRE			
Roxy Conference Room Hire Receipted at VIC	\$	Nil	Roxy Conference Room – currently off limits
Roxy Conference Room Hire Invoice requests to Finance	\$	NIL	Roxy Conference Room – currently off limits
COMMUNITY GROUP EVENTS			
Community Groups - ticketing/booking site setup			NWTC – Funny Business at the Roxy

Community Groups - ticketing sales and assistance ON - LINE via the Visitor Information Centre	\$	1010.00	NWTC – Funny Business at the Roxy
Community Groups – ticketing sales via Online at Trybooking	\$	2965.00	NWTC – Funny Business at the Roxy
Community Groups - ticketing sales and assistance ON - LINE via the Visitor Information Centre	\$	238.00	RSL Country Music Festival – Showground camping bookings
Community Groups - ticketing sales via Online at Trybooking	\$	110.00	RSL Country Music Festival – Showground camping bookings



CUSTOMER SERVICE REQUESTS (CRMs)

CRMs carried forward from:

Department	Outstanding as at 25 March 2025	Completed since 25 March 2025	Outstanding as at 9 May 2025
Technical Services	34	15	19
Environment and Sustainability	43	32	11
Town Utilities	2	0	2
Urban Infrastructure	29	16	13
Building Services	17	14	3
Total Outstanding	125	77	48

CRM's –25 March to 9 May 2025:

Department	Received 25 Mar to 9 May 2025	Completed 25 Mar to 9 May 2025	Outstanding as at 9 May 2025
Technical Services	29	8	21
Environment and Sustainability	50	20	30
Town Utilities	21	7	14
Urban Infrastructure	37	2	35
Building Services	8	0	8
Executive & Community Assets	4	1	3
Organisation and Community Services	0	0	0
Totals	149	38	111

CRMs received since 25 March 2025 and still outstanding as at 9 May 2025:

Department	Open
Technical Services	40
Environment and Sustainability	41
Town Utilities	16
Urban Infrastructure	48
Building Services	11
Executive and Community Assets	3
Organisation and Community Services	0
Total	159

CONSULTATION

Consultation has occurred within the Organisation and Community Development Directorate.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Policy implications are those relating to the 2024/2025 Operational Plan and the Policies of Gwydir Shire Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The activities carried out by the Organisation and Community Services Department are in line with the 2024/2025 Operational Plan.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The activities undertaken by the Organisation and Community Services Department regarding social and environmental factors are targeted in line with the 2024/2025 Operational Plan.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be received.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

7.4 Technical Services Report

File Reference:	NA
Goal:	5. Organisational management
Outcome:	2.1 Our economy is growing and supported
Strategy:	2.1.1 Plan for and develop the right assets and infrastructure
Author:	Alexander Eddy, Director of Engineering Services

STAFF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST Nil

IN BRIEF/SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

This report is for reception

TABLED ITEMS Nil

BACKGROUND

The Monthly Technical Services report has been identified by Council as the process of reporting the activities carried out monthly by the Technical Services Department. This report is for the month of April 2025.

COMMENT

Warialda CBD Park

Work continues at the Warialda CBD Park with the installation of the new fence along the eastern boundary completed. The retaining wall along the fence with Telstra is now completed.

Electrical cabling has been completed and ready for connection to outlets.

The site is level, and concreter has commenced delivery of materials in preparation for concrete works. Foundation works for the amenities building have commenced.



Warialda CBD Park

Wearnes Road Causeways

The Wearnes Road sealing project, funded under the NSW Government's Fixing Local Roads Program is complete. In April, scour protection of drains was undertaken, causeway approaches constructed and sealed, and advisory signage erected. Historically, Wearnes Road has been a difficult road to maintain within the community's expectations due to its remote location and high susceptibility to scouring and washouts following rain. With the project complete, it is expected that Council's ongoing maintenance effort on the road will be significantly diminished while providing a vastly increased level of service.



Wearnes Road

IB Bore Road

Except for linemarking, crews have completed works for Moree Plains Shire Council on the final 2km of the IB Bore Road. Moree Plains secured funding under the NSW Governments Fixing Local Roads Program. Council carried out construction works on behalf of Moree Plains as private works. Now complete, there is a complete sealed link from the Newell Highway to North Star, through to the Inverell Shire Council boundary on Getta Getta Road. The project was completed within budget and on time.



IB Bore Road

Croppa Creek Road Rehabilitation

In March, contractors completed 20km of stabilisation works on Croppa Creek Road. These works were a combination of Disaster Recover Funding Arrangement (DRFA) works and Fixing Country Roads works. Work will continue on the road for the remainder of 2025. Many sections of road stabilised in March have been finished with a sacrificial seal, which will be incorporated into the base course pavement layer as works continue.



Croppa Creek Road

Maintenance

General maintenance continues on Regional and State roads, including vegetation control, slashing, whipper snipping and spraying of guideposts and guard rails and sign maintenance.

Seal maintenance is ongoing on all State, Regional and Local Roads as potholes continue to develop.

All parks and gardens continue to be maintained. Mowing, weed control, irrigation, hedging, and trimming are routinely undertaken as well as daily cleaning of the public toilets. Staff continue to maintain our sporting fields and facilities for use by various sporting groups and schools, The sporting fields have been recently fertilised and are responding well with the recent rain.

Maintenance Grading and Resheeting

During April maintenance grading or resheeting was carried out on the following roads

- Baroma Road
- Tucka Tucka Road
- Mungle Road
- Eulourie Road
- Oregon Road
- Trevallyn Road
- Bereen Road
- Blue Nobby

Slashing

During April slashing was carried out on the following roads

- Air Strip Road
- Gragin Road
- Warialda Road
- North Star Road
- Killarney Gap Road
- Upper Horton Road
- Cobbadah Road



Oregon Road Maintenance Grade with Polycom Addition

Asset Protection Zone Maintenance

Regular slashing work is being undertaken on APZ's in Bingara, Coolatai and Warialda with the last round of work programmed for May 2025.

Roads Maintenance Council Contract – Works Orders issued by TfNSW

All Work Orders issued by Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) are quality assurance schedule of rates projects carried out by Council staff under the Roads Maintenance Council Contract with TfNSW.

With the cold weather now starting to roll in, the Bitumen Resurfacing Program on both MR63 Fossickers Way and HW12 Gwydir Highway was completed just in time, in early April, including remedial works from stripped bitumen seals that were undertaken last year. Line marking for these newly sealed segments has been scheduled with TfNSW line marking crews for mid-June. Wendouree pavement works are now coming to an end with all DGB20 roadbase material imported and compacted. Density compaction tests are now being undertaken by TfNSW soil testing crews whilst the construction team continue with final trimming and preparing the pavement for a primerseal, scheduled for mid-May. Delays have occurred again this month due to wet weather and resourcing availability to finalise the importation of roadbase. Once the sealing of the pavement has taken place, guardrail contractors will be used for the installation of new guardrail and end terminals. Disestablishment of the site is scheduled for mid-late May. All other ordered works with TfNSW have now been completed and claims finalised.

Routine maintenance continues each week undertaking inspections, rest area services, vegetation control, guardrail repairs and bitumen repairs.



Final Trimming Pavement Works being Undertaken on the Wendouree Rehabilitation Project.

Water and Sewer

Water and Sewerage operators carry out routine operational tasks such as water testing, grounds maintenance at the water treatment plants, reservoirs, both sewerage treatment plants, sewer pump stations, Warialda truck wash and truck wash ponds.

Reactive maintenance includes service line repairs, water main breaks and sewer blockages. All tasks are recorded and entered into a central database. The database is used to identify common failure areas enabling planning for repairs as well as being used for asset condition rating which is used to correlate annual performance reports for State Government.

Gravesend Boil Water Alert

As a precaution Council placed Gravesend Water Supply on a Boil Water Alert on 31st March 2025, due to the turbidity of the Gwydir River and subsequent turbidity in the reticulation system, which has the potential to make drinking water in Gravesend unsafe.

The boil water alert was lifted on Wednesday 16th April 2025.

April 2025 Water and Sewer Works Summary

Classification	Total
Meter Replacement	2
New Service Line	
Service Line Repairs	15
Sewer Block	6
New Sewer Connection	
New Water Connection	
Main Break	3
Equipment Repairs	3
Sewer overflows – EPA self reports	2

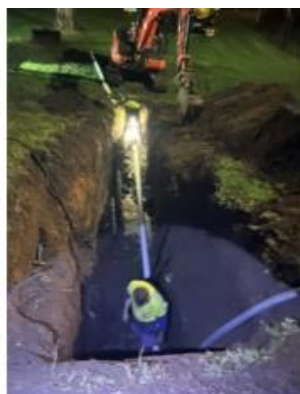
Customer Request Response	3
Other Work	51
Total	85

Other work was undertaken at the following locations

- Bingara Golf Course
- Holden Street units
- Saleyards toilets
- Bingara Showground
- Warialda Recreation Ground
- Captain Cook Park
- Bingara Toy Library
- Railway Park North Star
- Off leash dog park Bingara
- Community College Warialda
- The Living Classroom
- Warialda Koala Park
- Ridley Street, Herbert Street and Bombelli Street Bingara
- Warialda airstrip amenities
- Warialda truckwash
- Bingara Medical Centre
- Warialda CBD Greenspace



Under-bored Service Lines in Bombelli Street



Night Watermain Repair in Cunningham Park

Warialda Truck Wash

The truck wash facility was used by 185 trucks during April with an average wash down time of 57 minutes and total water used was 878kL. The estimated income for the reporting period of March is \$13,227.00 less monitoring fees and expenses.

Grants Projects

Name	Funding Program	Status	Funding Acquittal
Batterham Lookout	Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Phase 1	In Progress Additional drainage work completed in March	Final claim to be submitted
Upper Horton Amenities Building	Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Phase 3	Complete	Final claim to be submitted
Bingara Showground Camp draft arena Upgrade	Stronger Country Communities Rd 5	Complete	Final claim to be submitted
CWA Park Playground Upgrade	Stronger Country Communities Rd 5	Complete	To be submitted
Warialda Recreation Ground landscaping	Stronger Country Communities Rd 5	In Progress Sandstone blocks have been installed on site. Irrigation and turf to be installed in May	



Warialda Recreation Ground Landscaping

Bingara Showground

Bingara showground was used for camping in conjunction with the Bingara RSL Club Country Music Festival. The camping generated an income of \$3,545.64 for the showground.



Bingara Showground Camping Area

Plant

A total of 109 items were registered with a common expiry registration date of 1st May 2025. A total of 56 items were required to have inspections at authorised inspection stations in either Warialda or Bingara.

Purchases

- 2 x 7x 4 - Box trailers for sign maintenance
- 60 tonne workshop press



Workshop Press

Workshops and Depots

Workshop Services and Jobs	Feb	Mar	Apr
Total number of services in Workshops	23	21	19
Total number of repairs in Workshops	137	175	126

Major repairs and maintenance undertaken in the workshops during April included:

P1946 Ute - brake repairs

P1475 Rubber-tired roller – transmission repairs



P1684 Compactor – replace starter solenoid

P1690 Grader – hydraulic repairs to ripper controls

P1719 Truck - air conditioner repairs

P1687 Truck – Engine Control module fault - exhaust brakes repairs

P1663 Rock crusher - hard face anvils

P1884 Pole saw – replace driveshaft

P1995 Mower - replace drive belt

P1884 CHSP Bus – replace side door step

P1446 Jet patcher – electrical repairs

P1905 - Mower fit new safety switch fit new starter motor

P2038 Truck - fit radiator mounting bush

P1718 Truck - PTO control repairs

P1718 Truck – install new roll over trap

P1022 Ute – install new door and ignition barrel

P1915 Skid steer - track repairs

P2005 Mower – install new deck spindle and isolation switch

P1467 Excavator – hydraulic repairs

P1902 Ute - install new lower control arm

P1655 Ute – replace glow plugs and front shocks

CONCLUSION

The activities carried out by the Technical Services Department are in line with the 2024/25 Management Plan and as otherwise directed.

CONSULTATION

Consultation is carried out within the Technical Services Department during the monthly Technical Services Team Meetings and with other relevant persons.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be received.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

7.5 Business and Strategy Report

File Reference: NA

Delivery Program

Goal: 3. An environmentally responsible shire

Outcome: 3.1 Our community understands and embraces environmental change

Strategy: 3.1.1 Encourage respectful planning, balanced growth and good design

Author: Justin Hellmuth, Director of Business and Strategy

STAFF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST Nil

IN BRIEF/SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

This report is for reception.

TABLED ITEMS Nil

BACKGROUND

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT Monthly Report April 2025

The following Development (D/A) and Development Modification (s4.55/s96) applications were approved during the month of April 2025.

No.	Property Description	Development/Work	\$	DA	s4.55
47/2024	227 Allan Cunningham Road Bingara	Install manufactured dwelling and construction of attached verandah	\$137,500	✓	
36/2024/2	8a Frazer Street Bingara	Modification of site for approved garage	N/A		✓
2025/4	58a Keera Street Bingara	Install manufactured dwelling	\$99,000	✓	
2025/6	77 Riddell Street Bingara	Shed	\$61,730	✓	

There were no Development (DA) or Development Modification (s4.55/s96) applications approved in the previous months and not previously reported to Council.

There were no Development Modification (s4.55/s96) application(s) that were returned to the applicant prior to lodgement (RET) or withdrawn (W) during the month of April 2025.

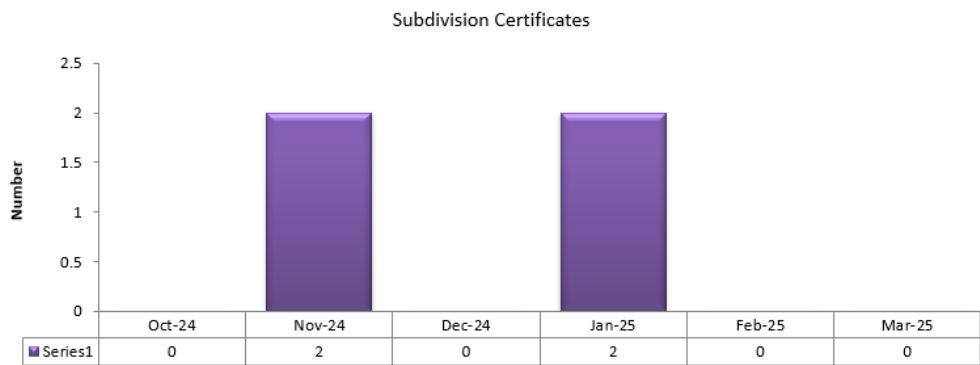
There were no Development (D/A) applications determined where there has been a variation in standards under clause 4.6 of the Gwydir Local Environmental Plan 2013 during the month of April 2025.

The following table shows all Development (D/A) and Development Modification (s4.55/s96) applications that were submitted on the NSW Planning Portal, that were lodged with Council after the payment of lodgement fees and those that remain unlodged with Council, during and prior to 28 April 2025 and remain undetermined as at the 30 April 2025:

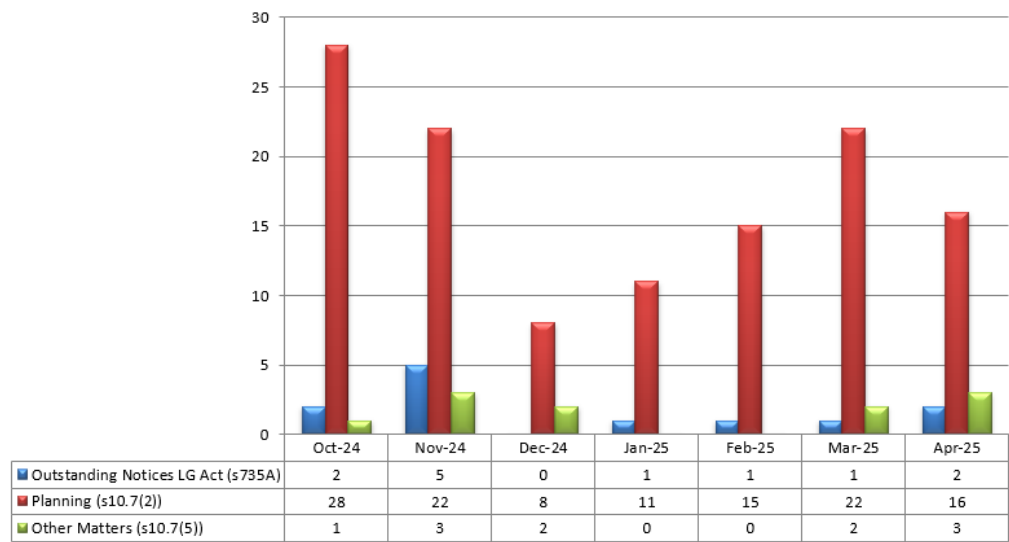
Application No.	Applicant	Owner	Property Address	Description of Work	Date Received	Date Lodged	Reason for time between submission & lodgement	Current Status	Type
35/2024	SMK Consultants Pty Ltd	L M Smith	16489 Gwydir Hwy Gravesend	Quarry	11/10/2024	19/12/2024	Request for additional information and awaiting payment of fees	Under assessment with Wakefield Planning and on Referral to TfNSW	DA
37/2024	N J Beel	N J Beel & L B Beel	1462 Oregon Rd Warialda	2 Lot Rural Subdivision	18/10/2024	15/11/2024	Request Additional Information prior to lodgement	Under assessment with Wakefield Planning	DA
41/2024	SMK Consultants Pty Ltd	D F Picton	5 East St Bingara	2 Lot Urban Subdivision	12/11/2024	18/11/2024	Invoice for fees issued and awaiting payment	Under assessment with Wakefield Planning	DA
46/2024	Coggs Contracting	Coggs Contracting	4114 Elcombe Rd Bingara	4-bay Garage with attached awning	6/12/2024	17/01/2025	Invoice for fees issued and awaiting payment	Under assessment with Wakefield Planning on hold pending removal of condition on Instrument 88B	DA
2025/5	Abode Building Design	D & B Newman	27 Geddes Street Warialda	alterations and additions to existing dwelling	18/02/2025	14/03/2025	Pre-lodgement review and payment of fees	Under assessment with Wakefield Planning	DA
2022/38/2	SMK Consultants Pty Ltd	Stahman Property Trust	1507 River Road Pallamallawa	Change of floor plan in accommodation building	20/02/2025	21/03/2025	Pre-lodgement review and payment of fees	Under assessment with Wakefield Planning	MOD
2025/10	Rod Davis - RDC Engineers	Doolin Farming Pty Ltd	2513 Getta Getta Rd North Star	Feedlot Expansion from 999 head to 3000 head	22/02/2025	8/04/2025	Pre-lodgement review	Designated Development on exhibition for 28 days from 15/04/2025 to 12/05/2025	DA
2025/9	SMK Consultants Pty Ltd	K B Butler	996 Whitlow Rd Whitlow	2 Lot Rural Subdivision	5/03/2025	27/03/2025	Pre-lodgement review and payment of fees	Under assessment with Wakefield Planning	DA
2025/7	Abode Building Design	T L Rose	7 Inverell Rd Warialda	Change of Building Classification - Conversion of shed	14/03/2025	27/03/2025	Pre-lodgement review and payment of fees	Under assessment with Wakefield Planning	DA

				to principal dwelling					
2025/8	Abode Building Design	P J Thurston	17 Railway Pde Warialda Rail	manufactured dwelling and shed	25/03/2025	27/03/2025	payment of fees	Under assessment with Wakefield Planning	DA
2025/11	M W Collins	M W Collins	66 High St Warialda	carport	4/04/2025	30/04/2025	Pre-lodgement review and payment of fees	on exhibition from 02/05/2025 to 15/05/2025	DA
2025/12	SMK Consultants Pty Ltd	C T & A Houston	3 Faithful St Bingara	Torrens Title 2-Lot Subdivision	9/04/2025	5/05/2025	Pre-lodgement review and payment of fees	on exhibition from 08/05/2025 to 21/05/2025	DA
2025/13	Abode Building Design	D L Blake	69 Riddell St Bingara	Dwelling/attached garage/detached carport	16/04/2025	7/05/2025	Pre-lodgement review and payment of fees	on exhibition from 13/05/2025 to 26/05/2025	DA
2025/14	Westbuilt Homes	S Kruse	77 Riddell St Bingara	Manufactured Dwelling	14/04/2025	-	Invoice issued and awaiting payment of fees	-	DA
2022/2022/3	Pawa Architecture	M A & S Tritton	163 Fairford Rd Bingara	Modification of dwelling floor plan and location	31/03/2025	1/05/2025	Pre-lodgement review, request for information and payment of fees	-	DA

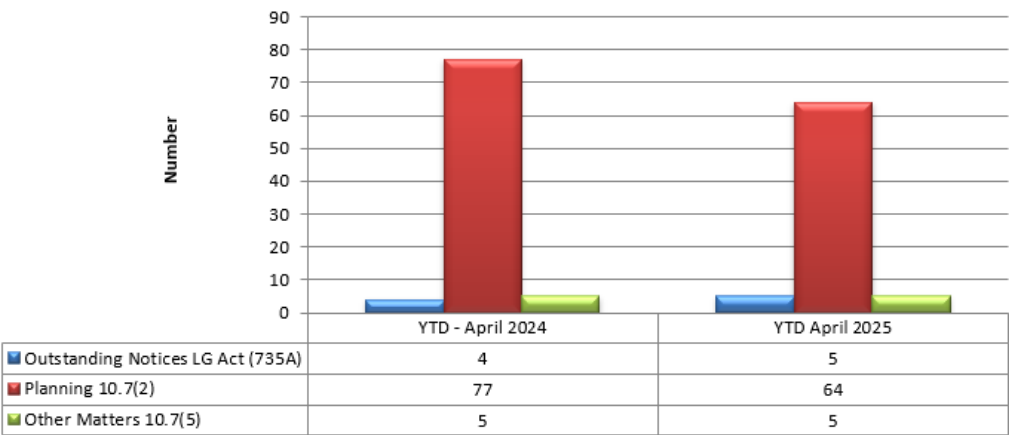
The following graph shows the Subdivision Certificates issued during the month of April 2025 and in the preceding six months.



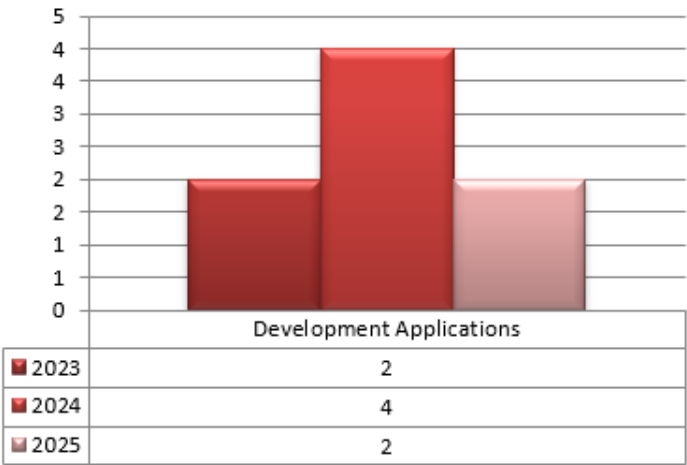
The following graph shows the Conveyancing Certificates issued during month of April 2025 compared to the previous six months:



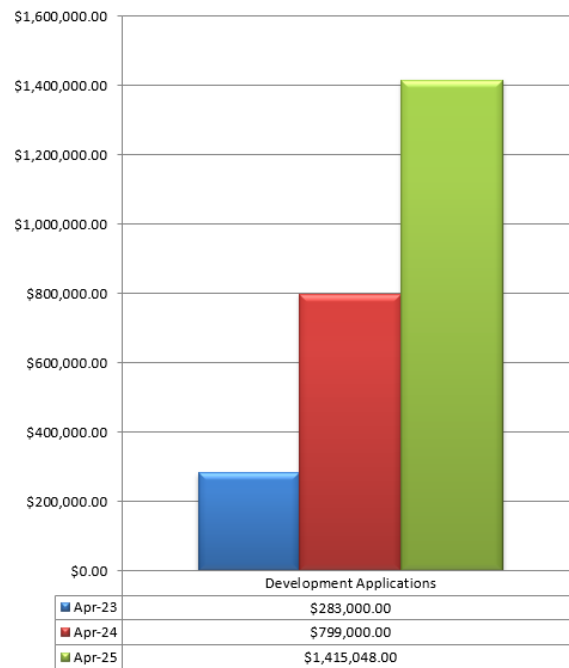
The following graph shows the Conveyancing Certificates issued up to and including the month of April 2025 compared with the same period in 2024:



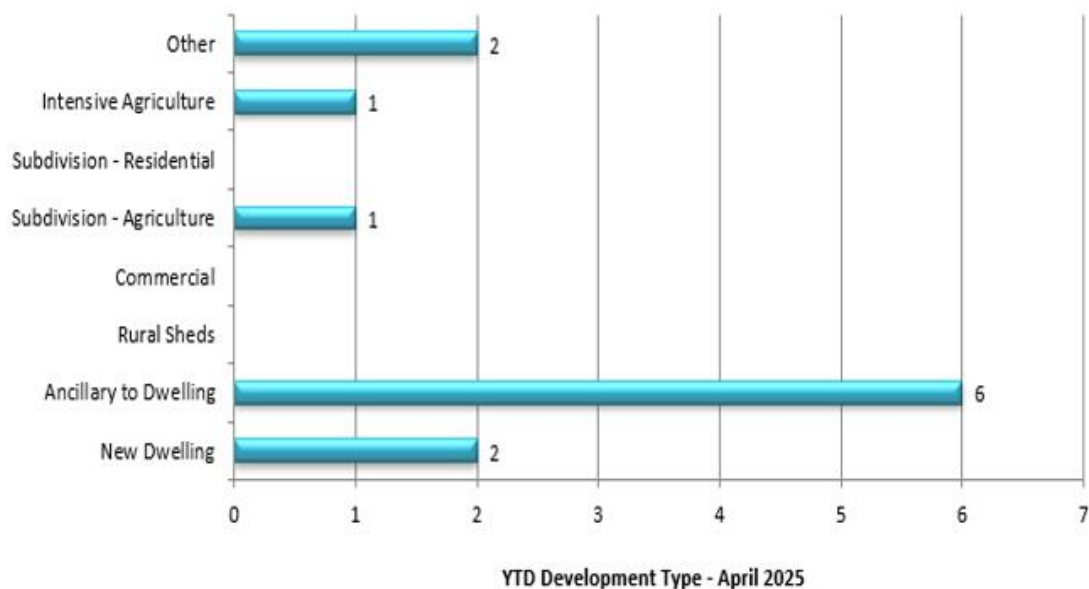
The table below shows a comparison between total development applications (excluding s4.55/s96 modification applications) lodged during the month of April 2025 compared to the same period in the previous two years:



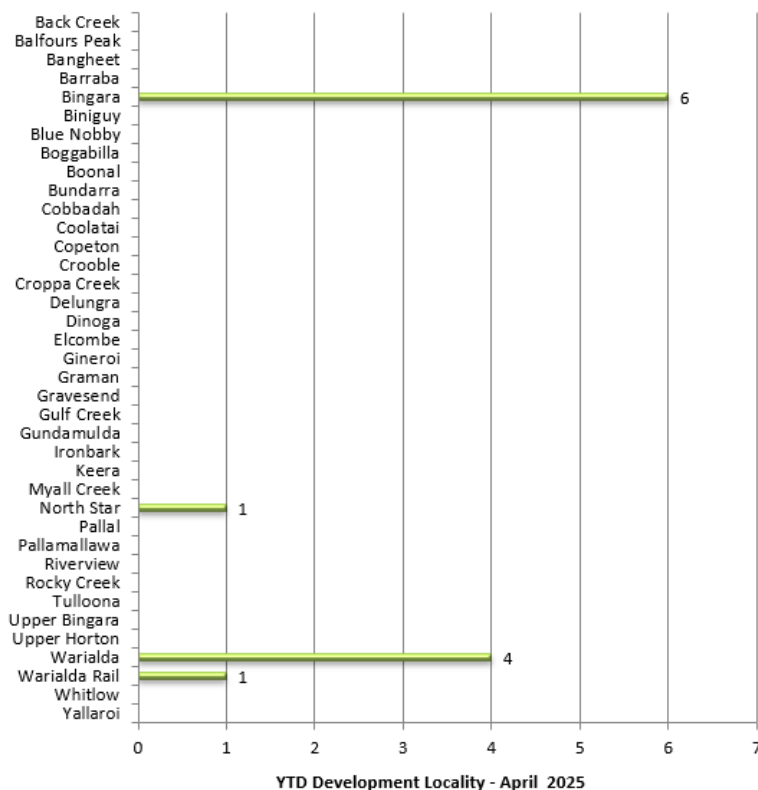
The table below shows a comparison between total value of development applications (excluding s4.55/s96 modification applications) lodged during the month of April 2025 compared to the same period in the previous two years.



Development Applications (excluding s4.55/s96 modification applications) lodged for the year by type – YTD April 2025, the variance in the number of application types to total applications received is attributed to applications for combined development types ie: a dwelling and detached shed:



Development Applications (excluding s4.55/s96 modification applications) lodged for the year by locality – YTD April 2025:



The Planning and Development Department Report for April 2025 was compiled with information available at the time of writing the report.

BUILDING SERVICES

MONTHLY REPORT APRIL 2025

The Department continues to receive enquiries and provide advice on a range of planning and building matters including:

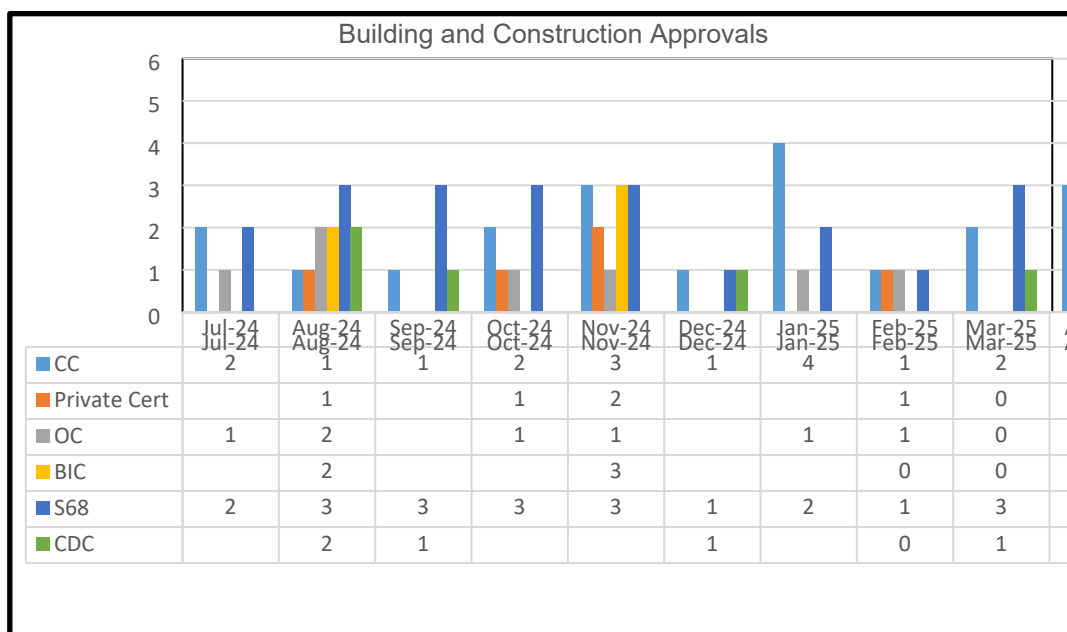
- Minor structure construction e.g., sheds
- Exempt and Complying Development
- Commercial opportunities and construction
- Basix (Building Sustainability Index)
- Bushfire requirements
- Building construction standards and requirements
- Stormwater
- Licensing and owner builder requirements
- Fees and charges
- NSW Planning Portal advice and assistance with the application process

The department receives all applications via the NSW Planning Portal. It is mandatory that all applications for Construction Certificates (CC), Complying

Development (CDC), Principal Certifier Appointments (PCA), Occupation Certificates (OC) and Building Information Certificates (BIC) be lodged with Council via the NSW Planning Portal. Section 68 (S68) Applications are currently lodged directly with Council but as of 1st January 2025 will be able to be lodged through the Planning Portal, this is not mandatory at this stage but is the preferred method of application.

There are currently *102 active* applications that are at varying stages of the assessment/construction process and working towards their completion, and issue of an Occupation Certificate.

The graph below summarises the approvals for the current year and the following table shows the details of the approvals that have been issued for the months of April 2025.



CONSTRUCTION CERTIFICATES			
No.	Property Description	Development/Work	\$
2024/40	7 Inverell Rd Warialda	4-bay garage/shed with workshop	\$51,700
2025/2	14 Byrnes St Bingara	Shed	\$19,000
2025/3	18 Ridley St Bingara	3- bay garage/shed	\$41,915

COMPLYING DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATES			
No.	Property Description	Development/Work	\$
2025/2	53 Market St Warialda	Alterations and additions to the existing dwelling, including bedroom, ensuite and living area	\$194,062

OCCUPATION CERTIFICATES		
No.	Property Description	Development/Work

Nil		
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BUILDING INFORMATION CERTIFICATES		
No.	Property Description	Development/Work
Nil		

PRIVATE CERTIFIER – CERTIFICATE REGISTRATION		
No.	Property Description	Development/Work
Nil		

SECTION 68 APPROVALS		
No.	Property Description	Development/Work
2025/2	227 Allan Cunningham Rd Bingara	Installation of a manufactured dwelling, installation of onsite sewerage management system, water supply, sanitary plumbing and drainage, and stormwater work
2025/4	20 Bombelli St Bingara	Water supply, sanitary plumbing & drainage in association with installation of wash basin
2025/6	25 Moore St Bingara	Water supply, sanitary plumbing & drainage, stormwater works in association with DA 48/2024 (shed) and proposed dwelling (Private Certifier)
2025/9	53 Market St Warialda	Water supply, sanitary plumbing & drainage and stormwater works in association with CDC 2025/2
2025/10	18 Ridley St Bingara	Water supply, sanitary plumbing & drainage and stormwater works in association with DA 2025/3

NO. OF COMPLAINTS/INSPECTIONS April 2025

Type	No.	Yr. to Date	Actioned	Pending
Construction/Building & Building Maintenance	32	468	447	21

NOTE - 10 of the open items are the result of annual repairs and maintenance inspections of the aged accommodation units and are general non urgent repairs that will be attended to at times scheduled to be convenient to the tenants.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

The Department continues to receive requests to carry out minor maintenance and these are generally dealt with in a timely manner. Otherwise, the work is scheduled into maintenance staff building activities including new works for attention.

MAJOR PROJECTS WORKED ON

Living Classroom – Wellness and Interpretive Centre

Progress on the Wellness & Interpretive Centre has hit an unforeseeable delay with our plastering contractor having to withdraw from the project as he has become unwell with a serious illness. As a result, we have had to secure the services of another plasterer which we have now done, but this has inevitably pushed our works program back by 2-3 months as our new plasterer is unavailable for an immediate start. I anticipate our new completion date will now be 30 September 2025.

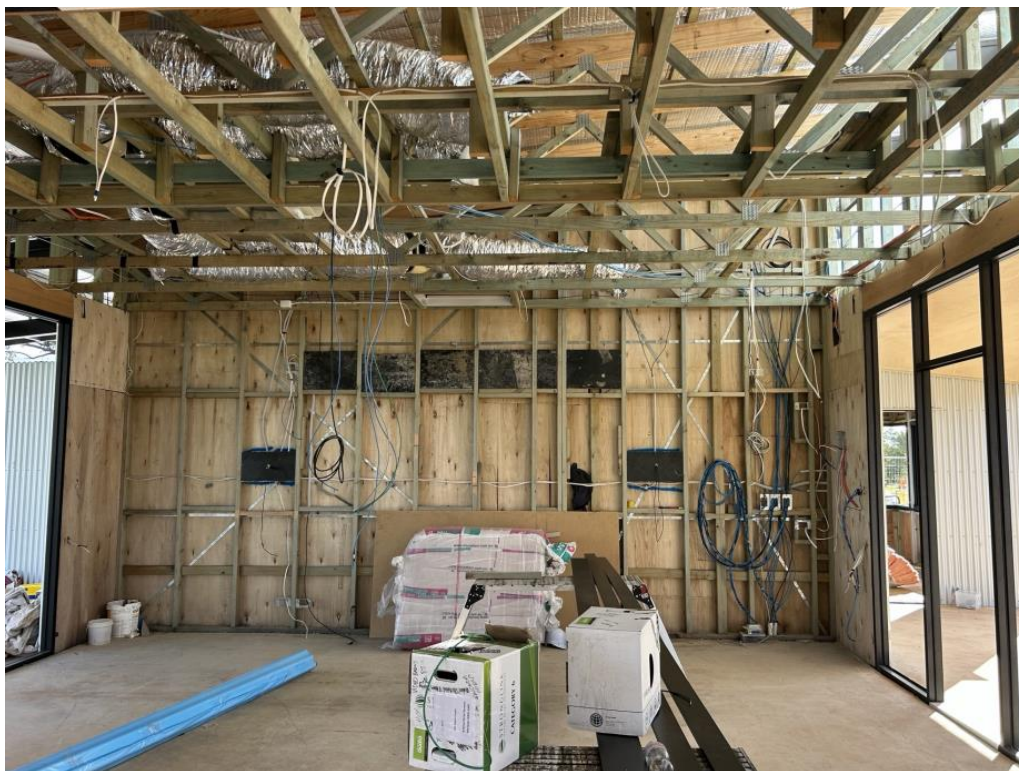
Work completed to the end of April 2025:

- Mechanical ventilation and audiovisual ruffins completed.
- Aluminium windows and doors frames installed.
- External painting completed.
- Timber ply soffits to verandas installed.
- Electrical, lighting, data, plumbing, data, security ruffins completed.
- Internal painting and tiling to amenities completed.

The photographs below show the progress of the project.



Common room



Internal framework, electrical and mechanical ventilation rough in



External cladding of the common room



Interpretive building, office and amenities



Internal framing and roof structure with mechanical ventilation ducting being installed

Bingara Administration Building – progress report

Work on the Bingara Administration Centre is progressing well with contractors on site erecting all the structural steelwork. Additional concrete slabs have been poured

in and around the internal concrete tilt panels. Delivery of the external coloured concrete tilt panels has been delayed but should arrive on site 26th May with erection commencing the same day and continuing for the week. Piers for the portal frames which will support the façade and create the arbour will be poured the week commencing 12th May. Portal frames should be delivered and erected soon after.

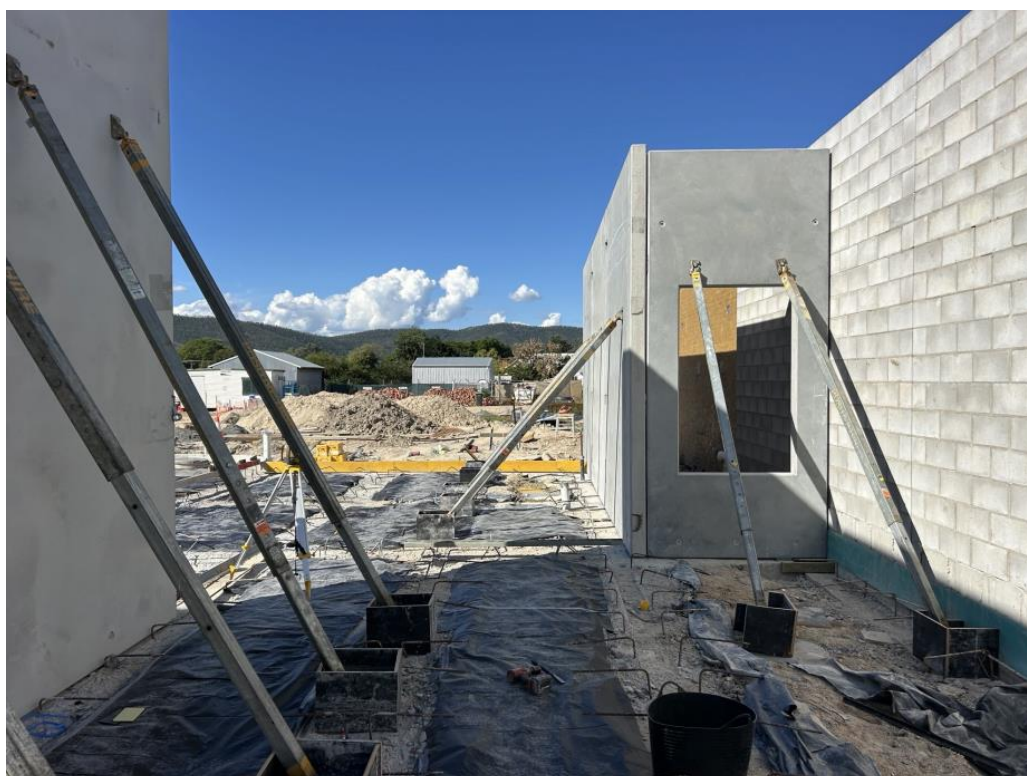
The photographs below show the progress of the project.



Standing of the internal concrete tilt panels



Concrete slab – General office space



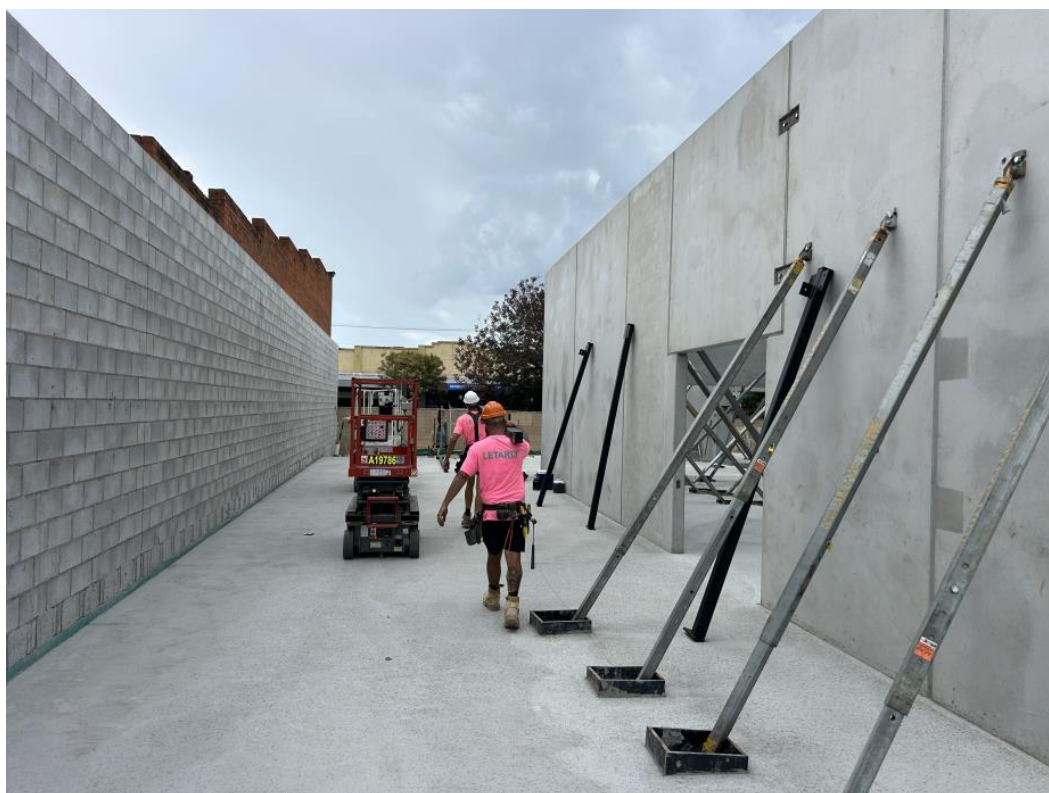
Standing of the internal concrete tilt panels and block wall – Councillor and IT area



Standing of the internal concrete tilt panels – Council Chambers



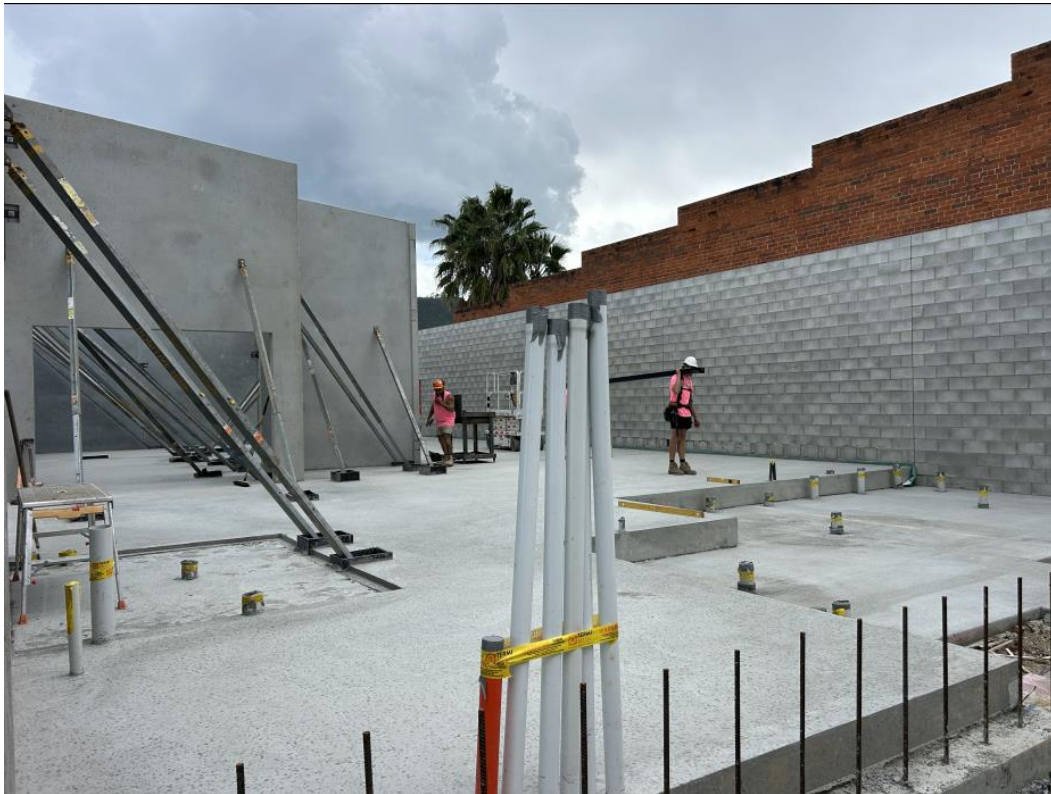
Standing of the concrete internal concrete tilt panels – looking toward Council chambers and customer service area



Erection of structural steel work



Concrete slab showing provision for public amenities area



View from the front of the building showing provision for NBN cabling



Standing of the steel framework



Erection of structural steelwork within Council Chambers



Standing of the steel framework in the Councilor and IT area

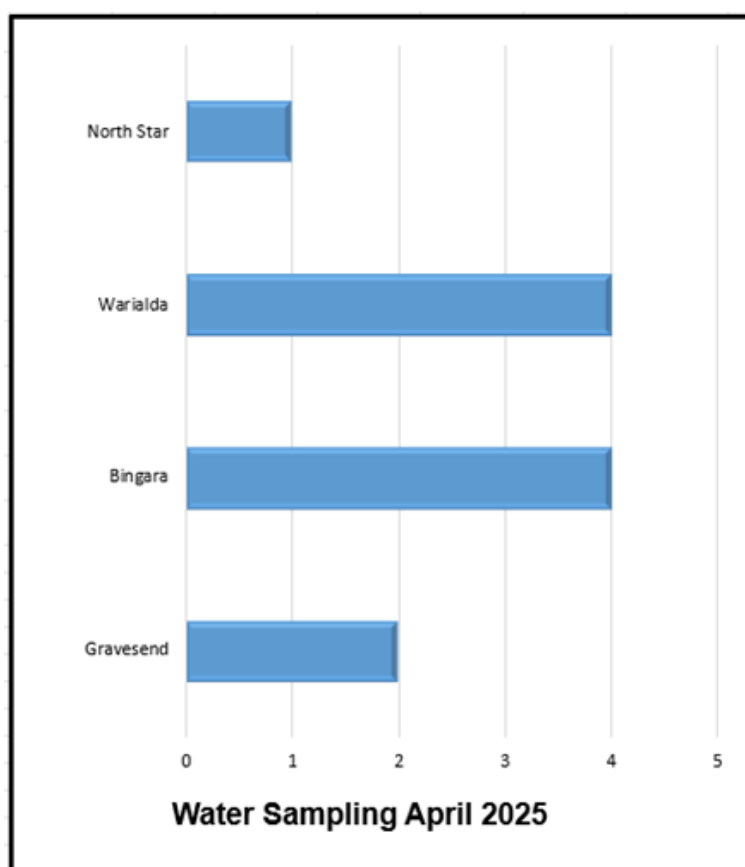
**ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY DEPARTMENT
APRIL 2025**

The Department continues to receive enquiries and provide advice on a range of health matters including:

- Overgrown properties
- Food premises design and fit-out
- Food handling practices
- Mobile food vendors
- Food business notification
- Pet Ownership

DRINKING WATER TESTING

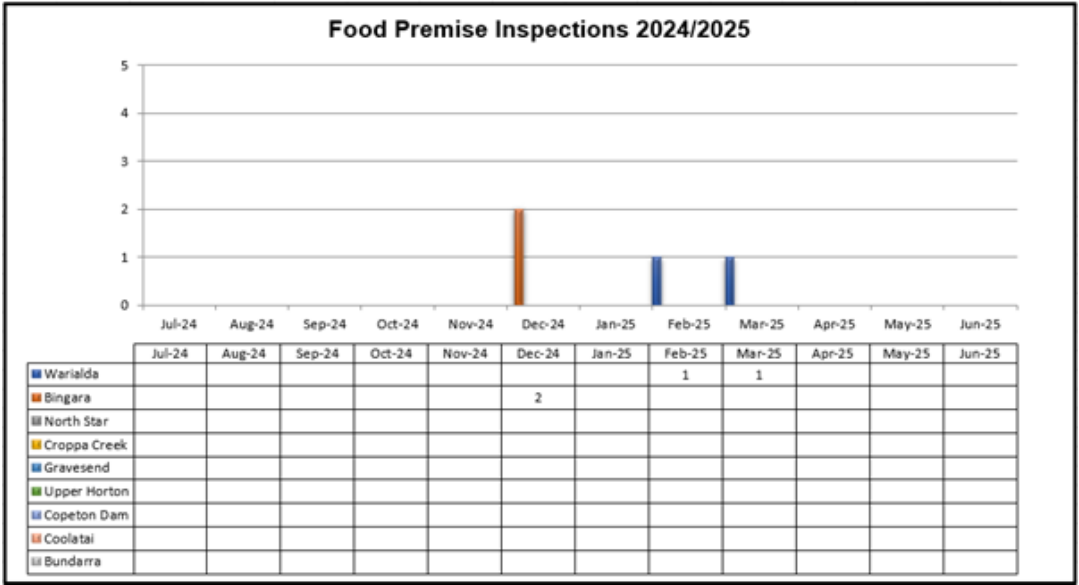
The Department continues to carry out routine sample collection for microbiological and chemical testing of the water supplies in the towns of Warialda and Bingara, fortnightly sampling of Gravesend and monthly sampling at North Star.



FOOD INSPECTIONS

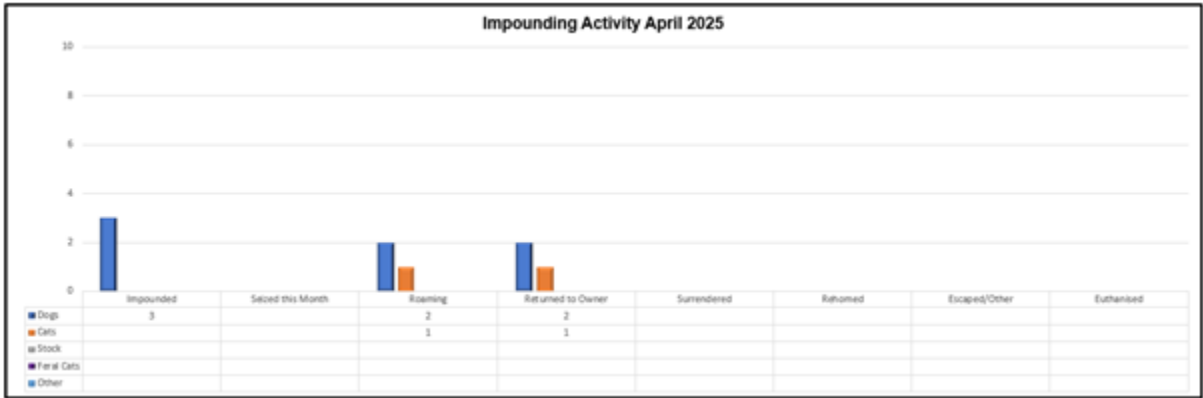
Food Premise Inspections are carried out on an annual basis for each food business. There are approximately 40 registered food service businesses within the Council area including supermarkets, clubs/pubs, motels, bakeries, cafés and takeaway food shops, mobile food vendors and school canteens. Depending on the nature of the food being served some businesses are exempt from inspection unless a complaint or issue arises.

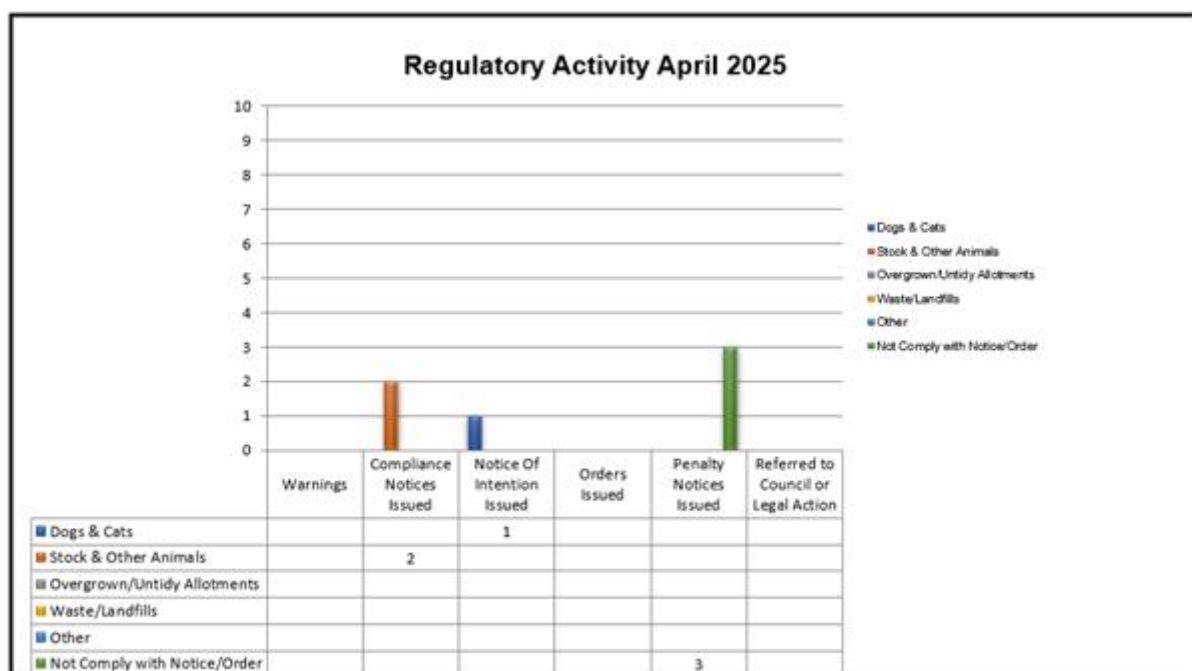
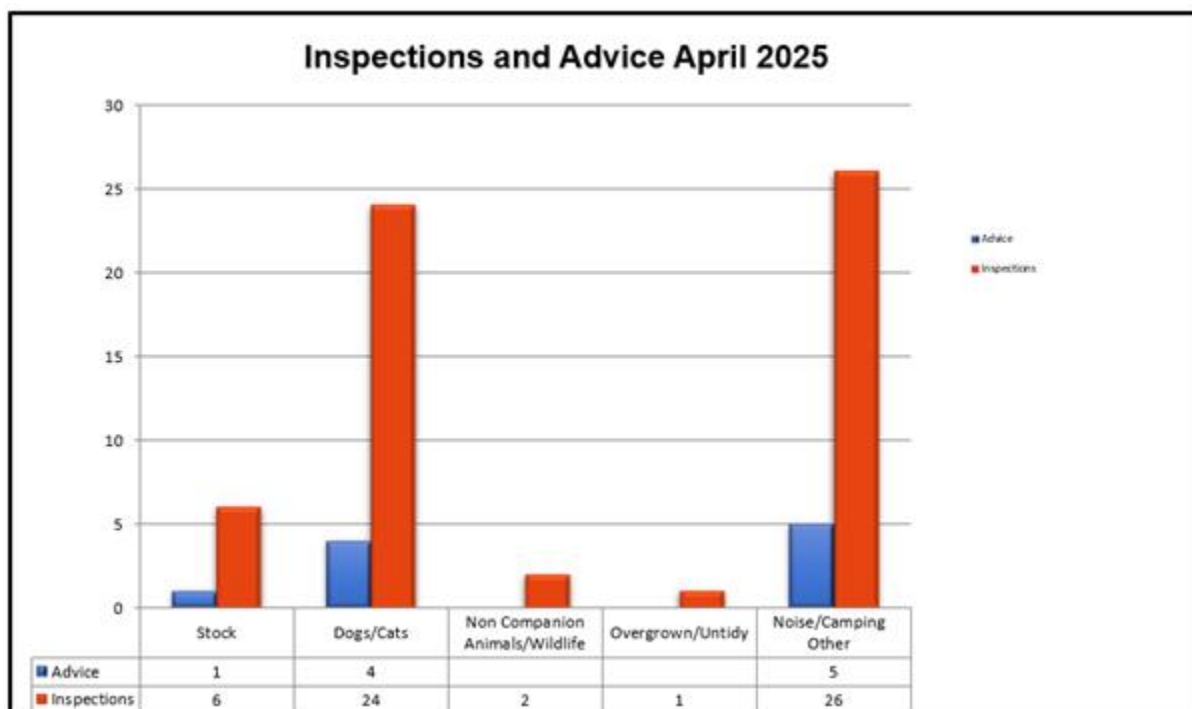
The graph below shows inspections that have been carried out for the current financial year.



COMPLIANCE AND REGULATORY CONTROL

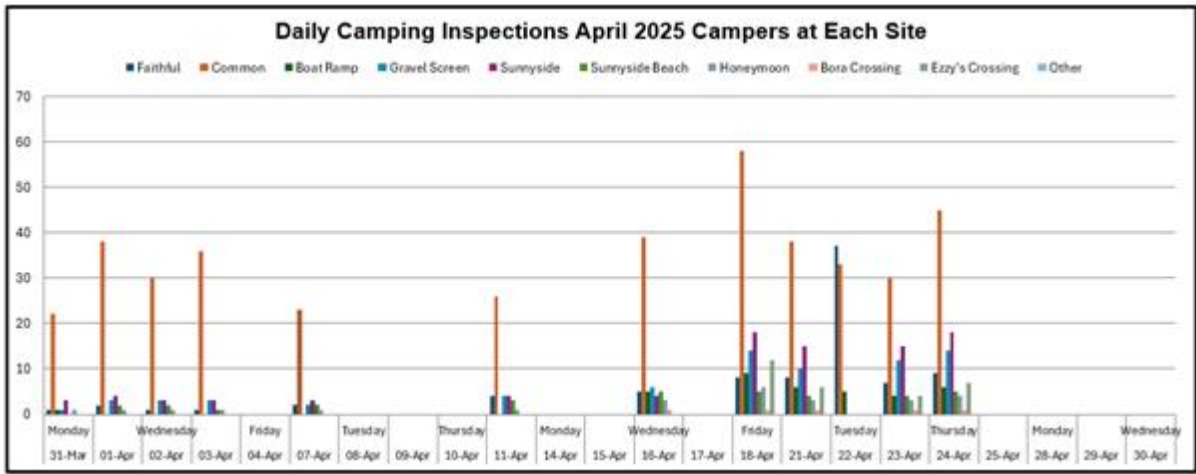
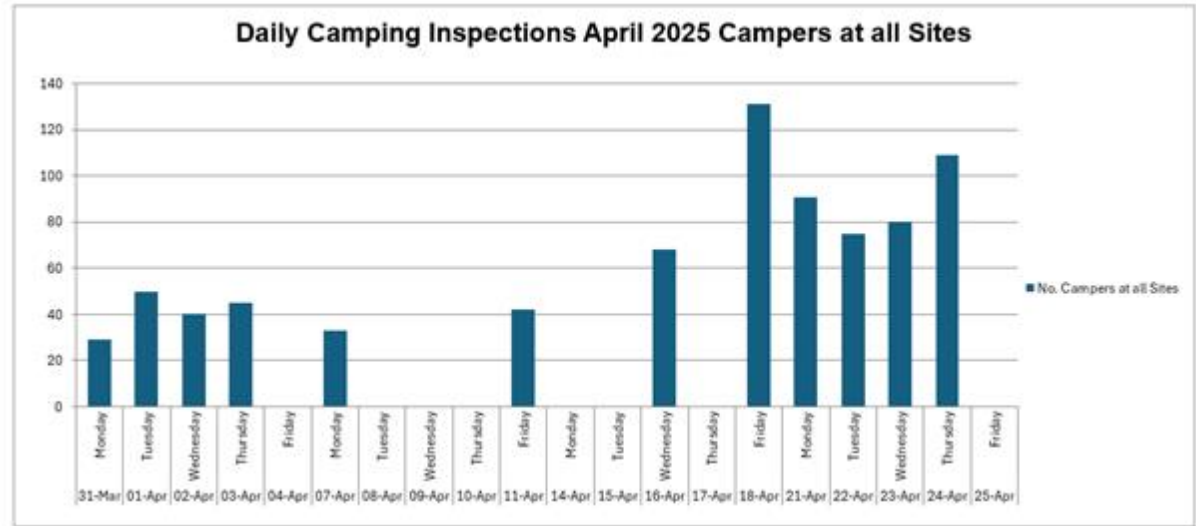
Council has received customer requests regarding overgrown blocks, roaming dogs, roaming stock, noise, the keeping of animals and other concerns during the month of April 2025. These are investigated and actioned as necessary.



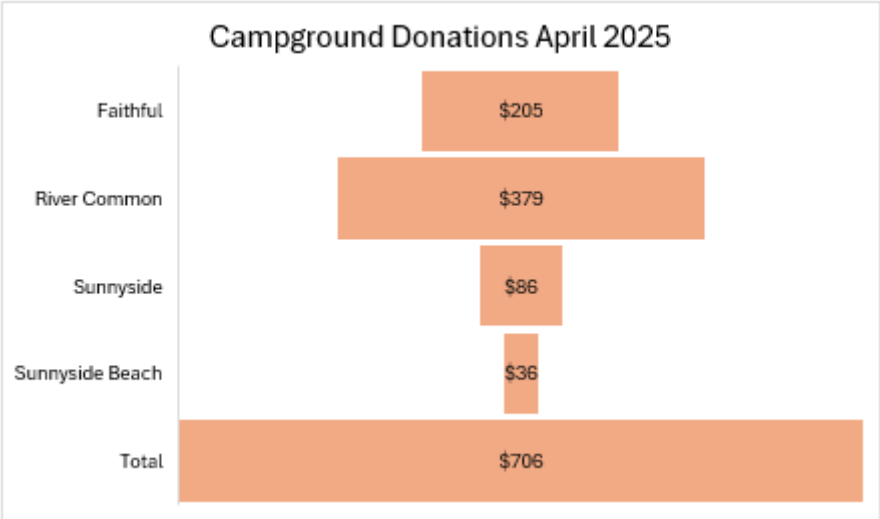


RIVERSIDE CAMPING

Council's Compliance Officers aim to carry out daily checks along the river to ensure that camping is being conducted in a safe and hygienic manner. Flyers promoting local events and services are distributed to campers and enquiries from campers are addressed as required. The graphs below show total numbers of campers and the distribution of campers at the different campsites.



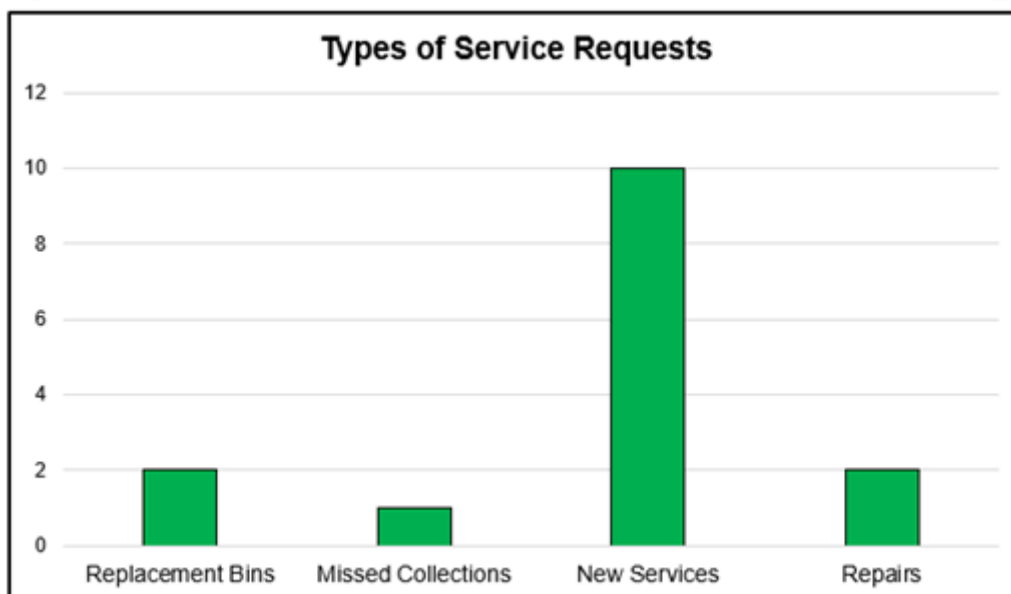
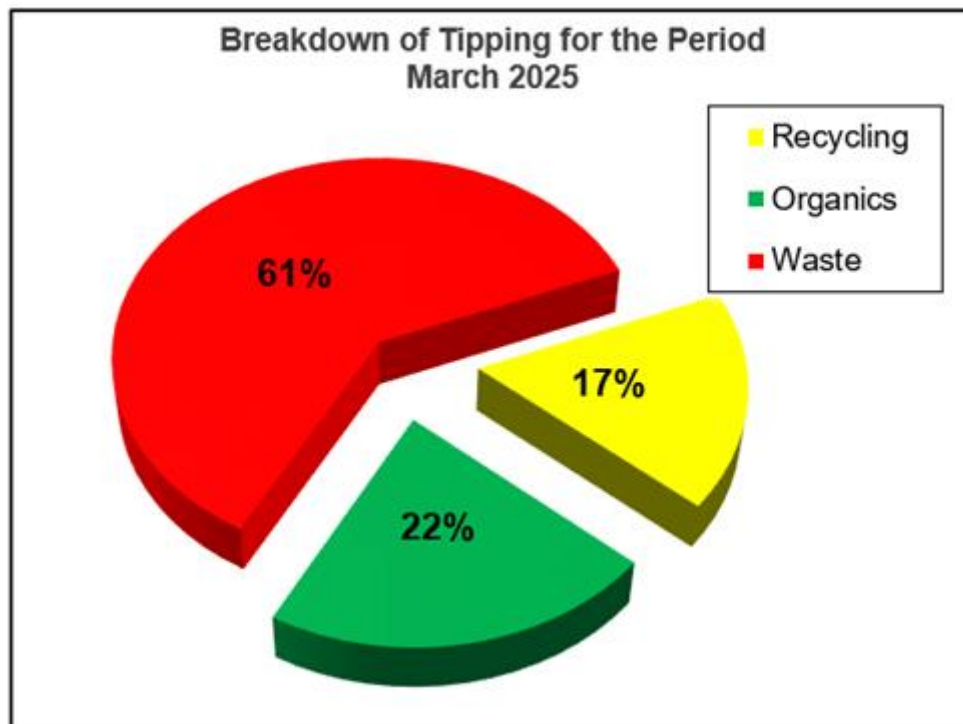
CAMPING AREA DONATIONS COLLECTED

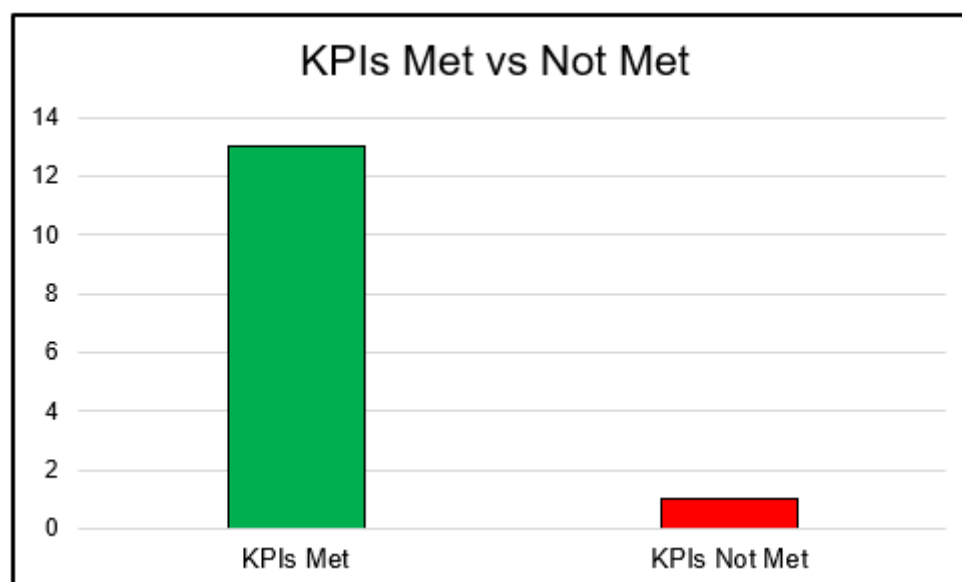


WASTE CONTRACT SERVICES

At the time of the report the available data from JR Richards is for the previous reporting period.

In March 2025, there were a total of 15 service requests for the period, including replacement bins, repairs, missed collections, and new services. Out of the total KPIs, 14 out of 15 KPIs were met for the month, with the missed services KPI not being achieved.





LANDFILL REPORTS

Landfill Access

Council is preparing to install locks at the North Star Transfer Station and Croppa Creek landfill to reduce illegal dumping and more securely monitor the landfills. Letters were sent at the end of April to residents in the catchment areas, providing them with their access codes and user agreement forms. The locks will be installed on Monday, 2nd June 2025. To assist residents, Council staff will hold information sessions starting at 5pm on Thursday, 22nd May at the North Star Sporting Club and on Friday, 23rd May at the Croppa Creek Bowling Club. These sessions will help residents understand the new system, answer any questions, and demonstrate how to use the locks with their access codes and via the Bluetooth app.

Bingara Landfill

Accessibility: All waste areas are accessible, but wet weather had made maintenance challenging.

Shredding & Crushing: Shredding of green waste piles and mattresses began last week, with concrete crushing to follow.

E-Waste: E-waste and batteries are due to be collected for recycling.

Warialda Landfill

Green Waste & Concrete Piles: Contractor will move to Warialda after Bingara to process green waste, mattresses & concrete piles.

E-Waste: E-waste and batteries are due to be collected for recycling.

Accessibility: Flooding at the start of the month caused the landfill to close for the day.

Warialda Rail

Gates: Gates are working correctly. Tracks have recently been cleaned.

Accessibility: All waste piles and other areas are easily accessible.

Solar & Batteries: Solar panels and batteries have been inspected. Batteries are fully charged.

Coolatai

Lock and Camera: Lock and cameras working correctly.

Waste Disposal: Reduction in waste disposal due to restricted access evident.

Accessibility: Turnaround area has been made for non-code holders to exit the site

safely. All waste piles and other areas are easily accessible.

Gate Lock: Gates were locked on April 7th, restricted access for ratepayers only.

Community Interaction: Had 3 phone calls from people residing in Ashford regarding getting a code to use the landfill. Having a discussion with Inverell Shire to work out a solution.



Turn around area made at Coolatai Landfill for people without codes to exit the site safely.

Croppa Creek

Access: Locks will be installed on June 2nd to limit access to ratepayers

Internal Roads: The area was boggy from flooding and road closures, leaving the site in a mess. This was tidied by the contractor once the ground dried out

Accessibility: All waste piles and other areas are easily accessible.

Fire Monitoring: Another fire has been lit on the premises. A surveillance camera has been installed to monitor the site.

Wire Dumping: A large amount of wire was dumped on the access road for the metal pile. A contractor was onsite and cleared the obstruction before it became an issue.



Smouldering pit from a fire that had been lit at Croppa Creek landfill.



Large amount of wire dumped on access road to metal pile in Croppa Creek landfill.

North Star Transfer Station

Access: Locks will be installed on June 2nd to limit access to ratepayers.

Surveillance: The site can now be monitored using the newly installed surveillance camera.

Area Condition: The area is tidy and accessible. A larger volume of waste is expected due to the conditions at Croppa Creek, and bins will be monitored for overfilling.

Large Items: large items still being dumped in and around skip bins instead of being taken to Croppa Creek. Hopefully this subsides once the access is restricted.



Large items being dumped behind skip bins at the North Star Transfer Station to avoid detection.

Upper Horton

Lock and Cameras: Lock and cameras working correctly.

Accessibility: All waste piles and other areas are easily accessible.

Chemical Drums: Still working through moving the large amount of chemical drums to Bingara landfill.



Load of chemical drums at Upper Horton Landfill to be moved to Bingara Landfill.

Gravesend

Gates: Gates are working correctly, with tracks clean.

Solar & Batteries: Solar panels and batteries have been inspected. Batteries are fully charged.

Shredding: Green waste & mattress shredding has been organised to happen in the next few weeks.

Maintenance: Waste builds up quickly, major works needed to make the site more user-friendly.

KOALA PARK

Council installed platforms and covers on the two smaller water troughs at the koala park in April. This not only makes it easier for the koalas to access the water but also helps keep their water source clean and uncontaminated.



One of the resident koalas 'Jessie' was spotted at the park on April 20th.

Koala Park Donations
April 2025
\$95.50

BIOSECURITY WEED CONTROL

Biosecurity Act 2015

The role of a Biosecurity Officer has changed in recent years with the replacement of the Noxious Weeds Act 1993 by the Biosecurity Act 2015. This new legislation was prompted by the need to streamline and modernise the management of invasive species in New South Wales. It consolidates multiple laws into a single framework, emphasizing a General Biosecurity Duty that requires everyone to take steps to manage biosecurity risks, including invasive weeds. Local Control Authorities, such as councils, continue to ensure weed control on both private and public lands. The Act provides new tools and powers for managing these risks, including issuing biosecurity notices and enforcing compliance. This shift promotes a more integrated and proactive approach, enhancing weed management effectiveness, protecting the environment, and supporting sustainable agriculture. Consequently, biosecurity officers now focus less on spraying and more on strategic inspections, monitoring, and enforcement to manage invasive species effectively.

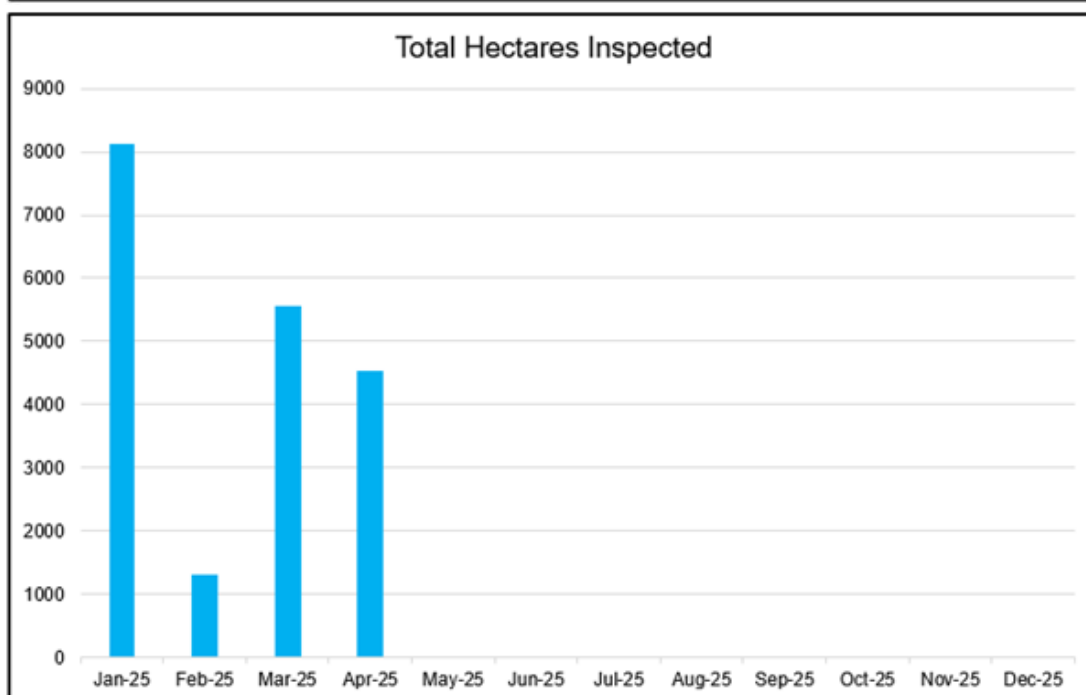
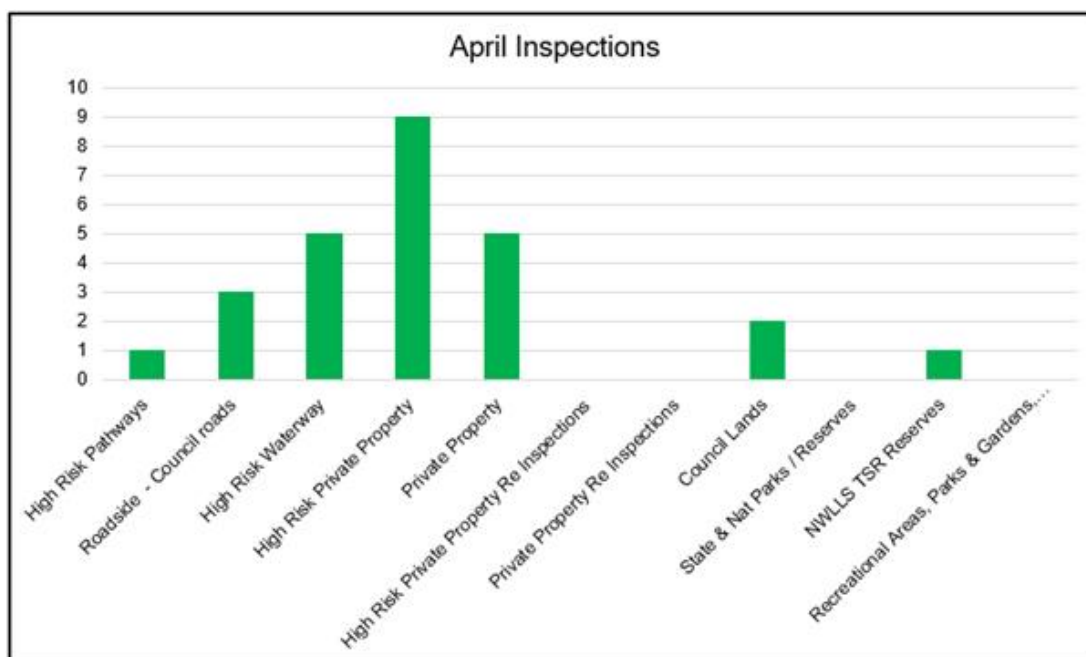


Green Cestrum found on Narrabri Road.

Weeds Action Program

The New South Wales Weeds Action Program (WAP) is a government initiative designed to mitigate the impact of invasive weeds through strategic planning and coordinated efforts. The program aligns with the NSW Invasive Species Plan and the NSW Biosecurity Strategy, providing essential funding for various weed control activities. A significant portion of this funding is allocated specifically for inspections,

which are crucial for identifying and managing high-risk weed pathways, roadside areas, waterways, private properties, and other critical sites. By supporting these inspections, the WAP ensures early detection and effective management of invasive species, thereby protecting the environment, agriculture, and local communities. Councils' Biosecurity Officers are given targets from the New South Wales Weeds Action Program (WAP) to reach each year. These targets ensure that a consistent and thorough approach is maintained in monitoring and managing invasive weeds. A large portion of the officers' time is dedicated to inspecting properties, which is crucial for early detection and effective management of high-risk weed species. By focusing on these inspections, Biosecurity Officers play a vital role in protecting the environment, agriculture, and local communities from the adverse effects of invasive weeds.



Department report for April 2025 was compiled with information available at the time of preparing the report.

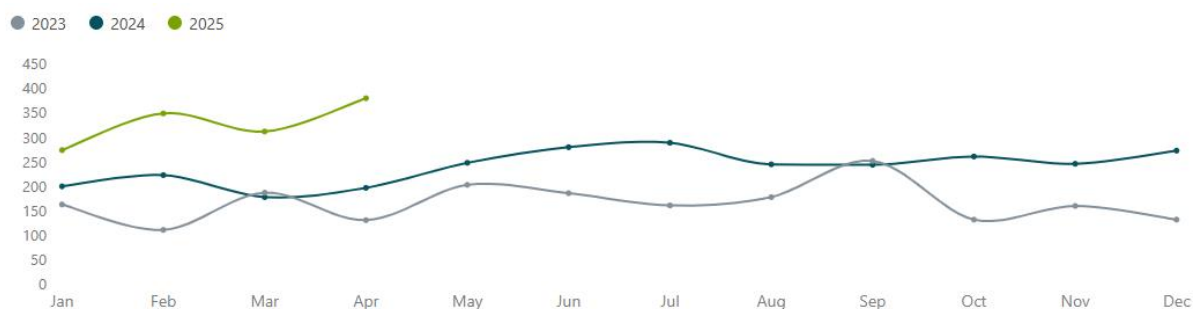
INFORMATION SERVICES

MONTHLY REPORT APRIL 2025

The Information Services help desk continues to provide essential support to staff across the organisation, ensuring the smooth operation of core systems, including IT, GIS, and Records management. This support encompasses technical issue resolution, data management, and system accessibility. Below is a summary of key service desk activities for the reporting period:

A total of 381 support tickets were logged during the period, with 375 resolved. The median resolution time for support tickets was 5.2 hours, reflecting overall efficiency in issue resolution. 96 per cent of the tickets are related to IT, while GIS accounts for 2% and Records for 2%.

There has been a significant increase in support tickets compared to the same period last year, rising from 198 to 381. This increase is partly due to the inclusion of GIS and Records-related requests in the help desk system, as well as a deliberate effort to ensure that nearly all help desk inquiries are properly logged and monitored.



MOVE TO ESRI

Council has started the rollout to upgrade its Geographic Information System (GIS) capabilities by transitioning from the current Spectrum Spatial platform to the ESRI GIS suite. This move reflects Council's commitment to adopting industry-leading technology that better meets operational needs, improves data integration, and enhances service delivery to the community.

ESRI is recognised globally as the standard in GIS technology, offering superior functionality, a wider range of analytical tools, and seamless integration with other enterprise systems. The transition will provide Council staff with improved access to spatial data, enabling more informed decision-making, better asset and land management, and enhanced mapping and reporting capabilities. Additionally, it will enable staff to access and input data directly in the field, overcoming the previous limitation of on-premises-only access.

The next phase of the rollout will expand access by offering selected data sets to the public, enhancing community engagement and transparency. This will empower residents to use the data in ways beyond Council's internal applications and provide valuable insight into the breadth of work and services Council delivers.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be received.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

7.6 Council's Investment Report

File Reference: NA

Delivery Program

Goal: 5. Organisational management

Outcome: 5.1 Corporate management

Strategy: 5.1.1 Financial Management and accountability systems

Author: Helen Thomas, Chief Financial Officer

STAFF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST Nil

IN BRIEF/SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

At each monthly Ordinary Meeting, the Council is presented with the schedule relating to Investments, as at the end of the previous month.

TABLED ITEMS Nil

BACKGROUND

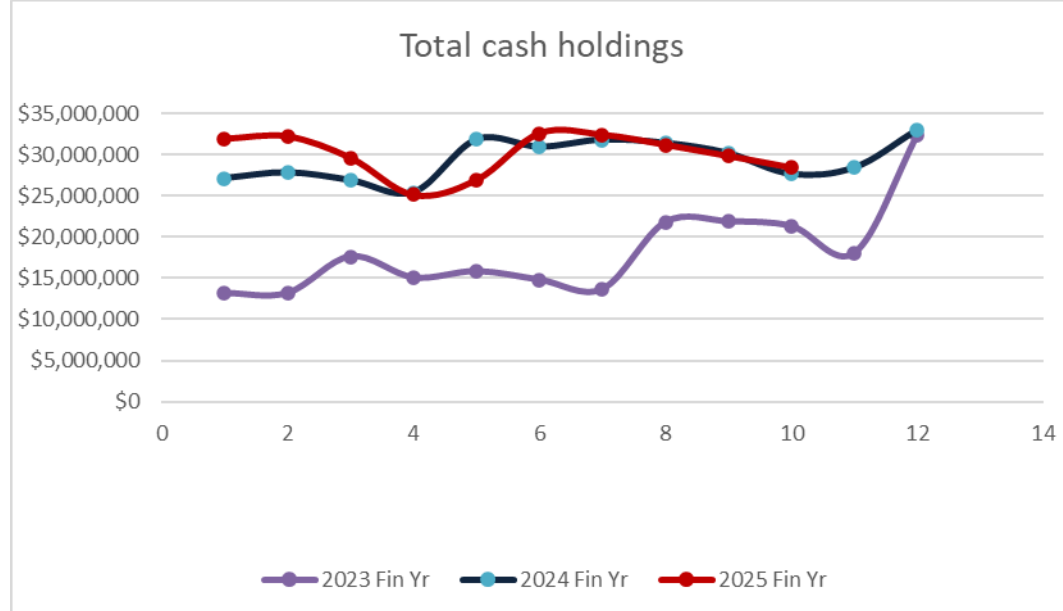
In accordance with Clause 19(3) of the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulation 1993, the following information provides details of Council's funds invested as at 30th April 2025.

Cash and Investments

Total Investments	
Managed Funds	\$3,521,970.00
Grand Total Investments	\$3,521,970.00

Total Cash and Investments	
Investments	\$3,521,970.00
Cash at bank	\$24,910,387.00
Grand Total Cash and Investments	\$28,432,357.00

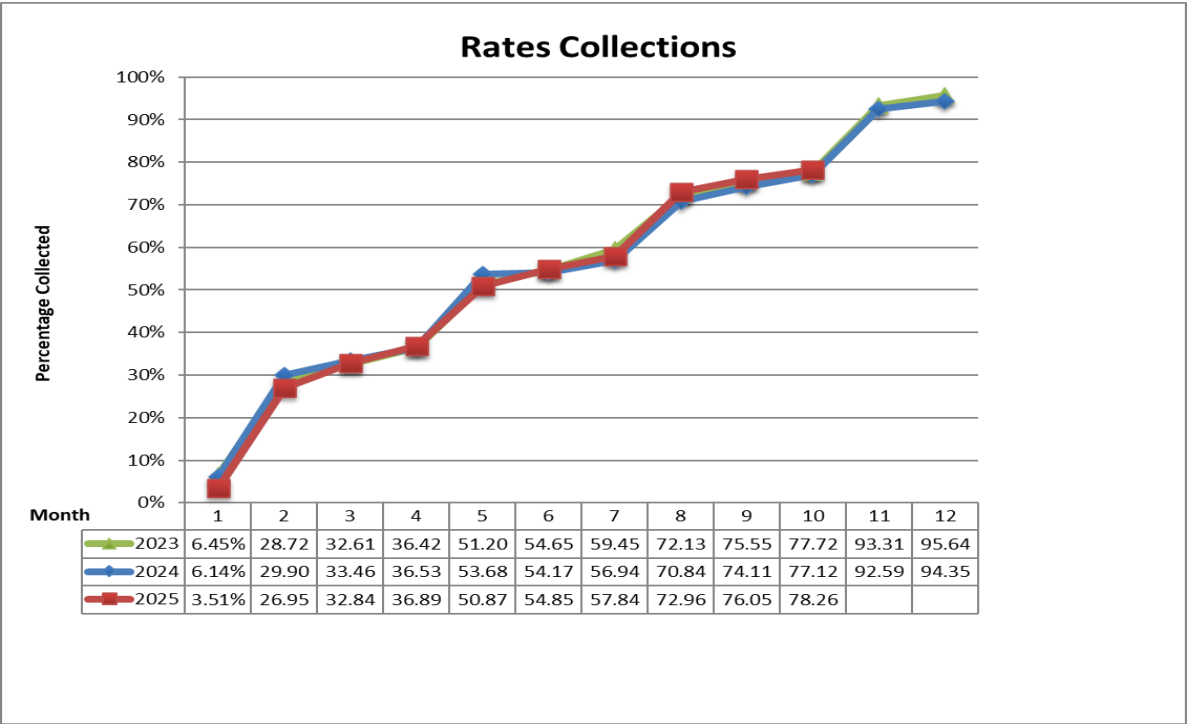
General Fund Cash	
Total cash and investments	\$28,432,357.00
LESS:	
Water fund*	-\$1,562,751.00
Sewer fund*	-\$1,134,738.00
Waste fund*	-\$4,476,685.00
Other restrictions:	
Employee leave entitlements*	-\$1,000,000.00
Bonds and deposits	-\$2,313,780.00
Unexpended grants*	-\$7,345,374.00
Developer contributions	-\$617,673.00
Asset Replacement Program	-\$347,238.00
Internal Restrictions*	-\$4,191,666.00
Admin Building Funding	-\$4,500,000.00
Discretionary General Fund Cash	\$942,452.00



I, Helen Thomas, CFO and Responsible Accounting Officer for Gwydir Shire Council, certify that the Council's investments have been made in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993, Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 and Council's Investment Policy, as amended.

RATES COLLECTIONS

The graph below represents a comparative of the percentage collections for the current year against the two previous rating years. The current years collections are up to 30th April 2025.



OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

THAT the April 2025 Monthly Investment and Rates Collection report be received.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

7.7 Country Mayors' Association March 2025 Meeting

File Reference: NA

Delivery Program

Goal: 4. Proactive regional and local leadership

Outcome: 4.2 We work together to achieve our goals

Strategy: 4.2.1 Build strong relationships and shared responsibilities

Author: General Manager

STAFF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST Nil

IN BRIEF/SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

This report is for information only

TABLED ITEMS Nil

BACKGROUND

Attached is the communique relating to the Country Mayors' Meeting held on 28th March 2025 at the State Parliament Theatre.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

THAT the information is noted.

ATTACHMENTS

1. CM A- Communique- General-meeting-28- March-2025- V 2 [7.7.1 - 15 pages]



THE COUNTRY MAYORS ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC

"What we want is nothing more than equity"

COMMUNIQUE

Country Mayors Association of NSW – General Meeting 28 March 2025

The Country Mayors Association of NSW held our General Meeting in the Theatrette in NSW Parliament House, Sydney on Friday 28 March 2025. We had 150 representatives of Country NSW Councils and associated organisations coming together to focus on the Financial Sustainability theme. We were joined by a variety of Parliamentarians.

For dinner, the night before, our Associate Member, the NRMA hosted a special cocktail-style function in the Tattersalls Club, across from Hyde Park, Sydney. We were grateful for this networking and fellowship opportunity. There were over 120 attendees and three special guest speakers.

NSW Local Government Minister the Hon. Ron Hoenig MP had some attention-grabbing statements, including that all NSW Councils will be mandated to live-stream their Council and Committee meetings. Local Government NSW President and CMA Executive Board member, Mayor Phyllis Miller (Forbes Shire) OAM explained the origin of her passion for Local Government and the NRMA's Chief Membership Officer Victoria Doidge reaffirmed their commitment to work with Country Mayors towards better, safer roads.

CMA Chairman, Temora Shire Mayor Rick Firman OAM said the chance for country Mayors to get together was greatly valued and we are thankful to the NRMA. "There was a real warmth in the room. Never underestimate the value of fellowship."





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COMMUNIQUE

The meeting

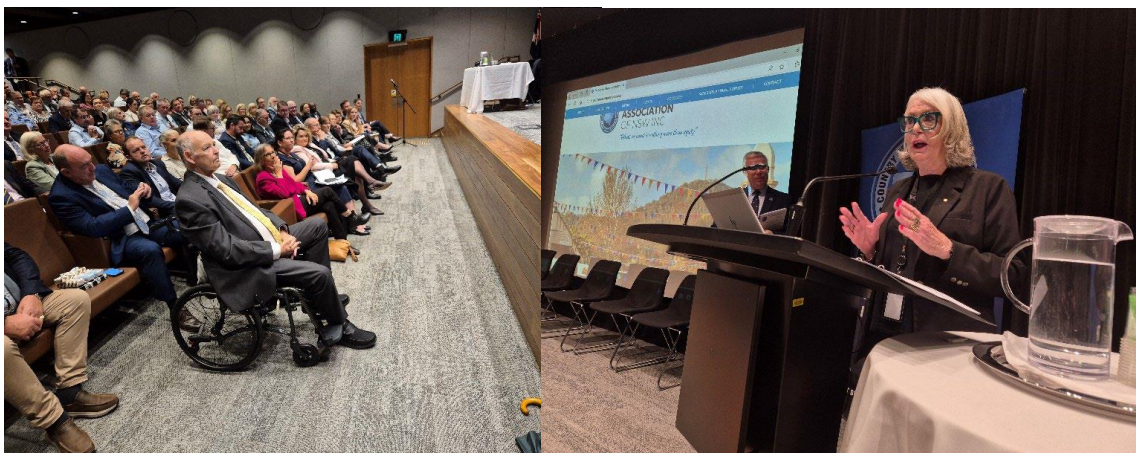
CMA Chairman Mayor Rick Firman OAM of Temora Shire Council issued a warm welcome and introduced the new Chair of the NSW Grants Commission, Ms. Linda Scott.

Ms Scott advised that she had not yet been inducted and it is too soon for her to say much. She emphasised that submissions need to go to the NSW Grants Commission email address: grantscommission@olg.nsw.gov.au. Ms Scott also urged CMA members to work with their CFOs regarding the forward payments of FAGs and the implications of that.



CMA Executive Board Member and President of LGNSW – Mayor Phyllis Miller OAM and Mayor Firman paid tribute to Forbes Shire GM Mr. Steve Loane OAM, who has served the Local Government sector for decades.

Mayor Miller announced that a new cost-shifting survey is about to be conducted by LGNSW. "I don't expect a return to 1% overnight but we need to get it back up there, bit by bit." Mayor Miller drew attention to the new Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) recycling legislation, intended to reduce food waste and stop food waste going to landfill. The NSW Parliament has passed legislation to mandate FOGO collection services for households by July 2030, and for businesses and institutions in stages from July 2026. Click [here](#) for more detail. Mayor Miller added that the Regional Summit in the State Library promises to be a great event.



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COMMUNIQUE

The Hon. Emily Suvaal, BN MLC. Was welcomed to the lectern as Chair of the NSW Government Inquiry into the "Ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services"

Mrs Suvaal said the Inquiry was important to her personally and professionally. There were 128 submissions, over 50 organisations gave evidence. We are still awaiting the State Government response to the Inquiry and the recommendations. We handed it down on 29 November and the Minister has told me that he is going to take the time to get it right. We can appreciate that changes to the accounting codes and the like take work.

It was a very important Inquiry and I know the challenges you face are still there and may have gotten worse.

CMA Chairman Rick Firman OAM presented a thank-you gift to Mrs Suvaal.



The entire TCorp Local Government Services Team then came onto the stage because it was important for members have faces for the names they deal with.

Snr Analyst, Mr. Tom Threlkeld gave the presentation, supported by his colleagues:

- Mr. Rob Kenna – General Manager, Financial Markets
- Mr. Brett Perry – Senior Manager, Credit Review
- Ms. Danielle Aspery – Senior Manager
- Mr. Craig Selvage – Senior Analyst
- Ms. Alina Tee – Analyst

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COMMUNIQUE

Mr. Threlkeld said that prior to 2015, banks and finance companies were *the* option. Since then, Tcorp has offered competitive rates for councils.

"We have a cost recovery focus, making us 0.5 to 1% cheaper than banks. Large loans can be spread over generations of rate payers. Please reach out to our Local Government Services team if you need to discuss flexibility.

Q. Mayor Phyllis Miller asked about the suitability of saleyards for financing.

Q. Mayor Sarah Ndiaye from Byron Shire: Thank you for our sustainability loans

Q. Bega Valley Shire CEO Anthony McMahon: Could you explain your process for assessing Councils' capacity to repay loans.

A. Enough unrestricted cash for two months of operations required.

We are more intrusive than a bank. But we partner with Councils, so we will not behave like a bank.

Yass Valley Mayor Cr. Jasmin Jones asked about upper limits and Mr Threlkeld said we don't really have one. Mayor Jones then asked when did you change to allow commercial elements. Mr Threlkeld said July last year.



CMA Deputy Chairman Mayor Russell Fitzpatrick and Executive Board Member Mayor Sharon Cadwallader thanked the TCorp team.



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COMMUNIQUE

Auditor-General for NSW, Mr. Bola Oyetunji

Mr Oyetunji said I learn a lot from you.

"When you talk about depreciation, we can improve things there. Financial Sustainability of Local Government is something we need to work on together."

A revenue imbalance graph highlighted the need for the return to 1%.

Costs or valuation, I cannot answer. But I want to work with the sector on it.

We like to think when we do an audit, we are making a difference.

Imagine a world without auditors – though there were chuckles, the value of audits was clear in members' minds.

Mr Oyetunji gave an example of the pool in Clarence Valley, which was done 7% under budget but everybody has heard of the North Sydney Pool. I am going to promote the top 10 and bottom 10 Councils, in terms of financial sustainability against OLG benchmarks, with the purpose of encouraging improvement. We need a deep understanding of how councils work. The desired outcome of audits is to improve performance.

Mr Oyetunji's presentation and update from Audit Office were distributed to the CMA Membership.

Steve Loane: Cost shifting \$1.6billion – what is your view? Should we invoice the State Government?

Uralla Shire Mayor Cr. Robert Bell: The Auditor General is used as an excuse for declining funding.

A: I am happy to work with you on any examples you have.

Q: If you have a top 10 and a bottom 10, perhaps the top can assist the bottom 10.

Q. Mayor Bronwyn Petrie of Tenterfield Shire Council: Thank you for your refreshing attitude.

Mayor Phyllis Miller OAM presented the thank-you gift.



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COMMUNIQUE

Excelling CMA Members Segment

Bega Valley Shire Council was the 2024 Bluett Award Winner and CEO, Anthony McMahon detailed some of the work that his Council is proud of.

Mr. McMahon ran a slideshow of Bega Valley Shire's innovative projects and detailed how they applied for the Bluett Award.

The LGA was devastated by the 2019/20 bushfire season losing over 460 homes, with over 1000 buildings destroyed and two lives lost. Since then, Council has supported rebuilding houses and built a new water treatment plant (one of several) to manage impacts of fires.

He said they are proud to have home grown staff – locals who have been recruited and trained/upskilled through traineeships, apprenticeships and cadetships.

Byron Shire Mayor Sarah Ndiaye asked about the affordable housing projects. This was one important area where CMA members could learn from example. An example

of the innovative housing in the Bega Valley: [Community Housing Assistance Agreement with Southern Cross Community Housing extended - Bega Valley Shire Council](#)

Mr. McMahon said "we sold to a community housing provider, with caveats, including that they use funds to re-invest in more local housing. We have also facilitated a Homes NSW development of 100 Lots."

Richmond Valley Mayor Cr.

Robert Mustow: Asked about the circular economy

Mr. McMahon: That's a presentation in itself and I suggest that if CMA are interested they get the Chairman of the Bega Group (including Bega Cheese) in on that.



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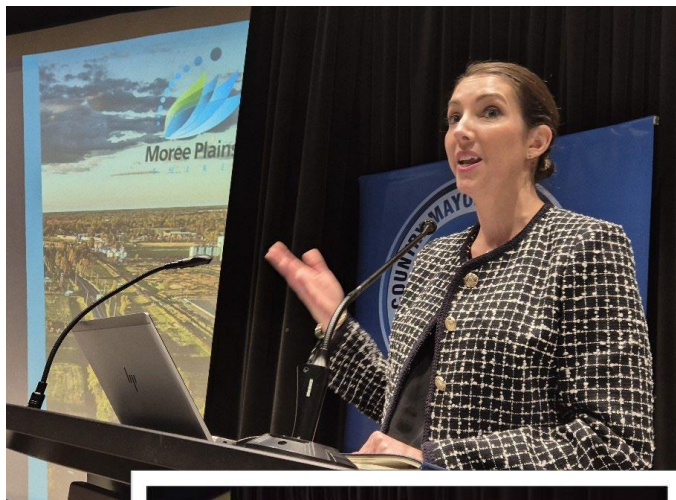
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COMMUNIQUE

Moree Plains Shire Council presentation. 2024 Bluett Award Runner-up

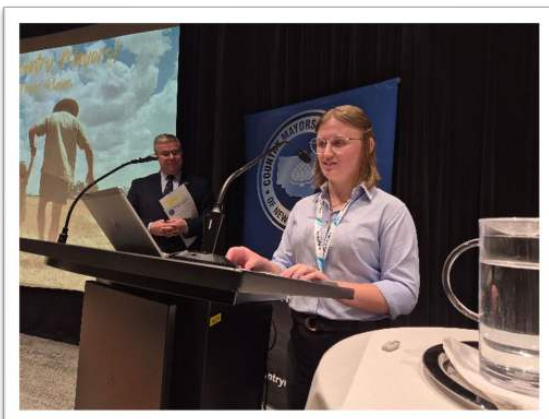
Moree Plains Shire Council Mayor Susannah Pearce also ran a slideshow, with which she illustrated how the Council had been forced to act to clean-up neighbourhoods marred by burnt out homes. The charred remains of houses have lingered for years and detract from more than aesthetics. Mayor Pearce described how her Council incentivised the cleaning up of these sites, with the waiving of waste fees (up to \$10,000). The project has dramatically improved a lower socio-economic neighbourhood.



Mayor Pearce became Mayor in September 2024.

The 2024 CMA Scholarship was presented to Moree Plains Shire Council's Jazmine Howarth.

The inspiring young Local Government GIS professional gave an articulate talk on what her work entails, how important it is to Council and how the \$5,000 CMA scholarship will help her to advance her knowledge and skills with a degree.



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COMMUNIQUE

There was then a brief presentation from the Hon Penny Sharpe MLC, Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage

We are working with land holders, I'll be heading out to visit REZs.

The costs of Biodiversity offsets is a concern but I think we can bring them down.

We built flexibility into the new system.

There is funding for landowners who can provide for the offsets scheme.

They could be funded for what they are already doing.

The Minister also talked about waste: FOGO and the levy review – "I know you want more from it" (the levy).

Mayor Russell Webb presented a thank-you gift.



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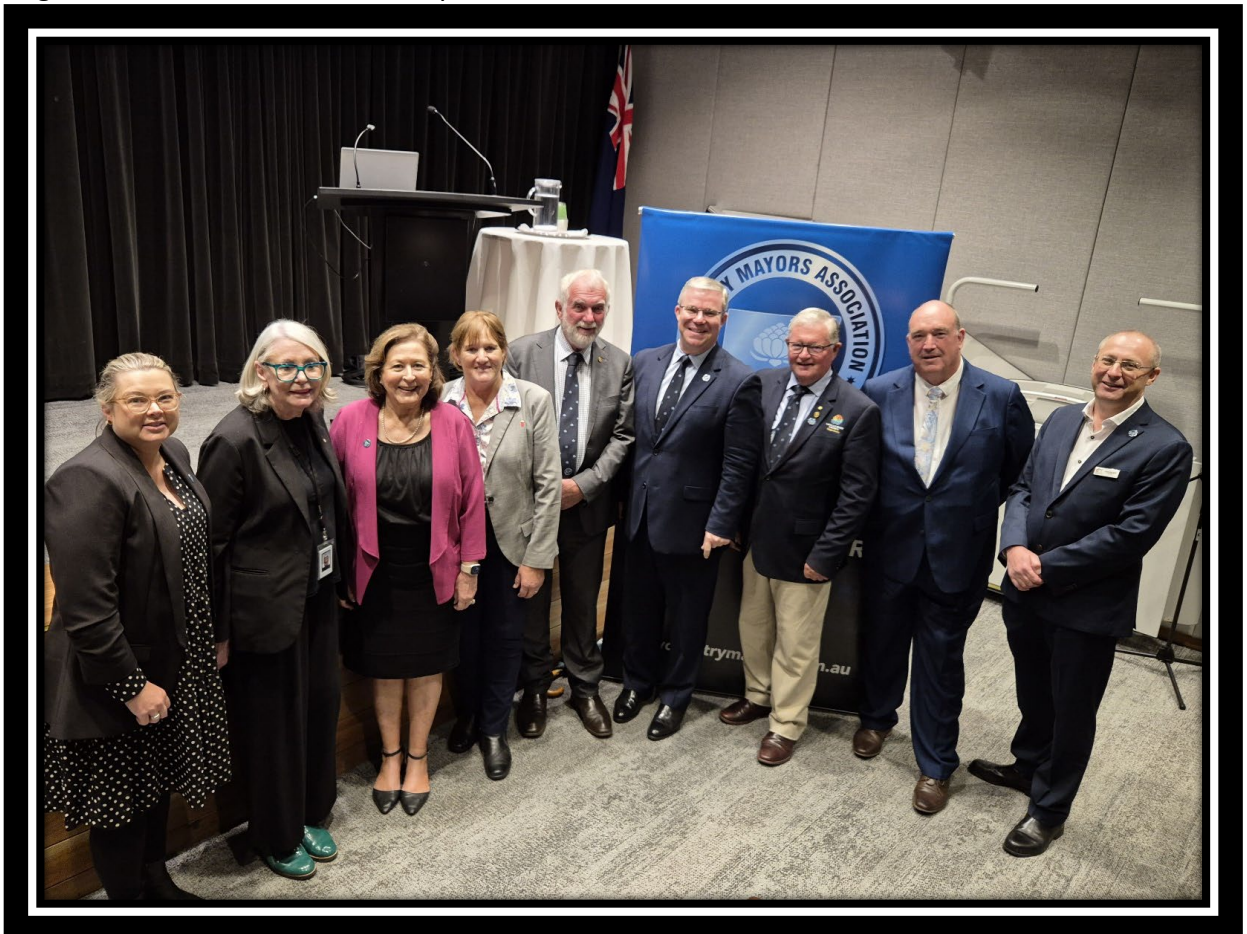
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COMMUNIQUE

A quick morning tea was enjoyed by all.

Before the Country Mayors Association of NSW Executive Board members got their hands on a scone, sausage roll or brownie, they posed for a photo. Pictured left to right: Secretary (and Temora Shire General Manager) Melissa Boxall, Local Government NSW President and Forbes Shire Mayor Phillys Miller OAM, Ballina Shire Mayor Sharon Cadwallader, Singleton Council Mayor Sue Moore, Tamworth Regional Council Mayor Russell Webb, Chairman and Temora Shire Mayor Rick Firman OAM, Lachlan Shire Mayor John Medcalf OAM, Deputy Chairman and Bega Valley Shire Mayor Russell Fitzpatrick and Dubbo Regional Council Mayor Josh Black. with Mayor Sam Coupland of Armidale Regional Council absent from the photo.



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NSW Nationals Leader the Hon. Dougald Saunders MP gave an update on the Crime Bill and the Bail Act.

Mr. Saunders said we need consequences, we need the stick and we will keep the CMA updated about the Bill. The NSW Nationals are pushing for strong and immediate legislative reform to stop repeat serious youth offenders from carrying out crime sprees across regional NSW.

The Crimes Legislation Amendment (Youth Crime) Bill 2025 will offer stronger measures than Labor's changes to the Bail Act that were passed last week, by:

- Expanding the definition of repeat offences beyond serious break and enter and motor vehicle theft, to include all serious indictable offences like murder or sexual assault.
- Introducing electronic monitoring and a mandatory curfew as conditions of bail.
- Revoking bail if there is a breach of the bail conditions, if another charge is laid while on bail, or if there is any interference with the electronic monitoring device.
- Elevating the voice of victims in the court through the use of victim impact statements.



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COMMUNIQUE

NSW Electoral Commissioner Mrs. Rachel McCallum

The Electoral Commissioner congratulated the attending mayors on their election in September 2024. Ms McCallum was appointed in Dec. 2024 and was previously the Information Commissioner. I am keen to learn more about what you do. Your September 2024 election was the biggest in the country that year, with well over 5mil. voters. The NSW Electoral Commission is both a statutory authority regulating and managing election propriety and a service provider. We issue penalty notice for not voting and approve campaign material, for example. The time taken to invoice Councils for their elections is due to the cost-recovery basis of election costs, meaning invoices must be received by the Commission before they issue theirs.

Surveys have shown that a quick and easy process is most valued by voters.

We do work to identify cost-saving opportunities and efficiencies, without compromising or risking public confidence. We are open to feedback.

Q. Mayor Firman, can we simplify the declarations process?

A. We do have an online system for updating.

Q. Cr. Bruce Reynolds Mayor of Blayney Shire:

The postal votes time frame – waiting two weeks for the count was frustrating.

A. Voters are allowed up to 13 days to get their vote in, which is policy nationally as well. The postal system has changed a lot also.

Mayor John Medcalf OAM presented the thank-you gift.



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COMMUNIQUE

Chair of IPART, Ms. Carmel Donnelly PSM

Ms Donnelly graciously allowed for her presentation to be distributed to members.

IPART acknowledged when the rate peg was lower than the rise in inflation. We are proud of the new rate pegging methodology. The rate peg is now unique for each 128 council in NSW.

IPART is involved in pricing increases of interest to CMA Members, other than those relating to Council rates. The Valuer-General is currently seeking to increase charges to Councils. Ms Donnelly encouraged submissions.



Mayor Sue Moore presented the thank-you gift.



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COMMUNIQUE

Members voted that Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Balranald Shire Council, Lake Macquarie City Council and Nambucca Valley Council be endorsed as new members of the CMA. Further, that the Central NSW JO be endorsed as an Associate Member.

The following motions were unanimously supported by the CMA Membership:

- a) **Executive Board Recommendation:** That the CMA Membership support the Executive Board's endorsement of the 17 recommendations from the *"NSW Inquiry into the ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services"*. Further, that the CMA advocate for their expeditious implementation.
- b) **Executive Board Recommendation:** That the Constitution be amended to enable the Executive to accept new member applications, with member endorsement at the next general meeting.
- c) **Executive Board Recommendation:** That the Membership endorse the Executive Board's determination that the CMA submission to 2024 Local Government Financial Sustainability Inquiry be considered the CMA's position regarding FAGs and the return to 1%. Further, that the CMA supports ALGA's campaign: ["Put Our Communities First"](#).
Note: The CMA Executive Board resolved at their most recent meeting to write to all Federal political parties, asking for their position on FAGs and outlining CMA's. This has already been done by the Policy Advisor and Secretariat.
- d) **Executive Board Recommendation:** That the Membership endorse the Board's appointment of a trial Policy Advisor (Submissions etc), for 7.5 hours per week until 30 November, 2025. And Further, that the Board revise the roles of Secretariat and Policy Advisor and report back to Members in due course.
NB: The 7.5 Hours were initially allocated to extend the Secretariat role. Therefore, the role is at no extra cost to Members.
- e) **Executive Board Recommendation:** That the membership endorse the Executive Board's decision to support the existing Orana DAMA (Designated Area Migration Agreement) under the operation of RDAs. Further that, as per the request from RDA Riverina, the CMA writes to both the NSW Minister for Skills, The Hon Steve Whan, MP and Federal Assistant Minister for Immigration, The Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP, requesting that they keep the Orana DAMA as an inland DAMA in NSW under RDA operation, and support the geographical expansion to include Far West and Northern Inland RDAs.

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- f) **Member Recommendation:** That the CMA write urgently to the NSW Government and the NSW Grants Commission to immediately review and overhaul the current methodology for the distribution of the Financial Assistance Grants from the Federal Government, as required under the legislation – Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995 (Commonwealth), to ensure the principles of Horizontal Fiscal Equalization as highlighted in the Act, are correctly applied in NSW and that the funds are distributed to those Councils that need it the most. (from Dungog Shire Council)
- g) **Member Recommendation:** That the CMA support and advocate to the NSW Government for the expansion of a pig bounty trial. (from Lachlan Shire).



The next meeting is scheduled for 9 May 2025 in the Theatrette, NSW Parliament House, Sydney. It will have a Health theme.

The NSW Regional Health Minister, the Hon Ryan Park is confirmed as a guest speaker.

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7.8 Organisational Structure

File Reference: NA

Delivery Program

Goal: 5. Organisational management

Outcome: 5.1 Corporate management

Strategy: 5.1.4 Workforce Planning

Author: General Manager

STAFF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST Nil

IN BRIEF/SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

This report recommends the confirmation of the existing Organisational Structure attached as of February 2025.

TABLED ITEMS Nil

BACKGROUND

Section 333 of the *Local Government Act 1993, as amended*, states:

Re-determination and review of structure

333 RE-DETERMINATION AND REVIEW OF STRUCTURE

The organisation structure may be re-determined under this Part from time to time. The council must review, and may re-determine, the organisation structure within 12 months after any ordinary election of the council.

COMMENT

The Organisation Structure attached is the result of consultation with the Senior Executive Team following the Council's decision to appoint Mrs Leeah Daley to the Acting GM position. This Organisational Structure commences from 5th July 2025.

All the senior staff have stepped up and are ready and willing to take on more responsibility within the organisation.

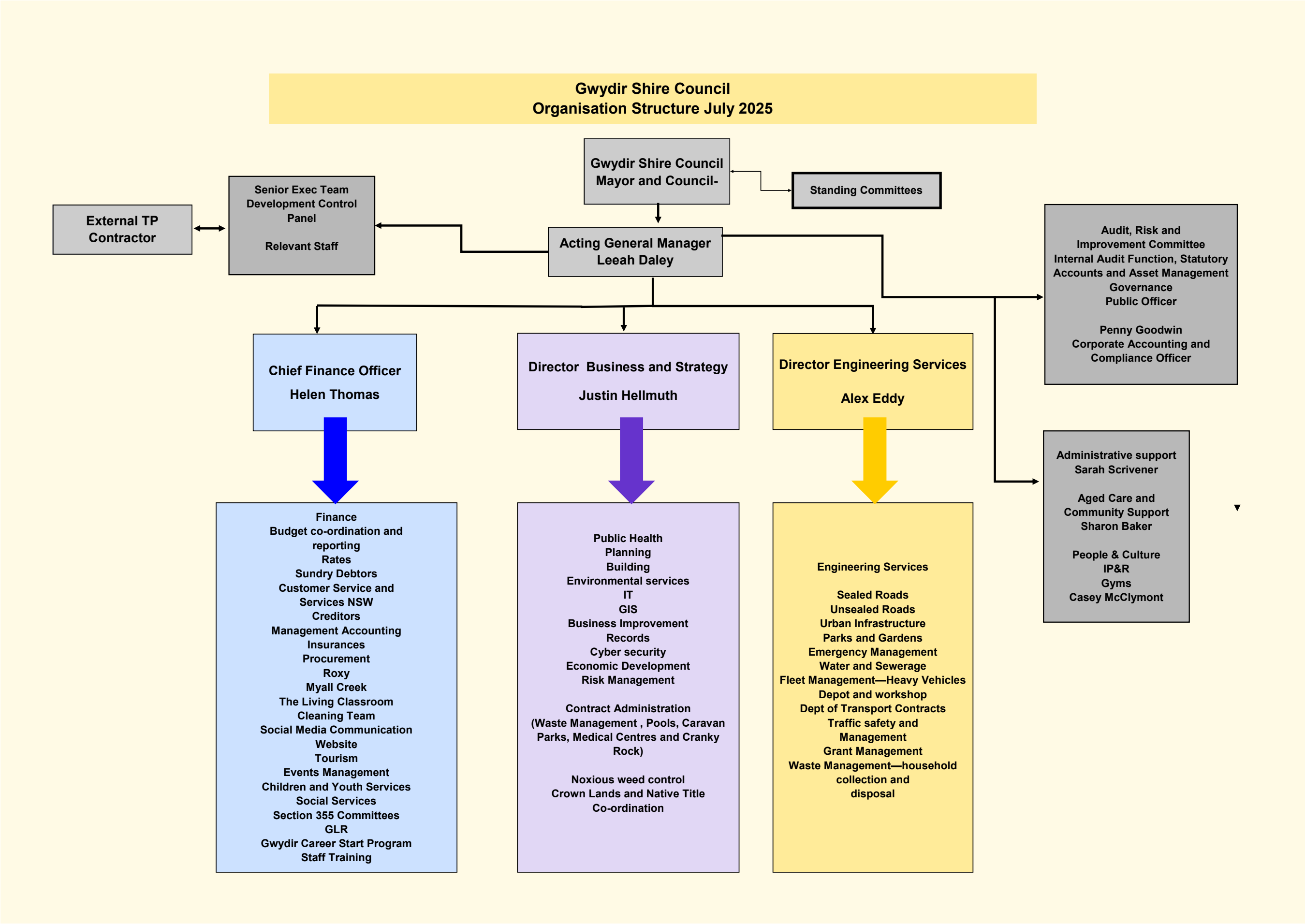
The attached structure now only has three Directorates and will result in some savings within the salaries' budget for the 2025/26 Financial Year.

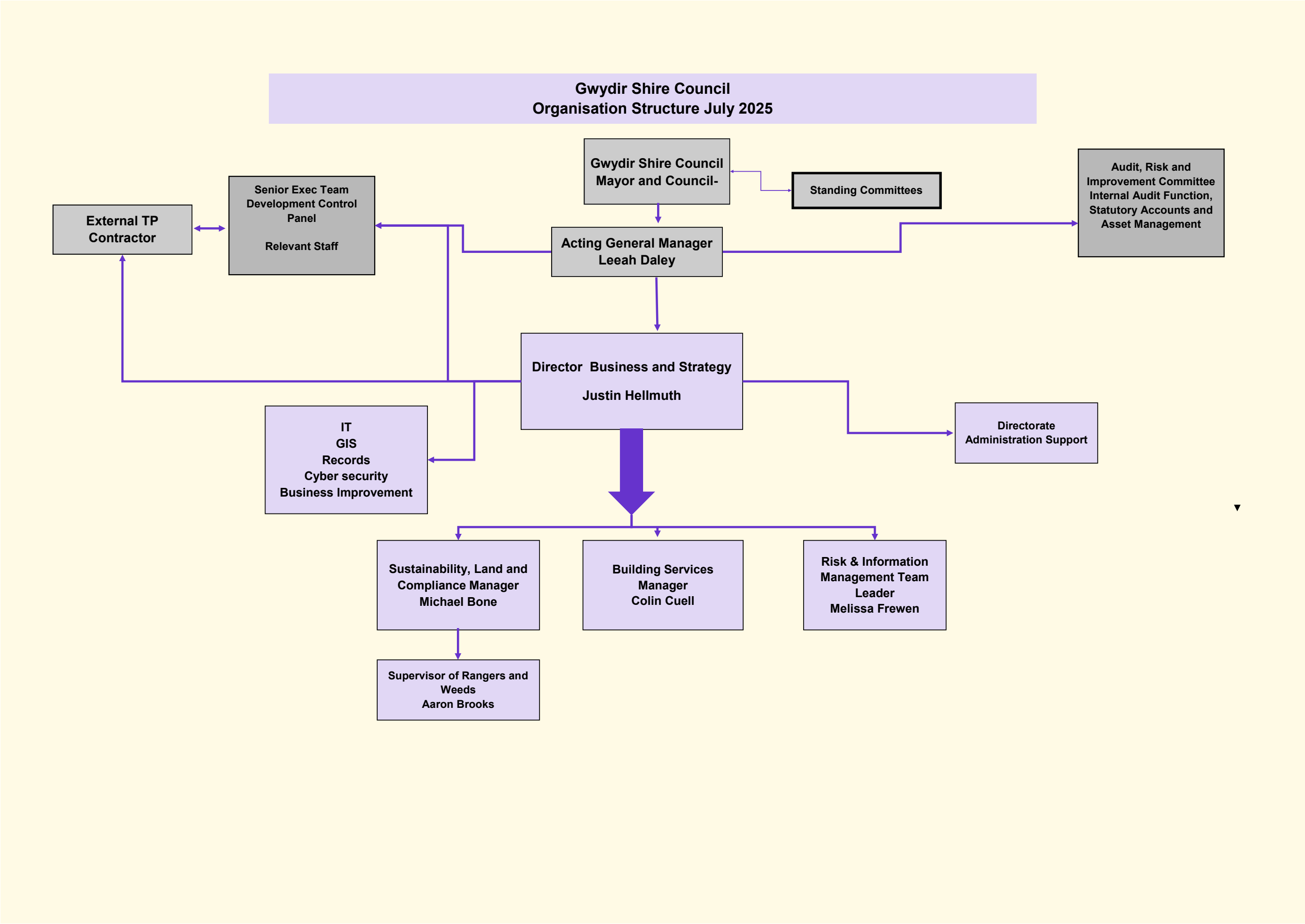
OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

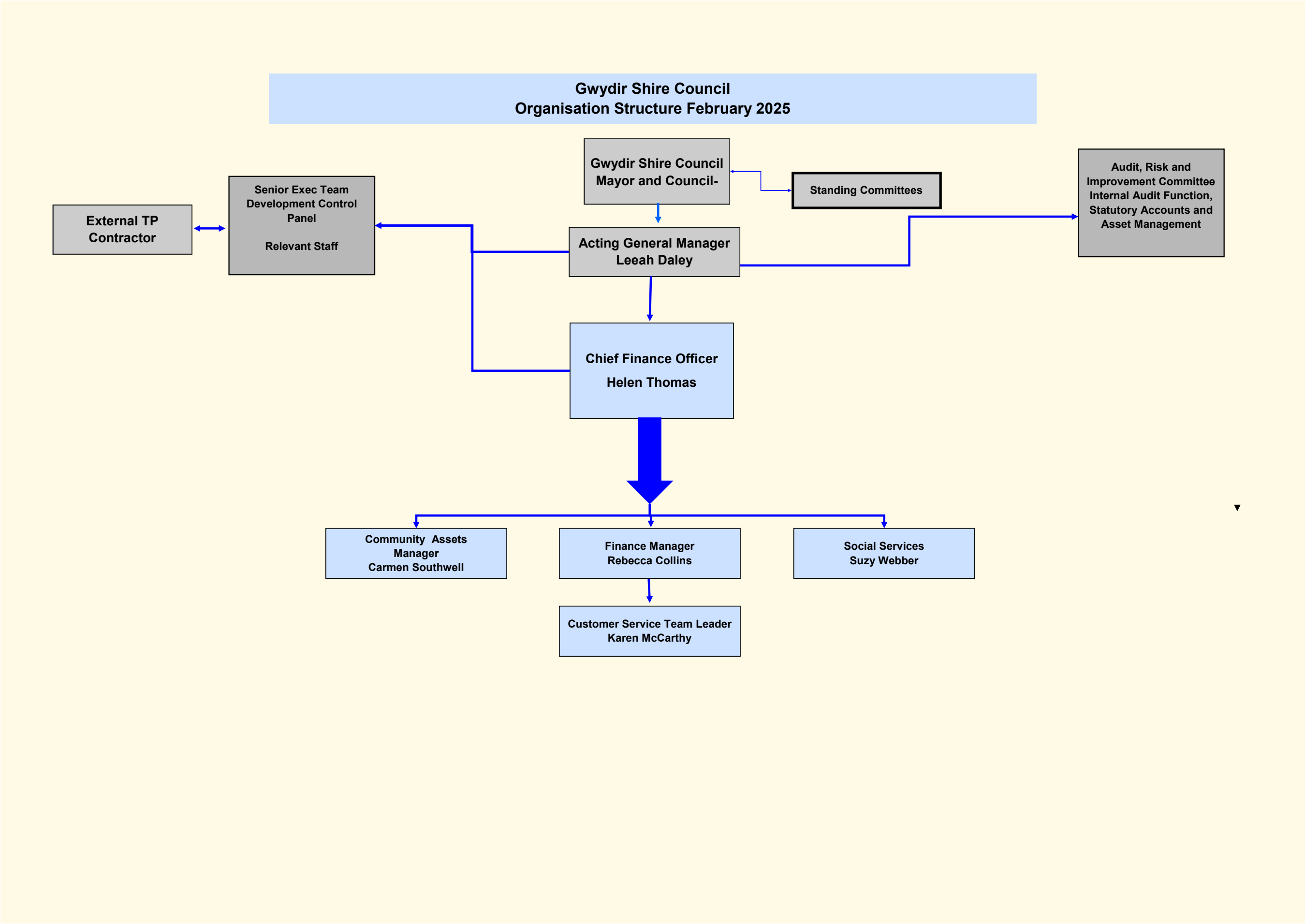
THAT the July 2025 Organisational Structure, as attached, is confirmed.

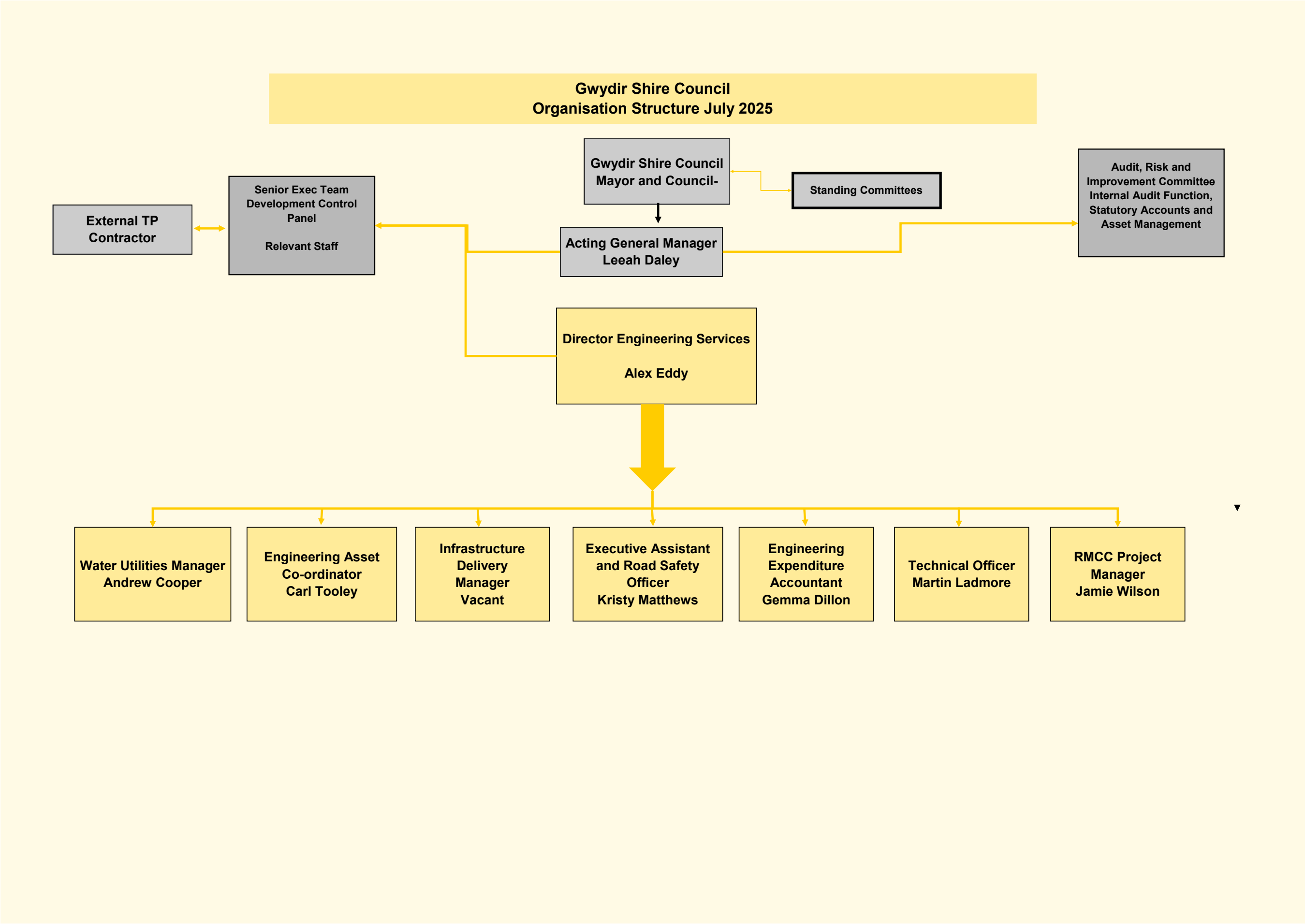
ATTACHMENTS

1. Org Chart July 2025 [7.8.1 - 4 pages]









7.9 March 2025 Quarterly Financial Review

File Reference: NA

Delivery Program

Goal: 5. Organisational management

Outcome: 5.1 Corporate management

Strategy: 5.1.1 Financial Management and accountability systems

Author: General Manager

STAFF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST Nil

IN BRIEF/SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

This report recommends that the March Quarter Budget Review Statement be noted and that the March Quarter budget adjustments be approved.

TABLED ITEMS Nil

BACKGROUND

This report is required under the Local Government Act and associated Regulations.

COMMENT

The commentary in this report is directed at overall results. The impact on individual business units and by implication the associated service levels have not been assessed - this is the responsibility of individual directors and managers.

This quarter shows adjustments in line with the projected end of year results. With the changes in capital programs, adjustments have been made from transfers from reserves to be held until next financial year. Overall, the original budget adopted and the March quarterly review adjustments keep the overall position of Net Operating Result before Capital Items satisfactory.

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

The following sections of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 detail Council's reporting obligations in respect of the Budget.

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 - Reg 203

203 Budget review statements and revision of estimates

(1) Not later than 2 months after the end of each quarter (except the June quarter), the responsible accounting officer of a council must prepare and submit to the council a budget review statement that shows, by reference to the estimate of income and expenditure set out in the statement of the council's revenue policy included in the operational plan for the relevant year, a revised estimate of the income and expenditure for that year.

- (2) A budget review statement must include or be accompanied by:
- (a) a report as to whether or not the responsible accounting officer believes that the statement indicates that the financial position of the council is satisfactory, having regard to the original estimate of income and expenditure, and
 - (b) if that position is unsatisfactory, recommendations for remedial action.
- (3) A budget review statement must also include any information required by the Code to be included in such a statement.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

THAT the March Quarter Budget Review Statement be noted.

FURTHER that the March Quarter budget adjustments be approved.

ATTACHMENTS

1. march 2025 quarterly review [7.9.1 - 9 pages]

Gwydir Shire Council

Quarterly Budget Review Statement
for the period 01/01/25 to 31/03/25

Table of Contents	page
1. Responsible Accounting Officer's Statement	1
2. Income & Expenses Budget Review Statement's Statement	2
Recommended Changes	3
3. Capital Budget Review Statement Statement	4
Recommended Changes	5
4. Cash & Investments Budget Review Statement Statement	6
5. Contracts & Other Expenses Budget Review Statement	7
6. Consultancy & Legal Expenses Budget Review Statement	8

Gwydir Shire Council

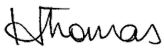
Quarterly Budget Review Statement
for the period 01/01/25 to 31/03/25

Report by Responsible Accounting Officer

The following statement is made in accordance with Clause 203(2) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2005:

31 March 2025

It is my opinion that the Quarterly Budget Review Statement for Gwydir Shire Council for the quarter ended 30/09/23 indicates that Council's projected financial position at 30/6/24 will be satisfactory at year end, having regard to the projected estimates of income and expenditure and the original budgeted income and expenditure.

Signed: 

date: 12/05/2025

Helen Thomas
Responsible Accounting Officer

Gwydir Shire Council

Quarterly Budget Review Statement
for the period 01/01/25 to 31/03/25

Income & Expenses Budget Review Statement

Budget review for the quarter ended 31 March 2025
Income & Expenses - Council Consolidated

	Original Budget 2023/24	Approved Changes					Revised Budget 2023/24	Variations for this Mar Qtr	Notes	Projected Year End Result	Actual YTD figures
		Carry Forwards	Other than by QBRs	Sep QBRs	Dec QBRs	Mar QBRs					
Income											
Rates and Annual Charges	(12,542,870)			(27,400)	(79,214)		(12,649,484)	(75,845)		(12,725,329)	(12,711,411)
User Charges and Fees	(3,228,700)			(172,519)	(147,729)		(3,548,948)	(86,990)		(3,635,938)	(4,530,851)
Interest and Investment Revenues	(520,559)			(305,081)	(15,787)		(841,427)	(11,007)		(852,434)	(929,486)
Other Revenues	(5,619,232)			8,587	(245,675)		(5,856,320)	(127,270)		(5,983,590)	(1,744,019)
Grants & Contributions - Operating	(14,154,700)			(700,057)	592,124		(14,262,633)	(58,608)		(14,321,241)	(11,937,266)
Grants & Contributions - Capital	(22,761,257)	-		(3,420,040)	4,339,172		(21,842,125)	(172,146)		(22,014,271)	(12,808,278)
Net gain from disposal of assets	(700,000)			-			(700,000)	700,000		-	
Transfer from Reserves	(750,000)			(1,293,678)			(2,043,678)	750,000		(1,293,678)	
Total Income from Continuing Operations	(60,277,318)	-	-	(5,910,188)	4,442,891	-	(61,744,615)	918,134		(60,826,481)	(44,661,311)
Expenses											
Employee Costs	17,126,252			1,150,678	(9,767)		18,267,163	211,969		18,479,132	13,605,477
Borrowing Costs	612,477			-			612,477	(299)		612,178	551,226
Materials & Contracts	42,889,473	-		4,345,985	(4,491,696)		42,743,762	109,441		42,853,203	35,221,872
Depreciation	10,373,591			-	5,348		10,378,939	24,384		10,403,323	9,450,428
Legal Costs	10,000			-			10,000			10,000	-
Consultants	281,500			130,113			411,613	55,600		467,213	408,344
Other Expenses	3,665,453			(12,770)	(13,564)		3,639,119	6,898		3,646,017	288,669
Net Loss from disposal of assets	-						-			-	209,024
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations	74,958,746	-	-	5,614,006	(4,509,679)	-	76,063,073	407,993		76,471,066	59,735,040
Net Operating Result from Continuing Operator	14,681,428	-	-	(296,182)	(66,788)	-	14,318,458	1,326,127	-	15,644,585	15,073,729
Discontinued Operations - Surplus/(Deficit)							-			-	
Net Operating Result from All Operations	14,681,428	-	-	(296,182)	(66,788)	-	14,318,458	1,326,127		15,644,585	15,073,729
Net Operating Result before Capital Items	37,442,685	-	-	3,123,858	(4,405,960)	-	36,160,583	1,498,273	-	37,658,856	27,882,007

Gwydir Shire Council

Quarterly Budget Review Statement
for the period 01/01/25 to 31/03/25

Income & Expenses Budget Review Statement
Recommended changes to revised budget

Budget Variations being recommended include the following material items:

Notes	Details
Rates and Annual Charges	Increase in sewer access charges received with extension of sewer system
User Fees	Increases expected in GLR income for HVT
Interest and Investment	Adjustment to income from actuals received
Other revenues	Increase in Tharawonga fees and other share agreements
Operating Grants	Event funding increase
Capital Grants	Water meter reading grant
Employee Costs	Increased in line with extra employee checks
Materials and Contracts	Minor adjustments against projects
Other Expenses	Increase in miscellaneous costs across business units

Gwydir Shire Council

Quarterly Budget Review Statement

for the period 01/01/25 to 31/03/25

Capital Budget Review Statement

Budget review for the quarter ended 31 March 2025

Capital Budget - Council Consolidated

	Original Budget 2023/24	Approved Changes					Revised Budget 2023/24	Variations for this Mar Qtr	Notes	Projected Year End Result
		Carry Forwards	Other than by QBRS	Sep QBRS	Dec QBRS	Mar QBRS				
Capital Expenditure										
New Assets										
- Plant & Equipment	1,500,000						1,500,000			1,500,000
- Land & Buildings	5,600,000						5,600,000	305,378		5,905,378
- Other			-				-			-
Renewal Assets (Replacement)										
- Plant & Equipment	-			902,689			902,689			902,689
- Land & Buildings	-			982,719			982,719			982,719
- Roads, Bridges, Footpaths	16,852,362			1,444,707	-1548681		16,748,388			16,748,388
Materials	-						-			-
Loan Repayments (Principal)	-						-			-
Waste	-			-			-			-
Water supply	3,040,000			-	-3040000		-			-
Sewerage services	140,000			-			140,000	102,350		242,350
Total Capital Expenditure	27,132,362	-	-	3,330,115	(4,588,681)	-	25,873,796	407,728		26,281,524
Capital Funding										
Rates & Other Untied Funding	600,000			69,799			669,799			669,799
Capital Grants & Contributions	17,852,362			3,260,316	-1548681		19,563,997	305,378		19,869,375
Reserves:	-						-			-
- External Resrtictions/Reserves	-		-				-			-
- Internal Restrictions/Reserves	5,000,000			-			5,000,000			5,000,000
New Loans				-			-			-
Receipts from Sale of Assets							-			-
- Plant & Equipment	500,000			-			500,000			500,000
Waste	-						-			-
Water supply	3,040,000			-	-3040000		-			-
Sewerage services	140,000			-			140,000	102,350		242,350
Total Capital Funding	27,132,362	-	-	3,330,115	(4,588,681)	-	25,873,796	407,728	-	26,281,524
Net Capital Funding - Surplus/(Deficit)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Gwydir Shire Council

Quarterly Budget Review Statement
for the period 01/01/25 to 31/03/25

Capital Budget Review Statement
Recommended changes to revised budget

Budget Variations being recommended include the following material items:

Notes	Details
	Changes to this quarter include the increase to sewer for required works and the completion of the additional accommodation at the Living Classroom.

Gwydir Shire Council

Quarterly Budget Review Statement

for the period 01/10/24 to 31/12/24

Cash & Investments Budget Review Statement

Budget review for the period 01/01/25 to 31/03/25

Cash & Investments - Council Consolidated

(\$000's)	Original Budget 2023/24	Approved Changes					Revised Budget 2023/24	Variations for this Sep Qtr	Notes	Projected Year End Result	Actual YTD figures
		Carry Forwards	Other than by QBRS	Sep QBRS	Dec QBRS	Mar QBRS					
Externally Restricted ⁽¹⁾											
Aged Care Bonds	515,000						515,000			515,000	1,401,179
Developer Contributions	856,000						856,000			856,000	617,673
Water	1,300,000						1,300,000			1,300,000	1,351,828
Sewer	1,500,000						1,500,000			1,500,000	1,258,766
Domestic Waste Management	4,400,000						4,400,000			4,400,000	4,554,905
Contracted Liabilities	15,000,000						15,000,000			15,000,000	5,341,776
Total Externally Restricted	23,571,000	-	-	-	-	-	23,571,000	-		23,571,000	14,526,127
(1) Funds that must be spent for a specific purpose											
Internally Restricted ⁽²⁾											
Employee Leave Entitlement	900,000						900,000			900,000	1,000,000
Trust Accounts	70,000	-					70,000			70,000	164,101
Total Internally Restricted	970,000	-	-	-	-	-	970,000	-		970,000	1,164,101
(2) Funds that Council has earmarked for a specific purpose											
Unrestricted (ie. available after the above Restricti	4,459,000	-	-		-	-	4,459,000	-		4,459,000	16,886,384
Total Cash & Investments	29,000,000	-					29,000,000			29,000,000	32,576,613

Gwydir Shire Council

Quarterly Budget Review Statement

for the period 01/01/25 to 31/03/25

Contracts Budget Review Statement

Budget review for the period 01/01/25 to 31/03/25

Part A - Contracts Listing - contracts entered into during the quarter

Contractor	Contract detail & purpose	Contract Value to date	Start Date	Duration of Contract	Budgeted (Y/N)	Notes
Roger Moore Pty Ltd	GWY_2024_T01 Supply and Delivery of Bulk Fuels (Warialda, North Star)	\$700,000 Annually	1-Oct-24	5 Years + 1 Year	Y	
Northwest Petroleum Pty I	GWY_2024_T01 Supply and Delivery of Bulk Fuels (Bingara)	\$500,000 Annually	1-Oct-24	5 Years + 1 Year	Y	
Red Energy	LGP006 Electricity supply to Large Sites and Street Lighting	TBA	1-Jan-25	7 Years	Y	
				40 weeks from date of possession		
Shay Brennan Constructic	Struxi 231967 Construction of Bingara Administration Centre	6,037,630	7-Aug-24		Y	
AGL	LGP Contract Small Sites Electricity	\$350k - \$450k	1-Jan-23	24 Months	Y	
JR Richards	Waste collection and processing	\$350k - \$450k P/A	1-Oct-23	120 Months	Y	
Stabilcorp	LGP Stabilising Croppa Creek Road	1,279,513	1-Mar-25	1 month	Y	
Stabilised Pavements Aus	LGP Stabilising Croppa Creek Road	1,727,155	1-Mar-25	1 month	Y	
Finn Valley Plant and Civil	LGP Causeway and construction Croppa Creek	1,370,726	01/09/25	6 months	Y	

Gwydir Shire Council

Quarterly Budget Review Statement
for the period 01/01/25 to 31/03/25

Consultancy & Legal Expenses Budget Review Statement

Consultancy & Legal Expenses Overview

Expense	YTD Expenditure (Actual Dollars)	Budgeted (Y/N)
Consultancies	408,344	y
Legal Fees	-	y

Definition of a consultant:

A consultant is a person or organisation engaged under contract on a temporary basis to provide recommendations or high level specialist or professional advice to assist decision making by management. Generally it is the advisory nature of the work that differentiates a consultant from other contractors.

Comments

Expenditure included in the above YTD figure includes: Project Management and Governance consultants.

7.10 Proposed Community Meeting Dates

File Reference: NA

Delivery Program

Goal: 4. Proactive regional and local leadership

Outcome: 4.1 We are an engaged and connected community

Strategy: 4.1.2 Enable broad, rich and meaningful engagement to occur

Author: IP&R Governance Officer

STAFF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST Nil

IN BRIEF/SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Proposed schedule for Community meetings throughout Gwydir Shire Local Government Area (LGA).

TABLED ITEMS Nil

BACKGROUND

Community meetings serve the critical purpose of providing a public forum for elected officials, government staff and citizens to join together and discuss key issues to help develop a strong and prosperous community.

The proposed community meeting dates have been drafted in collaboration with the mayor.

These community meetings will form part of the Council's community engagement processes for the purpose of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and its associated documents.

COMMENT

Proposed Community Meetings Schedule - 2025 Councillors and Staff

Bingara - Thursday, 28 August 2025 - Roxy Theatre from 6pm

Gravesend - Monday, 18 August 2025 - Gravesend Hall - from 6pm

Warialda - Tuesday, 19 August 2025 - Warialda Hall - from 6pm

Coolatai - Wednesday, 27 August 2025 - Coolatai Hall - from 6pm

North Star - Tuesday, 19 August 2025 - North Star Club - 12pm lunch

Croppa Creek - Monday, 25 August 2025 - Croppa Creek Bowling Club - from 6pm

Upper Horton - Monday, 1 September 2025 - Upper Horton Sporting Club - from 6pm

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

THAT the proposed community meeting schedule is adopted.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

7.11 Gravesend Recreation Reserve

File Reference: NA

Delivery Program

Goal: 4. Proactive regional and local leadership

Outcome: 4.1 We are an engaged and connected community

Strategy: 4.1.3 Build on our sense of community

Author: General Manager

STAFF DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST Nil

IN BRIEF/SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

This report recommends the formation of the Gravesend Recreation Reserve Management Committee under Section 355 of the Local Government Act to manage on Council's behalf Reserve Trust 81241, which Gwydir Shire Council is the appointed Corporate Crown Land Manager.

TABLED ITEMS Nil

BACKGROUND

Gwydir Shire Council was appointed as the Corporate Crown Land Manager of the Gravesend Recreation Reserve Trust 81241 in September 2019. The Reserve is outlined in the attached plan.

The Council assumed management of the Reserve at the request of Crown Lands and the then members of the Reserve Trust.

COMMENT

There is now interest within the Gravesend Community for the Reserve to be managed by a Section 355 Committee of the Council. The role and functions of the proposed management committee are attached.

There is a core of existing volunteers who will be appointed to the committee with one nominated as a voluntary caretaker.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Gravesend Recreation Reserve Management Committee be formed under Section 355 of the Local Government Act.

FURTHER that nominations be sought from interested Gravesend locality Community Members for appointment to the proposed Management Committee.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Gravesend Recreation Reserve [7.11.1 - 1 page]
2. Gravesend Recreation Reserve 81241 [7.11.2 - 2 pages]



Lot 111 DP 751108
 Lot 270 DP 751108
 Lot 216 DP 751108
 Lot 7037 DP 1043652

Gravesend Recreation
 Reserve Trust 81241

Locked Bag 5
 BINGARA NSW 2404

MAP LEGEND

- Land Parcels
- Gravesend Recreation Reserve

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 and end user comments should be directed to:
 General Manager
 Locked Bag 5
 BINGARA NSW 2404.

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Date: 16th May 2019
 Author: DPennett
 File: Projects 2019/GM/Gravesend Recreation Reserve/
 Map - Gravesend Recreation Reserve - 16 Map 2019



GRAVESEND RECREATION RESERVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Committee Membership and quorum

The membership of this Committee is:

- A Gwydir Shire Councillor Representative if selected by the Council;
- The General Manager or nominee; and;
- Between Five and Ten Community Representatives

The quorum is 4.

The non-Council members of this Committee are 'designated persons' under Section 441 of the Local Government Act.

Therefore, each non-Council Committee member is required to complete an annual written return of interest and declare any pecuniary interest in any matter before the committee as required under the Local Government Act.

Committee Chairman and Deputy Chairman

The Chair will be nominated by the General Manager.

The Deputy Chair and Secretary/Treasurer are determined by vote at the Committee.

Whenever the voting on a motion put to this Committee is equal, the Chairperson is to have a casting vote as well as an original vote.

Committee Delegation

Pursuant to Section 377 and 379 of the Local Government Act, 1993, as amended, and subject to the limitations and stipulations which the said Sections 377 and 379 impose, the power to resolve upon any matter submitted for consideration concerning the future planning and management of the activities of the Gravesend Recreation Reserve 81241.

Committee Function

The role of this Committee initially is the control, development and management of the Gravesend Recreation Reserve.

The Committee will achieve this through performing the following functions.

- Prepare a short-, medium- and long-term management plan for the project.
- Develop the estimated budget and any proposed fees and charges for the next financial year.
- Submit an Annual Report for inclusion into the Council's Annual Report before the end of September each year for the preceding financial year outlining the performance of the Committee against the adopted management plan and budget.
- Table the minutes of each Committee Meeting, if requested, at the next available Council Meeting.
- Maintain the volunteer workers' hours' records

8 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

9 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Confidential Organisation and Community Services Report

It is recommended that the Council resolve into Committee of the Whole with the press and public excluded to allow consideration of this Item, as provided for under Section 10A (2) (a) of the Local Government Act, 1993, on the grounds the report contains personnel matters concerning particular individuals (other than councillors).

Medical Practices

It is recommended that the Council resolve into Committee of the Whole with the press and public excluded to allow consideration of this Item, as provided for under Section 10A (2) (a) of the Local Government Act, 1993, on the grounds the report contains personnel matters concerning particular individuals (other than councillors).

10 CLOSURE