



# COMMUNITY REPORT

## 2018-19

CONNECTED, SUSTAINABLE, CREATIVE

Bellingen Shire Council is committed to supporting the community to achieve its aspirations, as set out in the Shire of Bellingen 2027 Community Vision. This document highlights what Council has achieved against the goals the Council has set for its term.

This document summarises information from the Annual Report. The full document can be found at [bellingen.nsw.gov.au](http://bellingen.nsw.gov.au)





## A GUMBAYNGGIRR DREAM...

“A place where there is genuine respect for the land and the original people of this country.

A place where the ancestors’ way of holding country is recognised.

A place where there is respect for custodial people who carry this tradition today and for elders and the children of the future.

A place where we all walk together, where we can all be here in harmony with the land and all life.

Shared by a gumbaynggirr elder in our community: ‘when you’re small you look and see how happy people are, family gathered together.

As a child you felt happy, that feeling needs to come back. It was very powerful in the early days and can still come back that way. Connection with family is very

important... safety and survival of each and every individual connected with family.

When we were children and went to river with aunties and uncles – they would make sure we were safe and that each and everyone would come together. What happened in early days has got to come back. Each and every one of us has to have healing before we can journey on into the future.

We have to come together again as one and come closer to oneness. Got to come together as one again. The land around here has a great capacity to do that, to heal... in a way that’s not separating. It’s something that would bring people together.”

# HIGHLIGHTS

IN 2018-2019  
THERE WERE:

**417,144**

BINS COLLECTED

**3,947**

TONNES DOMESTIC WASTE  
COLLECTED

**22,693**

PHONE CALLS AND COUNTER  
ENQUIRIES ANSWERED

**72,422**

LIBRARY ITEMS BORROWED

**103,827**

LIBRARY VISITORS

**57%**

OF POPULATION ARE LIBRARY  
MEMBERS

**211**

HECTARES OF WEED MANAGED

**2.3kms**

RIPARIAN RESTORATION

IN 2018-19 COUNCIL  
DELIVERED A \$14.7 MILLION  
CAPITAL PROGRAM  
INCLUDING:



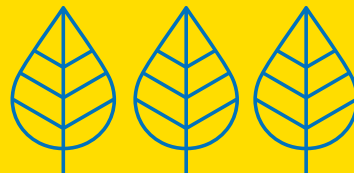
**\$4,206,009**

ROADS AND TRANSPORT



**\$2,058,639**

COMMUNITY FACILITIES  
TOWN IMPROVEMENTS  
SPORT AND RECREATION



**\$3,995,059**

ENVIRONMENT  
\*INC FLOOD EVENT



**\$4,428,296**

SEWER, WATER AND WASTE

## MEETING YOUR ASPIRATIONS COMMUNITY WELLBEING

### ASPIRATIONS

- Our children, youth and seniors are valued, involved and supported
- We are a learning and creative community
- We value, honour and actively acknowledge our Gumbaynggirr culture and heritage
- We are connected, safe and healthy with a strong sense of community

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The HUB has engaged with more than 83 community organisations, hosted 1,241 events and attracted more than 13,838 guests in the past year making it one of the busiest council community facilities in our shire.
- \$326,880 delivered to redevelop Dorrigo's Coronation Park, providing improved access and infrastructure to enable seniors and those with disability to easily access and use the park.
- Council prioritised an investment of \$143,000 and secured \$112,000 in grant funding to develop, design and co-deliver the Urunga Tidal Pool Project.
- Our library network hosted 484 events which attracted 4,459 people across the shire.
- \$153,260 secured to deliver the Urunga Library Redesign & New Technology Project to enhance the user experience of all library visitors.
- The Urunga Arts Space has attracted more than 140 participating local artists, hosted 22 individual exhibitions, attracted 10,000 visitors and generated more than \$80,000 in sales revenue.
- A community grant of \$5000 has funded the establishment and maintenance of an outdoor classroom for Bellingen Public School to learn more about Aboriginal culture and the continuation of connection to country.
- The innovative DAISY Player (Digital Access Information System) is available at all 3 libraries provides a complete audio substitute for print material, plays talking books and music and is specifically designed for use by people with impaired vision and dyslexia.

## MEETING YOUR ASPIRATIONS RESILIENT ECONOMY

### ASPIRATIONS

- We have meaningful work and vibrant businesses within our community
- We have balanced, sustainable tourism
- We have a sustainable local farming sector that provides us with healthy, fresh food

### HIGHLIGHTS

- \$25,000 in grant funding initiatives and promotional avenues provided to numerous festivals across the Shire.
- \$4 million in grant funding secured to deliver the Bellingen Memorial Hall Transformation Project.
- Funding submission through Destination NSW attracted a \$100,000 tourism campaign increasing visitation rates, additional investment and economic growth to the region.
- \$1m grant secured to enhance the visitor experience and provide attractive, safe and convenient access for all who visit Dangar Falls.
- Development of three separate apps for the shire centres of Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo, providing digital access to events and attractions.

# MEETING YOUR ASPIRATIONS

## PLACES FOR PEOPLE

### ASPIRATIONS

- We have a diversity of beautiful spaces that foster community happiness and wellbeing
- We have a mixture of affordable sustainable housing options for all in our community
- We are connected and able to move around in a safe, accessible, affordable, healthy and environmentally friendly way
- We have the facilities and services needed to be a healthy and active community.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- \$885,000 grant secured to deliver Stage Four of the Bellingen Main Street works including the installation of a feature trellis shade structure along Church Street, new landscape walls, feature footpaths and cobble stones, kerb and guttering and road and carpark resurfacing.
- Preliminary works have been undertaken by local tradesmen and artisans to restore the iconic Soldiers Window as part of the larger Memorial Hall Transformation Project.
- The Why Local Government Matters (WLGm) research was championed by Bellingen Shire Council and saw the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation of Councils commission UTS to investigate how and why residents value the activities and role of local government confirming Bellingen Shire is an extraordinary place to live.
- Collaboration efforts to develop a new Growth Management Strategy for the Shire were recognised and awarded winner of the Community Partnerships and Collaboration Category at the 2019 New South Wales Local Government Professionals Excellence Awards.
- Our road network renewal program has resurfaced an additional 16 kilometres of poor condition sealed roads.
- Gravel re-sheeted 7.8km of road and graded 80km.
- Reduced the shire's 22 load limited bridges down to 15.
- Council championed the formation of the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation (MNCJO) to collaborate and lobby to support our regional priorities including the development of the MNJCO Timber Bridge Renewal Prospectus, which represents a \$20 million investment to address a total of 91 bridges or 41% of the regions ageing timber bridges.
- \$54,000 grant secured to refurbish the Bellinger Valley North Beach Surf Club.

# MEETING YOUR ASPIRATIONS

## OUR LIVING ENVIRONMENT

### ASPIRATIONS

- We have clean water which is protected and used sustainably
- Our surroundings are quiet and clean
- We reduce, reuse, recycle
- We live sustainably and reduce our ecological footprint and contribution to climate change
- We protect and enhance our biodiversity
- We work together to protect and enhance our environment

### HIGHLIGHTS

- \$866,000 invested in our three waste management facilities to improve sustainability outcomes and customer service levels.
- 61% of council's total investment funds strategically placed with institutions divested of the fossil fuel industry.
- 220kW of free and renewable power produced, and savings reinvested into our \$285,000 Revolving Energy Fund (REF).
- State of climate emergency declared and planning for a workshop underway to operationalise our emergency declaration.
- Instream riverbank stabilisation works and the restoration and rehabilitation of 1.6 hectares of riparian zone land within the Earl Preston Reserve.
- Stage One of the Coastal Management Program (CMP) invites our community to participate to determine key coastal management issues and review current management practises.
- \$511,000 of Environmental Levy funds invested towards 18 projects, and \$40,000 via the Levy's Community Fund Grant Program.
- Snapping turtles from Taronga Zoo's successful captive breeding program were released into the Bellinger River to boost the numbers of this endangered species.
- Business case developed to attract funding that will support the work of the Great Koala National Park initiative.
- Investment in the shire's water future delivered a new two megalitre drinking water reservoir at South Bellingen, and a new 90 kilolitre wastewater pump station at Urunga.
- \$2.5 million invested to ensure Bellingen has access to clean drinking water and to protect the environmental health of the Bellinger and Kalang Rivers.

# MEETING YOUR ASPIRATIONS

## CIVIC LEADERSHIP

### ASPIRATIONS

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### HIGHLIGHTS

- Council commissioned UTS to conduct an independent review of council's financial sustainability. The review found Council's long-term financial sustainability is tracking well. In particular, the improving technical efficiency, low levels of debt, prudent spending, and the steady improvement in asset condition all indicate that Council is doing an extraordinarily successful job in challenging conditions.
- Customer Satisfaction Score (CSS) – target 75%. Achieved Customer Satisfaction Score = 90%.
- Customer and Business Services Team winner of the 2019 National Local Government Customer Service Network Awards' Customer Service Team of the Year Category for the second time since their last win at the Award's Inaugural 2015 event.
- Insurance premium rate of 1.81% is below the LRG rate of 2.36% and premium costs have decreased by 70% since 2010.
- Extensive Service Delivery Review undertaken to address organisational effectiveness and strategic capacity to deliver on council's priorities.
- Reflect, an infrastructure asset management, inspection and decision support tool developed that provides office and field based staff with the flexibility to capture and track maintenance requests, incidents, asset defects and maintenance activities.
- Create, Council's online engagement platform featured 20 projects which attracted 4,200 visits and 253 submissions from 198 people.

'The future looks bright for the residents of Bellingen Shire council and they can have the utmost faith in the stewardship of council'.

Associate Professor Joseph Drew. UTS



## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Council has seen a steady improvement in operating result over the past few years due to a number of initiatives that Council has undertaken, including in more recent years those commitments in its Fit For the Future (FFF) submissions. However, over the past year Council has faced a number of challenges that has resulted in a return to an operating deficit for 2018/19. Council has met 5 of the 7 Office of Local Government performance ratios for the year and will continue to strive towards long term financial sustainability.

### INCOME STATEMENT

for the year ended 30 June 2019

ORIGINAL UNAUDITED BUDGET '19	\$'000	ACTUAL 2019
	<b>Income from continuing operations</b>	
	Revenue:	
14,563	Rates and annual charges	14,771
6,488	User charges and fees	5,236
1,089	Interest and investment revenue	1,408
500	Other revenues	509
5,939	Grants and contributions provided for operating purposes	7,559
8,855	Grants and contributions provided for capital purposes	2,378
	Other income:	
	Net gains from the disposal of assets	3
	Fair value increment on investment property	531
<b>37,434</b>	<b>Total income from continuing operations</b>	<b>32,395</b>
	<b>Expenses from continuing operations</b>	
10,871	Employee benefits and on-costs	10,273
483	Borrowing costs	632
8,283	Materials and contracts	11,459
6,783	Depreciation and amortisation	7,593
2,742	Other expenses	3,191
<b>28,162</b>	<b>Total expenses from continuing operations</b>	<b>33,148</b>
<b>8,272</b>	<b>Operating result from continuing operations</b>	<b>(753)</b>
<b>8,272</b>	<b>Net operating result for the year</b>	<b>(753)</b>
8,272	Net operating result attributable to Council	(753)
(583)	Net operating result for the year before grants and contributions provided for capital purposes	(3,131)

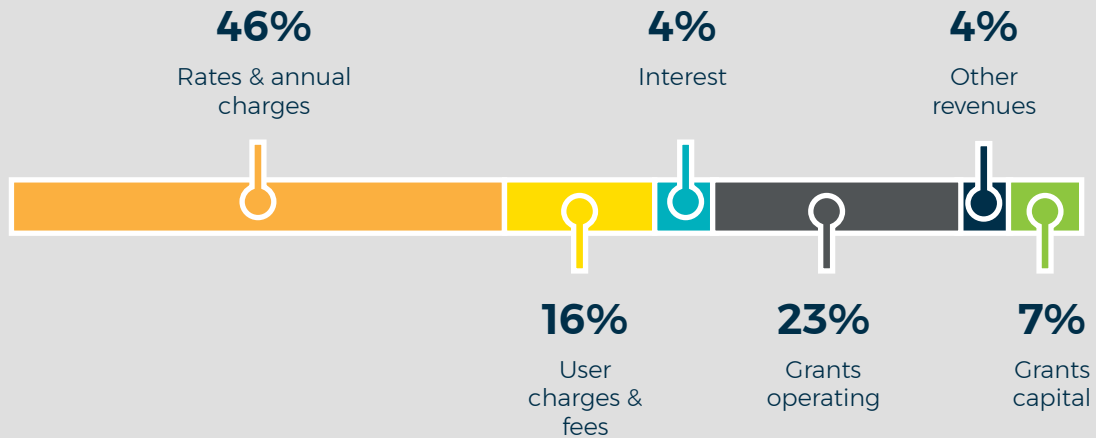
### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

as at 30 June 2019

\$'000	ACTUAL 2019
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current assets	
Cash and cash equivalents	1,376
Investments	21,643
Receivables	6,257
Inventories	409
Other	32
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>29,717</b>
Non-current assets	
Investments	9,102
Receivables	40
Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	418,193
Investment property	2,455
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	<b>429,790</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>459,507</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Current liabilities	
Payables	4,352
Income received in advance	320
Borrowings	737
Provisions	3,678
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>9,087</b>
Non-current liabilities	
Payables	4
Borrowings	6,302
Provisions	1,233
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>7,539</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>16,629</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>442,881</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>	
Accumulated surplus	272,954
Revaluation reserves	169,927
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>442,881</b>

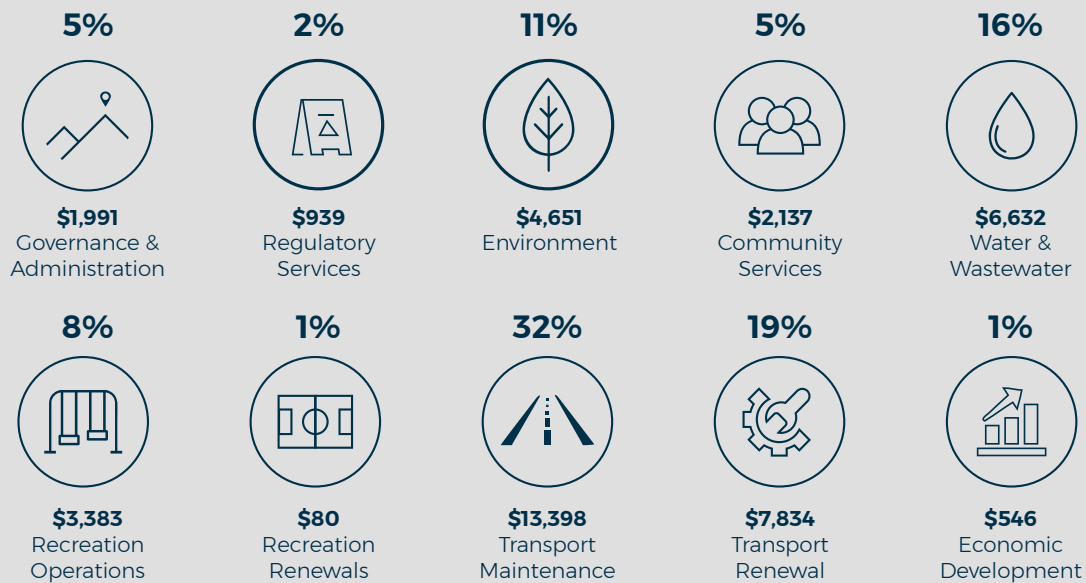
## WHERE DO THE FUNDS COME FROM

The Council raised \$32.3million from various sources.



## WHERE THE FUNDS GO

Council spent \$41.5million on maintaining and renewing assets and providing services. (\$ thousands)



To stay informed on Council's current projects sign up to our online engagement tool

[create.bellingen.nsw.gov.au](https://create.bellingen.nsw.gov.au)