
BELLINGEN
SHIRE COUNCIL

Annual Report
2022-2023



A Gumbaynggirr Community Vision

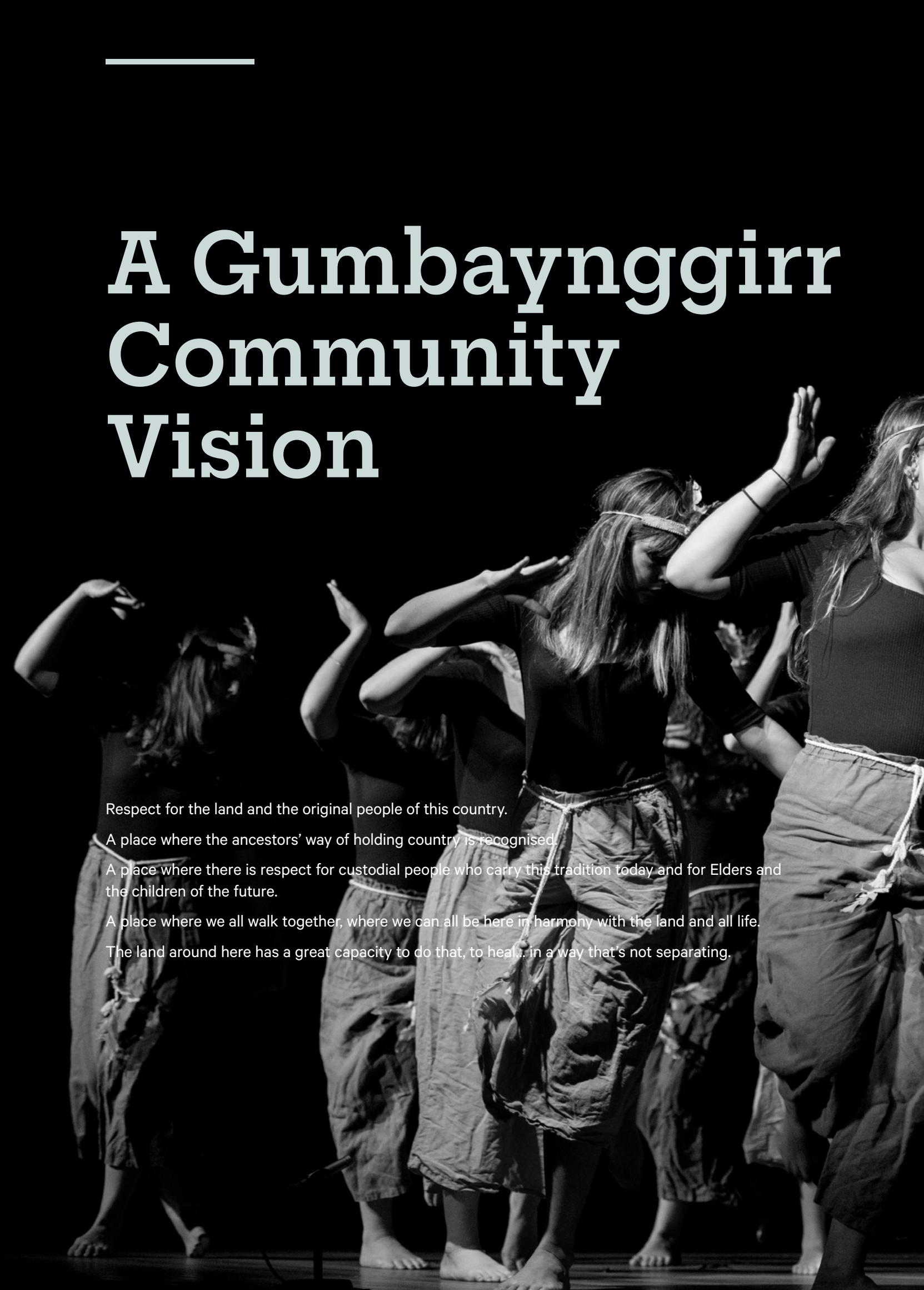
Respect for the land and the original people of this country.

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.

The land around here has a great capacity to do that, to heal... in a way that's not separating.





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C. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Seperate Attachment	
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Message from the Mayor & General Manager

The past year has been one of significant progress and transformation for Bellingen Shire Council. We look back at what has been achieved during this time with great pride, knowing that these achievements are making a real difference in the lives of our community members.

The work undertaken by Council staff during the 12-month period has been phenomenal. The numerous projects we have undertaken have been underpinned by our Delivery and Operational Plan, which aligns with our community's Vision towards 2035.

Arguably the most significant item has been the delivery of our ambitious capital works program. To put that into perspective, this is the largest capital investment that Council has ever seen. With \$29.4M spent just on our capital program this last year alone, we are still not halfway through the major investment commitment planned.

As part of this ongoing program, Council has transformed 19 out of the 22 load-limited wooden bridges in the Shire. The replacement bridges are now durable cement, designed to endure for 100 years, and significantly enhancing connectivity, accessibility, and safety on the roads in our Shire. Additionally, major road works were delivered, including the successful completion of stage one of the Gleniffer Road rehabilitation project ahead of schedule and within budget.

Notably, Council also received just under \$3.58 million in funding from the NSW Office of Sport to support the redevelopment of the Connell Park sporting precinct. This funding will facilitate the construction of two new clubhouse buildings at Connell Park, modernising facilities and enhancing amenities for users of Connell Park.

Another significant accomplishment this year was the completion of the Memorial Hall refurbishment, which has been transformed into a cultural hub. It can now facilitate a wide range of cultural and artistic expressions for the community, and we are seeing it come back to life with community groups

embracing the new features. The Hall's official opening was attended by esteemed guests, including Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales and importantly, I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the Hall's 355 Committee, whose commitment to the arts played a pivotal role in this transformation.

We also took steps in strengthening our community resilience and preparedness through a range of disaster related projects and events. A key example of this was hosting the Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning (DIEP) Forum, demonstrating our commitment to people living with disabilities. This event brought together representatives from emergency services, individuals with disabilities, and service providers to make emergency management more inclusive and enhance the resilience of people with disabilities during disasters and emergencies. The DIEP Forum is a significant step toward inclusive emergency planning.

Finally, we also farewellled General Manager of 12 years Liz Jeremy during this period. We would like to thank Liz for her dedicated service and commitment to the Shire and all that was achieved during her time at Council.

As we reflect on the year's achievements and look ahead, we remain committed to serving our community with diligence and dedication. We appreciate your continued support as we persist in enhancing the well-being and infrastructure of our Shire.

We're pleased to present this Annual Report, which has been evaluated against our community's criteria. We look forward to continuing to work with our Councillors, our staff, and the community to realise our Shire's Community Vision, maintaining our status as a connected, sustainable, and creative community.



Steve Allan
Mayor



Mark Griffioen
General Manager



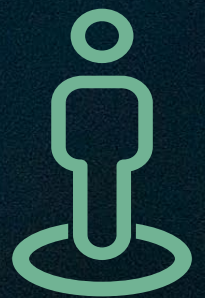
Connected Sustainable Creative

Community Vision

We are a community that is inclusive, connected to each other in our shire, and with connections beyond - regionally, nationally, and globally.

We strive to live sustainably to ensure that we have enough for all, forever.

We are a community that is creatively and culturally dynamic. We are ingenious and inventive in finding innovative solutions to problems and challenges.



50

Median
Age



Our Community Snapshot

13,253
Population

562 (4.2%)
of the Shire's population identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

6.3%
People Living With Disability

22%
Aged 19 Years & Younger

39.9%
Aged 65 & Over



31.4%
Households have children

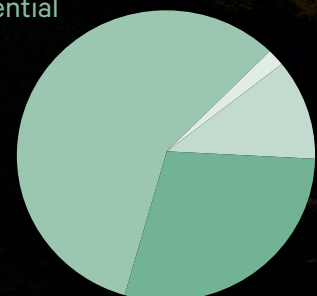
75%
Own or are purchasing their home

337,000
Annual Visitors



Land Use

- Primary Production
- Parkland
- Residential
- Other



\$520M
Gross Regional Product

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data 2021.

The Annual Report in Context

The Annual Report is a component of Councils Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, and outlines Councils achievements during the financial year in implementing its Delivery Program. It also provides the information that the Council is required to disclose.



Structure of the Annual Report

The Annual Report is one of the key components of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. The report helps Council to keep our community informed about outcomes and achievements in the previous financial year.

A

Achievements In Implementing The Delivery Program

Reports on the achievements in implementing the Delivery Program and measures the effectiveness of the principal activities undertaken in achieving the objectives in the Community Strategic Plan. Detailed reporting is available on [Council's website](#)

B

Statutory Information

Council is required to publicly report on the legislated obligations Council must meet each year as well as other information the NSW Government believes should be provided to the community.

C

Financial Statements

The full, audited Financial Statements of Council can be found in this section, as a separate attachment to this report.



About Our Shire

The Bellingen Shire is currently home to 13,262 people (ABS Estimated Resident Population 2022), who come from many different countries and are involved in diverse occupational, cultural, and social activities.

Our Shire has three distinct geographical areas – ocean, river, and mountains incorporating the communities of Mylestom, Repton, and Urunga on the coast, Bellingen nestled in the river valley, and Dorrigo on the plateau. Each is a vibrant and rich community with its own characteristics.

Bellingen Shire has an abundance of natural assets. Some 57% of the Shire is State Forest (21.26%), National Parks (32.36%) and Crown land. This and our cultural attractions have created a thriving tourism industry with 337,000 visitors coming to our Shire each year spending a total of \$85 million. Numerous festivals, ranging from jazz, classical and world music, to environmental, food and wine events, attract distinct audiences enhancing the social and economic fabric of the region.

Your Council

As a local government organisation, Bellinghen Shire Council is charged with the responsibility for the delivery of a diverse range of services each day.

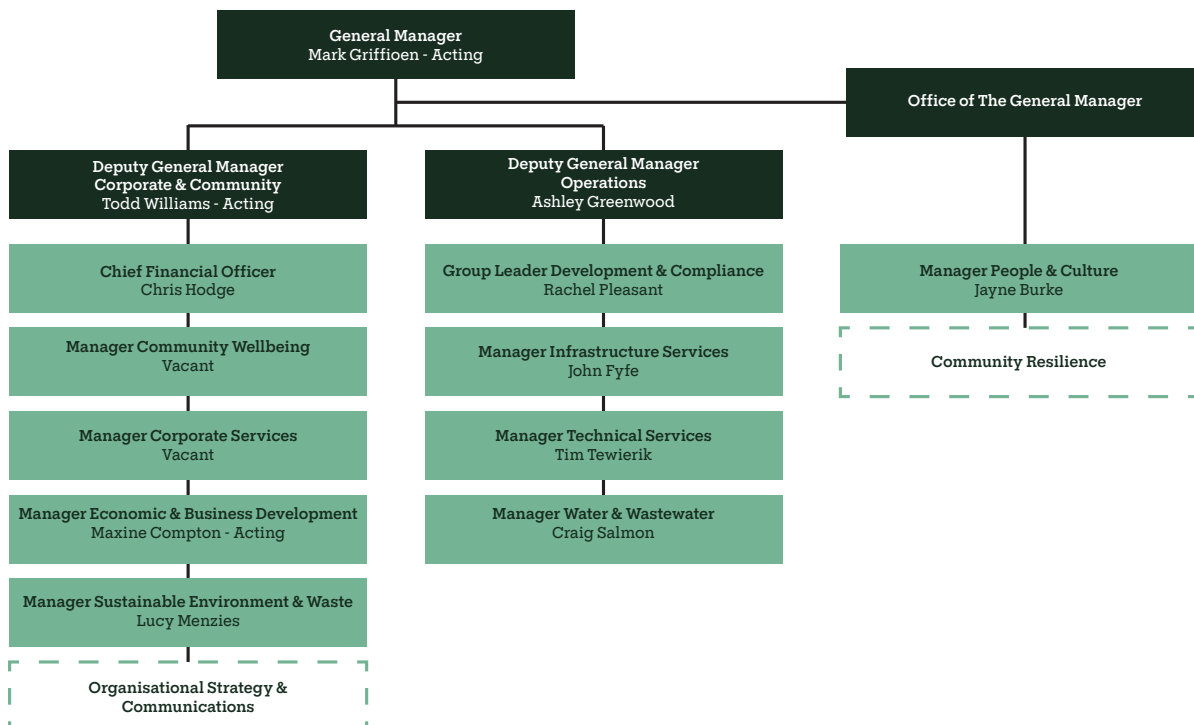
The elected Council comprises 7 councillors who represent the entire Local Government Area. The Mayor is elected by popular vote once every four years and the Deputy Mayor is nominated and elected annually by fellow Councillors.



Image: (l to r): Cr Ellie Tree, Cr Joanne Cook (Deputy Mayor), Cr Stephen Glyde, Mayor Steve Allan, Cr Dominic King, Cr Jo Brotherton and Cr Jennie Fenton.

Responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the Bellinghen Shire rests with the General Manager, Mark Griffioen. Together with senior leadership they ensure effective and efficient operation of the organisation.

The below diagram sets out the senior leadership structure for the Council as at 30 June 2023.



Operating Principles

Council is committed to the following operating principles in everything it does:

Every customer will be treated with courtesy, respect, fairness, and equity in every interaction with Council. All Council business will be conducted honestly, and transparently, in accordance with the spirit of Open Council. We will actively consult and work with the community as we formulate and implement new policies. Sometimes, because Council has a regulatory role, we may have to make decisions in line with our legal and communal obligations which may differ from an individual's specific request, or Council may be required to balance the different needs and interests of individual customers. When this is necessary, we undertake to ensure that our customers have all the facts and reasons behind such decisions and that the decision will be according to the law and in the best interests of the whole community.

We embrace our accountability for the professional management of Council processes and assets, and we undertake to apply commercial operational principles to ensure the community benefits from our efficient and effective management. We are aware of our responsibility as individuals and officers of the Council to perform our duties safely and to maintain a safe, healthy work environment.

Our Values

We have developed core values to guide our organisation. These guiding principles dictate behaviour and help to achieve on our Community Vision and our major strategies.



Service Ethic / Commitment



Professionalism



Respect



Teamwork



Integrity



Communication



2 Surf Clubs



1 Saleyard



29 Shared Paths



3 Waste Management Centres



10 Reservoirs

Community Infrastructure We Manage

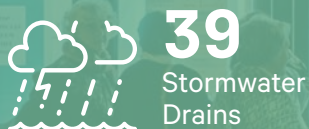
Community Facilities



Transport



Services



Highlights

In 2022/23 There Were:



70%

Waste Diverted From
Landfill



\$33.2M

Grant funding
successfully secured



21,387

Phone Calls And
Counter Enquiries
Answered



76,130

Library Items
Borrowed



91,047

Library Visitors



527.2k

Social Media Reach



678

Invasive Plant
Inspections



27,045

Swimming Pool Visitors



163

Active Volunteers Involved
in Council Programs



72%

First Contact
Resolution Rate



100%

Annual Road
Maintenance Program
Completed



1,220

Response to
Engagement Surveys

In 2022/23 Council delivered a \$29.4 Million capital program including:



\$13.8M

Bridges



\$7.1M

Roads And Footpaths



\$6.9M

Community Facilities
Town Improvements
Sport And Recreation



\$1.6M

Water, Sewer, Environment
And Waste *Inc Flood Event



Resilient Economy

- The Bellingen Shire Economic Development and Tourism Plan was adopted.
- The empty Visitor Information space in Urunga was transformed into the Creative Corner to support local artisans.
- Council and the Pandemic Response Group received national recognition winning the National Resilient Australia Local Government Award for 2022.
- Successfully secured \$3.96M in funding from Round Two of the NSW Government's Regional Tourism Activation Fund to upgrade the Urunga Boardwalk
- Provided \$50,000 to 23 groups through its Community Grants Programs
- The Food Resilience Strategy and Plan were completed
- A community survey for the LEMC Risk Assessment was conducted in February with 82 respondents
- 2 Triple B studio upgrade completed to strengthen connectivity in emergencies
- Memorial Hall and Urunga House recovery hub renovations complete
- The purchase of land for the community gardens
- Council continues to progress the Eco Destination Certification through Ecotourism Australia

Community Wellbeing

- Council announced the recipients of the 2022 Ian J. Cooper Awards for Access and Inclusion on International Day of People with Disability
- Hosted 'A Cuppa with Council' in Maam Gaduying Park where our community were invited to grab a coffee and have a conversation with some of our staff in support of RUOK Day.
- Successfully secured \$3.58M from the NSW Office of Sport to support the redevelopment of the Connell Park sporting precinct.
- Undertook consultation about ways to support healthy ageing for our community as a first step in the development of an Ageing Well Strategy for our Shire.
- Facilitated over 20 activities for Seniors Week with over 350 people attending events and activities.
- Her Excellency Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales official opened the newly transformed Memorial Hall marking a significant milestone for Bellingen.
- Celebrating reconciliation week local artist Aunty Lisa Kelly & Fi McAulay collaborated to bring us a community artwork that embodies our community's dedication to reconciliation.

- Council and the University of Sydney's Leave Nobody Behind project jointly organised the inaugural Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning (DIEP) Forum to address the vulnerability of individuals living with disability in the face of climate-related and disaster risks, emphasizing their underrepresentation in emergency preparedness and decision-making.
- Supported local communities including Kalang, Megan, Darkwood and Gleniffer to create unique disaster plans, uniting residents, groups, and services for readiness and recovery.
- Facilitated free first aid training in Urunga, Bellingen, and Dorrigo for isolated areas. 34 certificates were awarded for First Aid and CPR.
- Our Libraries facilitated events throughout the year including Vintage Film Club, Storytime, and a range of school holiday activities.
- Welcomed new Australians through Citizenship Ceremonies.

Our Living Environment

- Council continued to invest in renewable energy through on-site solar generation and the purchase of GreenPower.
- Continued funding for delivery of Environmental Levy Projects.
- Water Resilience Officer progressed a water conservation program across the shire.
- Bellingen Riverwatch, partnership funded through the Environment Levy - received two awards at the River Basin Management Society Awards in Melbourne
- As part of the Fixing Country Bridges Program Council installed bat boxes to provide accommodation to our batty friends during bridge construction.
- Council partnered with The Urunga Pharmacy and the Bellingen Compounding Pharmacy to reduce waste to landfill through a trial program of recycling medicine blister packs.
- Launched the Beachwatch program, providing weekly updates on water quality information at 7 popular swimming sites across the Shire.
- Introduced the Zero Waste Tableware Library, an innovative solution to curb single-use plastic waste.
- Worked with our community to develop the Community Climate Action Plan .The Plan proposes ambitious actions developed by our community and sets a clear pathway to guide our transition to a net zero world.

Places For People

- Bellingen Skate Park was improved with upgraded concrete surface, new shade sails and furniture and additional lighting, made possible through the Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants Program
- Plan of Management for Connell Park in development.
- Annual heritage assistance grants program facilitated.
- Replaced the ageing roof on the old Bellingen Reservoir
- Commenced works on William Street footpath in Bellingen.
- Secured an additional \$3.5M in State funding for the Gleniffer Road Upgrade
- Commenced works on the Mylestom boat ramp, fish cleaning table & Pontoon.
- Installed new flood Cameras at Wild Cattle Creek Bridge, Coramba Road, Dorrigo Slarkes Culvert-Slarkes Road, Bellingen
- Progressed road works on Coopers Lane, Urunga and Coramba Road, Dorrigo
- Road Resealing program Plateau, Valley, and Seaboard - All preparation works complete.
- Gleniffer Road Rehabilitation, construction completed on original scope of works. Additional funding of \$3M through Fixing Local Roads Round 4 increasing scope
- The long term \$23M Bridge Renewal Program continues with significant works underway and the reduction of load limited bridges down from 22 in 2017 to just 3. Details of the works for the year include:
 - Cahills Bridge - complete.
 - Richardsons Bridge - complete.
 - Taylors Bridge - complete.
 - Tysons Bridge - complete.
 - Freshwater Creek Bridge - complete.
 - McKenzies Creek Bridge - complete.
 - Smith's Bridge - complete.
 - Sunny Corner Bridge - complete.
 - Kalang River Bridge - Construction of bridge completed, roadworks and approaches underway and on track.
 - Spicketts Creek Bridge - Construction of bridge completed, roadworks and approaches underway and on track.
 - Crossmaglen Bridge - Construction underway and on track.

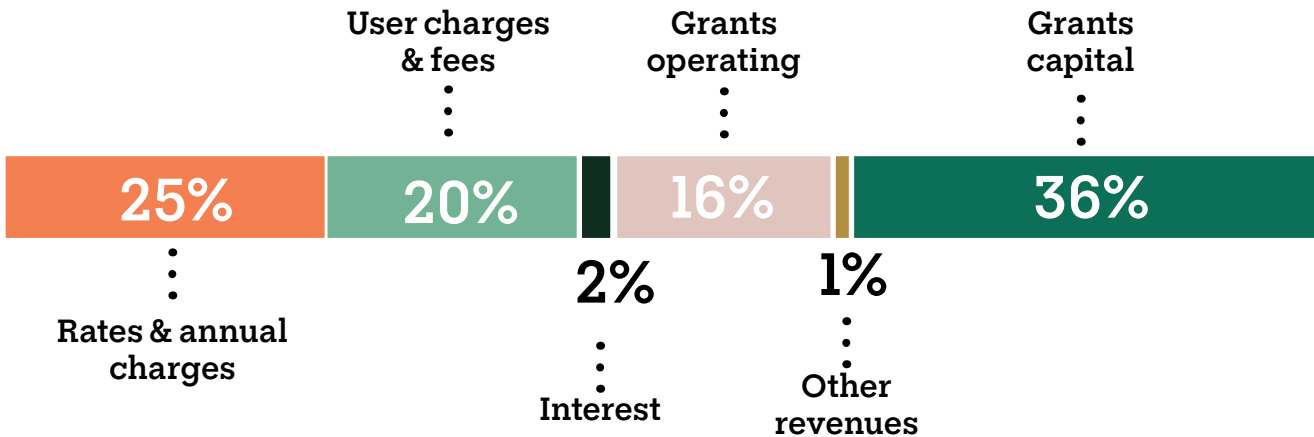
Civic Leadership

- Recognised Community Heroes at the 2023 Australia Day Awards Event held in Bellingen.
- Operational review undertaken of Council's Development and Compliance functions to consolidate the reporting lines under a newly formed Group Leader.
- Councillors engaged in a series of workshops and training to inform their responsibilities and roles as part of a professional development program.
- Financial Sustainability Strategy updated and reviewed by Executive Leadership Team, with a number of actions completed through the year.
- Successfully secured an additional \$410K funding through the Creative Capital Program to support supply and installation of Audio-Visual infrastructure and equipment within the new Memorial Hall performance spaces.
- Council's long standing General Manager, Liz Jeremy, tendered her resignation which Council accepted in a confidential session in December 2022.
- Council has allocated \$115,000 of the Local Government Flood Recovery Funding to a series of "Community Resilience Grants" aimed at bolstering responses during a disaster and strengthening our community groups and connection.
- Council is currently working to strengthen water security and resilience in the Shire by updating its Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan. The plan is designed to ensure that Council can provide a potable water supply while managing the community's wastewater.
- Council's Bridge Team received the Highly Commended - Projects between \$500,000 and \$5 million at the IPWEA awards.
- Council facilitated a detailed consultation program regarding the Special Rate Variation facilitating 4 drop in sessions and a survey that gathered 86 responses.
- Council is reviewing its disaster communication by Gathering feedback through pop up stalls and surveys in Bellingen, Mylestom, Urunga, and Dorrigo. This information will be used to strengthen Council's ongoing disaster communication program.

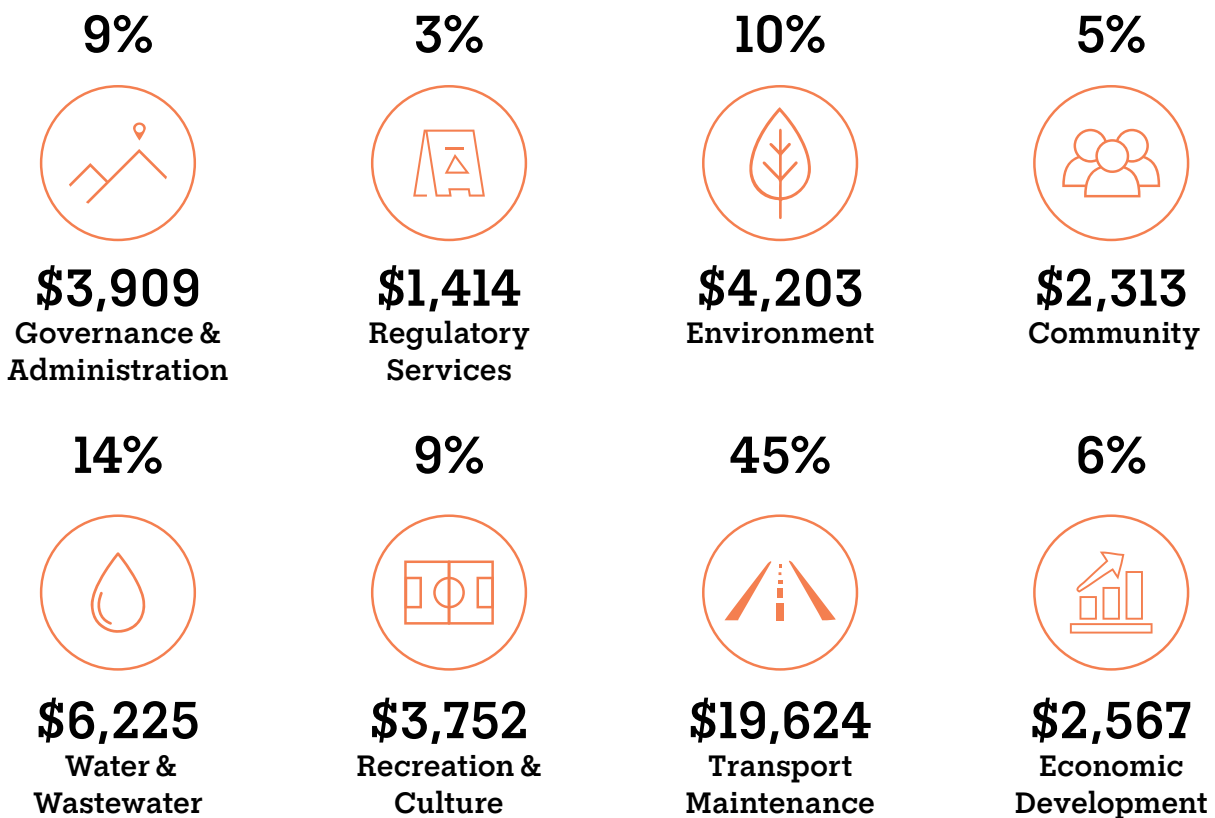
2022/23 In Numbers



The Council raised \$ 71 million from various sources



Council spent \$ 44 million on maintaining and renewing assets and providing services. (\$ thousands)





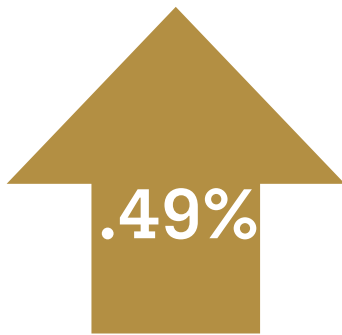
Report Against Indicators

Council tracks a range of measures and metrics to monitor the progress and service outcomes.

These indicators are used to guide strategic direction, monitor whether the strategies are resulting in positive changes and where Council determines whether the outcomes are achieved

Key Statistics and Trends

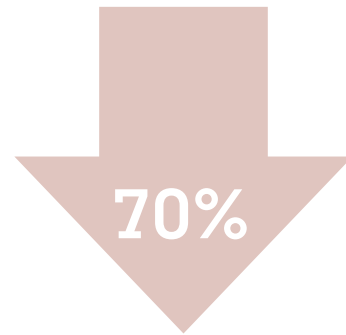
This section shows some key trends in Bellingen Shire and Council operations.



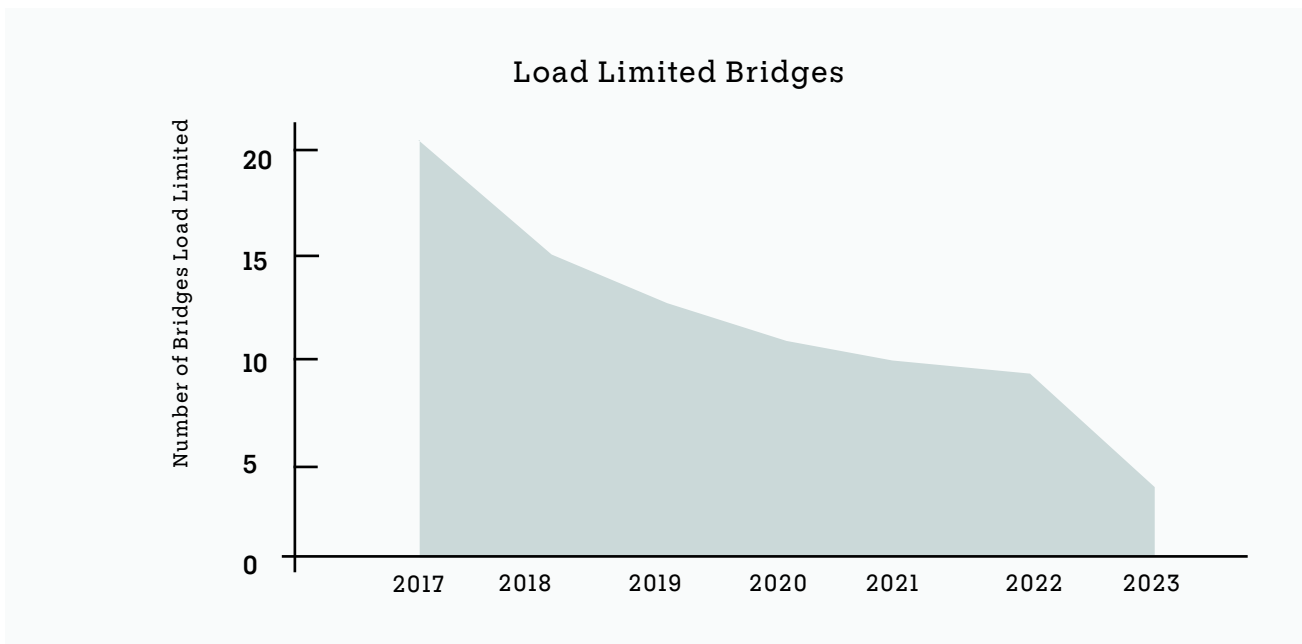
The Estimated Population of Bellingen Shire is 13,262 showing an increase by 0.49% from 13,197



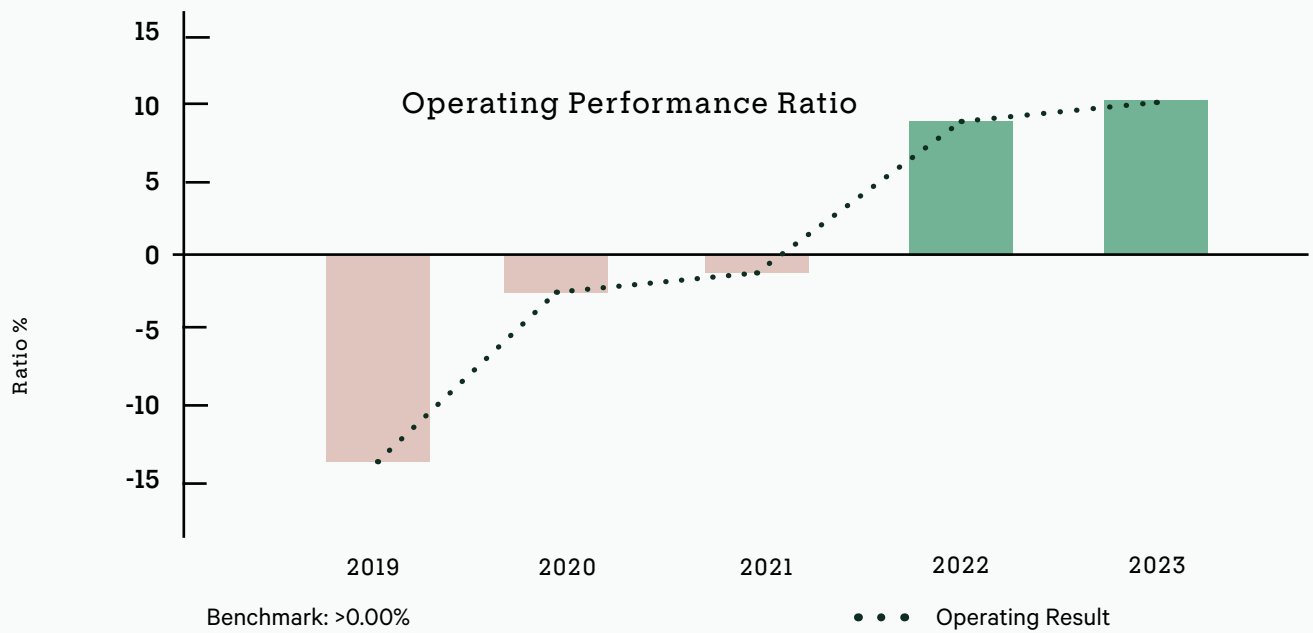
Bellingen Shire is on the way to becoming Eco Certified to ensure the long-term sustainability of our beautiful shire.



70% reduction of load limited bridges across the Shire since 2021/22 reducing the number to 3.

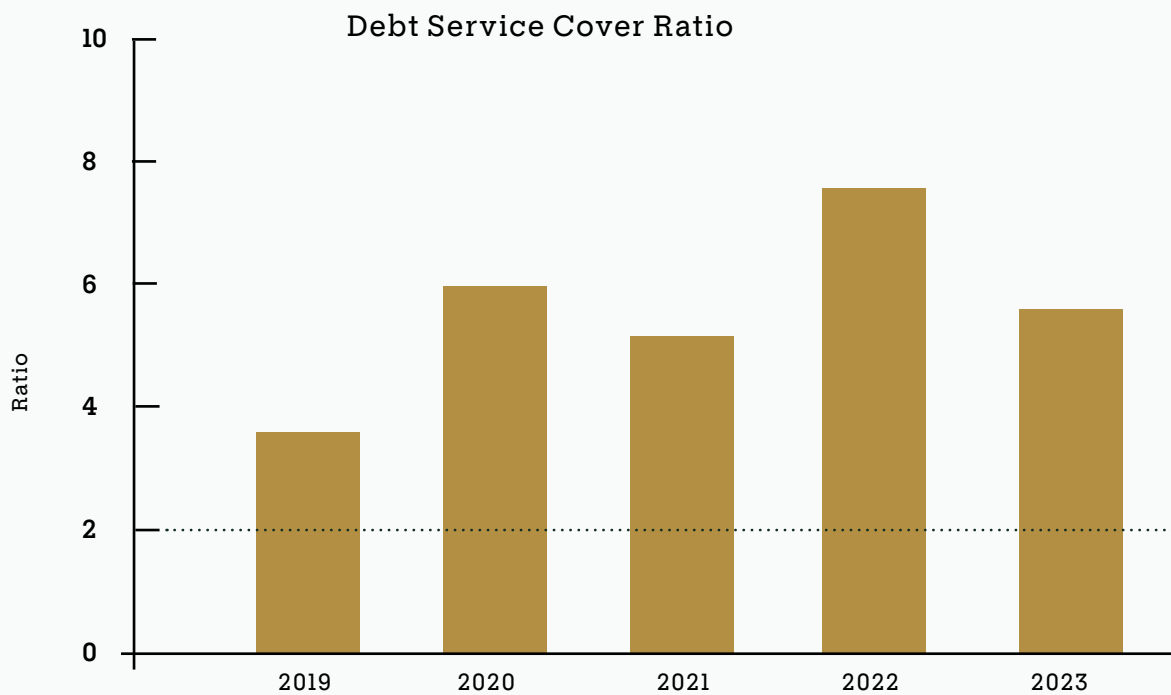


Council has conducted a detailed assessment of its 85-timber bridges, 22 of which were originally subject to load limits however at the end of 2022/23 financial year, only 3 of these bridges remained load limited.



This result measures Council's achievement of containing operating expenditure within operating revenue.

Councils operating performance ratio result represents an improvement from the previous financial year. It is expected that this ratio will continue to fluctuate in coming years as a result of revenue recognition timing differences.

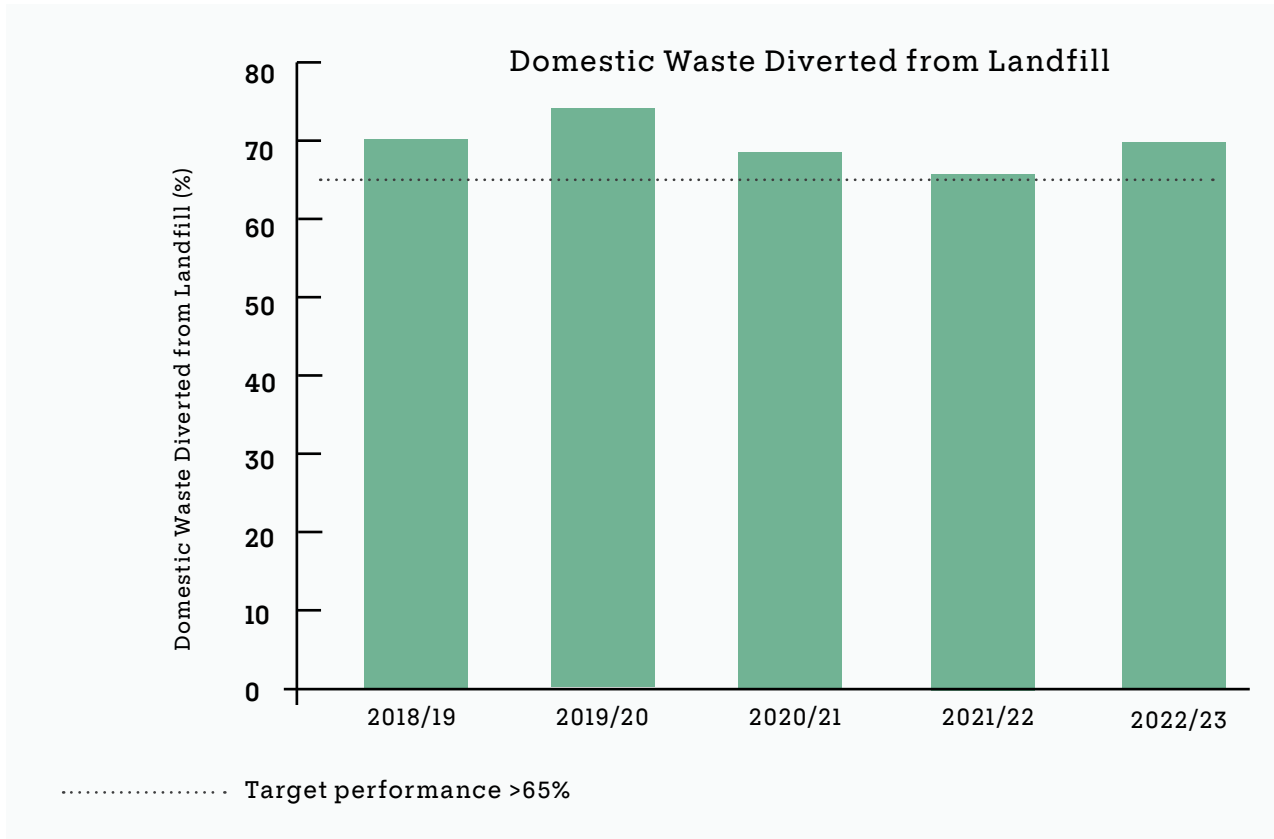


Source: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting.

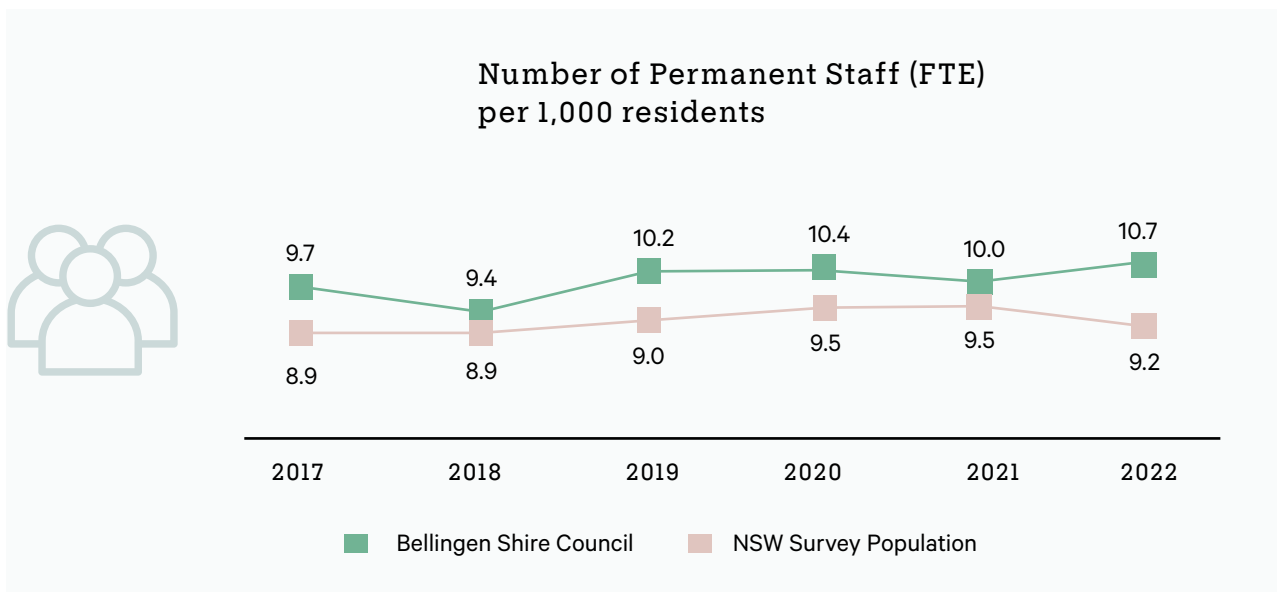
Purpose of debt service cover ratio
 The ratio measures the availability of operating cash to service debt including interest, principal and lease payments.

2022/23 ratio: 5.39x
 This indicator emphasises that Council's defined Operating Result maintains the capacity to meet its annual debt requirements. The 2022/23 result exceeds the industry benchmark of 2.0x, indicating sufficient operating cash to service its debts.

Waste

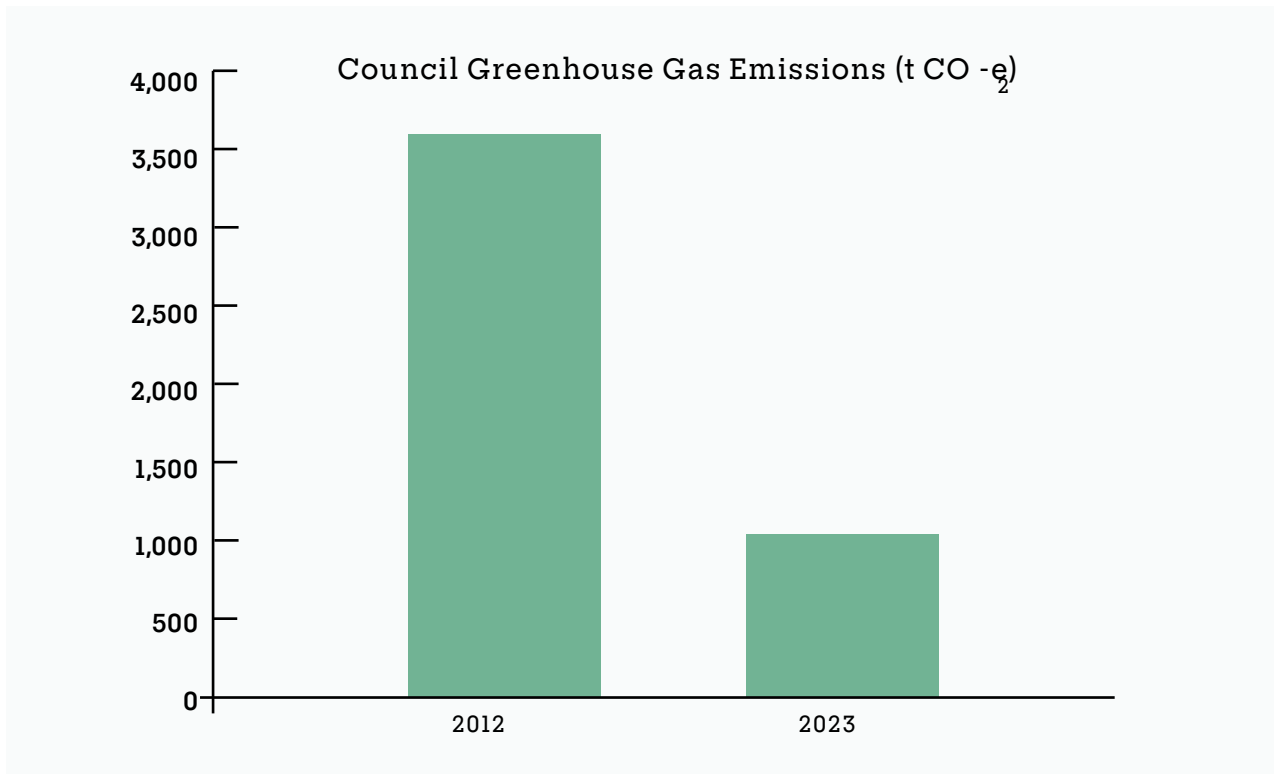


Domestic waste diversion from landfill increased significantly and currently exceeds the state average by 5%.



Data drawn from the PWC Australasian Local Government Performance Excellence Program Report 2022.

Carbon Emissions



As part of Council's climate emergency declaration, the corporate carbon plan has now been adopted by council and emissions reduction is being woven into all areas within council operations and processes.

Corporate Carbon Plan



100% renewable energy by 2030

Council continues to invest in renewable energy through on-site solar generation and the purchase of 100% Green Power for small sites and 20% GreenPower for 10 contestable sites. Throughout 2022/2023 on-site generation capacity increased to almost 200kW across 15 sites, including new arrays at 3 water and wastewater sites.



Zero net emissions by 2040

Net reductions are tracking well for purchased electricity. 772 Street lighting fixtures were upgraded to LED by Essential Energy in 2022/23 which has counteracted an increase in emissions from the re-opening of Memorial Hall. Reducing emissions from fuel will continue to be challenging until the availability and of cost-effective electric vehicles increases.

with hope, enrich your spirit
sparkle to your world.

Follow us on



@BELLINGENSHIRECOUNCIL

Like us on



facebook

@BELLINGENSHIRECOUNCIL

Community Engagement

Community engagement is a top priority for both our local community and the Council. It's vital for how the Council operates, ensuring that our community are aware of, and have the opportunity to provide input into the programs and services that affect them.

Community engagement means we listen to what the community wants and needs, and this helps us make decisions. It's not about everyone agreeing; it's about being fair, transparent, and involving the right people when needed.

We value our community's input and actively ask for ideas, feedback, and concerns to make informed decisions that benefit everyone.

We follow a public participation model developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). For every Council project, we identify stakeholders and use different methods to involve them. We have an online portal for people to share their thoughts on projects that affect them or interest them.

You can find more information about our engagement activities and projects at Bellingen.nsw.gov.au/Have-Your-Say.

To develop the current Community Vision 2035 we used the Place Score liveability survey. The outcomes informed the development of our 4-year Delivery Program and 1-year Operational Plan. The liveability data helps us understand what matters most to our community and how well we're doing.

Community insights are valuable when they are measurable, actionable, and trackable. By asking our communities directly, we can gather such data and track it over time.

Importantly, Council has invested strongly in its social media program this year to share information and updates, reaching a wide audience. In 2022/23, Council's social media accounts reached 527.2k people and through our Have Your Say portal, 1,220 people participated in 40 surveys.

Have
Your Say



1,220

Participated in
surveys



FIND OUT MORE

Read the detailed progress reports
against the 2022/23 Operational Plan.



Reporting On Achievements

Strategy Structure

The Bellingen Shire Strategy consists of the Shire’s vision, overarching principles and five key themes. For each of the key themes, there are a series of service commitments. This structure is illustrated in the following figure.

The key themes are supported by strategic priorities to achieve them. These are listed throughout the document.

Overarching Principles

- Sustainability
- Social Justice



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



Everyone in our community is valued, involved and supported

We value, honour and actively acknowledge our Gumbaynggirr culture and heritage

We are connected safe and resilient with a strong sense of community



We have a diversity of beautiful spaces and the facilities and services needed to 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 clean water which is protected and used sustainably

We live sustainably and reduce our ecological footprint and contribution to climate change

We work together to protect and enhance our biodiversity and natural environment



Council is well governed, future focused and responsible in its service delivery.

Our community is informed and engaged with a strong sense of civic leadership

Council is proactive in representing the needs of our community



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

Our Performance

for the last 12 months





Read the detailed progress reports against the 2022/23 Operational Plan.

FIND OUT MORE





Everyone in our community is valued, involved and supported

We value, honour and actively acknowledge our Gumbaynggirr culture and heritage

We are connected safe and resilient with a strong sense of community

Our Performance

for the last 12 months

195

people accessing the Dorrigo Support Service
improvement in social wellbeing

up
29%

27,045

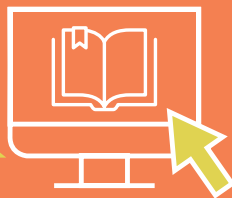
Swim centres visitors

up
34%

Library loans

up
6%

76,130



Library visitors

up
21%

91,047



active volunteers in council programs

163

down
2%

up
76%

Engagement @ Youth Hub

14,420



Read the detailed progress reports against the 2022/23 Operational Plan.

FIND OUT MORE



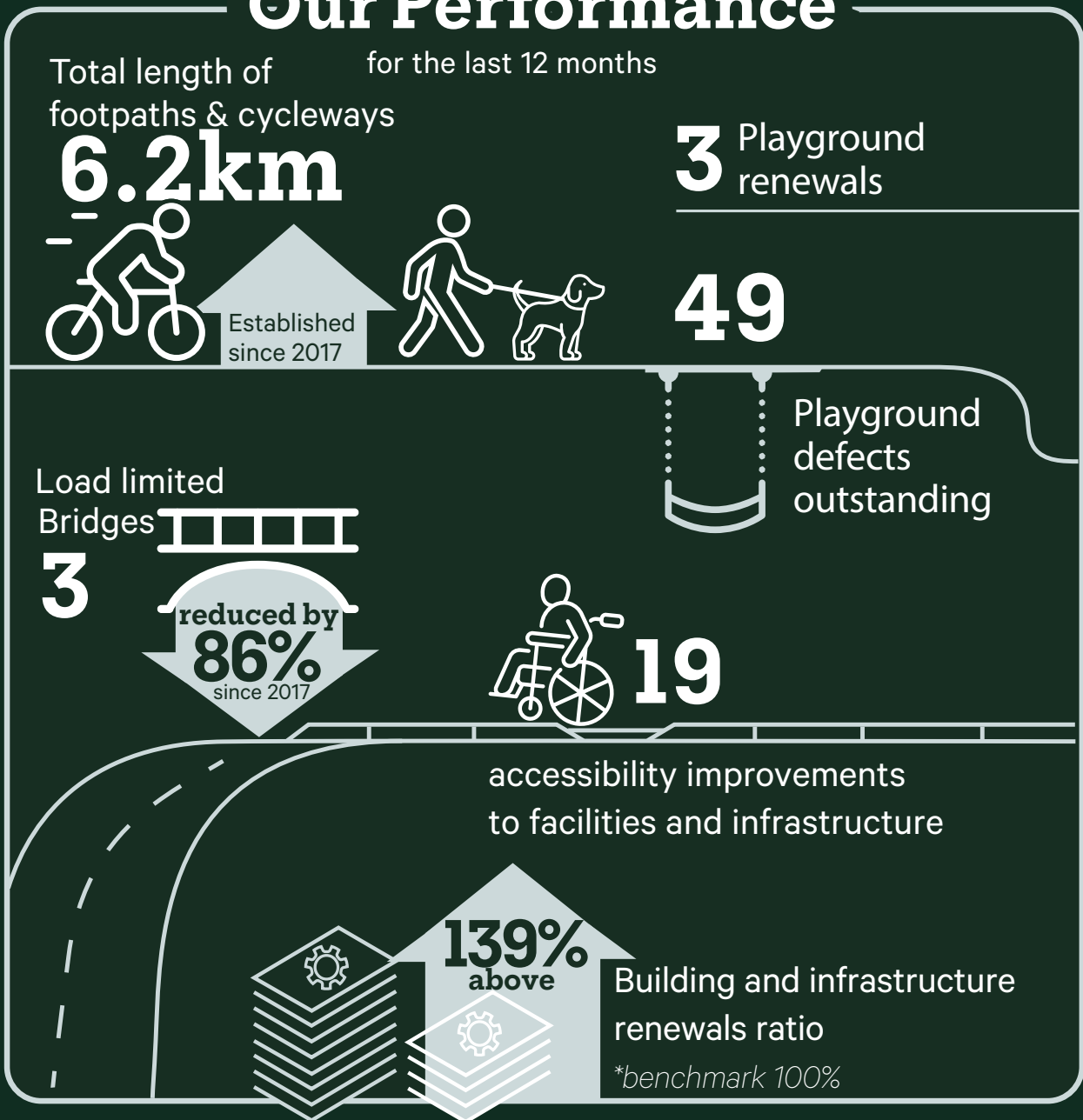


We have a diversity of beautiful spaces and the facilities and services needed to foster community happiness and wellbeing.

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.

Our Performance





Read the detailed progress reports against the 2022/23 Operational Plan.

FIND OUT MORE





We have clean water which is protected and used sustainably.

We live sustainably and reduce our ecological footprint and contribution to climate change.

We work together to protect and enhance our biodiversity and environment.

Our Performance

for the last 12 months

Waste diverted from landfill

70%



up **6%**

Water consumption

1,041

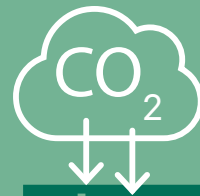
Megalitres



up **4%**

Council's emissions in tonnes

1,007



down **58%**

up

109%

678

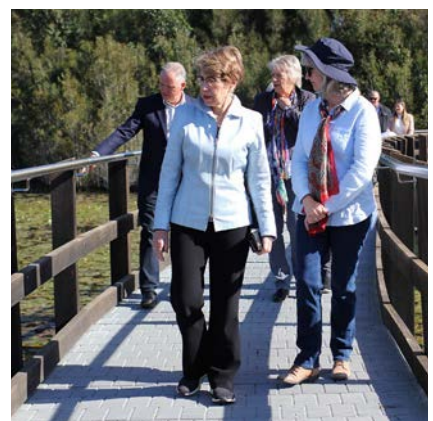
Invasive weed inspections carried out



0%

Missed garbage collections





Read the detailed progress reports against the 2022/23 Operational Plan.

FIND OUT MORE





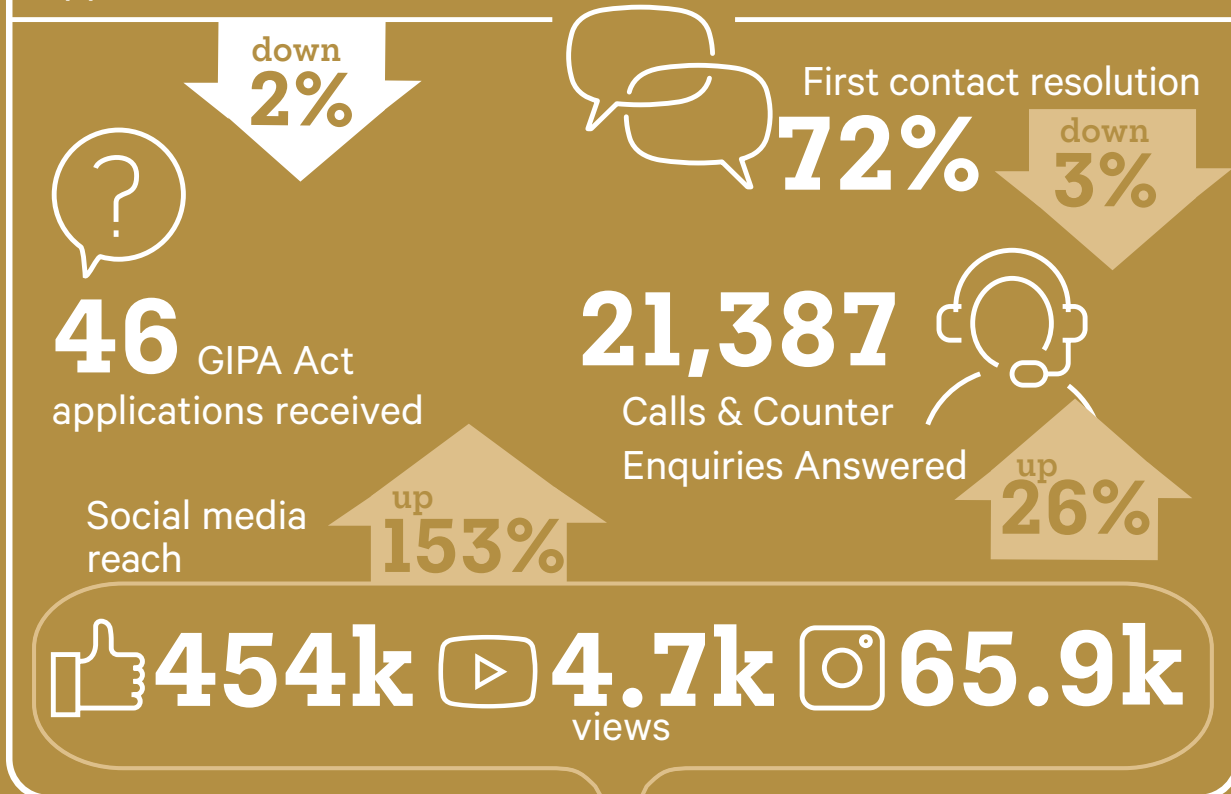
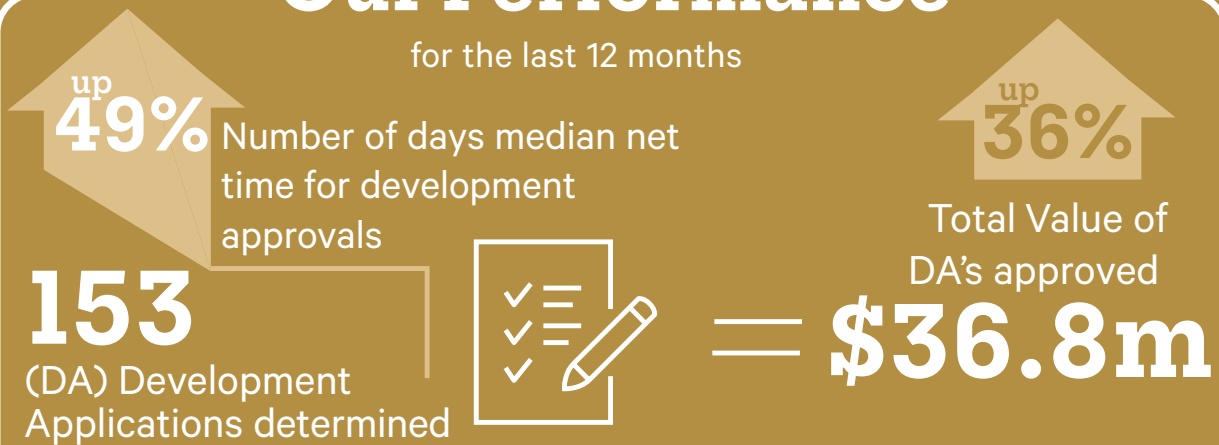
Council is well governed, future focused and responsible in its service delivery

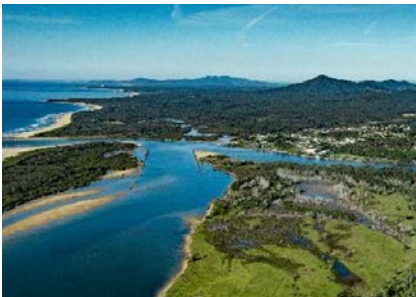
Our community is informed and engaged with a strong sense of civic leadership.

Council is proactive in representing the needs of our community.

Our Performance

for the last 12 months





Read the detailed progress reports against the 2022/23 Operational Plan.

FIND OUT MORE





Statutory and Other Information

Annual reports are one of the key points of accountability between a council and its community. The 2022/23 annual report focuses on our Delivery Program and Operational Plan and outlines Our Bellingen Shire Community Vision 2035 priorities.

The NSW Government considers it important for community members to understand how Bellingen Shire Council has been performing both as a business entity and a community leader. To meet these requirements, this report includes information prescribed by the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.

Councils are required to report annually under the Local Government Act 1993, Local Government (General) Regulation, Companion Animals Act and Regulation, Environmental Planning Assessment Act 1979, Swimming Pools Acts 1992, Swimming Pools Regulation 2018, Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994, Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2011, Carers' Recognition Act 2010, and Disability Inclusion Act 2014. This section presents information required by legislation. Some items have also appeared earlier in the report.

Special Variations in General Income

Special Rate Variation 2014/15

The ordinary rates include an 11.8% Special Rate Variation which was approved by the Minister in June 2014. The SRV applies to all rateable land within the Shire. The 2014/15 SRV generated approximately \$0.66M in additional revenue in 2022/23 and is estimated to generate an additional \$7.6M over the next 10 years. The increase is funding and servicing a loan of \$4.85M for Council's capital works program to address the transport infrastructure backlog, and fund additional maintenance on the road network. The \$0.66M generated by the SRV in 2022/23 were spent in the following way:

- Repayment of loan \$0.54M (subsidised by an interest rate subsidy under the Local Government Infrastructure Renewals Scheme)
- Roads Maintenance expenditure \$0.12M

All expenditure in 2022/23 was made in accordance with the approved SRV application and Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Determination

Special Rate Variation 2017/18 – 2020/21 (2020/21 delayed to 2022/23 due to COVID)

In addition to the 2014/15 SRV, the ordinary rates include four consecutive 6% Special Rate Variation's which were approved by the Minister in May 2017 and May 2018. These SRV's apply to all rateable land within the Shire. The four consecutive 6% SRV's generated approximately \$1.2M in additional revenue in 2022/23, expecting to generate an additional \$13.8M over the next 10 years. The increase is partially funding Council's capital works renewal program to address the transport infrastructure backlog. The \$1.2M SRV funds were all the roads resealing/heavy patching program in 2023.

All expenditure in 2022/23 was made in accordance with the approved SRV application and Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Determination.

Program of Service Reviews

Service reviews are a vital process that Bellingén Shire Council uses to ensure that services and facilities meet community needs and wants. The program of service reviews allows Council to better respond to changing customer priorities and needs, determine the right mix of services and align services with the Community Vision, define statutory and non-statutory services while considering the potential for service divestment, generate financial savings, and review and optimize service levels while enhancing staff capacity and skills.

During the reporting period Council undertook the following Service Reviews:

- Review of Light & Heavy Fleet
- Management options for Bellingén Memorial Hall
- Review of Development & Compliance.

Environmental Levy Projects 2022/23

Introduction

The funds are accrued as a special variation of 4% to General Income for expenditure on environmental projects. The variation was approved, in an ongoing capacity, by the Minister for Local Government in 2005.

The Environment Levy supports the implementation of projects to achieve the strategic directions, outcomes and aspirations outlined in Council's Community Vision 2035

The key focus areas being management of invasive plants, biodiversity, coastal and river ecos

- Invasive plant management
- Biodiversity management Coastal and river ecosystem management
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation

The projects portfolio valued at \$556,553 utilised the 2022-23 Environmental Levy to the value of \$260,175. Additional grant revenue of approximately \$259,787 was also secured.

Summary

PROJECT	FUNDING
Environmental Levy Community Fund	\$32,000
River & Biodiversity Community support, assistance and grant application/scoping time	\$30,000
Weeds Action Program	\$30,000
Sustainability and Climate Change Projects	\$20,000
Past project maintenance	\$36,000
Bellinger Landcare Incorporated	\$20,000
Bellingen Urban Landcare	\$5,000
Coastal Zone Management Plan	\$10,000
Riverwatch Partnership	\$12,000
BeachWatch	\$20,000
Biodiversity Strategy	\$15,000
(Vegetation Management Plans \$10K, Koala Conservation matching funds \$10K, Flying Fox Habitat restoration matching funds \$5K)	\$25,000
The Point – Riparian Zone Upgrade (design)	\$10,000
Seed Funding (for matching fund applications required in 2022/23 that are yet to be advertised)	\$10,175
Total	\$260,175

Overseas Visits

There were no overseas visits undertaken by Councillors, Council Staff or other persons representing the Council during the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

Elected Members' Expenses

Mayor and Councillor Fees

The total fees paid to the Mayor and Councillors in 2022/23 was \$128,223.

Councillor Support and Expenses

EXPENSES	2021/22 \$	2022/23 \$
Councillor support and provision of facilities (including provision of dedicated office equipment allocated to councillors and telephone calls made by councillors)	10,228	13,312
Attendance at conferences and seminars	14,264	17,398
Training of councillors and provision of skill development	18,859	5,060
Interstate visits undertaken during the year by Councillors while representing the Council, including the cost of transport, the cost of accommodation and other out of pocket travelling expenses	-	-
Overseas visits by Councillors while representing the Council, including the cost of transport, the cost of accommodation and other out of pocket travelling expenses	-	-
Expense of any spouse, partner or other person who accompanied a Councillor in the performance of his or her civic functions	-	-
Expenses involved in the provision of care for a child or an immediate family member of a councillor	-	-
Fees paid to Mayor and Councillors	111,879	128,223
Motor Vehicle Allowances	1,356	1,987
Mayoral vehicle operational costs and depreciation	12,505	9,374
Insurance costs for Councillors and Officers liability	39,457	43,403
Total costs for the year	208,547	218,758

Works Subsidised on Private Land

No resolutions were made during this period concerning work subsidised by Council and carried out on private land.

Modern Slavery Act 2018

Modern slavery affects all of us through the food we eat, the clothes we buy, and the goods we consume. Bellingen Shire Council has performed an initial review and identified the majority of suppliers as low risk within their organisation and supply chains. Council will not participate in any procurement with a supplier or contractor that is found to be engaging in modern slavery.

Contracts entered into through Regional Procurement comply with the requirements under the Modern Slavery Amendment Act 2021 (Cth) and all related legislation including the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (NSW).

Panel contracts entered into with Local Government Procurement have risk ratings applied to all approved contractors. The risk ratings undertake reasonable steps to ensure the goods and services procured are not a product of modern slavery. This provides confidence to better meet modern slavery legislative and ethical obligations.

A Contractor's modern slavery risk rating is based on:

- Awareness of the Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018;
- Approach/controls in place and action undertaken to detect and prevent modern slavery within their supply chain; and
- The main country(ies) of origin for the products sold

Council has taken reasonable steps to ensure that goods and services procured by and for the council during the FY22/23 were not the product of Modern Slavery. The actions and future initiatives Bellingen Shire Council have undertaken towards this are outlined in Councils Modern Slavery Statement

This statement outlines Bellingen Shire Council's commitment to combatting modern slavery and the measures we have implement during this reporting period to reduce the risk of our procurement activities resulting in or contributing to human rights violations.

We recognise the importance of taking steps to ensure that goods and services procured by and for our council are not the product of modern slavery.

Our supply chain includes a vast range of suppliers, contractors and partners to provide the goods and services required for the region. The key projects Bellingen Shire Council undertook for FY22/23 included;

- Fixing Country Bridges
- Keevers Drive embankment restorations
- Gleniffer Road Rehabilitation

Council has not received any notification from the Anti-slavery Commissioner in regard to issues of concern with Council operations.

Legal Proceedings

Council was not formally involved in any legal proceedings in the 2022/23 financial year, other than undertakings regarding recovering rates which are reported in the financial statements.

MATTER	ISSUE	STATUS/ RESULT	EXPENSES	RECEIVED
Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Major Contracts (Greater than \$150,000) Awarded

GOODS OR SERVICES	SUPPLIERS	TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE (INC GST) <i>NOTE: THIS VALUE INCLUDES ANY VARIATION PURCHASE ORDERS</i>
Gleniffer Road Rehabilitation - Construction	Engineering and Civil Contractors Pty Ltd	\$4,935,744
Design and Construction of Hobarts Bridge on Darkwood Road	Coastal Works	\$2,123,923
Keevers Drive Embankment Restoration (Design and Construct Package)	Fortade Group Pty Ltd	\$2,007,778
Shared Library Services	Clarence Regional Library	\$1,200,000
Reseal Program 22/23 - State and Local Roads	Boral Construction Materials Group Ltd	\$926,339
Pump Station to Hennesseys Lane Pavement Rehabilitation & Widening	The Bayrange Pty Ltd	\$647,515
Workers compensation Annual premium	Statecover Mutual Limited	\$522,425
Upgrade of Bellingen Footpaths; construction of new kerb, gutter, pathways and ramps to tie into the existing site infrastructure to create suitable pathways for use by the Bellingen Shire Council Community	Mid North Coast Contractors Pty Ltd	\$470,404
Supply and Delivery of Bitumen Emulsion	Fulton Hogan	\$350,000
Supply and installation of audio video equipment for Bellingen Memorial Hall upgrade	Any Entertainment Pty Ltd	\$339,618
Supply and Installation of barrier supply and install leading terminal supply and install trailing terminal establishment (RMCC: PS2HL - Guardrail installation)	Guardrail Systems Pty Ltd	\$308,263
Quarry Materials for Gleniffer Road Upgrade	Dorrigo Quarry	\$281,600
Supply, Delivery and Placement of Road Resurfacing to complete works for three projects: Hickory Street Asphalt rehabilitation & SVTOL Sites 2 & 3	Colas NSW Pty Ltd	\$225,469

GOODS OR SERVICES	SUPPLIERS	TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE (INC GST) <i>NOTE: THIS VALUE INCLUDES ANY VARIATION PURCHASE ORDERS</i>
Insurance Premium Public Liability- Professional Indemnity 2022/23	Statewide Mutual	\$229,103
Bellingen Sewage Treatment Plants Design Upgrade	GANDEN Pty Ltd	\$219,856
Upgrade of Bellingen Swimming Pool - resurfacing of concrete aprons	Binet Constructions	\$219,539
RFS Shelter Station Extension	Warwick Green Building Pty Limited	\$215,330
Civil Investigation and Design for Kalang Road Embankment Restorations	Jed Civil	\$188,397
Plant replacement for P121 as per program	Mavin Truck Centre Pty Ltd	\$185,404
Better Waste Recycling Project: Construction of a new upcycling workshop shed to help improve the shires waste management practices through education workshops and the diversification of small-scale waste processing.	ASKC Sheds Lismore Pty Ltd	\$174,320
Coramba Road Rehab Project	Stabilcorp Pty Ltd	\$164,221
Council Motor Vehicle Insurance 2022-2023	Statewide Mutual	\$161,959
Insurance Premium Property 2022/23	Statewide Mutual	\$160,768
Total		\$16,561,774

Donations and Contributions

Developer Contributions

New reporting and accounting requirements for infrastructure contributions and planning agreements were introduced into the EP&A Regulation on 12 February 2021 through the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Development Contributions) regulation 2021 (amending Regulation).

The following table relates to contributions expenditure, including a breakdown of contributions expenditure by project.

PLAN	BALANCE 30 JUNE 2022	RECEIPTS	SPEND	BALANCE 30 JUNE 2023
Roads	867,782	91,944	-	959,725
Parking	30,346	1,196	-	31,542
Drainage	11,365	448	-	11,813
Community Facilities	581,293	51,061	87,469	544,885
Community Facilities - Bushfires	156,108	6,151	-	162,259
7.11 not under plan	112,696	4,440	-	117,136
7.12 Plan'	67,250	61,125	-	128,375
Section 64	6,239,077	522,214	-	6,761,291
	8,065,919	738,577	87,469	8,717,027

Council's Community Grants Program July 2022 – June 2023

Council offers a Community Grants Program twice a year that runs over the financial period. Grants are available through this program via the Community Support Fund, Community Event Sponsorship Fund and Creative Placemaking Fund. The available budget for 2022/23 was \$50,000, which was split across Round 1 and Round 2. One grant recipient declined their \$2000 grant, resulting in \$48,000 being awarded in total.

During Round 1, Council received eighteen (18) applications totalling \$68,136.

Seven (7) applications were received for the Community Support Fund, five (5) applications for the Community Event Sponsorship Fund and six (6) applications for the Creative Placemaking Fund.

Thirteen (13) applications were supported either fully or in-part with the total funding recommended for Round 1 being \$27,275.

Community Support and Community Event Sponsorship Funds

Council's commitments with respect to Donations and Contributions are detailed as follows:

Community Support Fund (Round 1)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Mylestom Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association	Activities to support seniors in Mylestom	\$1,400
Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival Inc	Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival Schools Program	\$3,740
Urunga Mylestom Chamber of Commerce	Urunga Bicycle Racks	\$2,000
Bellingen Public School P&C	Bello Children's Fete	\$1,500
Urunga Public School P&C	Learning on Country with Landcare and Bellingen High	\$1,700
SUB-TOTAL		\$10,340

Community Event Sponsorship Fund (Round 1)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Bellingen Golf Club	Bellingen Shire Golf Classic	\$1,000
Camp Creative	Camp Creative 2023	\$3,000
Bellingen Improvised Music Festival (BIMF) 2022	Local Band Showcase at BIMF 2022	\$2,000
Dorrigo Folk and Bluegrass Festival Inc	Marquees for 20th Dorrigo Folk & Bluegrass Festival	\$2,000
Bellingen Muse (auspiced by Bellingen Community Arts Council)	Bellingen Muse 2022 - Festival Fiesta	\$2,000
SUB-TOTAL		\$10,000

The Creative Placemaking Fund (Round 1)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Dorrigo Preschool Association	Community Mural Project	\$3,000
Urunga Public School	Connecting to Gumbaynggirr Culture	\$3,000
SUB-TOTAL		\$6,935

During Round 2, Council received eighteen (14) applications totalling \$54,145.60.

Three (3) applications were received for the Community Support Fund, six (6) applications for the Community Event Sponsorship Fund and five (5) applications for the Creative Placemaking Fund.

Ten (10) applications were supported either fully or in-part with the total funding recommended for Round 1 being \$22,725. One (1) applicant declined their grant offer of \$2000, resulting in nine (9) applications being funded \$20,725.

Community Support Fund (Round 2)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Dorrigo and Guy Fawkes Agricultural Association	Fence Panels for Dorrigo Showground	\$3,000
SUB-TOTAL		\$3,000

The Community Event Sponsorship Fund (Round 2)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Bellingen Youth Orchestra	Schools Concert 2022	\$2,400
Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival Inc	Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival 2023	\$2,000
Arts Council of the Dorrigo	Dorrigo Easter Art Exhibition (DEAE) 2023	\$1,215
Dorrigo Chamber of Commerce	Day of Dahlias	\$1,000
Urunga Business and Community Inc	Urunga Rail Centenary	\$1,000
SUB-TOTAL		\$7,615

The Creative Placemaking Fund (Round 2)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival Inc	BRWF Street Performances and Youth Activities	\$2,110
Gumbaynggirr Wenonah Head Aboriginal Corporation	Wenonah Head Indigenous Art Welcome Posts	\$4,500
Urunga Sail Training Club	Weaving the Story of Bindarray Yuruun	\$3,500
SUB-TOTAL		\$10,110

Heritage Fund Donations & Contributions

Council distributed \$11,252 of funding to four grant recipients as part of the 2022/23 Local Heritage Assistance Fund. This comprised \$5,626 of funding from Council, and \$5626 of funding provided by the NSW Department of Premier & Cabinet. The table below outlines the allocation of funding to grant recipients.

LOCAL HERITAGE ASSISTANCE FUND GRANTS		\$
Repair historic original concrete fence	8 Watson Street Bellingen	\$2,250
Repaint exterior (partial) and install period gate	12 William Street Bellingen	\$2,693
Replace double hung sash window to match existing	22 Coronation Street Bellingen	\$3,000
Remove paint and Repolish various elements in original Black japonica finish	19 Cudgery Street Dorrigo	\$3,310
Sub Total		11,252

The total actual amount contributed or otherwise granted by Council under Section 356 of the Act for 2022/23 was \$53,626.

Particulars of Any Environmental Upgrade Agreement Entered Into

Council has not entered into any arrangements during the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

Report on Capital Works Projects

Councils capital projects for infrastructure facilities, including renovations and extensions have not exceeded 10% of Councils annual rate revenue during the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

General Manager and Senior Staff Remuneration

Senior Staff Salaries

There are three positions within Council designated as Senior Staff as at 30 June. These include the General Manager, Deputy General Manager, Operations and Deputy General Manager, Corporate and Community. The total remuneration package of \$256,658.05 payable to the General Manager included salary, FBT costs associated with the provision of a Council owned motor vehicle and superannuation costs.

The combined total remuneration package cost of \$478,385.32 payable to the two Deputy General Manager Positions included salary, additional leave, FBT costs associated with the provision of a Council owned motor vehicle under leaseback arrangement and superannuation.

Functions Delegated by Council

External bodies that exercised functions delegated by Council during the period were:

BODY	FUNCTION
EXTERNAL BODIES	
Clarence Regional Library Committee	Library Service
NSW Rural Fire Service	Rural Fire Services
COMMUNITY COMMITTEES (SECTION 355 NSW LGA 1993)	
Bellingen Citizens Centre Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Centre
Bellingen Island Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Reserve
Bellingen Memorial Hall Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall
Bellingen Youth Hub	Care, Control and Management of the Bellingen Shire Youth Hub
Bellingen/Connell Park Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Parks
Bellinger Valley Historical Society Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Bellingen and Urunga Museums
Brierfield Hall Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall
Burdett Park Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Park
Deervale Hall and Recreation Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall and Reserve
Dorrigo Public Hall Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Centre
Dorrigo Recreation Grounds Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Reserve
Dorrigo Saleyards Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Saleyards
Hickory House and Neighbourhood Bus Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Community Bus & Centre
Megan Hall and Recreation Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall and Reserve
Mylestom Hall Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall
North Bellingen Children's Centre Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Centre
North Dorrigo Recreation Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Reserve
Raleigh Hall and Recreation Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall and Reserve
Thora Community Hall Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall
Urunga Literary Institute and Senior Citizens Centre Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Centre and the Literary Institute Hall
Urunga Recreation Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Reserve

Corporations, Partnerships, Joint Ventures or Other Bodies in which Council Held a Controlling Interest

Council did not participate in any corporations, partnerships, joint ventures or other bodies in which it held a controlling interest.

Corporations, Partnerships, Joint Ventures or Other Bodies in Which the Council Participated

ORGANISATION	ROLE
Arts Mid North Coast	Board Member
Mid North Coast Weight of Loads Group	Member
Regional Procurement	Partner
Statewide Mutual Limited	Member, Board Member
StateCover Mutual Limited	Member
Mid North Coast Joint Organisation	Member
Coffs Coast Regional Waste Services	Member
Our Living Coast Regional Sustainability Alliance	Member
Climate Emergency Australia	Member
MidWaste	Member
Sustainability Advantage	Member
Cities Power Partnership	Member
Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy	Member
Clarence Regional Library Group	Board Members
Sustainable Schools Network	Member
North Coast Regional Weeds Network	Member

Stormwater Management Services

Council did not levy a stormwater management levy during the reporting year.

Coastal Protection Services

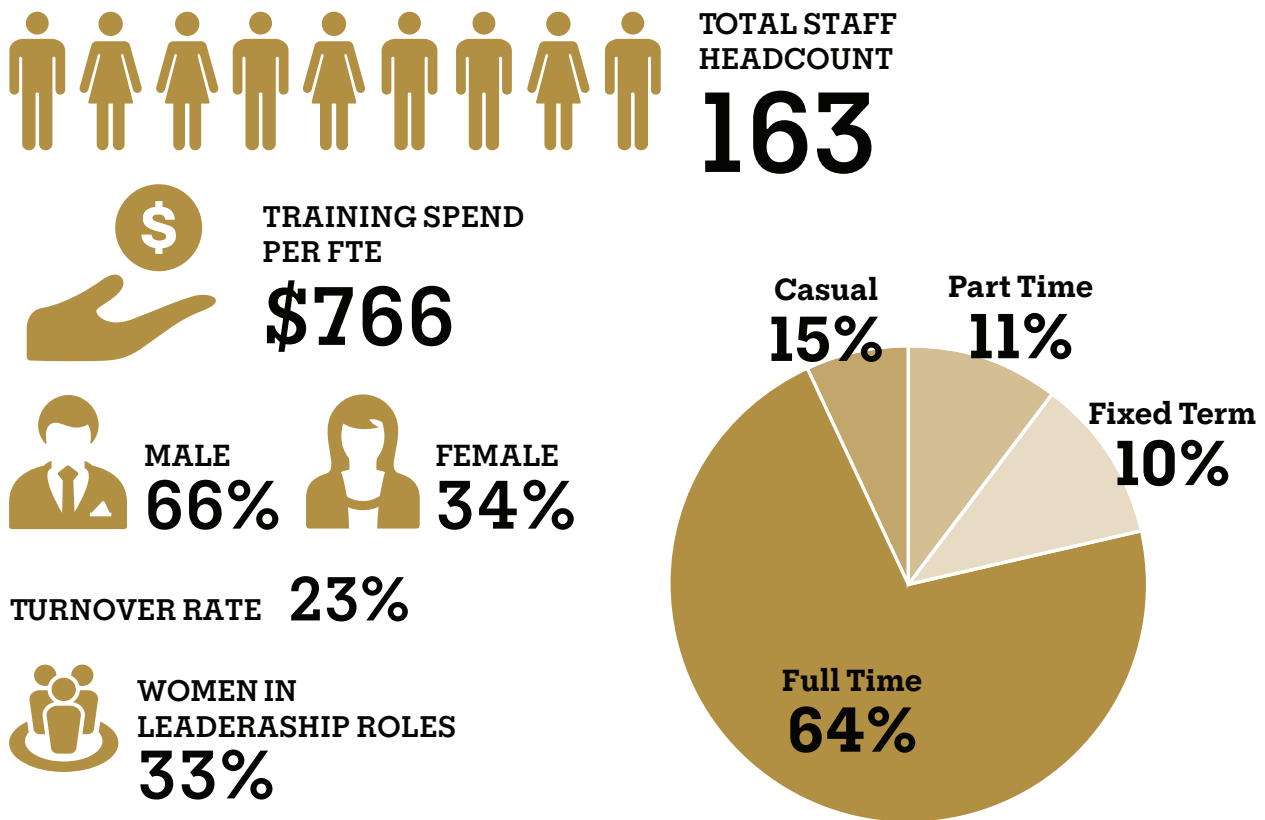
Council did not levy an annual coastal protection charge during the reporting year.

Workforce Strategy and Equal Opportunity Employment

Workforce Strategy

Council's Workforce Strategy responds to Council's Community Strategic Plan – Bellingen Shire Community Vision 2035. The Workforce Strategy guides the preparation of our workforce to be professional and resilient, able to work in partnership and collaboration with external stakeholders to deliver quality local services that meet the diverse needs of our community.

Key Metrics 30 June 2023



During the reporting period, three (3) people were employed by the council under senior staff contracts. Three (3) people were engaged by the council, under a contract or other arrangement wholly or principally for the labour of the person. There was one (1) apprentice

Our supporting action plan is articulated under three (3) objectives that prepare our workforce to meet our community's immediate and long-term demands:

1. Attract - Strive to create and maintain a workforce that reflects the diversity of our community
2. Develop - Value and retain experience while at the same time grow talent and create career development opportunities.
3. Retain - Build an environment that encourages accountability and rewards performance with a focus on opportunities to enhance the health and wellbeing of our employees.

In 2022/23 we delivered a number of initiatives relating to workplace culture, diversity and equal employment that stem from our Workforce Strategy and contribute to our objectives.

Reward & Recognition

Council continues to recognise the hard work and efforts of its employees through various programs. Council's annual service recognition event "Togetherbration" was held in December 2022 with 19 employees receiving recognition for 5 to 35 years of service with council.

Learning & Development

Council employees undertook the following training throughout the 2022/23 year to inform staff of their responsibilities to uphold the highest standards of behaviour in the workplace and to ensure communities have trust and confidence in local government.

- Digital Literacy
- Chainsaw Training
- ChemCERT AQF3
- Confined Space
- Conversations that Count
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Workshop
- Merit Assessment for Hiring Managers
- Minute Taking Skills
- Overhead Powerlines
- Performance Review Workshop
- Pole saw Training
- Prepare Traffic Management Plans
- Presenting with Confidence
- Working at Heights

Workplace Relations

The Local Government (State) Award 2023 requires establishment of a Consultative Committee for the purposes of consultation and participation. Council's Staff Consultative Committee (SCC) is comprised of elected staff representatives and managers who meet regularly to work together on specific issues covered under the scope of the Award.

Workplace Health and Safety

Council is committed to providing a safe work environment for all employees by providing safe systems of work and ongoing training. Safety is a process of continuous improvement with ongoing reviews of our safety systems and processes taking place during this period.

There has been a big focus on safety training during 2022/23 with the following training programs delivered:

- Bullying and Harassment
- De-Escalation and OVA Training
- Drug and Alcohol General Awareness
- Drug and Alcohol Fit for Work
- Fire Extinguisher
- First Aid
- Mental Health Education and Awareness
- NRMA Driver Safety Training
- Warden and Chief Warden

External accreditation to AS/NZS ISO 45001 has been achieved for the Integrated Management System (IMS) (the Work Health & Safety Management System) used on road construction and maintenance projects under the Road Maintenance Council Contract (RMCC) with Transport for NSW.

Council has also worked with StateCover Mutual to successfully implement VAULT, which is a safety reporting and information management system. This is intended to replace paper-based incident reporting and the entering of manual data into spreadsheets.

Monthly Safety sessions are provided to outdoor staff promoting a range of initiatives including tips to stay safe onsite, preventative messaging and health and wellbeing material is also circulated throughout Council's office noticeboards and the intranet.

More broadly, Council staff have been actively involved with the promotion and participation in varied wellbeing initiatives including:

- R U OK Day
- Safe Work Month
- Movember
- Adopt-a-Family
- Fitness Passport discount gym membership initiative

Health and Wellbeing

A Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been developed as part of StateCover self-audit requirements. Various initiatives have already taken place and will continue as part of our overarching strategy.

Health and safety committees (HSC) provide the means to give workers a voice in health and safety matters at the workplace and involve workers through participation and consultation. It brings together the person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) and workers to discuss and develop ways to improve health and safety at work. Council has an active Health and Safety Committee that meet regularly to discuss health and safety matters in the workplace. Council employs a dedicated Employee Safety and Wellbeing Coordinator.

A number of Health and Wellbeing events are held by Council each year (e.g. RU OK Day, Australia's Biggest Morning Tea) bringing employees together to support one another in these areas.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

During the reporting period, Council undertook a review of its EAP and has partnered with PeopleSense by Altius for this service. It is regularly promoted through various mechanisms.

Council's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential counselling program available to all employees and their immediate family members. Employees have access to up to four free sessions per year. EAP offers confidential and professional psychological support for personal or work-related issues focused on providing practical solutions. EAP counselling provides vital support to improve the mental health, resilience, and wellbeing of our employees.

Labour Statistics

Wednesday 25 May 2022 has been chosen as the “relevant day” for councils to report on their labour statistics in their annual reports under section 217 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021.

The “relevant day” for the purpose of reporting labour statistics under section 217 is required to be fixed by the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Environment after the end of each financial year. This date is to be a different day to the one fixed by the Secretary for the previous year. The following table outlines the statistics as required.

THE NUMBER OF PERSONS DIRECTLY EMPLOYED BY COUNCIL	
Permanent full-time basis	118
Permanent part-time basis	28
Casual basis	21
Fixed-term contract	18
The number of persons employed by the council who are "senior staff" for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1993	3
The number of persons engaged by the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person's employer, that is wholly or principally for the labour of the person	2
The number of persons supplied to the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person's employer, as an apprentice or trainee.	1
	191

Mayor or Councillor Training

The elected Council has undertaken a series of workshops, professional development and training to inform their responsibilities and roles. These programs are tracked to ensure that our elected members are provided the appropriate development necessary to perform their civic duties. Ongoing professional development activities currently being coordinated are recorded and stored in a portal to ensure that councillors always have access to the information. During the reporting period Councillors attended 50 workshop briefings and the following training programs were facilitated and attendance recorded.

TRAINING SESSION	MEDIA & COMMUNICATION	VERBAL JODO
Date	August 2022	February 2023
Cr Allan (Mayor)	✓	✓
Cr Brotherton	✓	✓
Cr Cook	✓	✓
Cr Fenton	x	x
Cr Glyde	✓	✓
Cr King	✓	✓
Cr Tree	✓	✓

Companion Animals Act - Compliance

Companion Animals Act – Compliance Pound

- Twenty-nine (29) dogs were seized, surrendered, or found roaming free during the 2021/2022 year.
- Fourteen (14) were returned to owners five (5) of these dogs were returned to their owners prior to being impounded and nine (9) of these dogs were transferred to Council’s animal shelter.
- No (0) dogs remained in the pound from the previous year.
- No (0) dogs remained in the pound at the end of this reporting period.
- Fifteen (15) impounded dogs were re-homed.
- Two (2) dangerous dogs were euthanised.
- Twenty (20) cats were seized, found abandoned or stray,
- Four (4) were returned to owner and twenty (20) were transferred to the animal pound.
- Fifteen (15) were re-homed and one (1) cat was sold.

In place processes and one on one education has seen a significant increase in compliance and another decrease in the number of dogs that have been seized.

Council works closely with Nambucca Shire Council and the Macksville Pound and numerous rescue organisations. This relationship has allowed us to re-home all suitable dogs and cats that cannot be adopted out via our subsidised sale and de-sexing program.

In line with Council’s adopted Companion Animals Management Plan, Council aims to return companion animals to their owners, or to re-home those animals which not been collected by the owner or surrendered to the pound. Only in situations where re-homing is not possible for reasons of suitability or temperament, will euthanasia be used as a management option.

FINANCIAL YEAR – DOGS	SEIZED OR SURRENDERED	IMPOUNDED	EUTHANISED
2014 – 2015	141	94	30
2015 – 2016	62	32	15
2016 – 2017	59	28	6
2017 – 2018	51	28	4
2018 - 2019	42	19	0
2019-2020	48	25	3
2020 – 2021	26	17	1 (Dangerous)
2021 - 2022	34	14	4
2022 - 2023	29	9	2 (Dangerous)

FINANCIAL YEAR – CATS	SEIZED OR SURRENDERED	IMPOUNDED	EUTHANISED
2014 - 2015	15	12	12
2015 - 2016	9	7	7
2016 - 2017	16	13	13
2017 - 2018	8	5	5
2018 - 2019	6	6	1
2019-2020	14	14	0
2020 - 2021	17	16	1 (Feral)
2021 - 2022	13	11	1
2022 - 2023	20	20	0

Statement on activities relating to enforcing and ensuring compliance with Companion Animals Act and Regulation

Council's Ranger Services interrogate the Companion Animals Register monthly and send notices to owners of unregistered dogs in the Shire. Following the final notice if the animal is still not registered a Penalty Notice (PN) is issued for non-compliance.

Service requests are investigated and if animals are not identified with a microchip and/or are not registered their owners are issued with a written notice to comply. Non-compliance results in fines being issued.

The barking dog investigation and response procedure continues to be implemented to deal with dog noise nuisance. The process places more emphasis on the persons involved (complainant and dog owner) to resolve the matter themselves prior to Council intervening with regulatory actions. This approach is consistent with that utilised by other local councils and after one year since inception it is working efficiently and effectively.

Regular patrols are conducted, and one on one education and warnings related mainly to dog offences are issued to offenders in the first instance. PN's are issued for subsequent breaches and for serial offenders Dangerous, Menacing or Nuisance Orders are issued:

- Two (2) Dangerous Dog Orders,
- Four (4) Menacing Dog Order and
- Five (5) Nuisance Dog Order was issued.
- Nil (0) Nuisance Cat Orders were issued.

Dog Attack data

Thirty (30) dog attacks were reported and after investigation six (6) were lodged with the Office of Local Government through the Companion Animals Register. Two (2) were recorded as dangerous and Four (4) were declared menacing.

COMPANION ANIMAL MANAGEMENT FUNDING	2022/23 \$
Registration (146) - commissions	711.16
Impounding fees, charges	588
Fines	11,880
Totals	13,179.16

Companion Animal Community Education Programs

Council undertakes one-on-one compliance education with owners who have been found to be in breach of the Companion Animals Act.

Strategies to promote and assist the de-sexing of dogs and cats

Council does not currently have any strategies in place for the promotion of and/or assistance with de-sexing of dogs or cats.

Off leash areas provided in the council area

Council provides three (3) dog off-leash exercise areas across the Bellingeen Shire. Dogs can run, exercise, and socialise leash-free with other dogs and visitors at the following locations:

- **Dorrigo:** Polocrosse fields in Ash Street
- **Bellingeen:** Jarrett Park west of Lavenders Bridge
- **Urunga:** The beach south of the river mouth to the four wheel drive access point known as sand mines

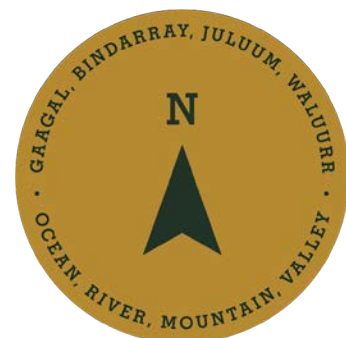
Private Swimming Pool inspections

PRIVATE SWIMMING POOL INSPECTIONS	2022/23
Number of inspections of tourist and visitor accommodation	
Total	0
Number of inspections of premises with more than 2 dwellings	
Total	0
Number of inspections that resulted in issuing a certificate of compliance under s22D of the SP Act	
Total	29
Number of inspections that resulted in issuing a certificate of non-compliance under cl21 of the SP Reg	
Total	16

Rates and Charges Written Off

The total value of rates and charges written off for the year 2022 /2023 was \$ 480,269.96 as follows:

RATES AND CHARGES WRITTEN OFF	2021/22 \$	2022/23 \$
General Rates	327,790.31	211,124.85
Water Annual Charges	92,949.24	77,739.00
Sewer Annual Charges	72,232.86	68,775.00
DWM Charges	-	105,077.00
	492,972.41	462,715.85
Rates-Residential	1,425.83	7,478.77
Rates-Business	-	-
DWM	0.69	-
Non DWM	402.33	2,513.00
Water-annual Charges	0.13	-
Water-usage Charges	10,139.00	10.53
Sewer-annual Charges	0.91	-
Sewer-usage Charges	162.82	0.07
Liquid Trade Waste Usage Charges	-	-
Interest-rates	51.93	4,895.71
Interest-water	-	0.92
Legal Fees/Costs	-	2,655.11
	12,186.64	17,554.11
Totals	505,159.05	480,269.96



Planning Agreements

The below table outlines the planning agreements entered into and or are ongoing with Council during 2022/23.

PARTIES TO PLANNING AGREEMENT	DATE AGREEMENT MADE	LAND	PARTICULARS	EFFECTS OF COMPLIANCE WITH DURING 2022-2023
Bellingen Shire Council (Council) & Shaul Rubinstein Pty Ltd (Developer)	14/9/2020	Lots 1 & 2 DP 900116, known as 84-90 Hyde Street, Bellingen.	Requires developer to undertake public works including the reconstruction of Halpins Lane, construction of 36 on street car parks on Oak Street and upgrade of footpath areas. Requires Council to contribute towards the cost of the upgrade of Halpins Lane and the footpath. Pertains to Development Consent 2018/DA-00025 - Demolition, Remediation & Construction of Shop Top Housing on the land.	Agreement remains in place. Relevant works triggering provisions in agreement have not yet commenced
Bellingen Shire Council and Ruby Sequoia Pty Ltd as trustee for Ruby Sequoia Family Trust and Bruce Michael Levy and Jeanette Paula Levy as Trustees for Roses Road Trust	20/12/2020	2A Oak Street, Halpins Lane, William Street and Oak Street, Bellingen	Provide car parking in William Street and contribute towards upgrading of infrastructure in Halpins Lane. Pertains to Development Consent 2020/DA-0091 – Subdivision of land into 3 lots and construction of professional office suites and residential dwellings.	Agreement remains in place. Council has received \$42,178.26 via Tax Invoice 906 on 8/6/21 in respect of the Halpins Lane Contribution. Other relevant works triggering provisions in agreement have not yet commenced.
Bellingen Shire Council and Urunga Developments Pty Ltd	23/6/2021	4040, 4042 & 4056 Giinagay Way, Urunga	Agreements regarding upgrades of water and sewer infrastructure necessary to service subdivision in the locality. Pertains to Development Consent 2014/DA-129 – Subdivision of 3 lots into 263 lots & associated works.	Agreement remains in place. Subdivision construction works have commenced. Will be superseded by amended Planning Agreement under negotiation which will be documented in next reporting period.
Bellingen Shire Council and 105 North BNK Rd Pty Ltd	22/11/2022	105 North Bank Road, Bellingen	Requires Developer to construct and dedicate a public park to Council, construct sewer infrastructure, contribute towards monitoring of septicity and contribute towards future sewer infrastructure if septicity remains an issue. Requires Council to monitor septicity.	Construction of the development has commenced. Relevant infrastructure not yet completed and no payments made to date.

Public's Right to Access Government Information

The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act) came into effect on 1 July 2010 and replaced the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and Section 12 of the NSW Local Government Act 1993.

The aim of the GIPA Act is to provide an open, accountable, fair, and effective government. This means that all government agencies in NSW are required to make more information freely available and more processes and documents of Government will be available following an application process.

In 2022/23 Council processed fifty-eight (58) informal access for information requests, removing the need to make a formal application in most cases.

Review of Proactive Release Program - Clause 8(a)

Section 7(3) of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 requires each agency to review, at intervals of not more than 12 months, its program for the release of government information under this section to identify the kinds of government information held by the agency that should in the public interest be made publicly available and that can be made publicly available without imposing unreasonable additional costs on the agency.

In the 2022/23 reporting period, Council has undertaken a review their programs for the release of government information to identify the kinds of information that can be made publicly available.

Our program for the review of information involved:

- Review and update of Council's Agency Information Guide
- Review Council's process for assessing informal and formal GIPAs.

The information is provided in accordance with Clause 8 of the "Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018". Annual reporting requirements under section 125 of Act

During the reporting period, our agency received one hundred and fifty eight (158) formal and valid access applications (including withdrawn applications but not invalid applications).

Clause 8B: The total number of access applications received by the agency during the reporting year (including withdrawn applications but not including invalid applications).

TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED
46

Number of Refused applications for Schedule 1 Information - Clause 8(c)

The total number of access applications received by the agency during the reporting year that the agency refused either wholly or partly because the application was for the disclosure of information referred to in Schedule 1 of the Act (information for which there is a conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure).

NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS REFUSED	WHOLLY	PARTLY	TOTAL
	0	2	2
% of Total	0%	100%	

Statistical information about access applications - Schedule 2

TABLE A: NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS BY TYPE OF APPLICANT AND OUTCOME*										
	Access Granted in Full	Access Granted in Part	Access Refused in Full	Information not Held	Information Already Available	Refuse to Deal with Application	Refuse to Confirm/ Deny whether information is held	Application Withdrawn	Total	% of Total
Media	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Members of Parliament	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Private sector business	5	15	0	1	0	0	0	2	23	50%
Not for profit organisations or community groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Members of the public (by legal representative)	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	26%
Members of the public (other)	4	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	11	24%
Total	21	20	1	2	0	0	0	2	46	
% of Total	46%	43%	2%	4%	0%	0%	0%	4%		

* More than one decision can be made in respect of a particular access application. If so, a recording must be made in relation to each such decision. This also applies to Table B.

TABLE B: NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS BY TYPE OF APPLICANT AND OUTCOME*										
	Access Granted in Full	Access Granted in Part	Access Refused in Full	Information not Held	Information Already Available	Refuse to Deal with Application	Refuse to Confirm/ Deny whether information is held	Application Withdrawn	Total	% of Total
Personal information applications*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	21	19	1	2	0	0	0	2	45	98%
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2%
Total	21	20	1	2	0	0	0	2	46	
% of Total	46%	43%	2%	4%	0%	0%	0%	4%		

* A personal information application is an access application for personal information (as defined in clause 4 of Schedule 4 to the Act) about the applicant (the applicant being an individual).

TABLE C: INVALID APPLICATIONS

Reason for invalidity	No of applications	% of Total
Application does not comply with formal requirements (section 41 of the Act)	17	100%
Application is for excluded information of the agency (section 43 of the Act)	0	0%
Application contravenes restraint order (section 110 of the Act)	0	0%
Total number of invalid applications received	17	100%
Invalid applications that subsequently became valid applications	13	76%

TABLE D: CONCLUSIVE PRESUMPTION OF OVERRIDING PUBLIC INTEREST AGAINST DISCLOSURE: MATTERS LISTED IN SCHEDULE 1 OF ACT

	Number of times consideration used*	% of Total
Overriding secrecy laws	0	0%
Cabinet information	0	0%
Executive Council information	0	0%
Contempt	0	0%
Legal professional privilege	0	0%
Excluded information	2	100%
Documents affecting law enforcement and public safety	0	0%
Transport safety	0	0%
Adoption	0	0%
Care and protection of children	0	0%
Ministerial code of conduct	0	0%
Aboriginal and environmental heritage	0	0%
Privilege generally - Sch 1(5A)	0	0%
Information provided to High Risk Offenders Assessment Committee	0	0%
Total	2	

**More than one public interest consideration may apply in relation to a particular access application and if so, each such consideration is to be recorded (but only once per application). This also applies in relation to Table E.*

TABLE E: OTHER PUBLIC INTEREST CONSIDERATIONS AGAINST DISCLOSURE: MATTERS LISTED IN TABLE TO SECTION 14 OF ACT

	Number of times consideration used*	% of Total
Responsible and effective government	0	0%
Law enforcement and security	0	0%
Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice	19	95%
Business interests of agencies and other persons	1	5%
Environment, culture, economy and general matters	0	0%
Secrecy provisions	0	0%
Exempt documents under interstate Freedom of Information legislation	0	0%
Total	20	

TABLE F: TIMELINESS

	Number of applications*	% of Total
Decided within the statutory time frame (20 days plus any extensions)	40	100%
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	0	0%
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	0	0%
Total	40	

TABLE G: NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS REVIEWED UNDER PART 5 OF THE ACT (BY TYPE OF REVIEW AND OUTCOME)

	Decision varied	Decision upheld	Total	% of Total
Internal review	0	0	0	0%
Review by Information Commissioner*	0	0	0	0%
Internal review following recommendation under section 93 of Act	0	0	0	0%
Review by NCAT	0	0	0	0%
Total	0	0	0	0%
% of Total	0%	0%		

*The Information Commissioner does not have the authority to vary decisions, but can make recommendations to the original decision-maker. The data in this case indicates that a recommendation to vary or uphold the original decision has been made by the Information Commissioner.

TABLE H: APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW UNDER PART 5 OF THE ACT (BY TYPE OF APPLICANT)

	Number of applications for review	% of Total
Applications by access applicants	0	0%
Applications by persons to whom information the subject of access application relates (see section 54 of the Act)	0	0%
Total	0	

TABLE I: APPLICATIONS TRANSFERRED TO OTHER AGENCIES

	Number of applications transferred	% of Total
Agency-Initiated Transfers	0	0%
Applicant - Initiated Transfers	0	0%
Total	0	0%

Complaint and Compliment Reporting

Bellinghen Shire Council Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures

2022/23	COMPLAINTS	COMPLIMENTS
Total	40	50

Recovery & Threat Abatement Plans

Council was not identified in any Recovery & Threat Abatement Plan by the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development during this period.

Public Interest Disclosures Reporting

Organisations are required under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022 (PID Act) to collect and report on information about public interest disclosures (PIDs).

The Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2022 outlines what information public authorities are to record and include in both the six month report to the NSW Ombudsman and the public authority's annual report:

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON PIDS	MADE BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS PERFORMING THEIR DAY TO DAY FUNCTIONS	UNDER A STATUTORY OR OTHER LEGAL OBLIGATION	ALL OTHER PIDS
Number of public officials who made PIDs	0	0	0
Number of PIDs received	0	0	0
OF PIDS RECEIVED, NUMBER PRIMARILY ABOUT:			
Corrupt conduct	0	0	0
Maladministration	0	0	0
Serious and substantial waste	0	0	0
Government information contravention	0	0	0
Local government pecuniary interest contravention	0	0	0
Number of PIDs finalised	0	0	0

Note: The number of PIDs finalised only refers to PIDs that have been received since the commencement of the relevant period.

Commentary on PID Obligations

The Public Interest Disclosures Act, 1994 (PID Act) requires that Council report annually on its obligations under the Act. This report is made in accordance with Sections 31 and 6E of the PID Act, and Clause 4 of the associated regulations. The PID Act encourages and facilitates the disclosure, by public officials, of:

- Corrupt conduct
- Maladministration
- Serious and substantial waste of public money
- A breach of the Government Information (Public Access) Act, 2009
- A breach of pecuniary interest obligations under the Local Government Act, 1993.

The Act sets out a comprehensive framework for protecting public officials who disclose wrongdoing and provides clear pathways for those wanting to make disclosures.

Council's internal reporting policy contains the procedures relating to the lodgment, receipt, assessment and handling of public interest disclosures. Council's internal reporting policy and other information about the Act has been made available to staff through Council's intranet and staff induction sessions. In the reporting period 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2023 Council received no Public Interest Disclosures.

Disability Action Plan

Actions in Councils Disability Inclusion Action Plan have been implemented over the last 12 months in line with the Plan's four (4) priorities. Based on these priorities, the key achievements for the past 12 months include:

Promoting positive attitudes and behaviours

- Promoted the Ian J. Cooper nominations and awards process and celebrated International Day of People with Disability at the Urunga ArtSpace with an inclusive art exhibition featuring works by community members, school children and Ability Options.
- The Youth Hub ran a number of programs including the Tech and Games Club and Golden Wolves Social Club for gender diverse people and those on the autism spectrum.
- Accessible features were promoted on our social media channels (Facebook) including information on MLAK toilets, tactile ground surface indicators, beach wheelchair, Library resources, companion animals, mobility map, hearing loops, Pinkbox machine and accessible places to visit from our Inclusive Tourism Guide.
- Included updates on disability inclusion and diversity in Councils newsletters.
- Hosted an RUOK Day in the park for staff and community.

Creating Liveable Communities

- Accessible amenity upgrades were completed at Roses Reserve, Alma Doepel Reserve and Forestry Building, Urunga.
- Council hosted a Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning workshop and forum in partnership with the University of Sydney and Coffs Council.
- Playground upgrades using the Everyone can Play principle were completed at Dangar Falls and Connell Park (Phase 1).
- Installed ramps leading into two library meeting rooms at Bellingen Library.
- Accessibility audits were undertaken at Bellingen and Church St amenities, Bellingen Library and Bellingen Pool.

Supporting Access to meaningful employment

- Council signed an agreement with Job Access to increase employment opportunities for people with disability.
- Developed an inclusive statement for all recruitment advertising.
- Partnered with BlueSky Community Services to undertake a disability audit of Council.

Improving access to systems and processes

- Developed an Easy Read version of the DIAP.
- Reported on key outcomes of the DIAP in our newsletters.
- Ensured the website is kept up to date with information on services and facilities.

A report will be prepared for the Minister providing details of specific actions for 2022/23. The 2022-2026 Disability Inclusion Action Plan was adopted in June 2022. and can be viewed on [Council's website](#).

Compliance with the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010

Dorrigo Support Services operate within the legislative requirements of the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010. Dorrigo Support Services has policies and procedures in place which recognise and acknowledge the valued role of carers and their diverse needs, taking into consideration culture, age, disability, religion, socio-economic status, gender identify and sexual orientation.

Through our assessment, planning, delivery, and review of services, we acknowledge the importance of consultation with carers to ascertain and support the model of service delivery; the participant's goals and / or aspirations; health requirements and community engagement.

Each carer's involvement in a participant's support plan development and review, is paramount to providing effective support for the people they care for, and / or providing the information and referral pathway that will enable them to make informed choices on the services required.

The important role of Carers is recognised and acknowledged in Bellingen Shire Council's Ageing Well Strategy (2023 -2027), which is aligned to key activities within Council's Operational Plan (2023 – 2024).



Memorial Hall Grand Opening Images by And The Trees Photography.



WE ARE THE
SPIRIT OF THE
PLATEAU, THE
ANCIENT MYSTERY
OF THE ***DORRIGO***
AND WHERE OUR
GREAT RIVER
RUSHES TO MEET
THE ***PACIFIC***.



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