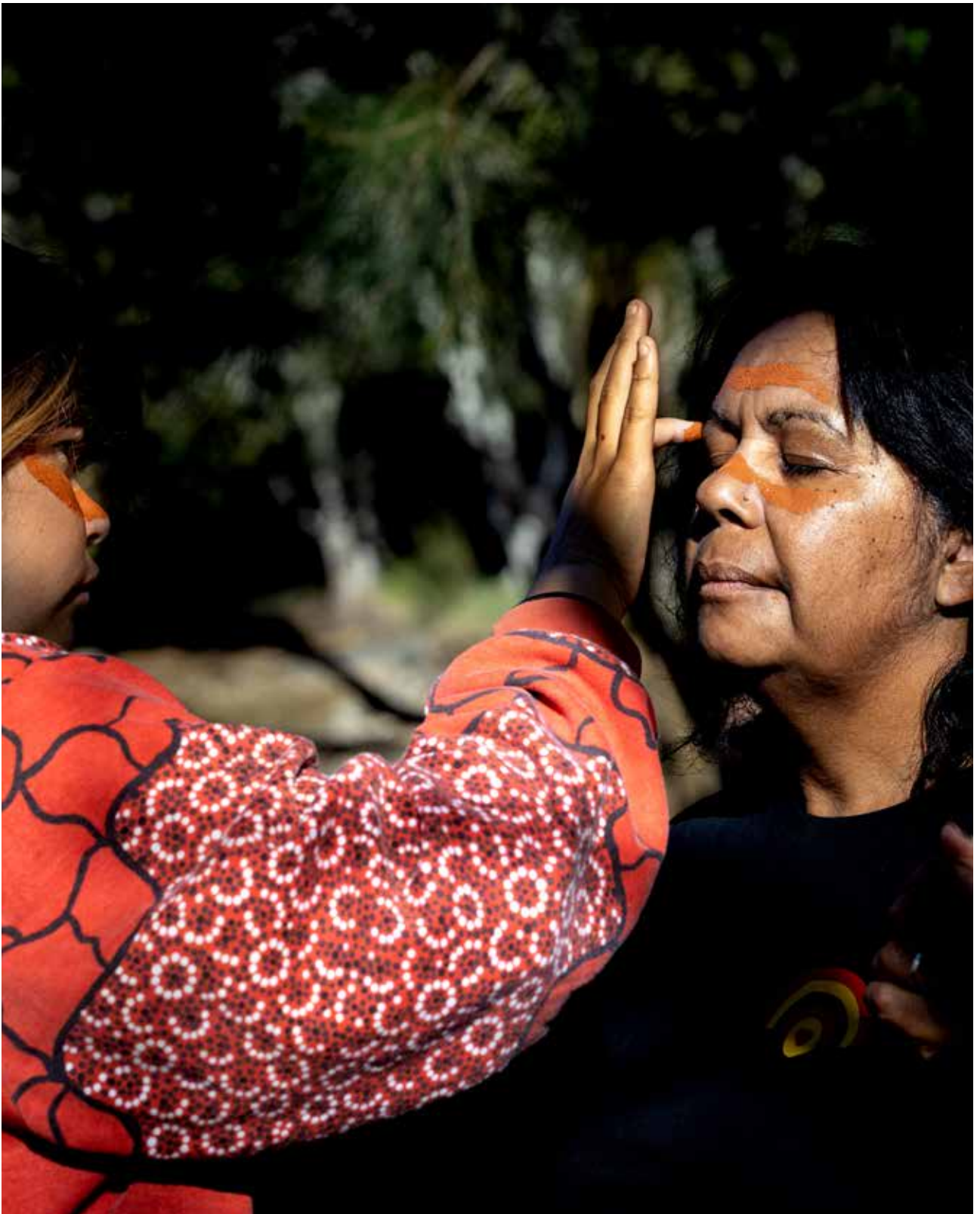


BELLINGEN SHIRE COUNCIL



Annual Report
2020-2021

CONNECTED SUSTAINABLE CREATIVE



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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Executive Summary

This report features Council's contribution towards realising our Shire's Community Vision, which identifies the strategic direction for our long-term future, and details the range of actions undertaken to deliver the essential programs, projects and initiatives our community relies on.

Our efforts have focussed on working together with our community to translate their hopes and aspirations into meaningful activities that address the environmental, financial sustainability, resilience, water security and disaster preparedness challenges our Shire faces now and into the future due to the recent drought, bushfires, floods and the current pandemic crisis.

To achieve this, Council has had to be agile, brave and resourceful to maintain the operational capacity required to deliver the essential services our community relies on in parallel with our continued efforts to protect the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our community.

This proactive strategic approach has provided Council with the agility to balance the needs of the organisation with our community's aspirations via the introduction of scalable options for the delivery of these essential services in response to the evolving challenges we continue to face in our Shire.

In addition, our ever-changing environment has required that Council work tirelessly to mitigate the impact of the challenges faced to deliver against the organisation's Operational Plan in compliance with Federal and State Government advice and the most recent Public Health Order.

As part of this transformational journey, Council has pursued opportunities identified during UTS's Financial Sustainability Review to improve its long-term financial position, inclusive of reviewing depreciation accruals, staff expenditure, service levels, fees and charges and grant advocacy activities.

The results of these continuous improvement activities have also informed Council's strategic asset management planning activities, which promote financially sustainable maintenance, repair and rehabilitation (MR&R) activities to address the suite of significant challenges our Shire's road and bridge network presents.

MR&R achievements have included the resurfacing of an additional 13 kilometres of poor condition sealed roads, the reconstruction of 2.2 kilometres of road that was in too poor a condition to reseal and the grading of 66 kilometres of our unsealed road network.

Our Shire's total of 15 load limited bridges has also been significantly reduced down to 12, with a further 6 load limited timber bridges programmed for MR&R works for the next financial year, and \$3.98 million in grant funds have been utilised to progress the construction process for the replacement of an additional three high priority timber bridges.

Ongoing water resilience is also an imperative for our community so Council has substantially progressed our own secure yield analysis assessments to inform Council's Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy to optimise the water, wastewater and stormwater services operated by Council.

Council has also provided training, financial and logistical support to coordinate local resources, inclusive of representatives from Council, local medical, emergency, Chambers of Commerce, and community service providers, to implement sustainable community recovery, preparedness, and resilience initiatives to ensure we remain a connected, sustainable, and creative community.



Liz Jeremy
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.

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



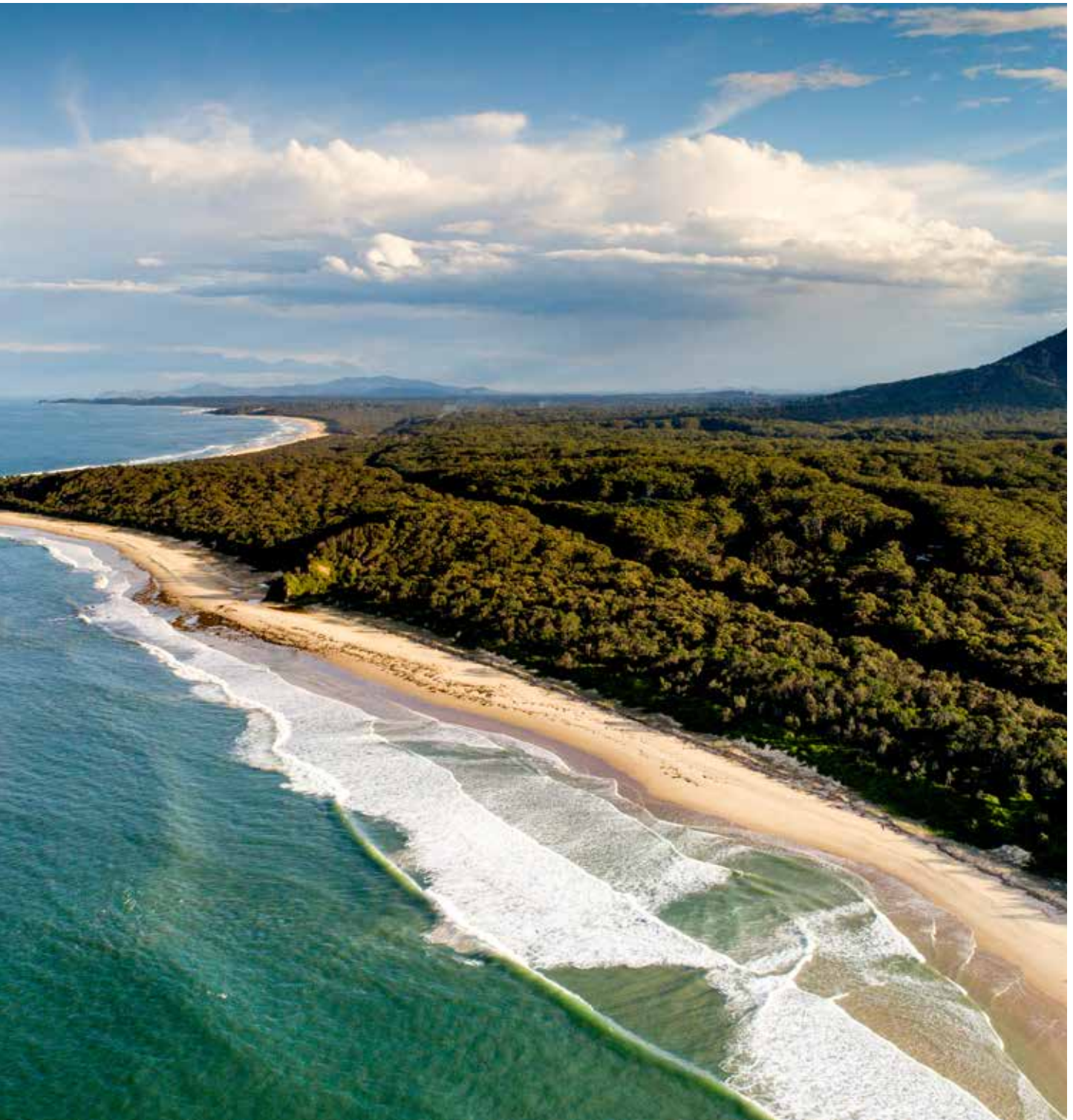
Integrity



Communication

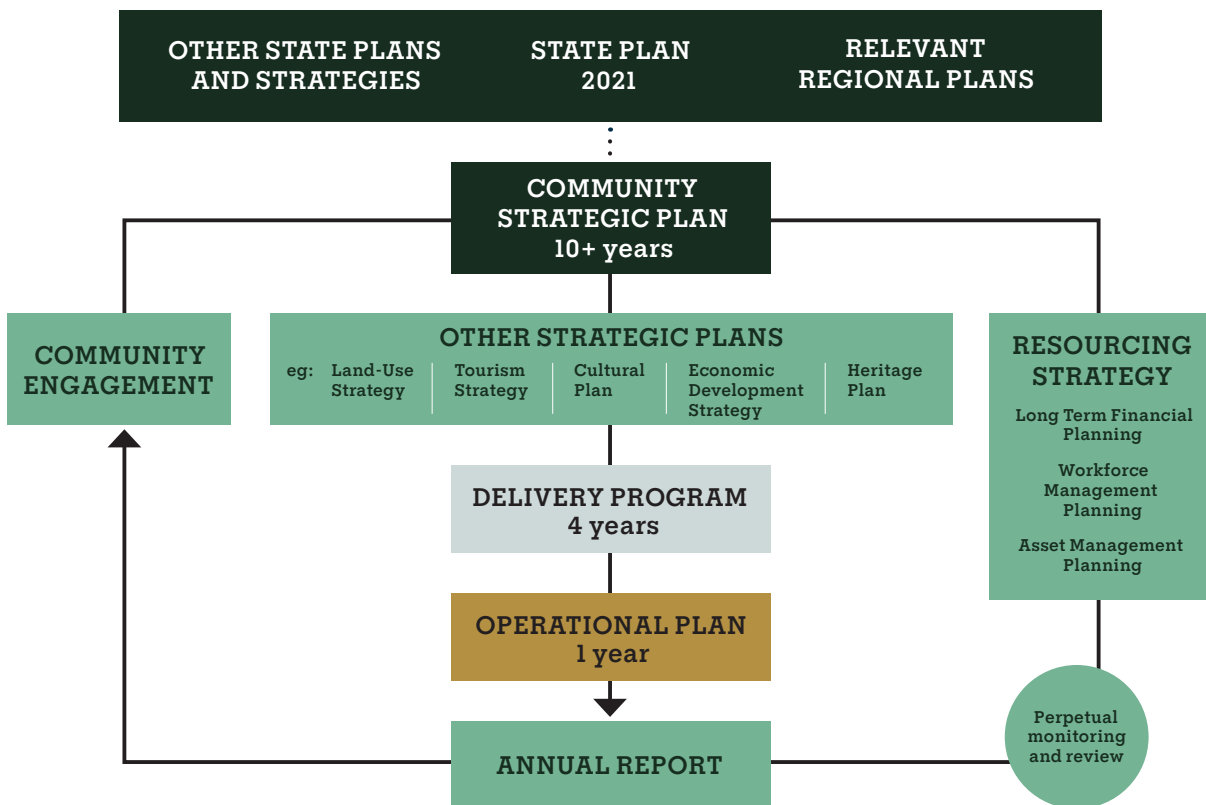


Hungry Head Coastline



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.



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.



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.



Financial Statements

The full, audited Financial Statements of Council can be found in this section.



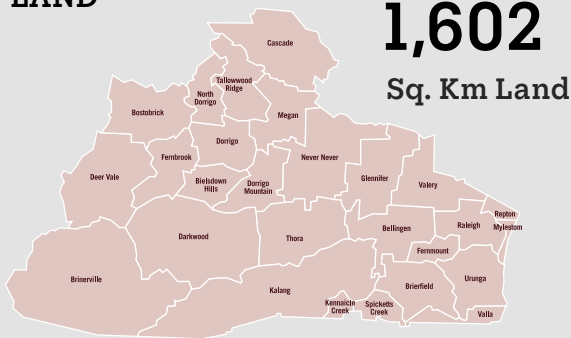
About Our Shire

The Bellingen Shire is currently home to 13,141 people (ABS Estimated Resident Population 2020), 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.

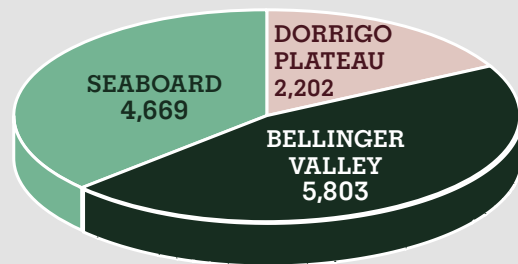
Bellingen Shire has an abundance of natural assets. Some 57% of the Shire is State Forest (21.26%), National Parks (32.36%) and Crown land. This and our cultural attractions have created a thriving tourism industry with 210,000 visitors coming to our Shire each year spending a total of \$58.9 million. 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.

LAND

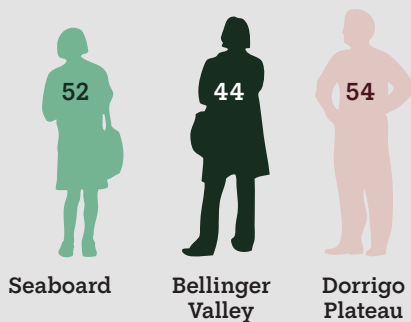


57% Council Area Not Rateable

POPULATION



MEDIAN AGE



Source: ABS census 2016

EMPLOYMENT



OUR HOMES



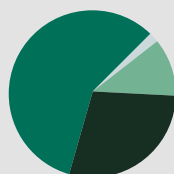
We live in 6,056 dwellings, 88% of dwellings are houses

33.1% of households have children.

68% of residents own / or are purchasing their home

LAND USE

- Primary Production
- Parkland
- Residential
- Other



ECONOMY

Gross Regional Product \$454M

as of the 30th June 2020.

Gross Regional Product is the amount of the nation's wealth which is generated by businesses, organisations and individuals working in the area.



2,918 residents have a tertiary qualification

Your Council

As a local government organisation, Bellingin Shire Council is charged with the responsibility for the delivery of a diverse range of services each day. Council has 149 approved positions (as at 30 June 2021). 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 Garry Carter, Cr Desmae Harrison, Cr Dominic King (Mayor), Cr Steve Klipin, Cr Jennie Fenton (Deputy Mayor), Cr Steve Jenkins, Cr Toni Wright-Turner.

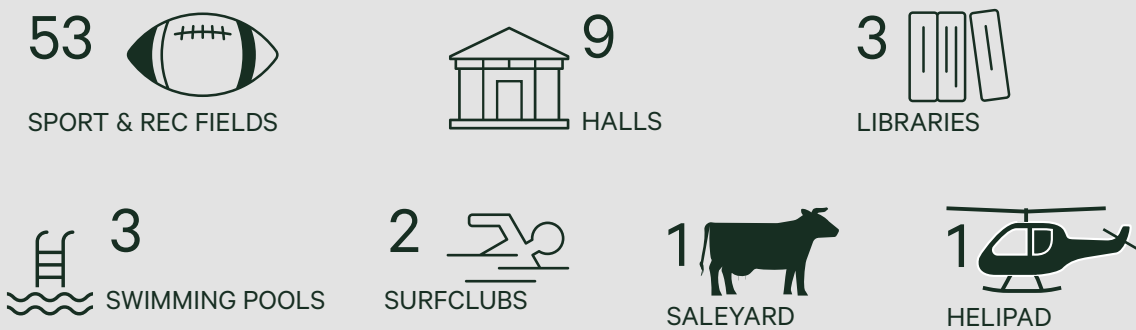
Responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the Bellingin Shire rests with the General Manager, Liz Jeremy. Together with senior management they ensure effective and efficient operation of the organisation.

The below diagram sets out the executive structure for the Council.

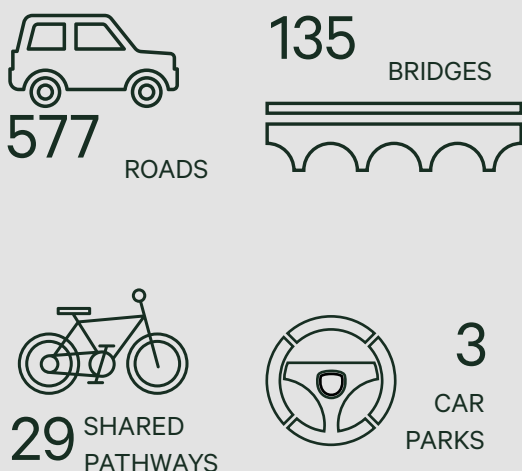


Community Infrastructure We Manage

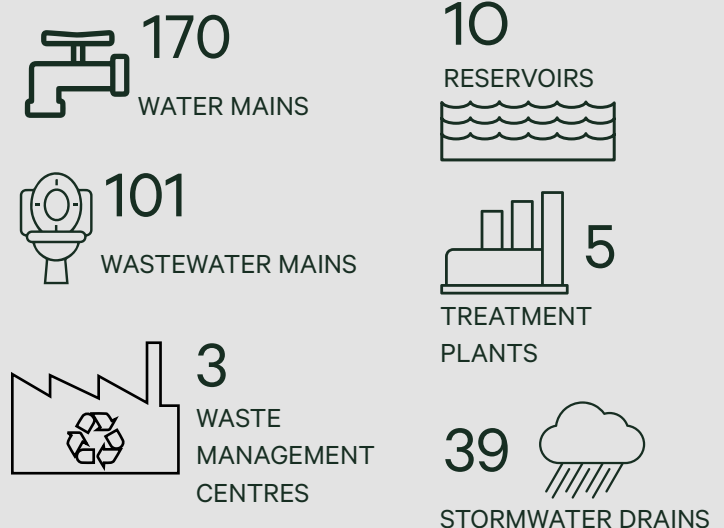
COMMUNITY FACILITIES



TRANSPORT



SERVICES



Highlights

In 2020-21 There Were:



68%

Waste Diverted From
Landfill



\$26.3M

Grant funding
successfully secured



22,467

Phone Calls And
Counter Enquiries
Answered



80,905

Library Items
Borrowed



99,097

Library Visitors



3,100

People informed
via Council's
engagement portal



372

Health & Environment
Inspections



30,833

Swimming Pool Visitors



154

Active Volunteers Involved
in Council Programs



79%

First Contact
Resolution Rate



100%

Building Inspections
Carried Out Within 3
Days



7,900

Youth Engagement
Through Hub Activities
and Programs

In 2020-21 Council delivered a \$7.2 Million capital program including:



\$5,106,504

Roads And Transport



\$1,637,138

Community Facilities
Town Improvements
Sport And Recreation



\$464,144

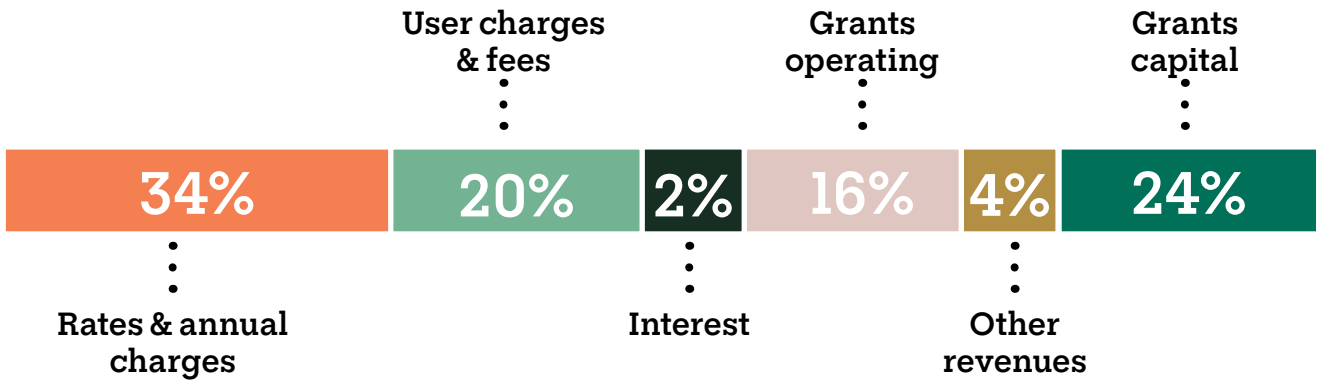
Water, Sewer, Environment
And Waste *Inc Flood Event

2020/21 In Numbers

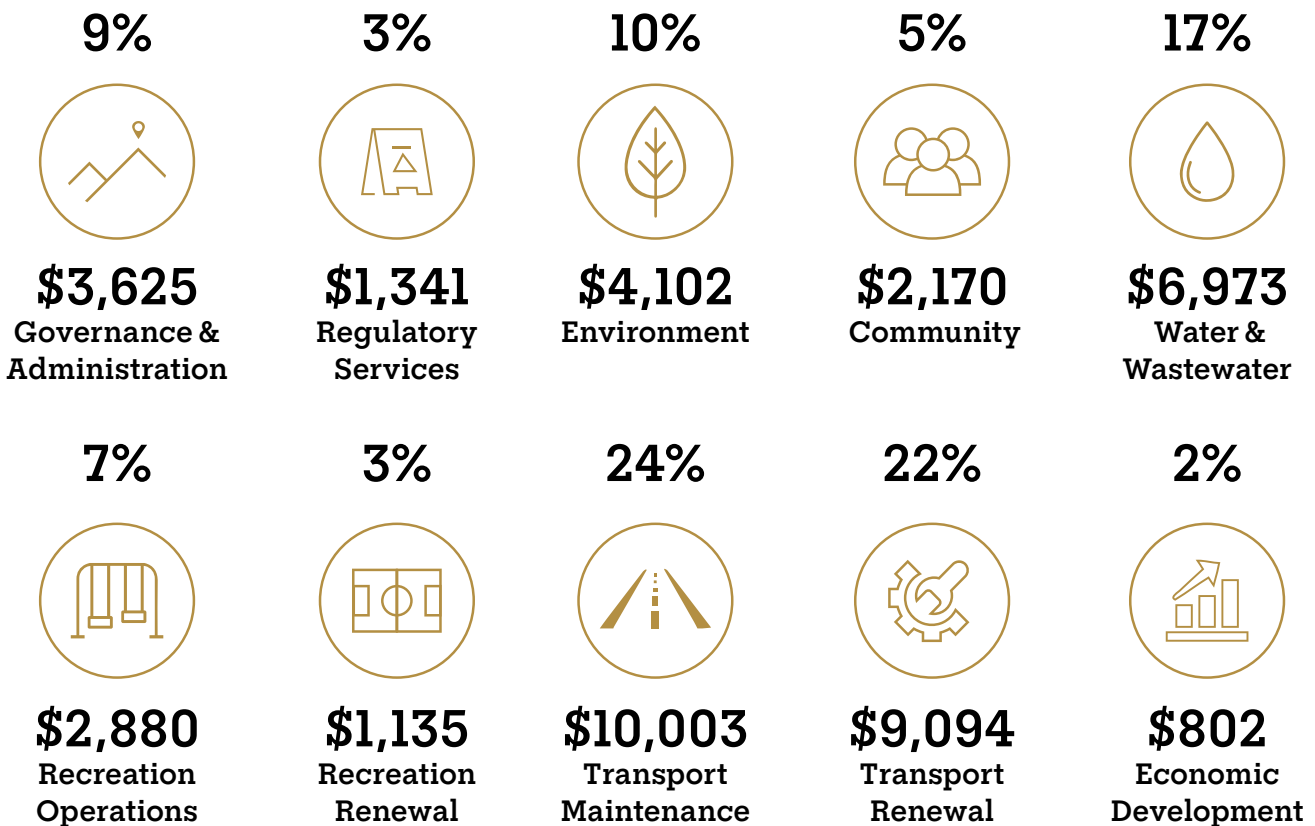


**B
S
C**

The Council raised \$ 47 million from various sources



Council spent \$ 42.1 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.



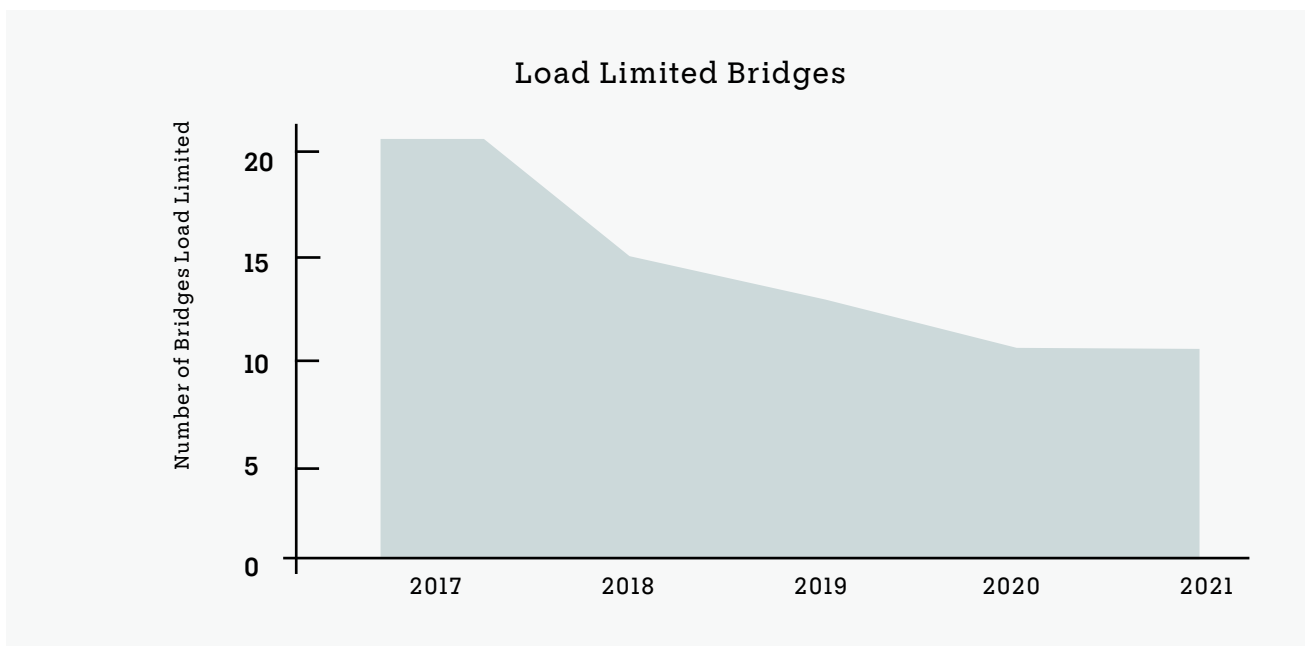
The Estimated Population of Bellingen Shire is 13,141 showing an increase by 3.6% from 12,668



'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

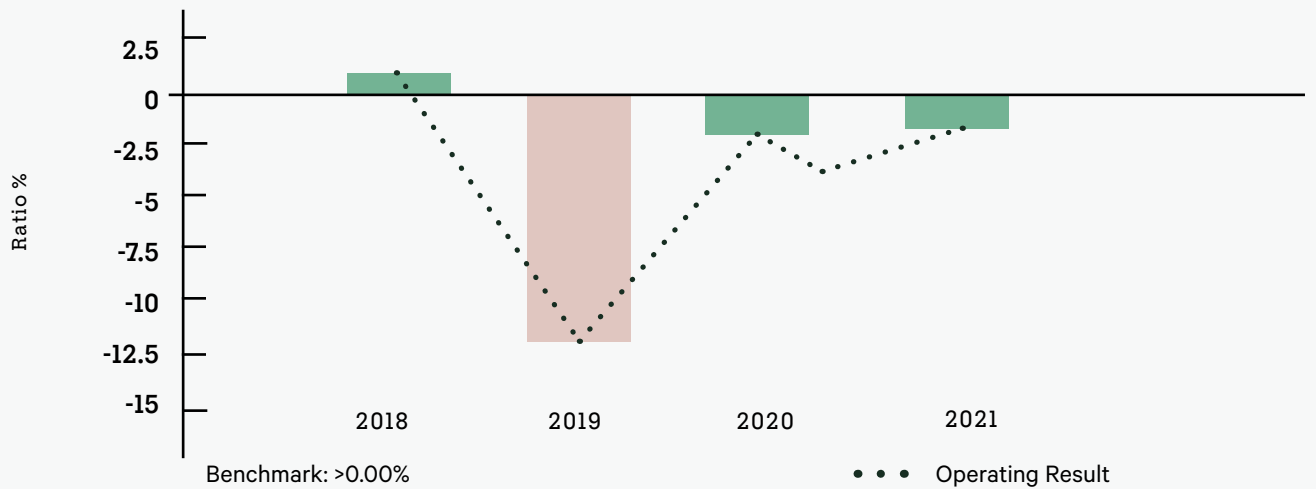


50% reduction of load limited bridges across the Shire.



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 2020-21 financial year, only 12 of these bridges remained load limited.

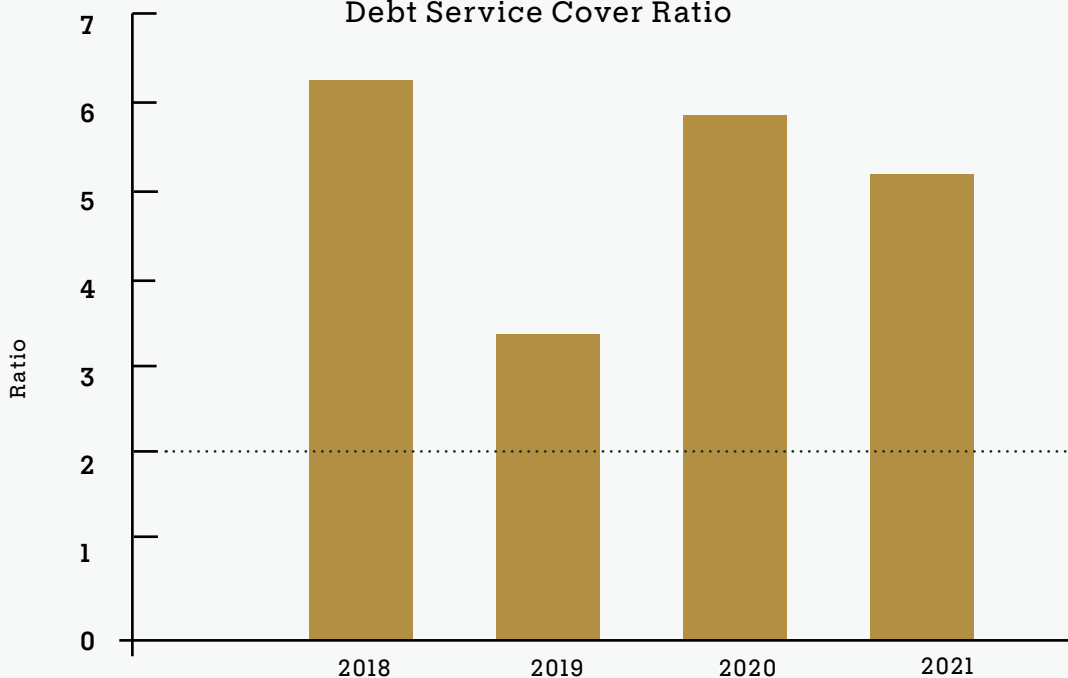
Operating Performance Ratio



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

Councils operating performance ratio result represents an improvement from the prior financial year and is significantly better than the 2020/21 ratio estimate of -5.3%. Council is continuing to work on improving this ratio into the future.

Debt Service Cover Ratio



Benchmark Minimum ≥ 2.00

Source: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting.

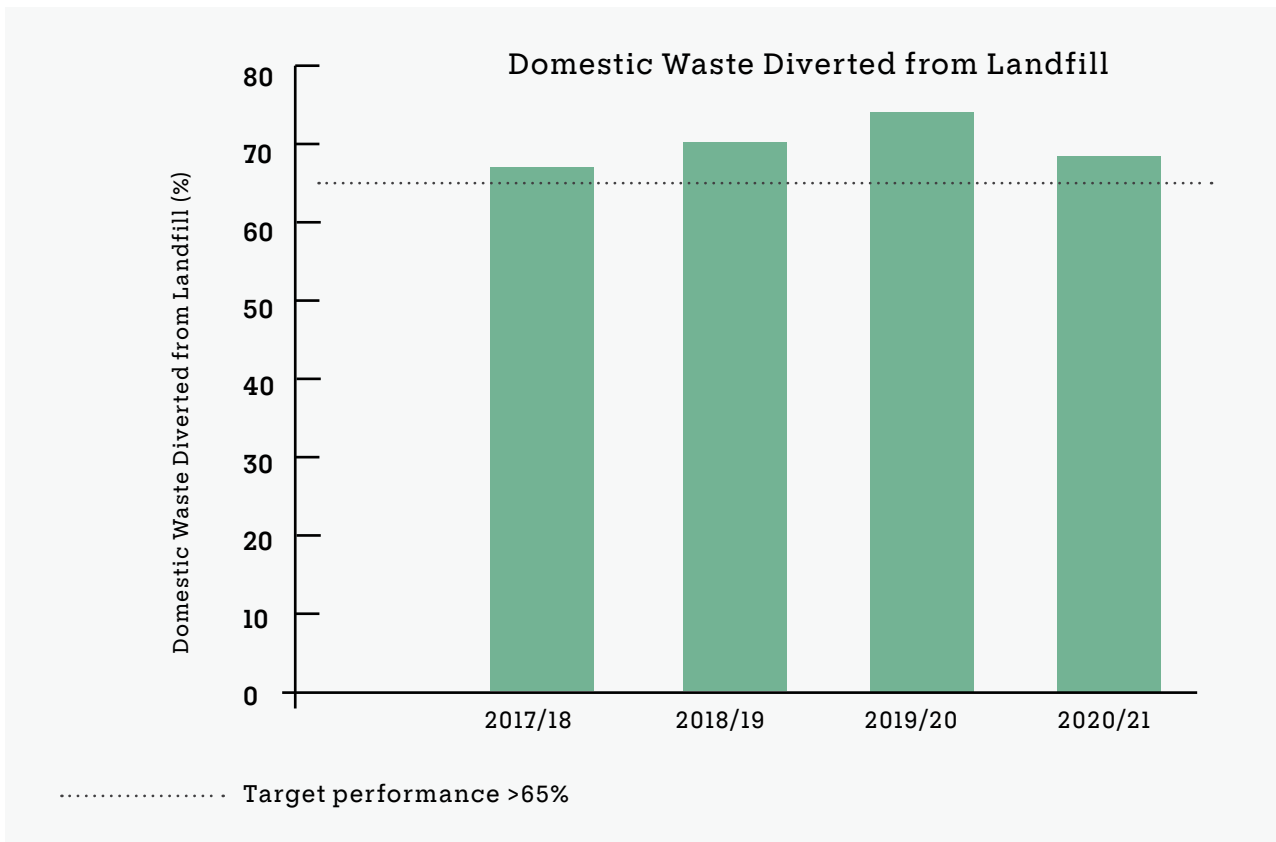
Purpose of debt service cover ratio

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

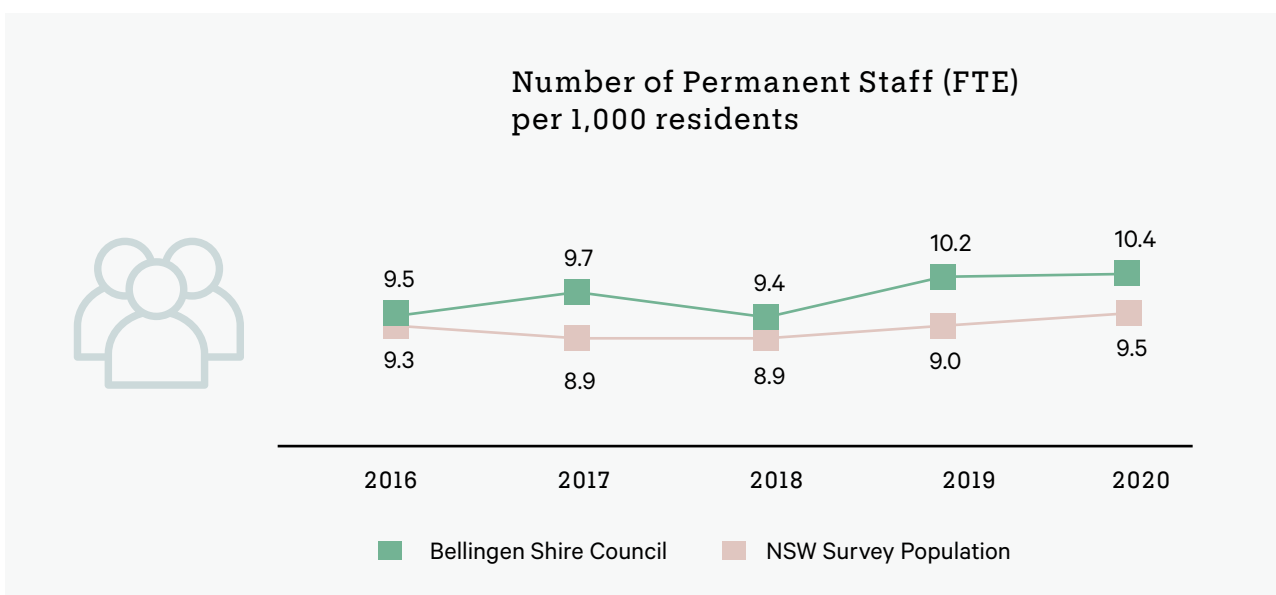
2020/21 ratio: 5.20x

This indicator emphasises that Council’s defined Operating Result maintains the capacity to meet its annual debt requirements. The 2020/21 result is better than the industry benchmark of 2.0.

Waste

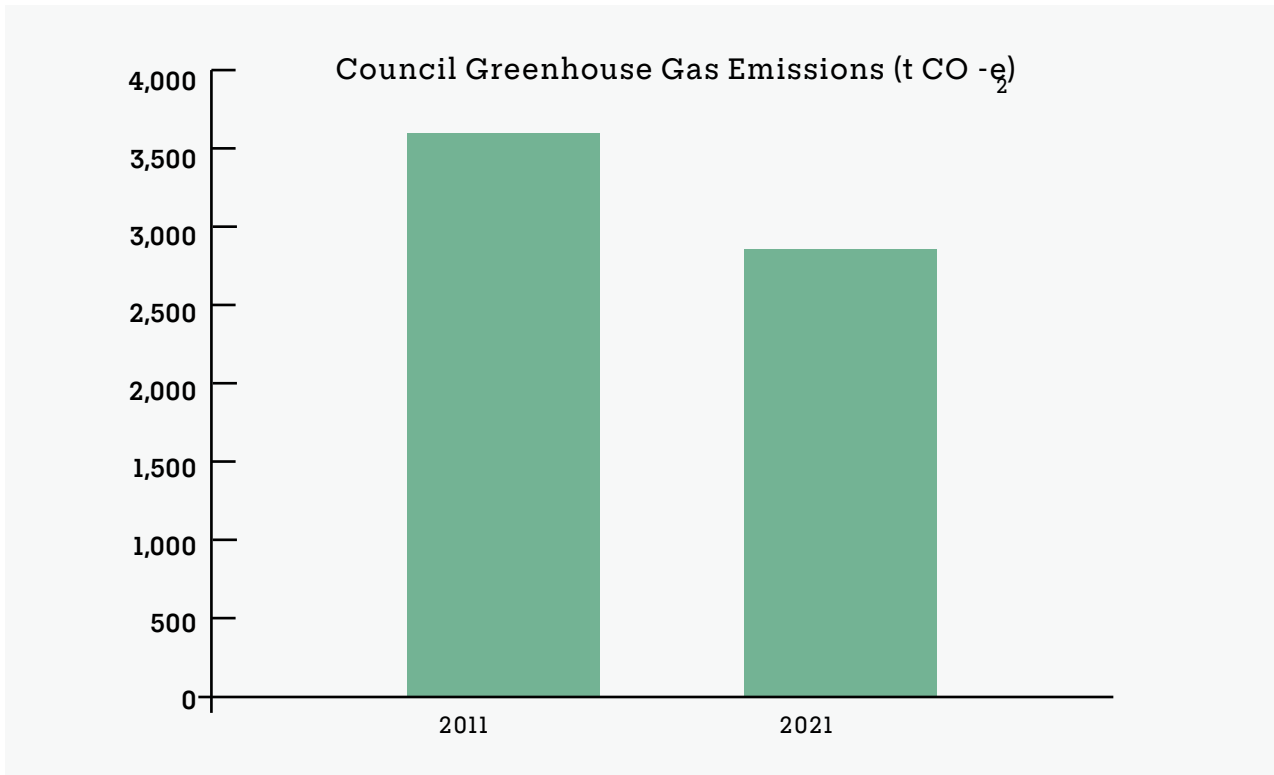


Waste diversion from landfill is relatively high considering a change to the Regulations for Mixed Waste and Organic Outputs (MWO) ceased the diversion of mixed waste from landfill. This waste is still processed prior to being placed in landfill which significantly reduces its weight in tonnes.



Data drawn from the PWC Australasian Local Government Performance Excellence Program Report 2020.

Carbon Emissions



As part of Councils 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

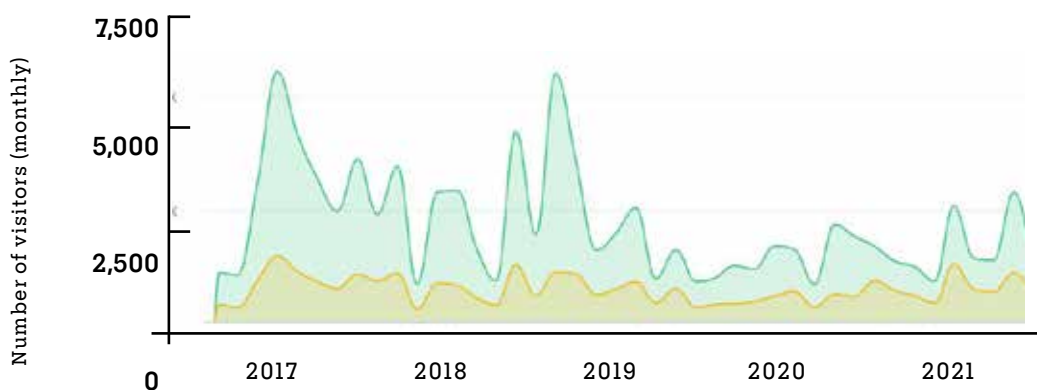
Council continues to invest in renewable energy through on-site solar generation and the purchase of Green Power. Excluding street lighting, 20.7% of purchased electricity is now from renewables. This will increase to 36.6% from January 2022. It is anticipated that street lighting fixtures will be upgraded by Essential Energy in 2022-23.



Zero net emissions by 2040

Emissions reductions are tracking well for purchased electricity. Emissions from fuel use will be a particular challenge until the availability and cost of Electric/low emissions plant and vehicles increases.

Community Engagement



Total visits
12k

Engaged
visitors
202

Informed
visitors
3k

During the reporting period, activities have focussed on engaging with our community across the broad range of projects, programs and initiatives Council provides to ensure we remain a connected, sustainable and creative community.

However, Council's approach has had to be flexible to ensure our community was provided with the opportunity to participate in our decision-making processes and outcomes, while complying with the most recent Public Health Order and observing best practice social distancing protocols.

Accordingly, Council engagement activities have primarily focussed on delivering online and remote community engagement activities, taking into consideration the limited capacity to conduct traditional face-to-face community meetings, workshops and forums.

Council primarily engaged with our community regarding the broad range of projects, programs and initiatives it delivers via Council's Create online engagement portal, the highlights of which are provided below:

Council's online engagement portal attracted a total of 12,000 visits, achieved a maximum daily visit rate of 341 visits, delivered 5480 downloads and engaged with our community across a suite of Council project, programs and initiatives which featured:

- Bushfire Recovery & Resilience Program
- Bellingen Coastal Management Program
- 2021 Australia Day Awards
- Fixing Country Bridges Program
- Bellingen Shire Branding Project
- Flood Event March/April 2021

- Creative Circle Consultation
- Creation of Food Resilience Vision & Plan
- Draft Biodiversity Strategy
- Draft Community Engagement Strategy
- Sewering Coastal Villages Project
- Fixing Local Roads Program
- Dangar Falls Upgrade Project
- Timber Bridge Renewal Program
- Coronavirus Community Updates
- Bellingen Memorial Hall Upgrade
- Becoming a Councillor

Council did however take advantage of the opportunity to conduct face-to-face engagement activities during the reporting period when the most recent Public Health Order and best practice social distancing protocols allowed, and these activities included:

- Council facilitated Pandemic Response Group Meetings
- Community Resilience Planning Workshops
- Community Resilience Deliberative Panel Activity
- Mid North Coast Community Leadership and Resilience Network Cohort Gathering
- Bluett Delegation Community Meet & Greet Visit
- Bellingen Shire Council's Draft Community Engagement Strategy Consultations

Additionally, a range of new tools have been introduced and implemented to improve existing lines of communication between Council and our community, inclusive of the introduction of social media platforms including Council Facebook page, & Instagram presence and QR Code messaging.



Reporting On Achievements

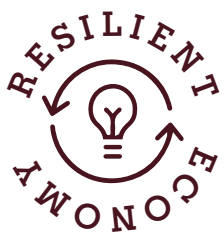
Strategy Structure

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

Our children, young people 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

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

We have clean water which is protected and used sustainably

Our surroundings are quiet and clean

We reduce, reuse and 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

Council is an organisation that embraces business excellence

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

Council is proactive in representing the needs of our community



The Bellingen Shire Bushfire Recovery, Resilience and Preparedness Program is a \$1.5M program comprised of 22 projects across the themes of: Managing Risk; Effective response to and recovery from Emergencies; and Enabling, empowering, and supporting community resilience.

Initiatives of the Bellingen Shire Bushfire Recovery, Resilience and Preparedness Program include:

- Implementation of the Disaster Dashboard which provides real time information on floods, fires, road incidents and other alerts and warnings
- Community Scholarships for study relating to resilience at Charles Sturt University were awarded.
- 20 grants for Community Events and Event Stimulus awarded totalling \$145K.
- 12 community grants information sessions attended by 82 people.
- 111 valid applications totalling over \$980K were made for the Bushfire community grants scheme in November 2020. Of these applications 70 were funded totalling \$464,479 across 3 grant streams.
- Council hosted an RFS Hotspots briefings via Zoom and at an Indigenous Protected Area
- Recruitment and delivery of a Deliberative Panel on Community Resilience.

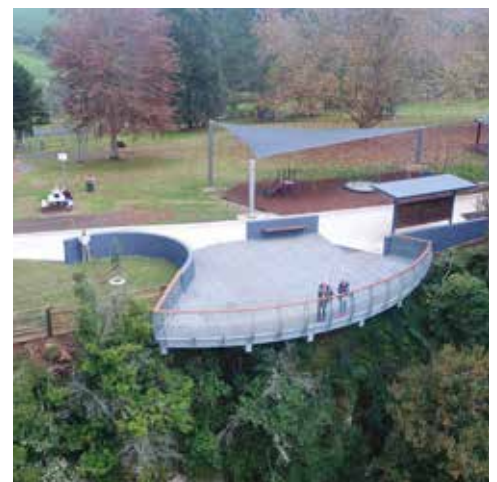
Council appointed Inclusive Tourism Pty Ltd to work with council to make places more accessible via the Inclusive Tourism Strategy. The Strategy will deliver an Inclusive Tourism Guide for local business – providing valuable tips on how to service clients with disabilities (both visible and invisible). This Strategy will complement Council's effort in delivery of its Disability Inclusion and Action Plan.

The Economic Development and Tourism Plan focuses on the key priorities of innovation, investment, and infrastructure to enhance the economic and environmental diversity of the Shire's three main townships of Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo and support nature-based tourism and supportive commercial opportunities.

A collaboration between Council and community groups saw an investment of nearly \$1M funded by the State Governments' Regional Growth Environment and Tourism Fund along with a \$230,000 contribution from Council to deliver the new Dangar Falls viewing platforms and upgraded pathways. The main platform at the top of the falls increased capacity and views to the falls significantly while being fully accessible – and a smaller plunge pool platform allows visitors to experience the waterfall up close. The car park was also upgraded along with approximately 60 metres of new pathway.

Council has completed the Bellingen Branding and Style Guide, the first priority within the Bellingen Shire Signage Strategy. Council actively identifies grant opportunities to fund the Signage Strategy and currently has a pending grant application being considered for \$450,000. If successful, this will provide the financial resources to install Shire Gateway, Town Entry, Marker, and Wayfinding Signage.

Council showcased the benefits of the Great Koala National Park (GKNP) at the North Coast Tourism Symposium and Awards. Delegates were provided with information on the economic benefits of the initiative and Tourism Award finalists were presented with life sized Koalas and feedstock trees. Council continues to look at strategies to advance the cause of the GKNP.





Council has taken the next step towards delivering the Hall to Hub Arts Evolution Project with development approval secured to transform this iconic building into a cultural space and community hub where the arts and culture can thrive.

Subsequent work resulted in Council considering and approving revised designs and an associated funding strategy to use as a basis for tendering. The next stage will be tendering and construction work in the 2021/22 financial year.

The implementation of the Bellinghen Shire Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan has continued with a successful project completed at Raleigh Hall. This project, funded as a partnership between the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund, the Raleigh Hall Management Committee and Bellinghen Shire Council, saw the construction of an access ramp and an accessible toilet making the hall much more accessible to all.

The hall hosted the 2020 Ian J. Cooper Awards for Access and Inclusion in December 2020. These Awards are given out every second year to local groups for their commitment to improving access and inclusion for community members in the Bellinghen Shire.

Council launched a new online and printable Community Directory resource which is available to groups and organisations in the Bellinghen Shire. This project is part of Council's commitment to enhancing community resilience as part of the Bushfire Recovery and Resilience Program. This resource is a great way to increase community participation and connection in the Bellinghen Shire.

To support the creation of a collaborative, mutually supportive and connected community network which shares resources, knowledge and ideas, Council has funded our Shire's own Community Asset Mapping Study.

To protect our Gondwana rainforests the Vegetation report will investigate cultural burning landscape management opportunities and activities to address the changes in regional native vegetation that have been observed and are anticipated as a result of global climate change.

Council has coordinated local resources and talent to establish our own Shire's Pandemic Response Group to ensure our community is in a strong position to provide local responses to the challenges the current pandemic situation presents us.

In a national first, and now in its second year, Council has championed the creation of the Community Leadership & Resilience Scholarship Scheme to create and train a skilled network of local community leaders to fuel the region's recovery.

At this year's Bellinghen Readers & Writers Festival our Bellinghen Branch Library hosted a full day program of free and exclusive events including indigenous storytelling sessions with Gumbaynggirr figure, Miklo Jarrett.

Council was successful in its application for a State Library grant worth \$482,000 to undertake Dorrigo library extension works. The successful grant application means the project will proceed to detailed design and Development Application stage.





Council completed the redevelopment of Dorrigo’s Coronation Park, which has provided improved access and infrastructure to enable seniors and those living with disability to easily access and use the park.

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 2020-21 financial year, only 12 of these bridges remained load limited. Funding has been secured and the deed executed for Stage 1 of the Fixing Country Bridges Programme. A total of 27 bridges have been approved for funding in consideration of the Bridges Prospectus developed in partnership with the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation. Works have commenced in relation to Tallowood Point Bridge around removal of the existing structure to accommodate future renewal works.

Council adopted a new s712 Bellingen Shire Contributions Plan. A Development Contributions Plan (DCP) is used to collect payments towards the provision of infrastructure triggered by new development. The payments received assist with the cost of providing roads, drainage, open space, and community infrastructure required to accommodate the needs of a growing population.

Council delivered the Mylestom Pathway Project which has vastly improved accessibility and promoted recreational opportunities by connecting the surf club to Mylestom’s foreshore parklands via a 620 metre long, 1.8-metre-wide section of shared pathway.

The implementation of our Shire’s Local Housing Strategy 2020-2040 has created an ongoing

conversation with our community to explore environmentally responsible, affordable and secure housing initiatives featuring universal design.

Council invested \$54,000 of grant funds to refurbish the Bellinger Valley North Beach Surf Club to support our Shire’s popular Junior and Nippers program where children learn surf safety, basic first aid and resuscitation skills.

Council’s Koala Management Strategy highlights the critical importance of our Shire’s koala population and the need for landscape wide approaches to protect one our greatest commercial assets, our natural environment and its flora and fauna.

So far, stages one to four of the Hungry Head Pathway Project have delivered 3.4 kilometres of pathway that provide a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists and encourage a range of complimentary sporting and recreational pursuits.

Our road and bridge networks present council with a suite of significant challenges, including managing the fourth largest timber bridge network (by length), in the state.

Addressing these challenges remains a priority for council and asset management planning activities that focus on the financial sustainability and management of our asset base, has allowed council to employ a strategic approach towards maintenance, repair and rehabilitation activities (MR&R). Council’s annual scope of road resealing and renewal works has been completed including works performed at:

- Deervale Road
- Tyringham Road
- Orara Street
- South Arm Road
- Kylie Street
- Valery Road
- Promised Land Loop Road
- Keevers Drive
- Martells Road
- Coramba Road





To progress Council's Climate Emergency Declaration in 2019, work continues on developing our Community Carbon Plan which will help our community manage the impacts of our everchanging environment by reducing our ecological footprint.

The Community Engagement Plan to frame the consultative process to develop the community carbon plan has been developed and Community stakeholder workshops were scheduled to be held to identify adaptation projects and explore setting a community carbon target. The workshops have been temporarily postponed due to Covid restrictions however are being re planned to progress in 2022.

The Sewering Coastal Villages Project to connect the sewer to Mylestom, parts of Raleigh and Repton and the Raleigh Industrial Estate progressed through detailed design stages with survey and geotechnical investigations complete.

The 10 year Council Corporate Carbon Plan is on target with the majority of short term (2 year) milestones being reached. Council employees have received monthly climate emergency updates and information about how to improve sustainable practices at work. Topics have included waste, energy and water with competitions and incentives to encourage engagement. 5 new solar installations and lighting upgrades at 7 council sites are also underway.

Council's Energy Efficiency Projects are keeping Council on track to meet the emissions targets of the Corporate Carbon Plan and reduce the ongoing costs of purchased electricity. Half of the savings of each project are made available for further investment in energy efficiency upgrades through the Revolving Energy Fund.

As a community we need to stay smart and be water wise which is why Council has recruited a Water Resilience Officer to research and evaluate strategic water supply-demand management and drought management systems.

Public information sessions were undertaken for the Lower Bellinger and Kalang Rivers Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan providing an opportunity for the community to comment on the draft plan.

Environmental Levy projects progressed well despite delays due to weather events and Covid restrictions. Some of these projects include:

- The Biodiversity Strategy highlights document
- Dalhousie Creek Project 1 - The Community beach monitoring project has been implemented in conjunction with UNSW.
- Dalhousie Creek Project 2 - Phase 2 of the project including variation was approved to allow for onground works in 2021-2022 due to flooding.
- Gleniffer - Stage 2 regeneration program

Council's Biodiversity Strategy guides our work in protecting the significant ecosystems, ecological communities and high value habitats that exist throughout our Shire's coastal, river and plateau environments.

To help educate residents about sustainable ways to dispose of food scraps and garden waste Council co-delivers the program which encourages residents to put their scraps and garden waste in the green bin or compost them at home to keep this valuable resource out of landfill.

Populations of the Bellinger River Snapping Turtle have again been re-introduced into our local river system in a collaborative effort of Council and our Shire's Bellinger Riverwatch and Landcare volunteers.





Council received the greatest accolade a New South Wales Council can achieve by winning the Rural Category of the 2020 Local Government NSW A. R. Bluet Memorial Awards.

With the mandate from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for all Councils to be utilising the online Planning Portal by 1 July 2021, Council fast tracked its implementation process to ensure a smooth transition for the community. The new software platform features automated functionality which will improve the user experience during the lodgement process and introduce efficiencies during the planning assessment process to reduce the cost of providing the service for our community.

Implementation of the Bellingen CBD Masterplan has progressed with changes to signage undertaken as required. This work has enabled regular patrols to be conducted, including the introduction of electronic infringement notices to assist in this program.

The Customer Service team responded to 22,467 phone and over the counter enquiries which averages out to 86 enquiries per day.

Council's Digital Transformation Project has delivered new enterprise software systems and IT infrastructure to accommodate our progressive transition towards automation, improved customer service and a contemporary managed service platform.

To assist individuals, businesses and community groups feeling the impact of the dramatic decline in economic activity within our Shire due to the current pandemic crisis, Council has implemented a suite of economic relief measures to help alleviate financial pressure.

Through consultation with our community, Council updated its Community Engagement Policy & Strategy with an emphasis on ensuring Council engagement activities are well thought out, deliberative in nature, and take place at the right point in the decision-making process to strengthen our community's capacity to engage with Council.

Council launched its new website, Instagram, and Facebook pages to provide our community with an engaging and customer focused user experience featuring intuitive and automated functionality. Council also continues to produce printed newsletters which are circulated quarterly with rates notices to provide traditional forms of communication for our community.

Council supported by the University of Newcastle recruited and delivered a Deliberative Panel exercise on Community Resilience. The program was attended by 23 demographically and geographically representative community members. The Community Resilience Deliberative panel worked to understand issues related to community resilience for the Shire, to explore the role of Council, the community and others in building capacity, and to make recommendations for future planning on Community Resilience.

Our Shire's Local Strategic Planning Statement continues to guide Council's ongoing efforts towards developing centre-based master plans to advocate for funding opportunities to support the long-term financial sustainability of delivering against these plans.

The Board and General Managers Advisory Group of the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation meet quarterly. The MNCJO has revised its Statement of Strategic Priorities, delivered key outcomes from the Hastings MacLeay Koala Recovery partnership, supported the regional Disaster Preparedness Officer, established a 'Resilience Partnership' with Charles Sturt University, Secured additional funding from the NSW OLG to be directed toward the development of a feasibility study for the community land trust model and a circular economy plan for the region, secured funding for the purchase of a Simtable used to simulate impact of serious weather events on local communities, developed a bridge prospectus, participated in the climate risk ready program, and developed a sustainability plan.





Statutory and Other Information

Annual reports are one of the key points of accountability between a council and its community. The 2020/21 annual report focuses on our Delivery Program and Operational Plan and outlines Our Bellingen Shire Community Vision 2027 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 \$0.64M in additional revenue in 2020/21 and is estimated to generate an additional \$7.3M 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 \$0.64M generated by the SRV in 2021/21 were spent in the following way:

- Repayment of loan \$0.48M (subsidised by an interest rate subsidy under the Local Government Infrastructure Renewals Scheme)
- Roads Maintenance expenditure \$0.16M

All expenditure in 2020/21 was made in accordance with the approved SRV application and Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Determination.

Special Rate Variation 2017/18 – 2020/21

In addition to the 2014/15 SRV, the ordinary rates include three of the 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 three consecutive 6% SRV's generated approximately \$0.89M in additional revenue in 2020/21, expecting to generate an additional \$10.1M over the next 10 years. The increase is partially funding Council's capital works road reseal program to address the transport infrastructure backlog. The \$0.89M SRV funds were spent in the following way:

- Roads resealing program \$0.89M

All expenditure in 2020/21 was made in accordance with the approved SRV application and Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Determination.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 the forecast 2020/21 6% Special Rate Variation has been delayed until the 2021/22 year.

Environmental Levy Projects 2020-21

Introduction

Bellingen Shire Council applied to the Minister for Local Government in May 2005 for a special variation to general income for environmental projects. On the 30 June 2005 Council received notice that an increase of 4% was approved on an on-going basis.

As identified in the Shire of Bellingen Shire 2027 Community Vision, the environment levy supports the implementation of projects to achieve the strategic directions, outcomes, and aspirations for the future from our local community. The key focus areas are as follows:

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

Expenditure of the EL budget for the 2020/21 financial year to the value of \$253,300

Summary

PROJECT	FUNDING
Environmental Levy Community Fund	\$32,000
River & Biodiversity Community support, assistance, and grant application/scoping time	\$27,300
Weeds Action Program	\$30,000
Sustainability and Climate Change Projects	\$40,000
Past project maintenance	\$27,500
Bellingner Landcare Incorporated- operational costs contribution	\$24,000
Bellingner Urban Landcare	\$8,000
Bellingner Shire Council Herbicide Review (endorsed at Council meeting 26/02/20)	\$25,000
Bellingner Shire Coastal Management Program	\$42,000
Riverwatch – Our River our Future	\$5,000
Total	\$253,300

Overseas Visits

There were no overseas visits undertaken by Councillors, Council Staff or other persons representing the Council during the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

Elected Members' Expenses

Mayor and Councillor Fees

The total fees paid to the Mayor and Councillors in 2020-21 was \$111,649.

Councillor Support and Expenses

EXPENSES	2019-20 \$	2020-21 \$
Councillor support and provision of facilities (including provision of dedicated office equipment allocated to councillors and telephone calls made by councillors)	11,088	5,791
Attendance at conferences and seminars	12,917	11,290
Training of councillors and provision of skill development	8,905	-
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	109,437	111,649
Motor Vehicle Allowances	1,252	2,011
Mayoral vehicle operational costs and depreciation	7,681	9,344
Insurance costs for Councillors and Officers liability	32,416	32,740
Total costs for the year	185,908	172,824

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

GOODS OR SERVICES	SUPPLIERS	TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE
Road pavement rehabilitation	Mid North Coast Contractors Pty Ltd	\$410,531
Supply, delivery, and placement of road asphalt	Colas NSW Pty Ltd	\$363,060
Road pavement rehabilitation and stabilisation	Stabilised Pavements Of Australia Pty Ltd	\$188,000
Heavy Plant Replacement	Westrac Equipment Pty Limited	\$834,670
Road Rehabilitation (full service overlay, stabilisation, and drainage)	Stabilcorp Pty Ltd	\$185,829
Print Management	Colourworks Australia Pty Limited	\$166,762
Bitumen spray resealing	All Pavement Solutions Pty Ltd	\$646,332
Emergency Slope Stabilisation Scaling	Pan Civil Pty Ltd	\$758,850
Replacement of Toilet Block at Burdett Park (Fernmount)	Fabranamics Pty Ltd	\$160,422
Geotechnical Bridge Assessments (Fixing Country Bridges)	Regional Geotechnical Solutions Pty Ltd	\$159,038
Total		\$3,873,494

Legal Proceedings

Council was not formally involved in any legal proceedings in the 2020/21 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

Works Subsidised on Private Land

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

Donations and Contributions

Council's Community Grants Program July 2020 – June 2021

Council offers a Community Grants Program twice a year that runs over the financial period. The grants available through the program include the Community Support Fund, Community Events Sponsorship Fund and Creative Placemaking Fund.

The total annual budget allocation for the Community Support and Event Sponsorship Funds for 2020/2021 financial year is \$50,000 and \$10,000 for the Creative Placemaking Fund.

During Round 1, Council received seven (7) funding applications totalling \$20,693.

Two (2) applications were received for the Community Event Sponsorship Fund, five (5) applications for the Community Support Fund and no (0) applications for the Creative Placemaking Fund.

Five (5) applications were supported either fully or in-part with the total funding recommended for Round 1 being \$12,593. Of this, \$12,593 will come from the Community Funds budget and \$0 from the Creative Placemaking Fund budget.

Community Support Fund

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Bellingen Public School P&C	150 year Celebration of the gazetting of Bellingen township	\$5,000
Urunga Mylestom Chamber of Commerce	Planter boxes project to beautify public spaces in Urunga	\$4,000
Mylestom Combined Pensioners and Seniors Association	Hire of performance marquees, seating and tables for 2019 festival	\$1,000
Urunga Lions Club	Purchase a new BBQ for catering at Lions Club community events	\$586
Kalang Progress Association	Community support activities through access to the Hal	\$2,007
Total		\$12,593

During Round 2, Council received twelve (12) funding applications totalling \$37,956. Of the applications received in Round 2, three (3) were received for the Community Event Sponsorship Fund, seven (7) for the Community Support Fund and two (2) for the Creative Placemaking Fund.

Ten (10) applications were supported with the total funding recommended for Round 2 being \$27,956.

The successful organisations include:

Community Event Sponsorship Fund (Round 2)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Bellinger River Agricultural Society	EJ Mantova Memorial Arts Prize	\$2,500
Bellinger River Agricultural Society	Bellingen Show May 2021	\$4,000
Bellingen Community Arts Council	Bellingen Shire Arts Week 2021	\$4,136
SUB-TOTAL		\$10,636

The Community Support Fund (Round 2)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
CWA Urunga	Develop a community garden	\$3,490
Dorrigo Plateau U3A Inc	Purchase new TV screen and equipment to run lectures, slideshows, etc at Hickory House	\$2,500
Bellingen Youth Orchestra	Orchestral Camp for students	\$2,000
Gleniffer Community Association	To install gutter Guard on all gutters	\$ 2,750
Dorrigo & Guy Fawkes Agricultural Association	Festive High Tea event including mental health speaker, games, antique valuer, raffles etc	\$1,300
Wenona Dune Care	Install a water tank to catch rainwater from amenities block	\$2,280
SUB-TOTAL		\$14,320

The Creative Placemaking Fund (Round 2)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Dorrigo Dramatic Club	Props & video equipment to support 3 local events during Arts Week in January 2021	\$3,000
SUB-TOTAL		\$3,000

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many events, and projects were unable to go ahead which is why applications numbers for this financial year is down slightly from previous years.

Heritage Fund Donations & Contributions

Council provided \$11,320 to recipients of funding pursuant to the Bellingen Shire Local Heritage Assistance Fund 2020-2021, with Grant funding of \$5500 also provided by the NSW Department of Premier & Cabinet.

HERITAGE FUND GRANTS	LOCATION	\$
Repaint house exterior in heritage sympathetic colour scheme	35 William Street, Bellingen	\$4,125
Restore decorative elements to original Japonica Finish	19 Cudgery Street, Dorrigo	\$3,497
Levenvale farm building restoration	347 Hydes Creek Road, Hydes Creek	\$5,859
Paint window frames, fascia & eaves	1 Doepel Street, Bellingen	\$3,000
Repair damaged sub-floor area	42 Hyde Street, Bellingen	\$339
Sub Total		\$16,820

DESCRIPTION	\$2020/21
Community Event Sponsorship Fund Grant	10,636.00
MNCJO	94,336
Other Community contributions	9,393
Youth Hub Contribution	104,317
TOTAL	218,682

The total actual amount contributed or otherwise granted by Council under Section 356 of the Act for 2020-21 was \$218,682

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)	
Australia Day Committee	Australia Day Activities
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 Shire Youth Centre	Care, Control and Management of the Bellingen Shire Youth Hub
Bellingen/Connell Park Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Parks
Bellingin Valley Historical Society Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Bellingin 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 Bellingin 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

General Manager and Senior Staff Remuneration

Senior Staff Salaries

There are three positions within Council designated as Senior Staff as at 30 June 2021. These include the General Manager, Deputy General Manager, Operations and Deputy General Manager, Corporate and Community. The total remuneration package of \$275,468 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 \$440,976 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.

Workforce Strategy and Equal Opportunity Employment

Workforce Strategy

Council's philosophy of 'putting people at the heart of what we do' is demonstrated through the Workforce Strategy.

Reviewed and updated throughout 2019-20, the strategy responds to Council's Community Strategic Plan – Bellingin Shire Community Vision 2027 - and 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.

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 2020-21, 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.

To continue maintaining a culture consistent with our Vision, Mission and Values, our People & Culture team continued to drive the Trainee, Apprentice and Cadet Program aimed at young talent within the community, offering both on the job training, mentoring and formal tertiary qualifications.

A combination of management consultation and a set criteria is applied when determining the intake each year. The criteria included:

- balancing the ageing workforce in the team;
- bringing future ready skills to the team; and
- bringing skills that are difficult to fill due to the nature of the work.

Three (3) apprentice positions and one (1) trainee were made available in 2020. Additionally, Council commenced the Cadet programmed partnership formalised with Charles Sturt University on 1 July 2020 engaging two (2) cadets for the program.

Togetherbration

The annual service recognition program 'Togetherbration' was held in December 2020 with 19 team members being recognised for increments of five (5) years' service. People are at the heart of what we do at Council and it is important to recognise our long serving team members and the contributions they have made to Council and the community.

Peer nomination recognition was also awarded to team members demonstrating Council's values.

Learning & Development

Council has taken a proactive approach to improving the understanding and awareness of staff about what constitutes bullying and harassment conduct in the workplace. This includes outlining organisational and staff responsibilities and how to manage physical wellbeing, mental health, and other risks.

Council staff undertook the following training throughout the 2020-21 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.

- Code of Conduct
- Dignity and Respect
- Employee Grievance Awareness

People at Work Survey

Council partnered with StateCover Mutual to conduct a psychosocial risk survey with staff called the People at Work Survey (PAWS). The program aimed to identify and manage work related psychological risks. The results from the PAWS will be considered by Council's Executive Leadership Team and strategies will be formulated resulting from the survey.

Mental Health Matters Training was delivered to all staff in early February 2021. The program included tailored sessions for managers, supervisors, team leaders and also for the broader staff. In addition to this, more specific Mental Health First Aid Training was provided to 20 selected staff to develop a network of support resources within Council.

Workplace Relations

Council's Staff Consultative Committee is a representative body that meets regularly to discuss and resolve organisational wide issues. The committee is integral to assist to mitigate issues and provides an important voice for our staff to raise matters with the organisation. It is also involved in reviewing Council policies and providing feedback to staff within the wider organisation.

Health and Wellbeing

As an activity of the Work Health and Safety Committee, council has developed a Health and Wellbeing Policy and conducted a staff survey in order to progress the development and implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

A wellness room has also been introduced for staff to access for a range of diverse reasons including prayer, breastfeeding and to access information on personal health and wellbeing.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Council continues to offer a confidential counselling and referral service to provide support to staff and their immediate families. The EAP is integral to supporting all people-related, business-as-usual and change management activities, and provides crises management support, developmental/coaching services, career support, conflict resolution, manager support and carer support.

Workplace Health and Safety

Council remains committed to continuous improvement in WHS (Work Health and Safety) performance. 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. An increasing number of safety policies and procedures at the corporate level supports the IMS to minimise risks to health and safety for all Council workers and members of the public.

The policies and procedures that were implemented or updated during the reporting period include;

- WHS Policy
- WHS Roles & Responsibilities Procedure
- Personal Protective Equipment Procedure
- Return to Work Program
- Smoke-Free Workplace Policy

The Workplace Health and Safety Committee, which has Health and Safety Representatives (HSR's) from across Council's many departments, met six (6) times during this reporting period to discuss WHS matters. In cooperation with Management Representatives, the HSR's worked to identify opportunities for improvement across Council, and aided communication on WHS matters between workers and management.

Council is also working with StateCover Mutual to implement VAULT, which is a safety reporting and information management system. This will replace paper-based incident reporting and the entering of manual data into spreadsheets. Expected implementation of VAULT is in the first quarter of the next reporting period.

Monthly Safety Newsletters are circulated to all staff promoting a range of initiatives including tips to stay safe, preventative messaging and health and wellbeing material through 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
- Biketober
- Movember
- Adopt-a-Family
- Fitness Passport discount gym membership initiative

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.

Companion Animals Act - Compliance

Companion Animals Act – Compliance Pound

- Twenty six (26) dogs were seized, surrendered, or found roaming free during the 2020/2021 year.
- Nine (9) of these dogs were returned to their owners prior to being impounded and seventeen (17) 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.
- Sixteen (16) impounded dogs were either returned to their owner or re-homed.
- One (1) dangerous dog was euthanised.
- Seventeen (17) cats were seized, found abandoned or stray,
- One (1) was returned to owner and sixteen (16) were transferred to the animal pound.
- One (1) cat was feral which had been trapped and was euthanised.
- The remaining fifteen (15) impounded cats were rehomed.

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 can’t 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 rehouse re-home those animals which have been surrendered to the pound. Only in situations where re-homing is not possible for reasons of suitability or temperament, will euthanasia be considered 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)

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)

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

Council's Customer and Business Services Team in conjunction with Ranger Services interrogate the Companion Animals Register monthly and send notices to owners of unregistered dogs in the Shire. Two notices are sent (original and final reminder at 14 days) giving the owner 28 days to comply. Following the final notice if the animal is still not registered a Penalty Notice (PN) is issued for non-compliance. If after 3 months, the animal has still not been registered the processes is repeated.

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

A revised barking dog investigation and response procedure has been implemented to deal with dog noise nuisance. The new process places more empathise on the persons involved (complainant and dog owner) to resolve the matter themselves prior to Council intervening with regulatory actions. This new approach is now consistent with that utilised by other local governments.

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.

- One (1) Dangerous Dog Orders,
- Nil (0) Menacing Dog Order and
- Two (2) Nuisance Dog Orders were issued.
- Nil (0) Nuisance Cat Orders were issued.

Dog Attack data

- Nine (9) dog attacks were investigated and lodged with the Office of Local Government

COMPANION ANIMAL MANAGEMENT FUNDING	
Registration (146) - commissions	\$10,085.00
Impounding fees, charges	\$6,939.00
Fines	\$1,783.00
Total Income	\$18,807.00

COMPANION ANIMALS – ACTIVITY 2020/21 FY		
	DOGS	CATS
IN		
Seized	16	1
Abandoned/stray	9	17
Surrendered	1	0
OUT		
Returned to owner	9	1
Sold	0	0
Released to owner	10	7
Released to organisation for rehoming	6	7
Escaped pound	0	0
EUTHANISED		
Dangerous dog	1	NA
Owner request	0	0
Illness/disease/injury	0	0
Unable to rehome	0	0
Feral/infant	0	1
Unsuitable for rehoming	0	0
IN POUND AT END OF YEAR		
	0	0

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.

Particulars of Any Environmental Upgrade Agreement Entered Into

Council has not entered into any arrangements during the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

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 2020 to 30 June 2021.

Rates and Charges Written Off

The total value of rates and charges written off for the year 2020 /2021 was \$505,642.74 as follows:

RATES AND CHARGES WRITTEN OFF	2020/21 \$	
General Rates	329,419.99	
Water Annual Charges	94,502.10	
Sewer Annual Charges	72,354.60	
DWM Charges	-	496,276.69
Rates-Residential	1,349.68	
Rates-Business		
DWM	-	
Non DWM	382.00	
Water-annual Charges	-	
Water-usage Charges	7,171.18	
Sewer-annual Charges	-	
Sewer-usage Charges	234.87	
Liquid Trade Waste Usage Charges	-	
Interest-rates	228.32	
Interest-water	-	
Legal Fees/Costs	-	9366.05
TOTALS		\$505,642.74

Planning Agreements

The below table outlines the planning agreements entered into with Council during 2020/21.

VPA PARTIES	PROPERTY	PARTICULARS	COMPLIANCE
Bellingen Shire Council & Shaul Rubinstein Pty Ltd (14/9/20)	84 Hyde Street & Halpins Lane & Oak Street, Bellingen	Provide car parking in Oak Street & contribute towards upgrading of Halpins Lane and other infrastructure	Yes
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	Yes
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	Yes

Private Swimming Pool inspections

PRIVATE SWIMMING POOL INSPECTIONS	2020/21
Number of inspections of tourist and visitor accommodation	
Total	3
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	38
Number of inspections that resulted in issuing a certificate of non-compliance under cl21 of the SP Reg	
Total	9

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 2020/21 52 formal valid applications for access to information were received.

Review of Proactive Release Program - Clause 8(a)

Under section 7 of the GIPA Act, agencies must review their programs for the release of government information to identify the kinds of information that can be made publicly available. This review must be undertaken at least once every 12 months.

Council's program for the proactive release of information involves updating Council's Agency Information Guide and Privacy Management Procedures and Plan to ensure that staff are provided with clear guidance as to what information should and should not be proactively released.

During the reporting period, we reviewed this program by analysis of the types of requests made to Council and what proportion could be answered through open access means.

Clause 7(a): Details of the review carried out by the agency under section 7 (3) of the Act during the reporting year and the details of any information made publicly available by the agency as a result of the review

REVIEWS CARRIED OUT BY THE AGENCY	INFORMATION MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE BY THE AGENCY
Yes	Yes

As a result of this review, we released the following information proactively through Councils interactive community engagement portal “Create”:

PROJECT NAME	DOCUMENTS PROACTIVELY RELEASED FY20
Atherton Drive Master Plan	Consultation with Key Stakeholders for Atherton Drive Master Plan commences
•	Final Master Plan Released
•	Draft Master Plan On Exhibition
•	Draft Redevelopment and Management Options now available for Public Comment
•	Redevelopment and Management Options on display at Urunga Library from 30 June 2017
Bellingen Main Street Master Plan	New Main Street trees will provide an abundance of shade.
•	Changes to Parking following Bellingen Main Street Beautification Project
•	Bellingen Town Centre Beautification - Design Plans
•	Finalisation of Beautification Works
•	An Update on Church, Hyde & Oak Street
•	Town Centre Beautification Works - Church and Hyde Streets
•	Tree Selection Finalised for Bellingen Town Centre
Bellingen Main Street Project - Church Street North Precinct	Installation of Trellis and Road Resurfacing
Bellingen Main Street Project - Church Street North Precinct	Finalisation of Church Street Works
Bellingen Main Street Master Plan	Main Street Beautification - Update 5 October
Bellingen Main Street Project - Church Street North Precinct	Church Street North Precinct Planning and Works
Bellingen Main Street Master Plan	Bellingen Town Centre Beautification - Disability Access
•	Hyde & Oak Street Intersection Update
•	Removal of Camphor Laurel Trees in Church Street Bellingen
•	Accessible Play Space Option
Bellingen Main Street Project - Church Street North Precinct	Final programming of Church Street North Precinct works underway
•	Left turning lane from Bridge Street closed 10/07/2018
Bellingen Main Street Master Plan	Oak Street the Current Focus for Beautification Works
Bellingen Main Street Master Plan	Continuation of the Bellingen Town Centre Beautification Project
Bellingen Island Flying-fox Camp Management Plan	Camp Management Plan: Implementation Summary Report
Business Support Network	Employment Opportunities at Bellorana Masonic Village, Bellingen
Business Support Network	TAFE NSW - Part time teaching opportunities in hospitality
Coronavirus Community Updates	Bellingen Shire Coronavirus Pandemic Response Group
•	Medical Clinical Action Group
•	Neighbourhood Care Network - Getting Ready
•	Community Update
•	NBN Co creates \$150 million COVID-19 relief & assistance package
•	Council Update

PROJECT NAME	DOCUMENTS PROACTIVELY RELEASED FY20
Final approval issued for the Bellinghen Shire Local Housing Strategy 2020-2040	New location-specific information added
•	What does home mean to you?
•	Summary: Homes for Our Future Discussion Paper
Special Rate Variation	IPART Announcement of Special Variation
Stage 3 Bellinghen Main Street Beautification & Accessibility Project	Stage 3 Works Nearing Completion
Stronger Country Communities Fund	Stronger Country Communities Fund Projects For Bellinghen Shire
Town Centre Car Parking Strategies	Town Centre Parking Strategy on Exhibition until 19 December 2018
Yarning About Urunga	Yarning about Urunga consultation report presented to Council

During the reporting period, our agency received Fifty two (52 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
52

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

During the reporting period, Council refused two (2) applications.

Clause 8C: 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 to the Act (information for which there is conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure)

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

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	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4%
Not for profit organisations or community groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Members of the public (by legal representative)	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	40%
Members of the public (other)	23	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	27	56%
Total	44	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	48	
% of Total	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%		

* 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*	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4%
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	43	20	1	0	0	0	0	0	46	96%
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	44	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	48	
% of Total	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0	0%

* 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)	4	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	4	100%
Invalid applications that subsequently became valid applications	4	100%

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%
Total	2	0%

*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	2	50%
Business interests of agencies and other persons	2	50%
Environment, culture, economy and general matters	0	0%
Secrecy provisions	0	0%
Exempt documents under interstate Freedom of Information legislation	0	0%
Total	4	0%

TABLE F: TIMELINESS

	Number of applications*	% of Total
Decided within the statutory time frame (20 days plus any extensions)	48	100%
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	0	0%
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	0	0%
Total	48	

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%	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

Bellingen Shire Council Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures

2020-21	COMPLAINTS	COMPLIMENTS
Total	27	62

Public Interest Disclosures Reporting

Organisations are required under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 (PID Act) to collect and report on information about public interest disclosures (PIDs).

The Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2011 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

Council has reviewed, updated and endorsed its Code of Conduct, Fraud Control Plan, Fraud Investigation Procedures, Reporting Form, the Fraud and Corruption Policy and Risk Management Policy.

The Council's General Manager has taken action to make staff aware of their obligations through the issue of the information to all staff and the provision of relevant information on Council's Internet. An all staff fraud health check has also been undertaken to raise awareness in this area.

Disability Action Plan

Actions in Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan have been implemented over the last 12 months based on the availability of resources and plan priorities. A report will be prepared for the Minister providing details of specific actions for 2020/21.

Compliance with the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010

Dorrigo Support Centre's Policies and Procedures recognises and acknowledges the valued role of carers and their diverse needs which takes into consideration culture, age, disability, religion, socio-economic status, gender identity and sexual orientation.

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

The carers participation in the review process in line with the Service Plan, is paramount in 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 services required.

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.



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



COUNCIL@BELLINGEN.NSW.GOV.AU
33 HYDE ST BELLINGEN NSW 2454 | 02 6655 7300

BELLINGEN.NSW.GOV.AU